The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

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BOOK TWO

THE ELEMENTARY BELIEFS

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRINCIPAL TOTEMIC BELIEFS

The Totem as Name and as Emblem

Owing to its nature, my study will be in two parts. Since every religion is made up of intellectual conceptions and ritual practices, I must treat in succession the beliefs and rites that make up totemic religion. Nevertheless, these two elements of religious life are too closely allied for any radical separation to be possible. Although in principle derived from the beliefs, the cult nevertheless reacts upon them, and the myth is often modeled on the rite so as to account for it, especially when the meaning of the rite is not, or is no longer, apparent. Conversely, there are beliefs that do not clearly manifest themselves except through rites that translate them. Thus, the two parts of the analysis cannot fail to interpenetrate. Still, they are of such a different order that separate study of them is indispensable. And since it is impossible to understand anything about a religion without knowing the ideas on which it rests, we must first become acquainted with those ideas.

My intention is not to retrace here all the speculative byways of religious thought, even among the Australians. I wish to get down to the elementary ideas at the basis of religion, but the point is not to follow speculative thought through all the sometimes quite luxuriant detail that the mythological imagination has given them in these societies. When myths can aid in understanding the fundamental notions better, I will certainly use those, but without making mythology itself the object of study. Besides, insofar as mythology is a work of art, it does not belong solely to the science of religions. In addition, the mental processes of which it is the outcome are far too complex to allow them to be studied indirectly and obliquely. Mythology is a difficult problem in its own right, one that must be treated in and of itself and according to its own specialized method.

Among the beliefs on which totemic religion rests, the most important are those that concern the totem, and so we must begin with those beliefs.

I

At the basis of most Australian tribes, we find a group that has a dominant place in collective life: That group is the clan. Two essential traits characterize it.

First, the individuals who comprise it consider themselves joined by a bond of kinship but a bond of a particular sort. This kinship does not arise from the fact that they have well-defined relations of common blood; they are kin solely because they bear the same name. They are not fathers, mothers, sons or daughters, uncles or nephews of one another in the sense we now give those terms; nevertheless they regard themselves as forming a single family, which is broad or narrow depending on the size of the clan, solely because they are collectively designated by the same word. And if we say they regard one another as being of the same family, it is because they acknowledge reciprocal obligations identical to those that have been incumbent on kin in all ages: obligations of help, vengeance, not marrying one another, and so forth.

In this first characteristic, the clan is not different from the Roman *gens* and the Greek γένος, for kinship among the *gentiles* arose exclusively from the fact that all the members of the *gens* carried the same name,[1] the *nomen gentilicium*. And of course the *gens* is in sense a clan, but it is a variety of the genus that must not be confused with the Australian clan.[2] What distinguishes the Australian clan is that the name it bears is also that of a definite species of material things with which it thinks it has special relations whose nature I will address below, in particular, relations of kinship. The species of things that serves to designate the clan collectively is called its *totem*. The clan's totem is also that of each clan member.

Every clan has a totem that belongs to it alone; two different clans of the same tribe cannot have the same one. Indeed, one is part of a clan only by virtue of having a certain name. So all who bear this name are members of it in the same right; however scattered across the tribal territory they may be, they all have the same kin relations with one another.[3] In consequence, two

[1]Here is the definition Cicero gave to gentility. *Gentiles sunt qui inter se eodem nomine sunt* (Top. 6). [Members of a *gens* are those who have the same family name. Trans.]

[2]In general, a clan is a family group in which kinship results only from having the same name. It is in this sense that the *gens* is a clan. The totemic clan is a particular species within the genus thus constituted.

[3]To a certain extent, the ties of solidarity extend even beyond the limits of the tribe. When individuals of different tribes have the same totem, they have special duties toward one another. This fact is explicitly stated for certain tribes of North America. (See [James George] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, vol.

groups that have the same totem can only be two sections of the same clan. It is common for a clan not to reside in the same place, but to have members in different places. Even so, the clan's unity is felt, though it has no geographical basis.

Regarding the word "totem": The Ojibway, an Algonquin tribe, use this word to denote the species of things whose name a clan bears.[4] Although the term is not Australian,[5] and in fact is found in only one society of America, ethnographers have adopted it and use it generally to denote the institution I am describing. Schoolcraft, the first to extend the meaning in this sense, spoke of a "totemic system."[6] This extension, of which there are numerous examples in ethnography, does have drawbacks. It is not quite right for an institution of such importance to bear a name that is given haphazardly, taken from a strictly local dialect, and in no way reflecting the distinctive traits of the thing it expresses. But today this usage of the word is so universally accepted that it would be an excess of purism to rebel against it.[7]

In the great majority of cases, the objects that serve as totems* belong to

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III [4 vols., London, Macmillan, 1910], pp. 57, 81, 299, 356–357. The texts on Australia are less explicit. Still, the prohibition of marriage between members of the same totem is probably international.

*In this chapter, Durkheim applies the adjective "totemic" (*totémique*) to "system," "group," "belief," "mark," "representation," "significance," "coat of arms," "symbol," and "decoration"—indeed, to everything except the animal or plant that serves as the totem of some group. I believe he intends to keep reminding the reader that while an animal or plant is the totem of some group, in itself it is not the totem; hence his careful locution, "the animal that serves as totem," which weighs down English sentences. Having stated this reminder, I simplify with "totemic animal" from now on.

[4][Lewis Henry] Morgan, *Ancient Society [or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization,* London, Macmillan, 1877], p. 165.

[5]In Australia, the words used vary by tribe. In the regions observed by Grey, people said *Kobong;* the Dieri say *Murdu* ([Alfred William] Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* [New York, Macmillan, 1904], p. 91), the Narrinyeri, *Ngaitye* ([Rev. George] Taplin, in [Edward] Micklethwaite Curr, [*The Australian Race; Its Origin, Languages, Customs, Place of Landing in Australia, and the Routes by Which It Spread Itself over That Continent*], vol. II ([Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1886–87], p. 244), the Warramunga, *Mungái* or *Mungáii* [Sir Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen] *Northern Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], p. 754), etc.

[6][Henry Rowe] Schoolcraft, [*Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the*] *Indian Tribes of the United States,* IV [Philadelphia, Lippincott Grambo, 1851–1857], p. 86. [The phrase "totemic element" appears on this page, but the passage is not about a "totemic system." Trans.]

[7]And yet the fate of this word is all the more regrettable, since we do not even know exactly how it is spelled. Some spell it *totam,* others *toodaim* or *dodaim* or *ododam.* See Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. I, p. 1. Even the meaning of the word is not exactly defined. If we rely on the first observer of the Ojibway, J. Long, the word *totem* designates the protective genie, the individual totem (to be discussed later, Bk. II, chap. 4), and not the totem of the clan. But the reports of other explorers say exactly the opposite (see on this point Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. III, pp. 49–52).

either the plant or animal kingdom but mainly to the latter. Inanimate things are used much more rarely. Of more than 500 totemic names listed by Howitt from among the tribes of the Australian Southwest, barely forty are not names of either plants or animals: They are clouds, rain, hail, frost, moon, sun, wind, autumn, summer, winter, certain stars, thunder, fire, smoke, water, red ochre, and sea. To be noted is the very limited place given to heavenly bodies and, more generally, to the great cosmic phenomena that nonetheless were to have a great future in the course of religious development. Among all the clans of which Howitt speaks, there are only two with the moon as totem,[8] two with the sun,[9] three with a star,[10] three with the thunder,[11] and two with lightning.[12] Only the rain is an exception; unlike the others, rain is very common.[13]

Such are the totems that may be called normal, but totemism has its abnormalities as well. Sometimes the totem is not a whole object but part of one. This seems to be rather uncommon in Australia;[14] Howitt cites only a single example.[15] However, it might well turn out to be a rather frequent occurrence in tribes in which the totemic groups have been excessively subdivided, in which one could say that the totems themselves must have been broken in order to provide names for the many divisions. This seems to have happened among the Arunta and the Loritja. In those two societies, Strehlow lists as many as 442 totems, several of which designate not an animal species but a particular part of such animals—for example, the tail or the stomach of the opossum, or the fat of the kangaroo.[16]

[8]The Wotjobaluk (p. 121) and the Buandik (p. 123).

[9]Ibid.

[10]The Wolgal (p. 102), the Wotjobaluk, and the Buandik.

[11]The Muruburra (p. 117), the Wotjobaluk, and the Buandik.

[12]The Buandik and the Kaiabara (p. 116). Note that all these examples are taken from only five tribes.

[13]Similarly, of 204 kinds of totems collected by Spencer and Gillen in a large number of tribes, 188 are animals or plants. Inanimate objects are the boomerang, cold water, darkness, fire, lightning, the moon, red ochre, resin, salt water, the evening star, a stone, the sun, water, the whirlwind, the wind, and hailstones (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 773. Cf. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. I, pp. 253–254).

[14]Frazer (*Totemism and Exogamy,* pp. 10, 13) cites numerous cases and even makes them a genus apart, which he calls *split-totems.* But these examples are taken from tribes in which totemism is profoundly altered, as in Samoa and in the tribes of Bengal.

[15]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 107.

[16]See the tables compiled by [Carl] Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien,* Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907, vol. II, pp. 61–72 (cf. III, xiii–xvii). It is worth noting that these fragmentary totems are exclusively animal totems.

The totem is ordinarily not an individual but a species or a variety: It is not such and such kangaroo or crow but the kangaroo or the crow in general. Nonetheless, it is sometimes a particular object. This is unavoidably the case when a thing that is unique of its kind serves as totem: the sun, the moon, such and such constellation, and so forth. But sometimes, as well, clans draw their names from this fold, that geologically caused depression in the terrain, that anthill, and so forth. While it is true that we have only a small number of examples in Australia, Strehlow mentions some.[17] But the very causes that have given rise to these abnormal totems show that they are of relatively recent origin. What actually has caused the erection of certain sites into totems is that a mythical being is thought to have stopped there and to have done some deed of his legendary life.[18] These ancestors are at the same time presented to us in the myths as themselves belonging to clans that once had perfectly normal totems, that is, taken from animal or plant species. So the totemic names that commemorate the exploits of these heroes cannot be primitive, but instead are linked with a form of totemism that is already derivative and altered. The question arises whether the meteorological totems are not of the same origin, since the sun, moon, and stars are often identified with ancestors of the mythical age.[19]

Sometimes—though rarely—a group of ancestors or a single ancestor is used as a totem. The totem in this case is not named after a real thing or a species of real things but after a purely mythical being. Spencer and Gillen long ago noted two or three totems of this sort. Among the Warramunga and among the Tjingilli is a clan that bears the name of an ancestor called Thaballa, who seems to incarnate gaiety.[20] Another Warramunga clan bears the name of a fabulous giant snake named Wollunqua, from whom the clan is held to be descended.[21] We are indebted to Strehlow for several examples of

[17]Ibid., pp. 52, 72.

[18]For example, one of those totems is a depression in which an ancestor of the wildcat totem rested; another is an underground gallery dug by an ancestor of the Mouse clan (ibid., p. 72).

[19][Sir Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen], *Native Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1899], pp. 561ff. Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 71 n. 2. [Alfred William] Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 426ff.; "On Australian Medicine Men," *JAI,* vol. XVI (1887), p. 53; "Further Notes on the Australian Class Systems," *JAI,* vol. XVIII [1899], pp. 63ff.

[20]According to the translation of Spencer and Gillen, "Thaballa" means "the boy who laughs." The members of the clan that bears his name believe they hear him laugh in the rocks that serve as his residence (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 207, 215 [227 n.]). According to the myth reported on p. 422, there was an initial group of mythical Thaballas (cf. p. 208). The clan of the Kati, fully developed men ("full-grown men" as Spencer and Gillen say) seems to be of the same sort (p. 207).

[21]Ibid., pp. 226ff.

this sort.[22] In all these cases, it is rather easy to see what must have happened. Under the influence of various causes, and through the development of mythological thought itself, the collective and impersonal totem gave way to certain mythical personages who moved to the first rank and became totems themselves.

Thus, as interesting as these various irregularities may be, nothing about them should require us to modify our definition of the totem. They do not, as was once believed,[23] constitute so many kinds of totems more or less irreducible to one another and to the normal totem, as I have defined it. They are only secondary and sometimes mutant forms of one and the same notion that is by far the most common and that there is every reason to regard also as the most primitive.

How the totemic name is acquired bears more on the recruitment and organization of the clan than on religion; it thus belongs more to the sociology of the family than to religious sociology.[24] Therefore, I will not go beyond a summary sketch of the most basic governing principles.

Depending on the tribe, three different rules are in use.

In many societies, in fact in most, the child has the totem of its mother, by birth: This is the case among the Dieri and the Urabunna of south-central Australia; the Wotjobaluk and the Gournditch-Mara of Victoria; the Kamilaroi, the Wiradjuri, the Wonghibon, and the Euahlayi of New South Wales; the Wakelbura, the Pitta-Pitta, and the Kurnandaburi of Queensland, to cite only the most important names. Since in this case the mother must be of a different totem from her husband, given the rule of exogamy, and yet lives at her husband's place of origin, the members of a single totem are of necessity dispersed among different places, depending on marriages. As a result, the totemic group has no territorial base.

Elsewhere, the totem is transmitted in the paternal line. In that case, the child remains near its father, and the local group is essentially made up of people who belong to the same totem, with only the married women in them

[22]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, pp. 71–72. Strehlow reports from among the Loritja and the Arunta the totem of a mythical water snake, which is very like that of the serpent Wollunqua.

[23]This is true of Klaatsch, in his article previously cited (see [Hermann Klaatsch, "Schlussbericht über meine Reise nach Australien in den Jahren 1904–1907"], *ZE*, vol. XXXIX ([1907], above, p. 89, n. 23).

[24]As I indicated in the preceding chapter, totemism concerns both religion and the family. In lower societies, these problems are closely interrelated, but both are so complex that they must be dealt with separately. Moreover, familial organization cannot be understood in advance of knowing primitive religious ideas, for those ideas serve as principles of the family. This is why it was necessary to study totemism as religion before studying the totemic clan as family grouping.

representing foreign totems. In other words, each locality has its own totem. In Australia until recent times, this mode of organization had only been met with in some tribes where totemism is in decay—for example, among the Narrinyeri, where the totem has virtually no religious character anymore.[25] Thus there was good reason to believe that a close connection existed between the totemic system and descent in the maternal line. But Spencer and Gillen have observed, in the northern part of central Australia, a whole group of tribes in which the totemic religion is still practiced and yet the transmission of the totem moves through the paternal line: These are the Warramunga, the Gnanji, the Umbaia, the Binbinga, the Mara, and the Anula.[26]

Finally, a third combination is observed among the Arunta and the Loritja. Here the totem of the child is not necessarily that of either its mother or its father but that of the mythical ancestor who mystically impregnated the mother at the time of conception, by procedures that the observers report in different ways.[27] A definite technique permits recognition of which ancestor it is and to which totemic group he belongs.[28] But because chance places one ancestor and not another close to the mother, the totem of the child turns out to be subject to fortuitous circumstances.[29]

Above and beyond the totems of clans are the totems of phratries. Although not different in nature from clan totems, they must nevertheless be distinguished.

A group of clans united by particular bonds of fraternity is called a phratry. Normally, an Australian tribe is divided into two phratries, with the various clans divided between them. Although there are societies from

[25]See Taplin, "The Narrinyeri Tribe," in Curr, *The Australian Race,* vol. II, pp. 244–245; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 131.

[26]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 163, 169, 170, 172. Still, it should be noted that in all these tribes except the Mara and the Anula, the transmission of the totem in the paternal line is apparently the most widespread rule, but there are exceptions.

[27]According to Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes,* pp. 123ff.), the ancestor's soul is incarnated in the body of the mother and then becomes the soul of the child. According to Strehlow (*Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 51ff.), although conception is the work of the ancestor, it does not involve a reincarnation. But in both interpretations, the totem specific to the child does not necessarily depend on that of its parents.

[28]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 133; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 53.

[29]For the most part, it is the locality where the mother thinks she conceived that determines the totem of the child. As we will see, each totem has its center, and the ancestors prefer to frequent the places that serve as the centers of their respective totems. The totem of the child is thus that of the locality where the mother thinks she conceived. Further, as the mother must be most often in the environs of the place that is the totemic center of her husband, the child usually has the same totem as the father. This doubtless explains why most of the inhabitants in each locality belong to the same totem ([Spencer and Gillen] *Native Tribes,* p. 9).

which that organization has disappeared, there is every reason to believe that it was once widespread. In Australia, at any rate, no tribe has more than two phratries.

In almost all cases in which the phratries have a name whose meaning could be determined, the name turned out to be that of an animal; it therefore seems to be a totem. A. Lang has shown this clearly in a recent book.[30] Accordingly, among the Gournditch-Mara (Victoria), one of the phratries is called Krokitch and the other Kaputch; the first of these means "white cockatoo" and the second "black cockatoo."[31] The same terms are found, wholly or in part, among the Buandik and the Wotjobaluk.[32] Among the Warramunga, the names used, Bunjil and Waangqui, mean eaglehawk and crow.[33] The words "Mukwara" and "Kilpara" are used for the same objects in a large number of tribes in New South Wales;[34] they designate the same animals.[35] The eaglehawk and the crow have also given their names to the two phratries of the Ngarigo and the Wolgal.[36] Among the Kuinmurbura, it is the white cockatoo and the crow.[37] Other examples could be cited. Thus we come to see the phratry as an ancient clan that was broken up, the present clans as the result of this dismemberment, and the solidarity that joins them as a relic of their original unity.[38] It is true that the phratries in certain tribes seem no longer to have definite names; in others, where names exist, the meaning is no longer known even to the natives. This is in no way surprising. The phratries are doubtless a primitive institution, since they are receding everywhere;

[30][Andrew Lang], *The Secret of the Totem* [London, Longmans, 1905], pp. 159ff. Cf. [Lorimer] Fison and [Alfred William] Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* [*Group Marriage by Elopement Drawn Chiefly from the Usage of Australian Aborigines; also The Kurnai Tribe, Their Customs in Peace and War,* Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], pp. 40–41; John Mathew, *Eaglehawk and Crow* [London, D. Nutt, 1899]; [Northcote Whitridge] Thomas, *Kinship* [*Organization*] *and* [*Group*] *Marriage in Australia* [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1906], pp. 52ff.

[31]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 124.

[32]Ibid., pp. 121, 123, 124; Curr [*The Australian Race*], vol. III, p. 461.

[33]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 126.

[34]Ibid., pp. 98ff.

[35]Curr [*The Australian Race*], vol. II, p. 165; [Robert] Brough Smyth, [*The Aborigines of Victoria,* vol. I, Melbourne, J. Ferres, Government Printer, 1878], p. 423; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 429.

[36]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 101–102.

[37][John] Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes of Queensland* [London, T. F. Unwin, 1910], p. 139.

[38]Other support for this hypothesis could be adduced, but that would make it necessary to bring in considerations relative to familial organization, and I am trying to keep the two matters separate. Moreover, that question is of only secondary relevance to my subject.

it is the clans, their offspring, that have come to the fore. So it is natural that the names the phratries bore should gradually have been erased from memory or that people should have ceased to understand them, for they must have belonged to a very archaic language that is no longer used. As proof of this, in several cases in which we know what animal's name it bears, the word that designates that animal in everyday language is entirely different from the one that designates the phratry.[39]

There is a kind of subordination between the phratry totem and the clan totems. Each clan in principle belongs to one and only one phratry. It is very unusual for a clan to have members in the other phratry, a case that is almost never seen outside certain tribes of the center, especially the Arunta.[40] Still, even where disruptive influences have produced overlappings of that kind, the majority of clan members are entirely contained in one of the tribe's two halves; only a minority are found on the other side.[41] Hence, the two phratries do not as a rule interpenetrate; hence, the possible totems an individual can have are determined by the phratry to which he belongs. In other words, the phratry totem is like a genus of which the clan totems are species. We will see that this comparison is not purely metaphorical.

In addition to the phratries and clans, we often find in Australian societies a secondary group that is not without a certain distinctiveness: the marriage class.

Subdivisions of the phratry, whose number may vary from tribe to tribe, are called marriage classes; sometimes we find two per phratry and sometimes four.[42] Their recruitment and functioning are regulated by two principles. First, in each phratry, each generation belongs to a different class from the generation directly preceding it, so when there are two classes per phratry, they necessarily alternate in each generation. The children belong to the

[39]For example, *Mukwara,* which designates a phratry among the Barkinji, the Paruinji, and the Milpulko, means "eaglehawk," according to Brough Smyth; among the clans included in that phratry, there is one that has the eaglehawk as its totem, but here that animal is designated by the word *Bilyara.* The reader will find several cases of this sort cited by Lang, *Secret of the Totem,* p. 162.

[40]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 115. According to Howitt (*Native Tribes* pp. 121, 454), among the Wotjobaluk, the Pelican clan is also represented in both phratries. This seems to me doubtful. Possibly the two clans had two different species of pelicans as their totems. This is what seems to emerge from the information given by [R. H.] Mathews on the same tribe ("[Ethnological Notes on the] Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria," in *RSNSW* [vol. XXXVIII], 1904, pp. 287–288).

[41]On this question, see my article [with Marcel Mauss] "[Sur] le Totémisme," in *AS,* vol. V [1902], pp. 82ff.

[42]On the question of Australian classes in general, see my article "La Prohibition de l'inceste," in *AS,* vol. I [1898], pp. 9ff., and specifically on the tribes having eight classes, "L'Organisation matrimoniale des sociétés australiennes," in *AS,* vol. VIII [1905], pp. 118–147.

class to which their parents do not belong, and the grandchildren are of the same class as their grandparents. Thus, among the Kamilaroi, the Kupathin phratry comprises two classes, Ippai and Kumbo; the Dilbi phratry comprises two others, called Murri and Kubbi. Since filiation goes in the maternal line, the child is of its mother's phratry; if the mother is Kupathin, the child will also be a Kupathin. But if she is of the Ippai class, he will be a Kumbo; then, if female, that child's children will again count within the Ippai class. Likewise, the children of women of the Murri class will be of the Kubbi class, and the children of the Kubbi women will again be Murri.* When there are four classes per phratry instead of two, the system is more complex, but the principle is the same. The four classes basically form two pairs of two classes each, and these two classes alternate in each generation in the manner just indicated. Second, in principle, the members of a class can contract marriage in only one class of the other phratry.[43] The Ippai must marry in the Kubbi class; the Murri, in the Kumbo class. Because this organization profoundly affects marriage relations, these groupings have been given the name "marriage classes."

Scholars have asked whether these classes sometimes had totems, as the phratries and the clans do. This question arose because, in certain Queensland tribes, each marriage class is subject to dietary restrictions peculiar to it. The individuals who comprise it must abstain from the flesh of certain animals that the other classes may freely eat.[44] Would these animals not be totems?

The dietary restriction, however, is not the characteristic mark of totemism. The totem is, first and foremost, a name and, as we will see, an emblem.† In the societies just examined, no marriage class bears the name of an animal or plant or has an emblem.[45] It is possible, of course, that these re-

*The children of the Kubbi men will take their class from their mother. Trans.

†That is, a stylized representation of the group designated—flags, coats of arms, and distinctive painting on people and things are examples.

[43]This principle is not upheld everywhere with equal rigor. In the tribes of the center that have eight classes, in particular, beyond the class with which marriage is regularly permitted, there is another with which people have a kind of secondary *connubium* (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 126). The same is true of certain tribes with four classes. Each class has the choice between two classes of the other phratry. This is true of the Kabi (see Mathew, in Curr, vol. III, p. 162 [This reference remains obscure. Trans.]).

[44]See [Walter Edmund] Roth, *Ethnological Studies among the North-West-Central Queensland Aborigines* (Brisbane, E. Gregory, Government Printer, 1897), pp. 56ff.; [Edward] Palmer, "Notes on Some Australian Tribes," *JAI,* vol. XIII (1894), [pp. 302ff.].

[45]Still, a few tribes are cited in which marriage classes have the names of animals or plants. This is the case of the Kabi (Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes,* p. 150), tribes observed by Mrs. [Daisy M.] Bates ("The Marriage Laws and Customs of the W. Australian Aborigines," in *VGJ,* vols. XXIII–XXIV, p. 47) and perhaps of two tribes observed by Palmer. But these phenomena are very rare and their significance

strictions derive from totemism indirectly. Conceivably the animals protected by them originally served as totems for clans that have since disappeared, while the marriage classes have remained. Sometimes indeed they do have a staying power that clans do not have. As a result, the restrictions now adrift from their original supports may have spread throughout each class, since there were no longer any other groupings to which they could become attached. But even if that rule was born of totemism, clearly it no longer represents anything more than a weakened and diluted form of totemism.[46]

All that has just been said of the totem in the Australian societies is applicable to the Indian tribes of North America. The only difference is that totemic organization among the Indians has a boundedness and a stability that it lacks in Australia. The Australian clans are not simply very numerous but of almost unlimited number in a single tribe. The observers cite some of them by way of example but never succeed in giving us a full list. The reason is that the list is never definitively closed. The same process of segmentation that originally dismembered the phratry and gave rise to clans proper goes on endlessly within the clans; as a consequence of that progressive crumbling, a clan often has only a very small membership.[47] In America, by contrast, the form of the totemic system is better defined. In America the

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poorly established. Moreover, it is not surprising that the classes, as well as the sexual groups, have sometimes adopted the names of animals. This unusual extension of totemic names in no way modifies my conception of totemism. [The ethnographer Durkheim identified simply as "Mrs. Bates" is the subject of a full-scale biography: Julia Blackburn, *Daisy Bates in the Desert,* New York, Pantheon, 1994. Trans.]

[46]The same explanation perhaps applies to certain other tribes of the Southeast and East in which, if Howitt's informants are to be believed, one would find totems specifically assigned to each marriage class as well. This presumably would be the case among the Wiradjuri, the Wakelbura, and the Bunta-Murra of the River Bulloo (Howitt, *Native Tribes* pp. 210, 221, 226). However, by his own admission, the testimonies he gathered are suspect. In fact, it emerges from the lists he compiled that several totems are found in both classes of the same phratry.

The explanation I propose, after Frazer (*Totemism and Exogamy,* pp. 531ff.), raises another difficulty. In principle, each clan, hence each totem, is represented indiscriminately in both classes of a single phratry, since one of those classes is that of children and the other that of the parents from whom the children get their totems. Thus, when the clans disappeared, the totemic prohibitions that survived must have remained common to the two marriage classes, since, in the cases cited, each class has its own. Whence that differentiation? The example of the Kaiabara (a tribe of the south of Queensland) enables us, perhaps, to visualize how this differentiation occurred. In that tribe, the children have their mother's totem, but it is individualized by a distinctive mark. If the mother has the black eaglehawk totem, the child's is the white eaglehawk (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 229). Here, apparently, are beginnings of a tendency for totems to differentiate according to marriage class.

[47]A tribe of a few hundred people sometimes has as many as fifty or sixty clans and even many more. See on this point Durkheim and Mauss, "De Quelques formes primitives de classification," in *AS,* vol. VI (1903), p. 28, n.1.

tribes are, on the average, markedly bigger than in Australia but there are fewer clans. Since a single tribe rarely has more than about ten,[48] and often fewer, each clan is a much larger group. Most of all, their number is better defined: People know how many there are and tell us.[49]

This difference is due to their more advanced social organization. From the first time those tribes were observed, the social groups were deeply rooted in the soil and consequently better able to withstand the forces toward dispersion that assailed them. At the same time, the society already had too strong a sense of its unity to remain unconscious of itself and the parts comprising it. Thus, the American example gives us a better grasp of organization based on clans. To judge that organization by the way it now appears in Australia would be misleading. There, in fact, it is in a state of disorder and dissolution that is by no means normal; it ought to be seen instead as the product of a decay that is attributable as much to the natural wear and tear of time as to the disorganizing influence of the whites. To be sure, it is unlikely that the Australian clans were ever as large or as structurally durable as the American clans. Still, there must have been a time when the distance between the two was not so great as it is today. The societies of America would never have managed to equip themselves with the substantial skeleton they did if the clan had always been so fluid and insubstantial.

Indeed, that greater stability has enabled the archaic system of phratries to persist in America with a clarity and relief that it no longer has in Australia. In Australia, the phratry is everywhere in decline; it is often nothing more than a group without a name. When it does have a name, that name is taken from a foreign language or from one that is no longer spoken and is no longer understood or no longer means much to the native. We have been able to infer the existence of phratry totems from a few survivals* that are, for the most part, so inconspicuous that they have escaped a number of observers. By contrast, in certain parts of America, this system of phratries has remained at the fore. The tribes of the northwest coast, in particular the Tlingit and the Haida, have attained a relatively advanced level of civilization, and yet they

*Rendered here as "survivals," which is seldom used today, Durkheim's term *survivances* belongs to evolutionary theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It refers to traits thought of as vestiges from an earlier stage and, consequently without present meaning or function.

[48]Except among the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest, where they are more numerous. See [Frederick Webb] Hodge, "Pueblo Indian Clans," in *AA*, 1st ser., vol. IX (October 1895), pp. 345ff. Even so, we can ask whether the groups having those totems are clans or subclans.

[49]See the tables compiled by Morgan in *Ancient Society*, pp. 153–185.

are divided into two phratries that are subdivided into a number of clans: phratries of the Crow and the Wolf among the Tlingit,[50] and of the Eagle and the Crow among the Haida.[51] That division is not merely nominal; it corresponds to existing custom and profoundly marks life. Compared to the distance between the phratries, the moral distance between clans is small.[52] The name each of them bears is not a mere word whose meaning has been forgotten or is known but vaguely. It is a totem in the full sense of the word, and it has all the essential attributes of the totem, such as they will be described below.[53] So on this point as well, there was good reason not to disregard the tribes of America, because there we can directly observe examples of phratry totems, whereas Australia only offers us a few dim vestiges of them.

II

The totem is not simply a name; it is an emblem, a true coat of arms, and its resemblance to the heraldic coat of arms has often been commented upon. "Every family," says Grey of the Australians, "adopts an animal or a plant as their crest and sign"[54]—and what Grey calls a family is indisputably a clan. As Fison and Howitt also say, "The Australian organization shows that the totem is, first of all, the badge of a group."[55] Schoolcraft speaks in the same terms about the totems of North America: "The totem is in fact a design that corresponds to the heraldic emblems of the civilized nations, and each person is authorized to wear it as proof of the identity of the family to which he belongs. This is shown by the real etymology of the word from which *dodaim*

[50][Avrel] Krause, *Die Tlinkit-Indianer* [Jena, H. Constenoble, 1885], p. 112; [John Reed] Swanton, "Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians," BAE, *XXVIth Report* [1908], p. 398.

[51][John Reed] Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* [Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1905], p. 62.

[52]"The distinction between the two clans is absolute in every respect," says Swanton, p. 68; he calls "clans" what I call "phratries." The two phratries, he says elsewhere, are like two peoples foreign to one another.

[53]Among the Haida at least, the totem of the clans proper is even more altered than the totem of the phratries. The custom that permits a clan to give or to sell the right to wear its totem arises from the fact that each clan has a number of totems, some of them shared with other clans (see Swanton, pp. 107, 268). Because Swanton calls clans phratries, he is obliged to give the name "family" to clans proper, and the name "household" to real families. But the actual meaning of the terminology he adopts is not in doubt.

[54][George Grey], *Journals of Two Expeditions in Northwestern and Western Australia,* II [London, T. and W. Boone, 1841], p. 228.

[55][Fison and Howitt], *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 165.

is derived, which means village or residence of a family group."[56] Therefore, when the Indians entered into relations with the Europeans and made contracts with them, each clan sealed the treaties thus concluded with its totem.[57]

The nobles of the feudal age sculpted, engraved, and in every way displayed their coats of arms on the walls of their castles, on their weapons, and on all kinds of other objects belonging to them. The blacks of Australia and the Indians of North America do the same with their totems. The Indians who accompanied Samuel Hearne painted their totems on their shields before going into battle.[58] In time of war, according to Charlevoix, certain Indian tribes had banners, made of bits of bark attached to the end of a pole on which the totems were represented.[59] Among the Tlingit, when a conflict breaks out between two clans, the champions of the two enemy groups wear helmets on which their respective totems are painted.[60] Among the Iroquois, the skin of the totemic animal was placed on each wigwam, as a mark of the clan.[61] According to another observer, the animal was stuffed with straw and placed in front of the door.[62] Among the Wyandot, each clan has its own ornaments and distinctive painting.[63] Among the Omaha, and among the Sioux more generally, the totem is painted on the tent.[64]

Wherever the society has become sedentary, where the house has replaced the tent and the plastic arts are more developed, the totem is carved

[56][Schoolcraft], *Indian Tribes,* vol. I, p. 420. [The quoted material is not on this page, nor is the discussion relevant. Trans.] Cf. vol. I, p. 52. This etymology is, by the way, very disputable. Cf. [Frederick Webb Hodge], *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of Ethnology, IId part [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1907–1910], p. 787.

[57][Schoolcraft] *Indian Tribes,* vol. III, p. 184. Garrick Mallery, *Picture-Writing of the American Indians,* BAE, *Xth Report,* 1893, p. 377.

[58][Samuel] Hearne, [A] *Journey [from Prince of Wale's Fort in Hudson's Bay] to the Northern Ocean* [Dublin, Printed for P. Byrne and J. Rice, 1796], p. 148 (cited in [James George] Frazer, "Totemism" ([*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 9th ed. (Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1887)], p. 30).

[59][Pierre François Xavier de] Charlevoix, *Histoire et description de la Nouvelle France,* vol. V [Paris, Chez la Veuve Ganeau, 1744], p. 329.

[60]Krause, *Tlinkit-Indianer,* p. 248.

[61]Erminnie A. Smith, "Myths of the Iroquois," BAE *Second [Annual] Report* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1883], p. 78.

[62][Richard Irving] Dodge, *Our Wild Indians* [Hartford, A. D. Washington and Co., 1882], p. 225.

[63][John Wesley] Powell, "Wyandot Government," *First Annual Report, BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1881), p. 64.

[64][James Owen] Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," *Third [Annual] Report, [BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1884], pp. 229, 240, 248.

on the wood and on the walls. This occurs, for example, among the Haida, the Tshimshian, the Salish, and the Tlingit. Krause says, "The totemic arms are a very special house decoration among the Tlingit." These are animal forms combined in certain cases with human forms and sculpted on poles that rise beside the door as high as fifteen meters; they are usually painted in very flashy colors.[65] Yet totemic representations are not very numerous in a Tlingit village; there are only a few, and those are found in front of the houses of chiefs and the rich. They are much more common, often several per house, in the neighboring tribe of the Haida.[66] With its many sculpted poles standing on all sides and sometimes very tall, a Haida village gives the impression of a holy city bristling with tiny bell towers and minarets.[67] Among the Salish, the totem is often drawn on the interior walls of the house.[68] Elsewhere it is found on canoes, utensils of all kinds, and funeral monuments.[69]

The preceding examples are taken exclusively from among the Indians of North America because such sculptures, engravings, and permanent representations are possible only where the technology of the arts already has a degree of refinement that the Australian tribes have not yet attained. In consequence, the totemic representations of the kind just mentioned are rarer and less apparent in Australia than in America. Nonetheless, there are some examples. Among the Warramunga, at the end of the funeral ceremonies, the bones of the deceased are buried after having been dried and reduced to powder; a figure representing the totem is traced on the ground beside the place where they are deposited.[70] Among the Mara and the Anula, the body is placed in a piece of hollowed-out wood that is also decorated with the identifying designs of the totem.[71] In New South Wales, Oxley

[65]Krause, *Tlinkit-Indianer,* pp. 130–131.

[66]Ibid., p. 308.

[67]See the photograph of a Haida village in Swanton, *Haida,* Pl. IX. Cf. [Edward] Tylor, "Totem Post of the Haida Village of Masset," *JAI,* New Series, vol. I [1907], p. 133.

[68]Charles Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Statlumh of British Columbia," *JAI,* vol. XXXV, 1905, p. 155.

[69]Krause, *Tlinkit-Indianer,* p. 230; Swanton, *Haida,* pp. 129, 135ff.; Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes,* vol. I, pp. 52–53, 337, 356. In this last case, the totem is represented upside down as a sign of mourning. Similar customs are found among the Creek (C. Swan, in Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes of the United States,* vol. V, p. 265), among the Delaware ([John Gottlieb Ernestus] Heckwelder, *An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania* [Philadelphia, A. Small, 1818], pp. 246–247).

[70]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 168, 537, 540.

[71]Ibid., p. 174.

found carvings on trees near the tomb where a native was buried, to which Brough Smyth ascribes totemic significance.[72] The natives of Upper Darling engrave their shields with totemic images.[73] According to Collins, almost all the utensils are covered with ornaments that probably have the same meaning; figures of this sort are also found on rocks.[74] Since, for reasons to be set forth below, it is not always easy to interpret these totemic designs, they may well be more common than they seem.

These varied facts provide a sense of the large place held by the totem in the social life of primitives. Thus far, however, it has appeared to us more or less as apart from man himself; we have seen it represented only on things. But totemic images are not only reproduced on the outsides of houses and canoes, on weapons, instruments, and tombs; they recur on men's bodies. Men do not simply place their emblem on the objects they possess but also wear it on their persons; they imprint it in their flesh, and it becomes part of them. This mode of representation is in fact, and by far, the most important one.

Indeed, generally the members of each clan seek to give themselves the outward appearance of their totem. At certain religious festivals among the Tlingit, the person who conducts the ceremony wears a costume that wholly or in part represents the body of the animal whose name the clan bears.[75] Special masks are used for this purpose. The same practices crop up again throughout the American Northwest.[76] They are also found among the Minnitaree when they go into battle[77] and among the Pueblo Indians.[78] Elsewhere, when the totem is a bird, the individuals wear its feathers on their heads.[79] Among the Iowa, each clan has a special way of cutting the hair. In the Eagle clan, two large tufts are arranged at the front of the head, while an-

[72]Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria,* vol. I, p. 99n.

[73]Ibid., p. 284. Strehlow cites an example of the same sort among the Arunta, *Aranda,* vol. III, p. 68.

[74][David Collins], *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales,* vol. II [London, Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804], p. 381.

[75]Krause, *Tlinkit-Indianer,* p. 327.

[76]Swanton, "Social Conditions," pp. 435ff.; [Franz] Boas, "The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians," in *Report of the United States National Museum for 1895,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897, p. 358.

[77]Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. I, p. 26.

[78][John Gregory] Bourke, *The Snake Dance of the Moquis of Arizona* [Chicago, Rio Grande Press, 1962], p. 229; J. W. Fewkes, "The Group of Tusayan Ceremonials Called Katcinas," in *XVth Report* [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office], 1897, pp. 251–263.

[79][Johann Georg] Müller, *Geschichte der amerikanischen Urreligionen* [Basel, Schewighauser, 1855], p. 327.

other hangs behind; in the Buffalo clan, the hair is arranged in the shape of horns.[80] Similar arrangements are found among the Omaha: Each clan has its own hairstyle. In the Tortoise clan, for example, the head is shaved, leaving six curls—two on each side, one in front and one behind—so as to imitate the feet, head, and tail of the animal.[81]

But it is most often on the body itself that the totemic mark is imprinted, for this is a mode of representation that is within the reach of less advanced societies. It has sometimes been asked whether the common rite of extracting a young man's two upper incisors when he reaches puberty might not have the purpose of imitating the form of the totem. This has not been established as fact, but it is worth noting that the natives themselves sometimes explain the custom in that way. For example, among the Arunta, the extraction of teeth is practiced only in the clan of rain and water. According to tradition, that operation is performed to make them resemble certain black clouds with light edges that are held to announce the speedy coming of rain—the clouds being considered as things of the same family.[82] This is evidence that the native himself realizes that the purpose of these deformations is to give him the appearance of his totem, at least conventionally. Also among the Arunta, during the rites of subincision,* specific kinds of gashes are made on the sisters and the future wife of the novice; the form of the resulting scars appears as well on a sacred object called the *churinga,*† of which I will presently speak. The lines drawn on the churinga are emblematic of the totem.[83] Among the Kaitish, the euro is considered to be closely akin to the rain;[84] the people of the rain clan wear small earrings made of euro teeth.[85] Among the Yerkla, a certain number of gashes that leave scars are inflicted on the young man during initiation; the number and form of these

*A form of genital mutilation that involves a cut made along the underside of the penis, and that in some traditions is accompanied by circumcision as well.

†Durkheim's convention of not pluralizing words that are not pluralized in their original languages by the addition of "s" (like "churinga," "waninga," and "nurtunja") can lead to confusion in English, in which articles do not have plurals. For that reason where he says *les churinga,* I say "the churingas." Also, I have followed his tendency to remove Australian terms from italics, once they have been explained.

[80]Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes,* vol. III, p. 269.

[81]Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," pp. 229, 238, 240, 245.

[82]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 451.

[83]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 257.

[84]What these relations of kinship signify will be seen below (Bk. II, chap. 4).

[85]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 296.

scars vary according to totem.[86] One of Fison's informants notes the same sort of thing in the tribes he studied.[87] According to Howitt, the same sort of relationship between certain scarifications and the water totem exists among the Dieri.[88] Finally, among the Indians of the Northwest, the custom of tattooing the totem on the body is very widespread.[89]

The tattoos made by mutilation or scarification do not always have totemic significance;[90] but the case is otherwise for simple designs painted on the body: Those usually represent the totem. True, the native does not wear them every day. When he engages in purely economic occupations, as when the small family groups disperse for hunting and fishing, they do not encumber themselves with this paraphernalia, which can be quite elaborate. But when the clans come together to share a common life and devote themselves to religious ceremonies, wearing it is obligatory. As we will see, each of those ceremonies is the affair of a specific totem, and, in principle, the rites that are addressed to a totem can be performed only by the people of that totem. Those who conduct them,[91] playing the role of celebrants—and sometimes even those who are present as spectators—always wear designs on their bodies that represent the totem.[92] One of the principal rites of initiation, the one that initiates the young man into the religious life of the tribe, is the painting of the totemic symbol upon his body.[93] It is true that, among

[86]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 744–746; cf. p. 129.

[87]*Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 66 n. It is true that this is disputed by other informants.

[88]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 744.

[89]Swanton, *Haida,* pp. 41ff. See plates XX and XXI; Boas, *The Social Organization of the Kwakiutl,* p. 318; Swanton, *Tlinkit,* Plates xviff. In one case outside the two ethnographic regions we are specifically studying, such tattoos are placed on the animals that belong to the clan. The Bechuana of southern Africa are divided into a certain number of clans: the people of the crocodile, the buffalo, the monkey, etc. The people of the crocodile, for example, make an incision on the ears of their beasts, the shape of which resembles the face of the animal ([Eugene Arnaud] Casalis, *Les Bassoutos* [English trans., *The Basutos,* Capetown, C. Struik, 1965], p. 221). According to [William] Robertson Smith, the same custom existed among the ancient Arabs (*Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1885], pp. 212–214).

[90]According to Spencer and Gillen, there are some that have no religious meaning (see *Native Tribes,* pp. 41–42; *Northern Tribes,* pp. 45, 54–56).

[91]Among the Arunta, this rule has exceptions that will be explained below.

[92]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 162; *Northern Tribes,* pp. 179, 259, 292, 295–296; Schulze, [Reverend Louis, "Aborigines of the Upper and Middle Finke River," *RSSA,* vol. XIV, 1891], p. 221. What is represented in this way is not always the totem itself but one of those objects that, being associated with the totem, are regarded as things of the same family. [The reference states that bodies are painted; it does not mention painting as a religious rite. Trans.]

[93]This is the case, for example, among the Warramunga, the Walpari, the Wulmala, the Tjingilli, the Umbaia, and the Unmatjera (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 339, 348). Among the Warramunga,

the Arunta, the design thus made does not always and necessarily represent the totem of the novice;[94] but this is an exception, no doubt a result of the disturbed state into which the totemic organization of that tribe has fallen.[95] What is more, even among the Arunta, at the most solemn moment of the initiation (its high point and consecration being the moment when the novice is admitted to the sanctuary where the sacred objects of the clan are kept), an emblematic painting is drawn on him. This time it is indeed the totem of the young man that is represented.[96] The ties that bind the individual to his totem are so close that, in the tribes of the North American northwest coast, the emblem of the clan is painted not only on the living but even on the dead: A totemic mark is placed on the corpse before burial.[97]

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at the moment the design is made, the officiants say the following words to the novice: "This mark belongs to your place: Do not turn your eyes to another place." According to Spencer and Gillen, "This language means that the young man must not involve himself in any ceremonies but those that concern his totem; they also testify to the close association that is held to exist between a man, his totem, and the place especially consecrated to that totem." (*Northern Tribes,* p. 584.) Among the Warramunga, the totem is transmitted from father to children; consequently each locality has its own.

[94]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 215, 241, 376.

[95]It will be recalled (see p. 105 above) that in this tribe, the child can have a different totem from his father or his mother and, more generally, of his kin. The relatives of both sides are the designated celebrants of the initiation ceremonies. As a result, since a man in principle is qualified as operator or celebrant only for ceremonies of his own totem, it follows that in certain cases, the rites at which the child is initiated necessarily concern a totem other than his own. This is how it comes about that the paintings made on the body of the novice do not necessarily represent his totem. Cases of this kind are to be found in Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 229. This shows, moreover, that if there is an anomaly, it is because the ceremonies of circumcision nevertheless belong essentially to the totem that would be the totem of the novice himself if the totemic organization was not disturbed—if the totemic organization was among the Arunta what it is among the Warramunga (ibid., p. 219).

The same disruption has had another consequence. Its effect everywhere has been to loosen somewhat the bonds that unite each totem with a definite group, since the same totem can include members in all the possible local groups, and even in the two phratries indiscriminately. The idea that ceremonies of a totem could be conducted by an individual of a different totem—an idea that is contrary to the very principles of totemism, as we will see better below—has thus been able to establish itself without excessive resistance. It is conceded that a man to whom a spirit has revealed the formula of a ceremony is qualified to preside in it, even though he was not of the totem concerned (ibid., p. 519). Proof that this is an exception to the rule, and the result of a kind of toleration, is that the beneficiary of the formula thus revealed cannot do with it as he pleases. If he transmits the formula, and such transmissions are common, it can only be to a member of the totem to which the rite refers (ibid.).

[96]Ibid., p. 140. In this case, the novice keeps the decoration in which he was dressed until it goes away by itself with the passage of time.

[97]Franz Boas, "First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in *BAAS, Fifth Report of the Committee on the North-Western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada* [London, Offices of the Association, 1890], p. 41.

III

These totemic decorations suggest that the totem is not merely a name and an emblem. They are used during religious ceremonies and are part of the liturgy: Thus, while the totem is a collective label, it also has a religious character. In fact, things are classified as sacred and profane by reference to the totem. It is the very archetype of sacred things.

The tribes of central Australia, principally the Arunta, the Loritja, the Kaitish, the Unmatjera, and the Ilpirra,[98] use certain instruments in their rites that, among the Arunta, are called churingas, according to Spencer and Gillen and, according to Strehlow, *Tjurunga.*[99] They are pieces of wood or bits of polished stone of various shapes but generally oval or oblong.[100] Each totemic group has a more or less sizable collection of them. *Upon each of them is engraved a design representing the totem of this group.*[101] Some churingas are pierced at one end, with a string made from human hair or opossum fur passed through the hole. Those that are made of wood and pierced in this way serve the same purpose as those cult instruments* to which the English ethnographers have given the name "bull roarers." Held by the string from which they are suspended, they are rapidly whirled in the air so as to produce the same sort of humming that is made by the "devils" that our children use as toys today; this deafening noise has ritual meaning and accompanies all religious ceremonies of any importance. Thus, churingas of this kind are actually bull roarers. Others, which are not wooden or are not pierced, cannot be used in this manner. Nevertheless, they evoke the same feelings of religious respect.

Indeed every churinga, however used, counts among the most preeminently sacred things. Nothing has surpassed it in religious dignity. The word that designates it makes this immediately clear. At the same time that "churinga" is a noun, it is also an adjective—meaning "sacred." Thus, among

*This term applies to special containers, knives, coverings, bells, and other objects used in the course of religious rites.

[98]There are some among the Warramunga as well, but fewer than among the Arunta, and although they have a certain place in the myths, they do not figure in the totemic ceremonies (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 163).

[99]Other names are used in other tribes. I give the Arunta term a generic sense, because it is in that tribe that the churingas have greatest importance and are the best studied.

[100]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 81.

[101]There are some, but not many, that do not bear any obvious design (see Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 144).

the names that each Arunta has, there is one so sacred that it must not be revealed to a stranger; it is pronounced but rarely and in a low voice, a sort of mysterious murmur. That name is called *aritna churinga* (*aritna* means "name").[102] More generally, the word "churinga" designates all ritual acts; for example, *ilia churinga* means the cult of the Emu.[103] Thus, churinga, period, used as a noun, is the thing whose quintessential feature is to be sacred. The profane, therefore—women and young men not yet initiated into religious life—may not touch or see the churingas; they are only permitted to look from afar and even then rarely.[104]

The churingas are piously kept in a special place the Arunta call the *ertnatulunga*—a sort of small cave hidden in a deserted place.[105] The entrance is carefully closed with rocks placed so skillfully that a passing stranger never suspects that the religious treasury of the clan is nearby. Such is the churingas' sacredness that it is passed on to the place where they are deposited; women and the uninitiated may not come near it. Young men may do so only when their initiation is completely over, and even then, some are judged to merit that privilege only after several years of trial.[106] The religiousness of the place radiates beyond and is transfused into all that surrounds it: Everything participates in the same quality and is for that reason insulated from profane contact. Is a man chased by another? He is safe if he reaches the ertnatulunga; he cannot be captured there.[107] Even a wounded animal that takes refuge there

[102]Ibid., pp. 139, 648; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 75.

[103]Strehlow, who spells it *Tjurunga,* translates the word a little differently. "This word," he says, "means all that is secret and personal" (*der eigene geheime*). *Tju* is an old word that means hidden, secret, and *runga* means that which is personal to me." But Kempe, who has more authority than Strehlow in the matter, translates *tju* as "great," "powerful," or "sacred" ([Reverend H.] Kempe, "Vocabulary of the Tribes Inhabiting the Macdonnell Ranges," in *RSSA,* vol. XIV (1890–1891, 1898), pp. 1–54], under "*Tju.*" Moreover, Strehlow's translation is basically not so far from the preceding as one might think at first glance, for what is secret is that which is taken away from the knowledge of the profane, in other words, that which is sacred. As concerns the meaning of the word *runga,* that seems very doubtful. The ceremonies of the emu belong to all the members of the Emu clan; all can participate in them; they are not the personal property of any member.

[104]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 130–132; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 78. A woman who has seen the churinga and the man who has shown it to her are both put to death.

[105]Strehlow calls that place, defined exactly in the same terms Spencer and Gillen use, *arknanuaua* instead of *ertnatulunga* (Aranda, vol. II, p. 78).

[106][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* p. 270, and *Native Tribes,* p. 140.

[107]Ibid., p. 135.

must be respected.[108] Quarrels are prohibited. It is a place of peace, as is said in the Germanic societies; it is the sanctuary of the totemic group; it is a true asylum.

The churinga's virtues are manifested not only by the way it keeps the profane at a distance. It is isolated in this way because it is a thing of great religious value, and its loss would tragically injure the group and the individuals. The churinga has all sorts of miraculous qualities. By its touch, wounds are healed, especially those resulting from circumcision;[109] it is similarly effective against illness;[110] it makes the beard grow;[111] it conveys important powers over the totemic species, whose normal reproduction it ensures;[112] it gives men strength, courage, and perseverance, while depressing and weakening their enemies. Indeed, this last belief is so deep-rooted that when two fighters are battling, if one happens to glimpse that his opponent is wearing churingas, he instantly loses confidence and his defeat is certain.[113] Thus, no ritual instruments have a more important place in religious ceremonies.[114] Their powers are passed on to the celebrants or to the congregation by a kind of anointing; the faithful are smeared with fat and then the churingas are rubbed against their arms, legs, and stomach.[115] Or the churingas are covered with down that flies away in all directions when they are whirled, this being one way to spread the virtues they contain.[116]

Churingas are not merely useful to individuals; the collective fate of the entire clan is bound up with theirs. Losing them is a disaster, the greatest misfortune that can befall the group.[117] Sometimes churingas leave the ertnatu-

[108]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 78. However, Strehlow says that a murderer who takes refuge near an ertnatulunga is mercilessly pursued there and put to death. I have some difficulty reconciling that fact with the privilege the animal enjoys and wonder if the greater rigor with which the criminal is treated is not recent and if it should not be ascribed to a weakening of the taboo that originally protected the ertnatulunga.

[109][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 248.

[110]Ibid., pp. 545–546; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 79. For example, the dust scraped from a stone churinga and dissolved in water makes a potion that heals the sick.

[111]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 545–546; Strehlow, *Aranda* vol. II, p. 79 disputes that.

[112]For example, a churinga of the Yam totem that is placed in the ground makes yams grow at that spot (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 275). It has the same power over the animals (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 76, 78; vol. III, pp. 3, 7).

[113][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 135; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 79.

[114][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes* p. 278.

[115]Ibid., p. 180.

[116]Ibid., pp. 272–273.

[117] Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 135.

lunga—for example, when they are lent to some foreign group.[118] There is real public mourning when this happens. For two weeks, the people of the totem cry and lament, covering their bodies with white clay as they do when they have lost one of their kin.[119] The churingas are not left for individuals to do with as they please; the ertnatulunga where they are kept is under the control of the group's chief. To be sure, each individual has special rights over certain of them;[120] but even if he is to some extent their owner, he can use them only with the consent of the chief and under the chief's guidance. It is a collective treasury, the Holy Ark* of the clan.[121] The devotion they receive further illustrates the great value that is attached to them. They are handled with a respect that is displayed by the solemnity of the movements.[122] They are cared for, oiled, rubbed, and polished; when they are carried from one place to another, it is in the midst of ceremonies, proof that this travel is considered an act of the very highest importance.[123]

In themselves, the churingas are merely objects of wood and stone like so many others; they are distinguished from profane things of the same kind by only one particularity: The totemic mark is drawn or engraved upon them. That mark, and only that mark, confers sacredness on them. To be sure, Spencer and Gillen believe that the churinga serves as the residence of an ancestral soul and that the authority of that soul gives the object its properties.[124] Strehlow views that interpretation as incorrect but the one he pro-

*Here, Durkheim shifts from the term *sacrée* to the term *sainte,* using the expression *l'arche sainte,* which is a fixed phrase meaning "something that may not be touched"—quite like the English "sacred cow," which in turn derives from ritual practice in India. I have used the term "holy" not only because "Holy Ark" is the standard expression in American English, but also to let the reader note the shift and reflect on its possible implications (see p. lxix).

[118]A group lends its churinga to another with the idea that those latter will pass on to it some of the virtues they have and that their presence will rejuvenate individuals and the collectivity (ibid., pp. 158ff.).

[119]Ibid., p. 136.

[120]Each individual has a personal bond first of all to one special churinga that serves as a security for his life and then to those he has inherited from his relatives.

[121]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 154; *Northern Tribes,* p. 193. The churingas are so marked with collective significance that they replace the "message sticks" that envoys carry when they go to summon foreign groups to a ceremony (*Native Tribes,* pp. 141–142).

[122]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 326. [Neither "solemnity" nor other words describing movements appear at this place. Trans.] It should be noted that the bull roarers are treated in the same way (Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes" pp. 307–308).

[123]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 161, 250ff.

[124]Ibid., p. 138.

poses does not markedly differ from it: He is of the opinion that the churinga is regarded as an image of the ancestor's body or as the body itself.[125] Thus, again, it is feelings inspired by the ancestor and projected onto the material object that make it into a kind of fetish. Yet both conceptions—which barely differ except in the literal detail of the myth—were obviously forged after the fact to make the sacredness imputed to churingas intelligible. There is nothing in the makeup of those pieces of wood and stone, and in their appearance, that predestines them to being regarded as the seat of an ancestral soul or the image of the ancestor's body. So that respect was not caused by the myth; far from it. If men conceived this myth, it was to account for the religious respect that those things elicited. Like so many other mythical explanations, this one resolves the question only by repeating it in slightly different terms, for to say that the churinga is sacred, and that it has such and such relationship with a sacred being, is not to account for the fact but to state one fact in two different ways. Second, as Spencer and Gillen admit, even among the Arunta, there are churingas that are made by the elders of the group, with the full knowledge of and in full view of everyone;[126] those obviously do not come from the great ancestors. Still, despite a few differences, they have the same power as the others and are kept in the same way. Finally, there are whole tribes in which a churinga is not at all thought of as being associated with a spirit.[127] Its religious nature comes to it from another source; and what would be the source if not the totemic imprint it bears? Thus, the outward displays of the rite are addressed to that image, and that image sanctifies* the object on which it is engraved.

Among the Arunta and in the neighboring tribes, there exist two other liturgical instruments that are clearly attached to the totem and to the

*To express the idea "to make something sacred," Durkheim uses the word *sanctifier.* That idea should be kept distinct from other meanings of the verb "to sanctify."

[125]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 76, 77, 82. For the Arunta, it is the actual body of the ancestor; for the Loritja, it is only the body's image.

[126]Just after the birth of a child, the mother shows the father where she believes the soul of the ancestor entered her. Accompanied by several relatives, the father goes to that place, and they look for the churinga that they believe the ancestor dropped at the moment of reincarnating himself. If one is found, it is probably because some elder of the totemic group put it there (the hypothesis of Spencer and Gillen). If they do not find it, they make a new churinga according to a prescribed technique (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 132; cf. Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 80).

[127]This is true of the Warramunga, the Urabunna, the Worgaia, the Umbaia, the Tjingilli, and the Gnanji (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 258, 275–276). Then, say Spencer and Gillen, "they were regarded as having especial value because of their association with a totem" (ibid., p. 276). There are examples of the same sort among the Arunta (*Native Tribes,* p. 156).

churinga itself, which ordinarily enters into their making: the *nurtunja* and the *waninga*.

The *nurtunja*,[128] which is found among the Arunta of the north and their immediate neighbors,[129] is a vertical support consisting of either a lance, several lances tied together in a bundle, or simply a pole.[130] Bunches of plants are fastened all around it with belts or bands made of hair. Down, arranged either in circles or in parallel lines running from top to bottom of the support, is attached to the upper end. The top is decorated with feathers of the eaglehawk. (This is the commonest and most typical form; there are many variations in particular cases.)[131]

The *waninga*, which is found only among the southern Arunta, the Urabunna, and the Loritja, has no one model either. Reduced to its most basic components, it also has a vertical support made with a stick about a foot long or with a lance several meters high that is cross-cut, sometimes by one or sometimes by two pieces.[132] In the first case, it resembles a cross. Diagonally crossing the space between the arms of the cross and the ends of the central axis are ties made with either human hair or the fur of an opossum or a bandicoot; they are pressed tightly together, forming a diamond-shaped web. When there are two cross-bars, the belts go from one to the other, and from there to the top and bottom of the support. They are sometimes covered with a coat of down thick enough to hide them from view. The waninga thus looks quite like a flag.[133]

Having their own role in many rites, nurtunjas and waningas are objects of religious respect entirely like the respect evoked by the churingas. Making and erecting them is carried out with the greatest solemnity. Whether fixed

[128]Strehlow says *Tnatanja* (*Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 4–5).

[129]The Kaitish, the Ilpirra, and the Unmatjera, but it is rare among the last group.

[130]Sometimes the pole is replaced with very long churingas placed end to end.

[131]Sometimes a smaller nurtunja is suspended at the top of the main one. In other cases, the nurtunja is given the form of a cross or a T. More rarely, the central support is absent (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 298–300, 360–364, 627).

[132]Sometimes there are three such transverse bars.

[133]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 231–234, 306–310, 627. In addition to the nurtunja and the waninga, Spencer and Gillen distinguish a third sort of sacred pole or flag, the *kauaua* (*Native Tribes*, pp. 364, 370, 629), whose functions they admit not having been able to determine exactly. They note only that the kauaua "is regarded as something common to the members of all the totems." But according to Strehlow (*Aranda*, vol. III, p. 23, n.2), the kauaua of which Spencer and Gillen speak is merely the nurtunja of the Wild Cat totem. Since that animal is the object of a tribal cult, it is understandable that the veneration its nurtunja receives should be common to all the clans.

on the ground or carried by a celebrant, they mark the central point of the ceremony; the dances take place and the rites unfold around them. During initiation, the novice is led to the foot of a nurtunja that has been erected for the occasion. "Here," he is told, "is the nurtunja of your father; it has already served to make many young men." After this, the neophyte must kiss the nurtunja.[134] With this kiss, he enters into relations with the religious principle that is held to reside in it; it is a genuine communion that is to give the young man the strength he must have to endure the terrible operation of subincision.[135] In addition, the nurtunja plays an important role in the mythology of these societies. The myths report that, in the mythical age of the great ancestors, the territory of the tribe was crisscrossed in all directions by companies made up exclusively of individuals having the same totem.[136] Each of those bands carried a nurtunja. When a company stopped to make camp and before they dispersed to hunt, the people set their nurtunja into the ground and suspended the churingas from the top.[137] In other words, they entrusted it with their most valuable possessions. At the same time, it was a sort of flag that served as the rallying point of the group. One cannot fail to be struck by the similarities of the nurtunja to the sacred poles of the Omaha.[138]

This sacredness stems from one cause: It is a material representation of the clan. In fact, the vertical lines or rings of down that cover it, or indeed the belts that join the arms of the waninga to the central axis (of different colors, as well), are not arranged arbitrarily, at the whim of those officiating. They must affect a form that is strictly imposed by tradition and that, in the minds of the natives, represents the totem.[139] Here we need wonder no longer, as in the case of the churingas, if the veneration this cult instrument receives merely reflects that inspired by the ancestors: It is a rule that each nurtunja or waninga lasts only during the ceremony in which it is used. An entirely new one is made each time one is needed; when the rite is finished, it is stripped of its ornaments, and the elements from which it is made are scattered.[140]

[134]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 342; *Native Tribes,* p. 309.

[135]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 255.

[136]Ibid., chaps. 10 and 11.

[137]Ibid., pp. 138–144.

[138]See [James Owen] Dorsey, "[A Study of] Siouan Cults," *BAE, Eleventh Report* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1894], p. 413, and "Omaha Sociology," p. 234. While it is true that there is only one sacred pole for the tribe, and yet one nurtunja for each clan, the principle is the same.

[139]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 232, 308, 313, 334, etc.; *Northern Tribes,* pp. 182, 186, etc.

[140]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 346. They do say, it is true, that the nurtunja represents the lance of the ancestor who, in Alcheringa times, was the head of each clan. But it is only a symbolic rep-

Thus it is no more than an image of the totem—indeed a temporary image—and therefore plays its religious role in this right and in this right only.

The churinga, the nurtunja, and the waninga owe their religious nature solely to the fact that they bear the totemic emblem. What is sacred is the emblem. It retains this sacredness whatever the object on which it is represented. It is sometimes painted on rocks—these paintings being called *churinga ilkinia,* sacred designs.[141] The decorations in which the celebrants and the congregation adorn themselves during religious ceremonies have the same name, and it is forbidden for children and women to see them.[142] In certain rites, the totem is sometimes drawn on the ground. The very technique of doing so testifies to the feelings that the design elicits and to the high value that is imputed to it. The drawing is done on ground that has been sprinkled and saturated beforehand with human blood;[143] we will see below that the blood itself is a sacred liquid that is reserved exclusively for pious use. Once the image has been made, the faithful remain seated on the ground in front of it, in an attitude of pure devotion.[144] Provided we assign a sense appropriate to the mentality of the primitive, one can say that they worship and glorify it.* This enables us to understand why the totemic emblem has remained a very precious thing to the Indians of North America: It is always surrounded by a sort of religious aura.

It is not without interest to know what totemic representations are made of, in addition to understanding how it happens that they are so sacred.

Among the Indians of North America, totemic representations are painted, engraved, or sculpted images that attempt to reproduce the outward appearance of the totemic animal as faithfully as possible. The techniques are those that we use today in similar cases, except that in general they are cruder than our own. But it is not the same in Australia, and of course it is in the Australian societies that we must seek the origin of these representations. Although the Australian may show himself to be fairly capable of imitating the

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resentation of that; it is not a sort of relic, like the churinga, which is thought to emanate from the ancestor himself. Here the secondary character of the interpretation is especially apparent.

* *A condition de donner au mot un sense approprié à la mentalité du primitif, on peut dire qu'ils l'adorent.* What it is about the verb *adorer* that must be specially understood is not made explicit.

[141]Ibid., pp. 614ff., esp. p. 617; *Northern Tribes,* p. 749.

[142]*Native Tribes,* p. 624.

[143]Ibid., p. 179.

[144]Ibid., p. 181. [The reference does not describe their demeanor; it says that they chant. Trans.]

forms of things, at least in a rudimentary way,[145] the sacred decorations seem to exhibit no preoccupations of this kind: They consist chiefly of geometric designs made on the churingas or on men's bodies. They are straight or curved lines painted in various ways,[146] together having and only capable of having a conventional meaning. The relation between the drawing and the thing drawn is so remote and indirect that the uninformed cannot see it. Only clan members can say what meaning they attach to this or that combination of lines.[147] In general, men and women are represented by semicircles; animals, by complete circles or by spirals;[148] the tracks of a man or an animal, by lines of points. The meanings of the drawings thus produced are indeed so arbitrary that the same drawing can have two different meanings for the people of two totems—representing a certain animal in one place and another animal or a plant elsewhere. This is perhaps even more apparent in the case of the nurtunjas and waningas; each of which represents a different totem. But the few very simple elements that enter into their composition cannot lend themselves to very diverse combinations. As a result, two nurtunjas can look exactly the same and yet convey two things as different as a gum tree and an emu.[149] When the nurtunja is made, it is given a meaning that it retains during the whole ceremony, but a meaning that ultimately is set by convention.

As these facts prove, while the Australian has quite a strong inclination to represent his totem, he does not do so in order to have a portrait before his eyes that perpetually renews the sensation of it; he does so simply because he feels the need to represent the idea he has by means of an outward and physical sign, no matter what that sign may be. We cannot go further toward understanding what made the primitive write the idea he had of his totem on his person and on various objects, but it has been important to note straightaway the nature of the need that has given birth to these numerous representations.[150]

[145]See some examples in Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* fig. 131. Among the designs there, several are obviously intended to represent animals, plants, the heads of men, etc.—very schematically, of course.

[146]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 617; *Northern Tribes,* pp. 716ff.

[147][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 145; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 80.

[148][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 151.

[149]Ibid., p. 346.

[150]Moreover, these designs and paintings undoubtedly have an aesthetic quality as well; they are an early form of art. Since they are also, and even most of all, a written language, it follows that the origins of drawing and those of writing merge into one another. Indeed, it seems that man must have begun to draw less to fix onto wood or stone beautiful forms that charmed the senses than to express his thought materially (cf. Schoolcraft, *Indian Tribes,* vol. I, p. 405; Dorsey, *Siouan Cults,* pp. 394ff.).

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRINCIPAL TOTEMIC BELIEFS (CONTINUED)

The Totemic Animal and Man

But totemic images are not the only sacred things. There are real beings that are also the object of rites, because of their relationship with the totem. They are, first and foremost, the creatures of the totemic species and the members of the clan.

I

Since the designs that represent the totem stir religious feelings, it is natural that the things represented should have the same property to some degree.

The things represented are mainly animals and plants. Since the profane role of plants and certainly that of animals ordinarily is to serve as food, the sacredness of the totemic animal or plant is signified by the prohibition against eating it. Of course, because they are holy things,* they can enter into the composition of certain mystic meals, and we will see in fact that they sometimes serve as true sacraments; in general, however, they cannot be used for ordinary eating. Anyone who violates that prohibition exposes himself to extremely grave danger. This is not to say that the group always intervenes to punish every such infraction artificially; the sacrilege is thought to bring about death automatically. A dreaded principle that cannot enter into a profane body without disrupting or destroying it is thought to reside within the

* *Choses saintes.* I indicate Durkheim's alternation between *sacré* and *saint.* On these terms, see above p. lxix, n. 101, and p. 121n.

totemic plant or animal.[1] In certain tribes at least, old men are exempted from that prohibition;[2] later, we will see why.

But although the prohibition is absolute in a great many tribes[3] (with exceptions that will be pointed out), unquestionably it tends to weaken as the old totemic organization breaks down. But the very restrictions that persist even then show that these attenuations have not been easily accepted. For example, where eating the totemic animal or plant is permitted, the eating is still not entirely free but is limited to small amounts at a time. To exceed this limit is a ritual offense and has grave consequences.[4] Elsewhere, the restriction remains intact for the parts that are considered the most precious, that is, the most sacred—for example, the eggs or the fat.[5] In yet other places, unrestricted eating is tolerated only if the animal eaten has not yet reached full maturity.[6] In this case, the animal's sacredness is probably assumed to be as yet incomplete. Thus, the barrier that isolates and protects the totemic being gives way but slowly, and not without strong resistance—which is evidence of what it must originally have been.

It is true that Spencer and Gillen do not believe such restrictions are survivals of a once-rigorous prohibition that is gradually weakening, but instead that they are the prelude to one just beginning to establish itself. Once upon

[1]See the example in [Rev. George] Taplin, "The Narrinyeri Tribe" [in James Dominick Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia,* Adelaide, E. S. Wigg & Son, 1879], p. 63; [Alfred William] Howitt, *Native Tribes [of South-East Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], pp. 146, 769; [Lorimer] Fison and [Alfred William] Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* [Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], p. 169; [Walter Edmund] Roth, *Superstition, Magic and Medicine* [in *North Queensland Ethnography,* Bulletin, no. 5, Brisbane, G. A. Vaughn, 1903], §150; [W.] Wyatt, "Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes" [in Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia*], p. 168 [H. E. A.] Meyer, "Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of Encounter Bay," [in Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia*], p. 186.

[2]This is the case among the Warramunga. [Sir Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], p. 168. [That discussion does not concern dietary practices. Trans.]

[3]For example, among the Warramunga, the Urabunna, the Wonghibon, the Yuin, the Wotjobaluk, the Buandik, the Ngeumba, and others.

[4]Among the Kaitish, if a member of the clan eats too much of his totem, the members of the other phratry have recourse to a magical procedure that is thought to kill (ibid., p. 294; cf. [Sir Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* p. 294, and *Native Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1899], p. 204 [The discussion does not concern dietary practices. Trans.]; Langloh Parker [Catherine Sommerville Field Parker], *The Euahlayi Tribe,* [London, A. Constable, 1905], p. 20).

[5]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 202n.; [Carl] Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien,* vol. II [Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], p. 58.

[6][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* p. 173.

a time, according to these writers,[7] there was total freedom of consumption, and the restrictions applied today are fairly recent. They believe they have found proof of their thesis in the two following facts. First, there are solemn occasions when the men of the clan or their chief not only may but must eat the totemic animal and plant, as I have just noted. Second, the myths report that the great founding ancestors of the clans regularly ate their totem. These stories cannot be understood, say they, except as the echo of a time when restrictions did not exist.

The fact that it is ritually obligatory to partake of the totem during certain religious ceremonies (moderately, at that) in no way implies that it ever served as ordinary food. Quite the contrary, the food eaten during mystical meals is sacred in its essence and hence forbidden to the profane. As to the myths, to impute to them the value of historical documents so easily is to follow a rather slipshod critical method. As a rule, the object of myths is to interpret the existing rites rather than to commemorate past events; they are more an explanation of the present than they are a history. In this case, those traditions in which the legendary ancestors ate their totem are in perfect accord with beliefs and rites that are still in force. The old men, and others who have attained high religious status, are not bound by the prohibitions as are ordinary men.[8] They may eat of the holy thing* because they are holy themselves; moreover, this rule is not peculiar to totemism alone but is found in the most disparate religions. Since the ancestral heroes were virtually gods, it must have seemed all the more natural that they should have been able to eat the sacred† food,[9] but that is no reason for the same privilege to have been conferred upon mere profane beings.[10]

* *Chose sainte.*

† *Aliment sacré.*

[7] Ibid., pp. 207ff.

[8] See above p. 128.

[9] It should also be borne in mind that in the myths, the ancestors are never represented as feeding on their totem *routinely.* Quite the contrary; this sort of consumption is the exception. According to Strehlow, their everyday fare was the same as that of the corresponding animal (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 4).

[10] Furthermore, this whole theory rests on a completely arbitrary hypothesis: Spencer and Gillen, like [James George] Frazer, concede that the tribes of Central Australia, including the Arunta, represent the most archaic and, consequently, the purest form of totemism. I will say below why this conjecture seems to me to be contrary to all likelihood. It is in fact probable that these authors would not so easily have accepted the thesis they defend if they had not refused to see totemism as a religion and thus had not failed to recognize the sacredness of the totem.

However, it is neither certain nor even likely that the prohibition was ever absolute. It seems always to have been superseded by necessity—for example, when the native is starving and has nothing else to eat.[11] All the more is this the case when the totem is a kind of food that man cannot do without. For example, many tribes have a water totem—a case in point in which strict prohibition clearly is impossible. But even in this case, the concession is subject to restrictions, which goes to show that the concession deviates from an accepted principle. Among the Kaitish and the Warramunga, a man of this totem cannot drink water freely, is prohibited from drawing it himself, and can receive it only from the hands of a third person, who must belong to the phratry of which he is not a member.[12] The complexity and inconvenience of this procedure are yet other ways of recognizing that access to the sacred thing is not free. In certain tribes of the center, the same rule applies whenever the totem is eaten, whether out of necessity or for any other reason. It should be reiterated that when this formality itself cannot be executed—that is, when an individual is by himself or is surrounded by members of his own phratry—he may do without any intermediary if there is urgent need. It is clear that the prohibition can be mitigated in various ways.

Still, the prohibition rests on ideas that are so deeply rooted in the mind that it often outlives its original reasons for being. We have seen that, in all probability, the various clans of a phratry are subdivisions of an original clan that broke up. Thus there was a time when all the clans were but one and had the same totem; therefore, whenever the memory of that common origin is not completely erased, each clan continues to feel solidarity with the others and to consider their totems as not foreign to it. For this reason, an individual is not entirely free to eat the totems assigned to the various clans of the phratry to which he belongs; he may touch the forbidden plant or animal only if it has been presented to him by a member of the other phratry.[13]

[11]Taplin, 'The Narrinyeri," p. 64; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 145, 147; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 202; [George] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions in North-West and Western Australia,* vol. II, London, T. and W. Boone, 1841; Curr, *The Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 462.

[12][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* pp. 160, 167. It is not enough for the intermediary to be of another totem. As we will see, to some extent, any totem of a phratry is forbidden to other members of that phratry who are of different totems.

[13]Ibid., p. 167. We can better understand now how it happens that, when the prohibition is not observed, it is the other phratry that carries out punishment for the sacrilege (see p. 128, n. 4 above). It is because that phratry has the greatest interest in seeing that the rule is respected. It is believed likely, in fact, that when the rule is violated, the totemic species will not reproduce abundantly. Since the members of the other phratry are the ones who regularly eat it, they are the ones affected. This is why they avenge themselves.

Another survival of the same kind relates to the maternal totem. There are good reasons for believing that totems were at first transmitted through the maternal line. And so, wherever descent through the paternal line has become the custom, this most likely has occurred only after a long period during which the opposite principle was in use; hence the child had the totem of its mother and was subject to all the prohibitions attached thereto. Now although in certain tribes today, the child inherits the totem of its father, something remains of the prohibitions that originally protected the mother's totem: It cannot be partaken of freely.[14] Yet nothing else in the present state of things corresponds to that prohibition.

A prohibition against killing the totem (or picking it, if it is a plant) is often added to the prohibition against eating.[15] But, here again, there are many exceptions and mitigations. For instance, there is the case of necessity—when, for example, the totem is a dangerous animal[16] or when one has nothing to eat. There are even tribes that prohibit hunting the animal whose name one bears for oneself, but nevertheless permit its killing for someone else.[17] In general, though, the manner in which the act is carried out clearly indicates that there is something illicit about it. One says "excuse me" as if for an offense, displays sadness and repugnance,[18] and

[14]This is the case among the Loritja (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 60, 61), the Worgaia, the Warramunga, the Walpari, the Mara, the Anula, the Binbinga (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 166, 171, 173). Among the Warramunga and the Walpari, it may be eaten but only if it is offered by a member of the other phratry. Spencer and Gillen point out (p. 167 n.) that, in this respect, the paternal and maternal totems are apparently subject to different rules. It is true that, in either case, the offer must come from the other phratry. But when the totem in question is that of the father, the totem proper, that other phratry is the one to which the totem does not belong; the inverse applies when it is the totem of the mother. This is the case, most likely, because the principle was at first established for the father's, then extended automatically to the mother's, even though the situation was different. Once it was instituted, the rule that one could avoid the restriction protecting the totem only when the offer was made by someone of the other phratry was applied without modification to the mother's totem.

[15]For example, among the Warramunga (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 166), the Wotjobaluk, the Buandik, and the Kurnai (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 146–147), and the Narrinyeri (Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," p. 63).

[16]And still not in all cases. The Arunta of the Mosquito totem must not kill that insect, even when it is inconvenient not to, but must settle for flicking it away (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 58. Cf. [Rev. George] Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," p. 63). [It is possible that, in certain of his footnotes, Durkheim conflated two articles by Taplin, one in Curr and the other in Woods. Trans.]

[17]Among the Kaitish and the Unmatjera (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 160). Indeed sometimes an elder gives one of his churingas to a young man of a different totem, to enable the young man to hunt the giver's totemic animal more easily (ibid., p. 272).

[18]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 146; Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions,* vol. II, p. 228. [Rev. Eugene Arnaud] Casalis, *The Bassutos* [Capetown, C. Struik, 1965], p. 211. Among these latter, "one must be purified after committing such a sacrilege."

takes the necessary to ensure that the animal suffers as little as possible.[19]

In addition to the basic prohibitions, there are examples of a prohibition against contact between a man and his totem. Thus, among the Omaha, no one of the Elk clan may touch any part of the male elk; and in a subclan of the Buffalo, no one may touch this animal's head.[20] Among the Bechuana, no one would dare to wear the skin of the animal that is his totem.[21] But these cases are rare; and it is natural that they should be, since, normally a man must wear the image of his totem or something reminiscent of it. Tattooing and totemic costumes would be impractical if contact was prohibited altogether. It should be noticed, furthermore, that this prohibition is followed not in Australia but only in societies where totemism is already far from its original form; apparently, then, it is of recent origin and due perhaps to the influence of ideas that are not specifically totemic at all.[22]

If we now compare these various prohibitions with those applied to the totemic emblem, it seems—contrary to what might be predicted—that those applied to the totemic emblem are the more numerous, strict, and rigorously imperative. All kinds of figures representing the totem are surrounded with a markedly greater respect than the being itself, whose form the figures imitate. Churingas, nurtunjas, and waningas must never be handled by women or uninitiated men, who are not permitted even to glimpse them except from a respectful distance and, at that, only on rare occasions. On the other hand, the plant or animal whose name the clan bears may be seen and

[19]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 58, 59, 61.

[20][James Owen] Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," in *Third Annual Report, BAE* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1881–1882], pp. 225, 231.

[21]Casalis [*The Bassutos,* p. 211].

[22]Even among the Omaha, it is not certain that the prohibitions against contact, some examples of which I have just reported, are specifically totemic in nature. Several of them have no direct relations with the animal that serves as the clan's totem. Thus, in a subclan of the Eagle, the characteristic prohibition is that against touching the head of a buffalo (Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," p. 239); in another subclan of the same totem, verdigris, charcoal, or something else must not be touched (p. 245).

I do not mention other prohibitions noted by Frazer, such as naming or looking at an animal or plant, for those are even less clearly of totemic origin, except perhaps in the case of certain instances observed among the Bechuana ([James George] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* [London, Macmillan, 1910], pp. 12–13). Frazer once accepted too easily (and on this point he has had imitators) that every prohibition against eating or touching an animal necessarily arises from totemic beliefs. However, there is one case in Australia in which the sight of the totem appears to be forbidden. According to Strehlow (*Aranda,* vol. II, p. 59), among the Arunta and the Loritja, a man whose totem is the moon must not look at it very long; to do so would be to expose himself to death at the hands of an enemy. I believe this is a unique case. Moreover we should bear in mind that the astronomical totems are probably not primitive in Australia, so this prohibition might be the outcome of a complex elaboration. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that, among the Euahlayi, the prohibition against looking at the moon applies to all mothers and children, whatever their totems (Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 53).

touched by everyone. Churingas are kept in a sort of temple, at the threshold of which the din of profane life settles into silence; it is the domain of sacred things.

Unlike the churingas, totemic animals and plants live on profane ground and are part and parcel of everyday life. And since the number and importance of the restrictions that isolate a sacred thing, withdrawing it from circulation, correspond to the degree of sacredness with which it is invested, we arrive at the remarkable result that *the images of the totemic being are more sacred than the totemic being itself.* Moreover, it is the churunga and the nurtunja that hold the highest rank in the ceremonies of the cult; only on extremely rare occasions does the animal appear in them. In one rite, of which I will have occasion to speak,[23] it is the basis of a religious meal but has no active role. The Arunta dance around the nurtunja, gathering before the image of their totem and worshiping it; never is there a similar display before the totemic being itself. If this being was the holy thing* par excellence, then that being, the sacred plant or animal, would be the one the young novice must commune with when brought into the sphere of religious life; we have seen instead that the moment when the novice enters the sanctuary of the churingas is the most solemn of the initiation. It is with them and with the nurtunja that he communes. So the representations of the totem are more efficacious than the totem itself.

II

We must now determine the place of man in the system of religious things.

A whole set of received notions and the power of language itself incline us to think of ordinary men, the ordinary faithful, as essentially profane beings. This conception may well not be literally true of any religion;[24] it certainly does not apply to totemism. Each member of the clan is invested with a sacredness that is not significantly less than the sacredness we just recognized in the animal. The reason for this personal sacredness is that the man believes he is both a man in the usual sense of the word and an animal or plant of the totemic species.

* *Chose sainte.*

[23]See Bk. III, chap. 2, §2.

[24]There is perhaps no religion that regards man as an exclusively profane being. For the Christian, there is something sacred about the soul that each of us carries within, and that constitutes the very essence of our personality. As we will see, this idea of the soul is as old as religious thinking. But man's own place in the hierarchy of sacred things is rather high.

In fact, he bears its name. At that stage, identity in name is presumed to entail an identity in nature. Having the same name is not thought of merely as an outward sign of having the same nature but as logically presupposing it. For the primitive, the name is not simply a word, a mere combination of sounds; it is part of the being and, indeed, an essential part. When a member of the Kangaroo clan calls himself a kangaroo, he is in a sense an animal of that species. "A man," say Spencer and Gillen, "regards the being that is his totem as the same thing as himself. A native with whom we were discussing the matter responded by showing us a photograph we had just taken of him: 'Look who is exactly the same thing as I. Well! It is the same with the kangaroo.' The kangaroo was his totem."[25] Thus, each individual has a dual nature: Two beings coexist in him, a man and an animal.

To give a semblance of intelligibility to this duality, which to us is so strange, the primitive has conceived myths that of course explain nothing and only displace the difficulty, but that, in displacing it, seem at least to diminish the logical shock. With variations of detail, they are all constructed on the same plan. Their object is to establish genealogical relations between the man and the totemic animal that make the man the animal's kin. By that shared (and variously imagined) origin, people believe they are accounting for their shared nature. The Narrinyeri, for example, have conceived the idea that certain of the first men had the power to transform themselves into animals.[26] Other Australian societies place strange animals at the beginning of humanity, animals from which men descended in some way or other,[27] or they place mixed beings intermediate between the two realms there,[28] or else formless, barely representable creatures without defined organs or appendages, and whose various body parts are barely drawn.[29] Mythical powers, sometimes conceived in the form of animals, intervened at that point, trans-

[25]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 202.

[26]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," pp. 59–61.

[27]Among certain Warramunga clans, for example (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 162).

[28]Among the Urabunna (ibid., p. 147). Even when we are told that those first beings were men, in reality they are only semihumans and participate in an animal nature at the same time. This is the case of certain Unmatjera (ibid., pp. 153–154). Here are ways of thinking whose blurred distinctions [*confusions*] unsettle us, but that must be accepted as they are. [Here and elsewhere in this text, the noun *confusion* and the corresponding verb, *confondre,* convey blending. They express a form of conceptual practice, not a state of mental disorder. See below, p. 241. Trans.] If we tried to introduce a tidiness that is alien to them, we would distort them (cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 119).

[29]Among certain Arunta (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 388ff.); and among certain Unmatjera (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 153).

forming into men these ambiguous and unnameable beings that represent, as Spencer and Gillen say, "a transitional phase between man and animal."[30] These transformations are presented to us as the outcome of violent and quasi-surgical operations. It is with blows of an axe or, when the operator is a bird, with pecks of the beak that the human is thought to have been sculpted in that amorphous mass, the arms and legs separated from one another, the mouth and nostrils opened.[31] Similar legends crop up in America, but because of the more developed mentality of those peoples, the representations they use are not confused and confusing in the same way. Here, it is a legendary personage who, acting on his own, metamorphosed the clan's eponymous animal into man.[32] There, the myth tries to explain how, by a series of more or less natural events and a sort of spontaneous evolution, the animal transformed itself little by little, finally taking on human form.[33]

True, there are societies (Haida, Tlingit, Tshimshian) in which the idea that man was born of an animal or plant is no longer accepted. Yet, the idea of an affinity between the animals of the totemic species and the members of the clan has survived, and it is explained in myths that differ from the preceding but are basically reminiscent of them. Here, then, is one of their fundamental themes. The eponymous ancestor is represented as a human being but one who, following various ups and downs, was induced to live for a more or less long time among legendary animals of the same species that gave

[30]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 389. Cf. Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 2–7.

[31]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 389. Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 2ff. This mythical theme is undoubtedly an echo of the initiation rites. The purpose of the initiation is to make of the young man a complete man, and it also implies surgical operations (circumcision, subincision, extraction of teeth, etc.). It must have been natural for them to conceive the processes used to make the first men according to the same model.

[32]This is true for the nine clans of the Moqui ([Henry Rowe] Schoolcraft, [*Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the*] *Indian Tribes* [*of the United States,* vol. IV, Philadelphia, Lippincott, Grambo, 1851–1857], p. 86), the Crane clan of the Ojibway ([Lewis Henry] Morgan, *Ancient Society* [London, Macmillan, 1877], p. 180), and the clans of the Nootka ([Franz] Boas, "Second General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in, BAAS, *VIth Rep. on the North-Western Tribes of Canada* [London, Offices of the Association, 1891], p. 43), etc.

[33]Thus did the Turtle clan of the Iroquois take form. A group of tortoises had to leave the lake where they lived and find another habitat. The heat made it difficult for one of them, who was larger than the others, to endure the exercise. It struggled so violently that it came out of its shell. Once begun, the process of transformation continued by itself, and the turtle became a man who was the ancestor of the clan (Erminnie A. Smith, "The Myths of the Iroquois," in *Second Annual Report* [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1883], p. 77). The Crawfish [Ecrevisse] clan of the Choctaw is said to have been formed in a similar way. Some men surprised a certain number of crawfish that lived in their vicinity, took the crawfish home with them, taught them to speak and walk, and finally adopted them into their society ([George] Catlin, [*Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the*] *North American Indians,* vol. II [London, Tosswil and Myers, 1841], p. 128.

the clan its name. As a result of these intimate and prolonged dealings, he became so like his new companions that when he returned to the community of men, they no longer recognized him. He was therefore given the name of the animal he resembled. From his sojourn in the mythical land, he brought back the totemic emblem, together with the powers and virtues thought to be attached to it.[34] In this case as in the preceding, then, the man is thought to participate in the nature of the animal, even though that participation is imagined somewhat differently.[35]

Thus he too has something sacred about him. Diffused throughout the body, this quality is especially evident at certain sites. Some organs and tissues are especially identified with it: most of all, the blood and the hair.

To begin with, human blood is such a holy* thing that, among the tribes of central Australia, it is very often used to consecrate the most respected instruments of the cult. In some cases, for example, the nurtunja is religiously anointed from top to bottom with human blood.[36] Among the Arunta, the men of the Emu draw the sacred emblem on ground that is thoroughly soaked with blood.[37] We will see further on how streams of blood are poured

* *Chose sainte.*

[34]Here, for example, is a legend of the Tsimshian. During a hunt, an Indian met a black bear who took him home and taught him to catch salmon and build canoes. The man stayed with the bear for two years, after which he returned to his native village. But because he was just like a bear, the people were afraid of him. He could not talk and could eat only raw foods. Then he was rubbed with magical herbs, after which he gradually regained his original form. Later, when he was in need, he called his friends the bears, who came to his aid. He built a house and painted a bear on its facade. His sister made a blanket for the dance, on which a bear was drawn. This is why the descendants of that sister had the bear as their emblem ([Franz] Boas, ["The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the] Kwakiutl [Indians," in *RNM for 1895,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], p. 323. Cf. Boas, "First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in *BAAS [Fifth] Report [of the Committee] on the North Western Tribes of [the Dominion of] Canada* [London, Offices of the Association, 1890], pp. 23, 29ff.; [Charles] Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Statlumh of British Columbia," in *JAI,* vol. XXXV (1905), p. 150.

From this, we see the drawback of making mystic kinship between man and animal the distinguishing feature of totemism, as M. Van Gennep proposes ([A. Van Gennep], "Totémisme et méthode comparative," *RHR,* vol. LVIII [juillet 1908], p. 55). Since this kinship is a mythical expression of facts that are deeply rooted for other reasons, the essential traits of totemism do not disappear in its absence. Doubtless, there are always close ties between the people of the clan and the totemic animal, but they are not necessarily ties of blood, although they most commonly are conceived as such.

[35]In some Tlingit myths, moreover, the relationship of descent between the man and the animal is affirmed more specifically. The clan is said to be the offspring of a mixed marriage, if such terms can be used—that is, one in which either the man or the woman was an animal of the species whose name the clan bears ([John Reed] Swanton, "Social Condition, Beliefs, [and Linguistic Relationship] of the Tlingit Indians," *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report, BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1908], pp. 415–418.

[36]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 284.

[37]Ibid., p. 179.

on the rocks that represent the totemic plants or animals.[38] There is no religious ceremony in which blood does not have some role to play.[39] Sometimes in the course of initiation, adults open their veins and sprinkle the novice with their blood, this blood being such a sacred* thing that women are forbidden to be present while it is flowing. Like the sight of a churinga,[40] the sight of this blood is forbidden to them. The blood that the young neophyte loses during the violent operations he has to undergo has altogether exceptional properties: It is used in various communions.[41] Among the Arunta, the blood that flows during subincision is piously collected and buried in a place on which a piece of wood is set to indicate to passersby the sacredness of the spot; no woman must approach it.[42] In the second place, the religious nature of blood also explains why red ochre has a religious role and is frequently used in ceremonies. The churingas are rubbed with it, and it is used in ritual decorations.[43] This is because ochre is regarded as a substance akin to blood, by virtue of its color. Indeed, several deposits of ochre that are found at different sites on the territory of the Arunta are thought to be coagulated blood that certain heroines of the mythical epoch allowed to flow onto the ground.[44]

Hair has similar properties. The natives of central Australia wear sashes made of human hair. The religious function of those narrow bands, as already noted, is to wrap certain cult objects.[45] Has a man lent one of his churingas to another? As a show of gratitude, the borrower makes a present of hair to the lender; the two sorts of things are considered to be of the same order and of equivalent value.[46] Accordingly, the operation of hair cutting is a ritual act

* *Chose sacrée.*

[38]See Bk. III, chap. 2. Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 184, 201.

[39]Ibid., pp. 204, 262, 284.

[40]Among the Dieri and the Parnkalla. See Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 658, 661, 668, 669–671.

[41]Among the Warramunga, the blood of circumcision is drunk by the mother (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 352). Among the Binbinga, the blood that soils the knife used in the subincision must be licked by the initiate (p. 368). In general, the blood that comes from the genitals is deemed to be exceptionally sacred (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 464; *Northern Tribes,* p. 598).

[42]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 268.

[43]Ibid., pp. 144, 568.

[44]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 442, 464. And this myth is common in Australia.

[45]Ibid., p. 627.

[46]Ibid., p. 466.

that is accompanied by special ceremonies. The individual having his hair cut must crouch on the ground with his face turned in the direction of the place where mythical ancestors from his mother's side are thought to have camped.[47]

For the same reason, as soon as a man dies, his hair is cut and put in a secluded place, for neither women nor uninitiated men should see it; and it is there, far from profane eyes, that the sashes are made.[48]

One could point out other organic tissues that, to varying degrees, display similar properties—the sideburns, the foreskin, the fat of the liver, and others.[49] But there is no point in piling up examples. The foregoing are sufficient to prove the existence in man of something that keeps the profane at a distance and has religious efficacy. In other words, the human body conceals in its depths a sacred principle that erupts onto the surface in particular circumstances. This principle is not different in kind from the one that gives the totem its religious character. We have just seen, in fact, that the various substances in which it is incarnated to the highest degree enter into the ritual composition of the instruments of the cult (nurtunjas, totemic designs), or are used in anointings for the purpose of increasing the virtues of either the churingas or the sacred rocks. These are things of the same kind.

The religious dignity that, in this sense, is inherent in each member of the clan is not equal in all. Men possess it to a higher degree than women, who are like profane beings in comparison to men.[50] Thus, whenever there is an assembly of either the totemic group or the tribe, the men form a camp distinct from the women's camp and closed to them: The men are set apart.[51]

[47]Ibid. It is believed that if all these formalities are not strictly observed, grave calamities for the individual will result.

[48]Ibid., p. 538; *Northern Tribes,* p. 604.

[49]Once detached by circumcision, the foreskin is sometimes hidden from sight, like the blood, and it has special virtues—for example, ensuring the fertility of certain plant and animal species (*Northern Tribes,* pp. 353–354). The sideburns are assimilated to the hair and treated like it (pp. 544, 604). Moreover, they play a role in the myths (p. 158). The sacred character of fat arises from the use made of it in certain funeral rites.

[50]This is not to say that the woman is absolutely profane. In the myths, at least among the Arunta, she plays a far more important religious role than is hers in reality (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes* [pp. 195–196]). Even now, she takes part in certain initiation rites. Finally, her blood has religious virtues (see *Native Tribes,* p. 464; cf. [Emile Durkheim], "La Prohibition de l'inceste et ses origines," *AS,* vol. I [1898], pp. 51ff.).

The exogamic prohibitions derive from this complex situation of the woman. I will not speak of those here, because they are more directly relevant to the subject of family organization and marriage.

[51]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 460.

But men differ too in the way the religious quality stands out. Since young, uninitiated men are totally without it, they are not admitted to the ceremonies. It reaches maximum intensity among old men. Old men are so sacred that they are permitted certain things that are forbidden to ordinary men: They can eat the totemic animal more freely, and, as we have seen, there are even tribes in which they are exempt from all dietary restrictions.

Therefore we must be careful not to see totemism as a kind of zoolatry. Since man belongs to the sacred world, his attitude toward the animals or plants whose name he bears is by no means the attitude a believer has toward his god. Rather, their relations are those of two beings who are basically at the same level and of equal value. The most one can say, at least in some cases, is that the animal seems to occupy a slightly higher rank among sacred things. Thus, the totem is sometimes called the father or grandfather of the men of the clan, which seems to indicate that they feel they are in a state of moral dependency upon it.[52] Yet as often happens—and perhaps most often of all—the phrases used denote a feeling of equality instead. The totemic animal is called the friend or the elder brother of its human kin.[53] To sum up, the ties between them and him far more closely resemble those that bind members of the same family: Animals and men are made of the same flesh, as the Buandik say.[54] By reason of that kinship, man sees the animals of the totemic species as kindly associates, whose help he believes he can count on. He calls them to his aid,[55] and they come to guide his hand in the hunt and to avert dangers that he may encounter.[56] In exchange, he treats them considerately and does not brutalize them,[57] but the care with which he treats them in no way resembles a cult.

[52]Among the Wakelbura, according to Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. [147–148]; among the Bechuana, according to Casalis, *The Basutos,* p. [211].

[53]Among the Buandik and the Kurnai, Howitt, ibid., pp. 147–148; among the Arunta, Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 58.

[54]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. [147–148].

[55]On the Tully River, according to [Walter Edmund] Roth (*Superstition, Magic and Medicine* [Brisbane, G. A. Vaughn, Government Printer, 1903], *North Queensland Ethnography* [Bulletin] no. 5, §74), when a native goes to bed or rises in the morning, he pronounces the name of the animal after whom he himself is named in a rather soft voice. The aim of this practice is to make the man skillful or lucky in the hunt or to avoid the dangers associated with that animal. For example, a man who has a species of snake as his totem is protected from bites if this invocation has been consistently done.

[56]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," p. 64; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 147; Roth, "Superstition, Magic and Medicine," no. 5, §74.

[57]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 58.

Sometimes man even appears to have a sort of mystical property right over his totem. The prohibition against killing and eating it of necessity applies only to the members of the clan; it cannot extend to outsiders without making life impossible as a practical matter. In a tribe such as the Arunta, where there are a great many different totems, if it was forbidden to eat not only the animal or plant whose name one bears, but also all the animals and all the plants that serve other clans as totems, the food resources would be reduced to none. Still, there are tribes in which unrestricted eating of the totemic animal or plant is not allowed, even by outsiders. Among the Wakelbura, this eating should not occur in the presence of people belonging to the totem.[58] Elsewhere, their permission is required. For example, among the Kaitish and the Unmatjera, when a man of the Emu clan, finding himself in a locality occupied by a grass-seed clan, gathers some of these seeds, he must go find the chief before eating any, and say to him: "I have gathered these seeds in your land." To which the chief replies: "It is good; you may eat them." But if the Emu man ate before asking permission, it is believed that he would fall ill and possibly even die.[59] In some cases, the chief of the group must take a small part of the food and eat it himself: It is a kind of tax that must be paid.[60] For the same reason, the churinga confers upon the hunter a certain power over the corresponding animal. By rubbing his body with a euro churinga, for example, he has a better chance of bagging euros.[61] This proves that participating in the nature of a totemic being confers a sort of eminent domain over it. Finally, there is a tribe in North Queensland, the Karingbool, in which the people of the totem have the exclusive right to kill the totemic animal or, if the totem is a tree, to strip its bark. Their cooperation is indispensable to any outsider who wants to use the flesh of that animal or the wood of that tree for personal ends.[62] Thus, they play the role of owners, though, as is obvious, the property is of a very particular sort, which we have difficulty imagining.

[58]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 148.

[59][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* pp. 159–160.

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid., p. 255, and *Native Tribes,* pp. 202–203.

[62]A. L. P. Cameron, "On Two Queensland Tribes," in *Science of Man, Australasian Anthropological Journal,* vol. VII, 1904, p. 28, col. 1.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PRINCIPAL TOTEMIC BELIEFS (CONTINUED)

*The Cosmological System of Totemism and the Notion of Kind**

We are beginning to see that totemism is a far more complex religion than it appeared at first glance to be. We have already distinguished three categories of things that it recognizes as sacred in varying degrees: the totemic emblem, the plant or animal whose appearance that emblem imitates, and the members of the clan. But this list is not yet complete. A religion is not merely a collection of disconnected beliefs about very special objects such as those just mentioned. To a greater or lesser degree, all known religions have been systems of ideas that tend to embrace the universality of things and to give us a representation of the world as a whole. If totemism is to be open to consideration as a religion comparable to others, it too must offer a conception of the universe. It meets this criterion.

I

The reason this aspect of totemism has been widely neglected is that the clan has been too narrowly conceived. In general, the clan has been viewed as merely a group of human beings, merely a subdivision of the tribe. As such, it seems, the clan could only be made up of men. But when we reason this way, we substitute our European ideas for those the primitive has about the world and society. For the Australian, things themselves—all of the things that make up the universe—are part of the tribe. Since they are constituents of it and, in a sense, full-fledged members, they have a definite place in the scheme of society, just as men do. "The savage of South Australia," M. Fison

* *Genre* is here rendered as "kind" or "genus," according to context, but usually not as "class," so as to avoid confusion with other uses of that term, in biology and sociology.

says, "considers the universe as a large tribe to one of whose divisions he belongs; and all things that are classified in the same group as he, both animate and inanimate, are parts of the body of which he himself is a part."[1] By virtue of this principle, when the tribe is divided into two phratries, all known beings are divided between them. "All of nature," says Palmer of the tribes of the Bellinger River, "is divided according to the names of phratries. . . . The sun, the moon and the stars . . . belong to this or that phratry just as the Blacks themselves do."[2] The Port MacKay tribe in Queensland is made up of two phratries that carry the names Yungaroo and Wootaroo, and it is the same in the neighboring tribes. According to Bridgmann, "All animate and inanimate things are divided by these tribes into two classes called Yungaroo and Wootaroo."[3] But the classification does not stop there. The men of each phratry are divided among a certain number of clans; similarly, the things assigned to each phratry are divided in turn among the clans that comprise it. Such and such tree, for example, will be ascribed to the Kangaroo clan and to it alone, and thus, like the human members of that clan, will have the Kangaroo totem; such and such other will belong to the Snake clan; the clouds will be classified in a particular totem, the sun in another, and so on. Thus, the known beings will be found to have their places on a kind of table, a systematic classification that includes the whole of nature.

I have reproduced a certain number of these classification systems elsewhere;[4] here I will repeat only some of those examples. One of the best known is the system that has been studied in the Mount Gambier tribe. This tribe has two phratries, one called Kumite and the other Kroki, each divided into five clans. Now, "Everything in nature belongs to one or the other of those ten clans."[5] Fison and Howitt say that all those things are "included" in one. In fact, they are classified under ten totems, like species of the respec-

[1][Lorimer Fison and Alfred William Howitt], *Kamilaroi and Kurnai: [Group Marriage and Relationship, and Marriage by Elopement; Drawn Chiefly from the Usage of the Australian Aborigines;* also *The Kurnai Tribe; Their Customs in Peace and War,* Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], p. 170.

[2][Edward Palmer], "Notes on Some Australian Tribes" [*JAI*], vol. XIII [1884], p. 300.

[3][Edward Micklethwaite] Curr, *The Australian Race: [Its Origin, Languages, Customs, Place of Landing in Australia and the Routes by Which It Spread Itself over That Continent,* vol. III, Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1886–1887], p. 45; [Robert] Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria,* vol. I [Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1878], p. 91 [The quoted material is not verbatim. The text reads this way: "Blacks seem to have an idea that these classes are universal laws of nature, so they divide everything among them." Trans.]; Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 168.

[4][Emile] Durkheim and [Marcel] Mauss, "De Quelques formes primitives de classification. [Contribution à l'étude des représentations collectives]" in *AS,* vol. VI [1903], pp. 1ff.

[5]Curr, *The Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 461.

PHRATRIES	CLANS	THINGS CLASSIFIED IN EACH CLAN
Kumite	Fish-hawk	Smoke, honeysuckle, certain trees, etc.
	Pelican	Blackwood trees, dogs, fire, frost, etc.
	Crow	Rain, thunder, lightning, clouds, hail, winter, etc.
	Black cockatoo	Stars, moon, etc.
	A nonvenomous snake	Fish, seal, conger eel, stringy-bark tree, etc.
Kroki	Tea tree	Duck, crawfish, owl, etc.
	An edible root	Bustard, quail, a sort of kangaroo, etc.
	A crestless white cockatoo	Kangaroo, summer, sun, wind, autumn, etc.
	There are no details about the fourth and fifth Kroki clans.	

tive genera. This is shown by the above chart, constructed from data collected by Curr, and by Fison and Howitt.[6]

The list of things attached to each clan is, quite incomplete; Curr himself warns us that he has confined himself to enumerating only some of them. Today, however, thanks to the work of Mathews and Howitt,[7] we have more extensive information on the classification adopted by the Wotjobaluk tribe, and that information enables us to understand better how a system of this kind can embrace the whole universe known to the natives. The Wotjobaluk themselves are divided into two phratries, called Gurogity and Gumaty (Krokitch and Gamutch, according to Howitt).[8] To avoid an overly long list, I will enumerate (after Mathews) only the things classified in each clan of the Gurogity phratry.

[6]Curr and Fison got their information from the same person, D. S. Stewart.

[7][Robert Hamilton] Mathews, ["Ethnological Notes on the] Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria," in *RSNSW,* vol. XXXVIII (1904) [pp. 287–288]. [Alfred William] Howitt, *The Native Tribes [of South-East Australia,* New York, Macmillan, 1904], p. 121.

[8]The feminine form of nouns given by Mathews is Gurogigurk and Gamatykurk. These are the forms that Howitt has rendered with a slightly different spelling. Also, these names are equivalent to those in use in the Mount Gambier tribe (Kumite and Kroki).

Classified in the Yam clan are the plains turkey, the native cat, the *mopoke,* the *dyim-dyim* owl, the *mallee* chicken, the rosella parrot, and the *pee-wee.* In the Mussel[9] clan: the gray emu, the porcupine, the curlew, the white cockatoo, the wood duck, the *mallee* lizard, the stinking turtle, the flying squirrel, the ring-tailed opossum, the bronze-wing pigeon, and the *wijuggla.* In the Sun clan: the bandicoot, the moon, the rat kangaroo, the black and white magpies, the *ngùrt* hawk, the gum tree grub, the *u mimoisa* (wattle tree) grub, and the planet Venus. In the Warm Wind clan:[10] the gray-headed eaglehawk, the carpet snake, the smoker parrot, the shell parakeet, the *murrakan* hawk, the *dikkomur* snake, the ring-neck parrot, the *mirudai* snake, the shingle-back lizard.

If we imagine that there are many other clans (Howitt names a dozen of them, while Mathews names fourteen and warns that his list is very incomplete),[11] we will see how all the things that interest the native as a matter of course find a place in these classifications.

Similar arrangements have been observed in the most dissimilar parts of the Australian continent: in southern Australia, in the state of Victoria, and in New South Wales (among the Euahlayi);[12] very obvious traces of them are found among the tribes of the center.[13] In Queensland, where the clans seem to have disappeared and where the marriage classes are the only subdivisions of the phratry, things are distributed between the classes. Hence, the Wakelbura are divided into two phratries, Mallera and Wutaru. The classes of the first are called Kurgilla and Banbe; those of the second, Wungo and Obu. To the Banbe belong the opossum, the kangaroo, the dog, the honey of the small bee, etc. To the Wungo are ascribed the emu, the bandicoot, the black duck, the black snake, the brown snake; to the Obu, the carpet snake, the

[9]The indigenous name of this clan is Dyàlup, which Mathews does not translate. This word seems to be identical to "Jallup," by which Howitt designates a subclan of that same tribe and which he translates as "mussel." For this reason, I think I can chance this translation.

[10]This is Howitt's translation; Mathews translates this word (*Wartwurt*) as "heat of the midday sun."

[11]Mathews's table and Howitt's disagree on more than one important point. It even appears that the clans ascribed by Howitt to the Kroki phratry are counted by Mathews in the Gamutch phratry, and vice versa. This is evidence of the very great difficulties that such studies present. However these discrepancies have no import for the question being treated.

[12]Mrs. Langloh Parker [Catherine Sommerville Field Parker], *The Euahlayi Tribe* [London, A. Constable, 1905], pp. 12ff.

[13]These facts are to be found below.

honey of stinging bees, etc.; to the Kurgilla, the porcupine, the plains turkey, water, rain, fire, thunder, etc.[14]

The same organization is found among the Indians of North America. The Zuñi have a system of classification whose basic outline is comparable in every respect to those just described. That of the Omaha rests on the same principles as that of the Wotjobaluk.[15] Echoes of the same ideas persist even in the more advanced societies. Among the Haida, all the gods and mythical beings that govern the various phenomena of nature are also classified in one of the tribe's two phratries, just as men are. Some are Eagles and the others, Crows.[16] The gods that govern things are but another aspect of the things they govern.[17] This mythological classification, then, is but a different form of the preceding ones. Hence, we can be confident that this way of conceiving the world is quite independent of ethnic or geographical particularity. At the same time, however, it emerges quite clearly that this way of conceiving the world is tightly bound up with the whole system of totemic beliefs.

II

In the work to which I have already alluded several times, I showed how these facts illuminate the manner in which the idea of genus or class took form among humans. These classifications are indeed the first that we meet in history. We just saw that they are modeled on social organization, or rather that they have taken the actual framework of society as their own. It was the phratries that served as genera and the clans as species. It is because men formed groups that they were able to group things: All they did was make room for things in the groups they themselves already formed. And if these various classes of things were not simply juxtaposed to one another, but arranged instead according to a unified plan, that is because the same social groups to which they are assimilated are themselves unified and, through that

[14]Curr [*Australian Race*], vol. III, p. 27. Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 112. I confine myself to citing the most characteristic facts. The paper already mentioned, "Classification primitive," can be referred to for details.

[15]Durkheim and Mauss, "Classification primitive," pp. 34ff.

[16][John Reed] Swanton, [*Contributions to the Ethnology of*] *the Haida* [Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1905], pp. 13–14, 17, 22. [Actually, this English text says "raven." Since all ravens are crows but not all crows are ravens, I have rendered Durkheim's *corbeau* as "crow" throughout. Trans.]

[17]This is particularly evident among the Haida. According to Swanton, every animal has two aspects. From one point of view, it is an ordinary creature that can be hunted and eaten, but at the same time, it is a supernatural being with the outward form of an animal, and to which man is subject. The mythical beings that correspond to various cosmic phenomena have the same ambiguity (ibid., pp. 14, 16, 25).

union, form an organic whole: the tribe. The unity of these first logical systems merely reproduces that of society. Thus we have our first opportunity to test the proposition put forward at the beginning of this work and to assure ourselves that the fundamental notions of the intellect, the basic categories of thought, can be the product of social factors. The preceding shows that this is indeed the case for the notion of category itself.

I do not mean to deny that the individual consciousness, even on its own, has the capacity to perceive resemblances between the particular things it conceives of. To the contrary, it is clear that even the most primitive and simple classifications already presuppose that faculty. The Australian does not place things at random in the same or different clans. In him as in us, similar images attract and opposite ones repel one another, and he classifies the corresponding things in one or the other according to his sense of these affinities.

Moreover, we can see in some cases the reasoning that inspires them. It is quite probable that the initial, and fundamental, frameworks for these classification systems were constituted by the two phratries and that consequently they began as dichotomous. When a classification has only two genera, they are almost necessarily conceived as antithetical. They are used first as a means of clearly separating those things between which the contrast is most pronounced. Some are placed to the right, the others to the left. The Australian classifications are of this kind. If the white cockatoo is classified in one phratry, the black cockatoo is in the other; if the sun is to one side, the moon and stars are on the opposite side.[18] Very often, the beings that serve the two phratries as totems have opposite colors.[19] Some of these oppositions are found even outside Australia. Where one of the phratries is in charge of peace, the other is in charge of war;[20] if one has water as its totem, the other has land.[21] This is probably why the two phratries have often been considered naturally antagonistic. It is accepted that a rivalry, even an innate hostil-

[18]See p. 142 above. This is the case among the Gournditch-mara (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 124), among the tribes observed by Cameron near Mortlake, and among the Wotjobaluk (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 125, 250).

[19]J[ohn] Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes* [*of Queensland*], London, T. F. Unwin, 1910, p. 139; [Northcote Whitridge] Thomas, *Kinship* [*Organizations*] *and* [*Group*] *Marriage in* [*Australia*], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1906, pp. 53–54.

[20]For example, among the Osage, see [James Owens] Dorsey, "Siouan Sociology," in *XVth Annual Rep.* [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], pp. 233ff.

[21]At Mabuiag, an island in the Torres Strait ([Alfred C.] Haddon, *Head Hunters* [*Black, White, and Brown,* London, Methuen, 1901], p. 132). The same opposition is also to be found between the two phratries of the Arunta: One comprises people of water, the other people of land ([Carl] Strehlow, [*Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*], vol. I [Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], p. 6).

ity, exists between them.[22] Once the logical contrast has replicated itself as a kind of social conflict,[23] the opposition of things is extended to persons.

Inside each phratry, on the other hand, the things that seem to have the greatest affinity with the thing serving as the totem have been classified with it in the same clan. For example, the moon has been placed with the black cockatoo; the sun, by contrast, with the white cockatoo, along with the atmosphere and the wind. Here is another example: The totemic animal is grouped with everything that serves as its food,[24] plus the animals with which it is most closely associated.[25] Of course, we cannot always understand the obscure psychology that has presided over many of these joinings and separations. But the preceding examples are sufficient to show that a certain intuition of the similarities and differences presented by things has played a role in creating these classifications.

But a feeling of similarity is one thing; the notion of kind is another. Kind is the external framework whose content is formed, in part, by objects perceived to be like one another. The content cannot itself provide the framework in which it is placed. The content is made up of *vague and fluctuating images* caused by the superimposition and partial fusion of *a definite number of individual images* that are found to have elements in common. By

[22]Among the Iroquois, the two phratries hold tournaments of a sort ([Lewis Henry] Morgan, *Ancient Society* [London, Macmillan, 1877], p. 94). Among the Haida, Swanton says, the members of the two phratries of the Eagle and the Crow "are often regarded as avowed enemies. Husbands and wives (who must be of different phratries) do not hesitate to betray one another" (Swanton, *The Haida,* p. 62). In Australia, this hostility is expressed in the myths. The two animals that serve as the totems of the two phratries are often represented as being perpetually at war with one another (see J[ohn] Mathew, *Eaglehawk and Crow: [A Study of Australian Aborigines,* London, D. Nutt. 1899], pp. 14ff.). In games, each phratry is the natural competitor of the other (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 770).

[23]Thus, Mr. Thomas mistakenly criticized my theory on the origin of phratries as unable to explain their opposition (*Kinship and Marriage in Australia,* p. 69). Still, I do not think it necessary to relate that opposition to the opposition between the profane and the sacred (see [Robert] Hertz, "La Prééminence de la main droite," in *RP,* vol. LXVIII (December 1909), p. 559). The things that belong to one phratry are not profane for the other; both are part of the same religious system (see p. 156 below).

[24]For example, the Tea Tree clan includes the vegetation and consequently herbivorous animals (see Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 169). Such, probably, is the explanation of a particularity that Boas notes in the totemic emblems of North America. "Among the Tlinkit," he says, "and in all the other tribes of the coast, the emblem of a group includes the animals that are food for the one whose name the group bears." ([Franz] Boas, ["First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in *BAAS*], *Fifth Report of the Committee [on the North-Western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada,* London, Offices of the Association, 1890], p. 25).

[25]Thus, among the Arunta, the frogs are associated with the Gum Tree totem, because they are often found in the cavities of that tree; the water is connected with the water fowl; the kangaroo with a sort of parakeet that is commonly seen flying around it ([Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen, *The Native Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1899], pp. 146–147, 448).

contrast, the framework is a definite form having fixed contours, but can be applied to an indefinite number of things, whether perceived or not and whether existing or possible. Indeed, the potential scope of every genus is infinitely greater than the circle of objects whose resemblance we have become aware of through direct experience. This is why a whole school of thinkers refuse to identify the idea of kind with that of generic image, and not without reason. A generic image is only the residual representation that similar representations leave in us when they present themselves in consciousness at the same time, and its boundaries are indeterminate; but a genus is a logical symbol by means of which we think clearly about these similarities and others like them. Besides, our best evidence of the gulf between those notions is that the animal is capable of forming generic images, whereas it does not know the art of thinking in terms of genera and species.

The idea of genus is a tool of thought that obviously was constructed by men. But to construct it, we had to have at least a model, for how could that idea have been born if there had been nothing within us or outside us that could have suggested it? To answer that it is given to us a priori is not to answer; as has been said, that lazy solution is the death of analysis. It is not clear where we would have found that indispensable model if not in the panorama of collective life. A genus is in fact an ideal, yet clearly defined, grouping of things with internal bonds among them that are analogous to the bonds of kinship. The only groupings of that kind with which experience acquaints us are those that men form by coming together. Material things can form collections, heaps, or mechanical assemblages without internal unity, but not groups in the sense I have just given the word. A heap of sand or a pile of stones is in no way comparable to the sort of well-defined and organized society that is a genus. In all probability, then, we would never have thought of gathering the beings of the universe into homogeneous groups, called genera, if we had not had the example of human societies before our eyes—if, indeed, we had not at first gone so far in making things members of the society of men, that human and logical groupings were not at first distinguished.[26]

[26]One sign of that original distinction is the fact that, like the social divisions with which they were originally merged, genera sometimes have a territorial base assigned to them. Thus, among the Wotjobaluk in Australia, and among the Zuñi in America, things are thought of as being distributed among the different regions of space, as are the clans. The regional division of things and that of clans coincide (see Durkheim and Mauss, "Classification primitive," pp. 34ff.). Even up to and including relatively advanced peoples, for example in China, the classifications retain something of this spatial character (pp. 55ff.).

From another standpoint, a classification is also a system whose parts are arranged in a hierarchical order. Some are dominant features, and others are subordinated to those. The species and their distinctive properties are subsumed under genera having their own distinctive properties; and the different species of the same genus are conceived as being on a par with one another. Is the standpoint of comprehensiveness the preferred one? In that case, things are represented in an inverse order, the most particular species and the richest in reality being placed at the top, and at the bottom the most general ones and the poorest in detail. But conceiving of them hierarchically is unavoidable either way. And we must guard against thinking that the word has only metaphorical meaning here. The purpose of a classification is to establish relations of subordination and coordination, and man would not even have thought of ordering his knowledge in that way if he had not already known what a hierarchy is. Neither the panorama of physical nature nor the mechanisms of mental association could possibly give us the idea of it. Hierarchy is exclusively a social thing. Only in society do superiors, subordinates, and equals exist. Therefore, even if the facts were not sufficiently conclusive, the analysis of those notions would be sufficient in itself to reveal their origin. We have taken them from society and projected them into our representation of the world. Society furnished the canvas on which logical thought has worked.

III

The relevance of these primitive classifications to the origin of religious thought is no less direct. They in fact imply that all the things thereby classified in the same clan or the same phratry are closely akin to one another and to that which serves as the totem of the clan or of the phratry. When the Australian of the Port MacKay tribe says that the sun, snakes, etc. are of the Yungaroo phratry, he does not simply mean to apply to all those disparate beings a common, but purely conventional, label; the word has an objective meaning for him. He believes that, really, "the alligators are Yungaroo, the moon Wootaroo and so on for the constellations, the trees, the plants, and so forth.[27] An internal tie binds them to the group in which they are classified, and they are regular members of it. They are said to belong to that group,[28]

[27][George] Bridgmann, in Brough Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria,* vol. I, p. 91.

[28]Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 168; Howitt, "Further Notes on the Australian Class Systems," *JAI,* vol. XVIII (1889), p. 60.

just as do the human individuals who are part of it, and so a relationship of the same kind joins the human individuals. Man sees the things of his clan as relatives and associates; he calls them friends and considers them to be made of the same flesh as he.[29] Hence, there are elective affinities and quite special relations of compatibility between them and him. Things and men attract one another, in some sense understand one another, and are naturally attuned. For example, when a Wakelbura of the Mallera phratry is buried, the scaffold on which the body is exposed "must be made from the wood of any tree belonging to the Mallera phratry."[30] The same applies to the branches that cover the corpse. If the deceased is of the Banbe class, a Banbe tree must be used. In the same tribe, a magician can use in his art only things that belong to his phratry.[31] Because the others are foreign to him, he cannot make them obey. In this way, a bond of mystical sympathy joins each individual to other beings that are associated with him, living or not. From this arises the belief that he can infer what he will do or is doing from what they do. Among this same group, the Wakelbura, when an individual dreams that he has killed an animal belonging to such and such a social division, he expects to meet a man of that same division the next day.[32] Conversely, the things assigned to a clan or a phratry cannot be used against members of that clan or phratry. Among the Wotjobaluk, each phratry has its own trees. To hunt an animal of the Gurogity, they can only use weapons made of wood taken from trees of the other phratry, and vice versa; otherwise the hunter is sure to miss his mark.[33] The native is convinced that the arrow would turn away from the target by itself and, in a manner of speaking, refuse to touch an animal who is a relative and a friend.

By their joining, then, the people of the clan and the things classified in it form a unified system, with all its parts allied and vibrating sympathetically. This organization, which might at first have seemed to us purely logical, is moral at the same time. The same principle both animates it and makes it cohere: That principle is the totem. Just as a man who belongs to the Crow clan has something of that animal in him, so too the rain. Since rain is of the same clan and belongs to the same totem, it is also and necessarily considered as "being the same thing as a crow." For the same reason, the moon is a black

[29]Curr, *Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 461, concerning the Mount Gambier tribe.

[30][Alfred William] Howitt, "On Some Australian Beliefs," *JAI,* vol. XIII [1884], p. 191 n. 1.

[31][Alfred William] Howitt, "Notes on Australian Message-Sticks and Messengers," *JAI,* vol. XVIII (1889), p. 326; "Further Notes," p. 61 n. 3.

[32]Curr, *Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 28.

[33]Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 294.

cockatoo, the sun a white cockatoo, and every blackwood tree a pelican, and so forth. Thus, all the beings classified in a single clan—men, animals, plants, inanimate objects—are only modalities of the totemic being. This is the meaning of the formula I have already reported. What makes them genuine kin is this: All really are of the same flesh, in the sense that they all participate in the nature of the totemic animal. Moreover, the adjectives applied to them are the same as those applied to the totem.[34] The Wotjobaluk call both the totem and the things subsumed under it by the same name, *Mir.*[35] Among the Arunta, where, as we will see, there are still traces of classification, it is true that different words designate the totem and the beings attached to it; however, the name given to these latter bespeaks the close relations that join them to the totemic animal. They are said to be its *intimates,* its *associates,* and its *friends;* they are thought to be inseparable from it.[36] These things are felt to be closely akin.

At the same time, we know that the totemic animal is a sacred being. Therefore, because they are in a sense animals of the same species, just as man is, so all the things that are classified in the clan of which it is the emblem are of the same character. They themselves are also sacred, and the classifications that situate them in relation to the other things of the universe at the same time assign them a place within the religious system as a whole. This is why the animals or plants among them cannot be freely eaten by the human members of the clan. Thus, in the Mount Gambier tribe, the people whose totem is the nonvenomous snake must abstain not only from the flesh of that snake; the meat of seals, conger eels, etc. is also prohibited to them.[37] If, driven by necessity, they permit themselves to partake of those things, they must at least diminish the sacrilege by expiatory rites, just as if those things were the totem, proper.[38] Among the Euahlayi,[39] where use but not abuse of the totem is permitted, the same rule applies to the other things of the clan. Among the Arunta, the prohibition that protects the totemic animal extends to other animals associated with it;[40] and in any case, the latter

[34]Cf. Curr, *Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 461, and Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 146. The terms *Tooman* and *Wingo* are applicable to both.

[35]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 123.

[36]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 447ff.; cf. Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. III, p. xiiff.

[37]Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 169.

[38]Curr, *Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 462.

[39]Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 20.

[40][Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen, *Northern Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], p.151; *Native Tribes,* p. 447; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. III, p. xii.

are owed special consideration.[41] The feelings inspired by both are identical.[42]

But the fact that on occasion they play the same role is even better evidence that all the things we see attached to a totem are not fundamentally different from it and, in consequence, have a religious nature. These are accessory and secondary totems, or subtotems, to use a word that today is consecrated by usage.[43] Within a clan, smaller groups constantly form under the influence of friendships and personal affinities. With their more limited membership, these smaller groups tend to live in relative autonomy and to form what amounts to a new subdivision or subclan within the clan. To distinguish and individualize itself, this subclan has need of its own totem—voilà, the subtotem.[44] The totems of these secondary groups are chosen from among those various things that are classified under the principal totem, so they are virtual totems—literally, for the least circumstance is all it takes to make them become actual ones. They have a latent totemic nature that becomes manifest as soon as circumstances permit or require it. In this way, one individual sometimes has two totems: a principal totem that is shared by the whole clan and a subtotem that is specific to the subclan of which he is part. These are somewhat analogous to the *nomen* and the *cognomen* of the Romans.[45]

[41]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 449.

[42]However, there are certain tribes of Queensland in which the things thus assigned to a social group are not forbidden to the members of that group. Such, for example, is the case of the Wakelbura. It should be borne in mind that the marriage classes serve in this society as frameworks for classification (see p. 144 above). Not only can the people of a class eat the animals ascribed to that class, but *they cannot eat others.* All other food is forbidden to them (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 113; Curr, *Australian Race,* vol. III, p. 27).

Nonetheless, we must take care not to conclude that these animals are considered profane. To be noted is that the individual not only may but must eat them, since he is forbidden to eat anything else. This imperativeness of the prescription is a sure sign that we are in the presence of things that are religious in nature. But the religiousness that marks them has given birth to a positive obligation rather than to that negative obligation which is the prohibition. Perhaps, indeed, it is not impossible to see how that deviation could have happened. We have seen above (see p. 140) that every individual is thought to have a sort of property right over his totem and, in consequence, over the things that come under it. If special circumstances influenced the development of that aspect of the totemic relation, then people would come naturally to believe that only the members of a clan could use their totem and all that is assimilated to it; that the others, by contrast, did not have the right to touch it. Under these circumstances, a clan could feed itself only with things ascribed to the clan.

[43]Mrs. Parker uses the expression "multiplex totems."

[44]As examples, see the Euahlayi tribe in the book of Mrs. Parker (pp. 15ff.) and the Wotjobaluk (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 121ff.); cf. the previously cited article of Mathews.

[45]See examples in Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 122.

Sometimes, indeed, we see that a subclan emancipates itself completely and becomes an autonomous group, an independent clan. The subtotem then becomes a totem in the full sense. One tribe in which this process of segmentation has been taken virtually to its outermost limit is the Arunta tribe. The information contained in the first book of Spencer and Gillen indicated back then that there were some 60 totems among the Arunta,[46] but the more recent research of Strehlow has established that the number is much larger. He counts not less than 442 totems.[47] Spencer and Gillen were in no way exaggerating when they said that "in the land occupied by the natives, there is no object, animate or inanimate, that does not give its name to some totemic group of individuals."[48] That multitude of totems, which is prodigious when compared with the size of the population, comes of the fact that, under the influence of particular circumstances, the original clans have divided and subdivided infinitely; as a result, almost all the subtotems have gained the status of totems.

Strehlow's studies have definitively shown this. Spencer and Gillen cited only a few isolated cases of allied totems.[49] Strehlow established that this was actually a universal form of organization. He drew up a table on which almost all the totems of the Arunta are classified according to this principle. All are attached to some sixty principal totems as either allies or auxiliaries.[50] The allied totems are held to be at the service of the principal one.[51] This state of relative subordination is probably the echo of a time when today's "allies" were only subtotems, and therefore a time when the tribe had only a

[46]See Durkheim and Mauss, "Classification primitive," p. 28 n. 2.

[47]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 61–72.

[48]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 112.

[49]See especially ibid., p. 447, and *Northern Tribes,* p. 151.

[50]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. III, pp. xiii–[xvii]. Sometimes the same secondary totems are attached to two or three principal totems at once. This is probably because Strehlow could not establish with certainty which of those totems was truly the main one.

Two interesting facts, which emerge from this table, confirm certain propositions I have already set forth. First, with very few exceptions, almost all the principal totems are animals. Next, the stars are never anything but secondary or allied totems. This is further evidence that originally the preference was to choose totems from the animal kingdom, and that the allied totems were not promoted to the status of totems until later.

[51]According to myth, in legendary times the allied totems served as food for the people of the principal totem and, if they were trees, provided shelter (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. III, p. xii; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 403). However, the fact that the allied totem is thought to have been eaten does not imply that it is considered profane. It is believed that, in mythical times, the principal totem was eaten by the ancestors who founded the clan.

small number of clans subdivided into subclans. Numerous survivals confirm that hypothesis. The two groups that are allied in this way often have the same totemic emblem. The oneness of that emblem is inexplicable unless the two groups were originally one.[52] Elsewhere, the kinship of the two clans is shown by the role and interest that each of them takes in the rites of the other. The two cults are still not completely separate, most likely because initially they were completely merged.[53] Tradition explains the tie that binds them by imagining how, long ago, the two clans lived very near each other.[54] In other cases, myth even states explicitly that the one was derived from the other. They say that the allied animal once upon a time belonged to the species that is still the principal totem and was not differentiated until a later epoch. In this way, the chantunga birds, which now are associated with the witchetty grub, were witchetty grubs in legendary times and later transformed themselves into birds. Two species that are now attached to the totem of the honey ant were honey ants in the past, and so forth.[55] Further, that transformation of a subtotem into a totem happens imperceptibly, with the result that the status is ill defined in some cases, and it is not easy to say whether one is dealing with a principal or a secondary totem.[56] As Howitt says regarding the Wotjobaluk, there are subtotems that are totems in the process of formation.[57] In this way, the various things classified in a totem are like many nuclei around which new totemic cults can form. This is the best evidence of the religious feelings they inspire. If they did not have this sacredness, they could not so easily be promoted to the same status as those sacred things par excellence, the totems proper.

Thus, the circle of religious things extends well beyond what at first seemed to be its boundaries. Not only are the totemic animals and the members of the clan enclosed within that circle; but since there is nothing known that is not classified within a clan and under a totem, there is also nothing that does not receive a reflection of that religiousness, to some degree. When

[52]Thus, in the Wild Cat clan, the designs carved on the churinga represent the flowering tree called hakea, which today is a distinct totem (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes* [pp. 147–148]). Strehlow (*Aranda,* vol. III, p. xii n. 4) says that this is common.

[53]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 182; *Native Tribes,* pp. 151, 297.

[54]*Native Tribes,* pp. 151, 158.

[55]Ibid., pp. 447–449.

[56]It is in this way that Spencer and Gillen speak to us of the pigeon called Inturita sometimes as a principal totem (*Native Tribes* [p. 410]), and sometimes as an allied totem (p. 448).

[57]Howitt, "Further Notes," pp. 63–64.

actual gods appear in the religions that form later, each of them will be set over a particular category of natural phenomena—this one the sea, that one the air, another the fruit harvest, and so on, and each of those provinces of nature will be thought of as drawing the life that is within it from the god to which it is subject. Such a distribution of nature among various deities is precisely what constitutes the representation of the universe that religions give us. So long as humanity has not moved beyond the phase of totemism, the role the various totems of the tribe play is precisely the one that will later belong to divine personalities. In the Mount Gambier tribe, which I have taken as the main example, there are ten clans, and so the whole world is divided into ten classes, or rather into ten families, each originating in a special totem. The things classified in a clan take their reality from that origin, for they are conceived of as various modes of the totemic being—according to our example, rain, thunder, lightning, clouds, hail, and winter are regarded as various kinds of crow. Taken together, these ten families of things constitute a systematic and complete representation of the world, and that representation is religious, since religious notions furnish the principle of it. Far from being restricted to one or two categories of beings, then, the domain of totemic religion extends to the farthest limits of the known universe. Like the religion of Greece, it places the divine everywhere. The well-known formula Πάντα πλήρη θεῶν* can serve as its motto as well.

To be in a position to conceive totemism in this way, we must modify the longstanding notion of it on one fundamental point. Until the discoveries of recent years, totemism was defined as the religion of the clan and was thought to consist entirely in the cult of a particular totem. From this point of view, it seemed that there were as many independent totemic religions as there were different clans. Moreover, that notion was in harmony with the commonly held notion of the clan: It is seen as an autonomous society,[58] more or less closed to similar societies or having only external and superficial relations with them. But the reality is more complex. Certainly the cult of each totem has its home in the corresponding clan; it is celebrated there and only there; the members of the clan are responsible for it; it is transmitted by them from one generation to another, along with the beliefs on which it is based.

On the other hand, the various totemic cults that are practiced within a single tribe do not develop in parallel and in ignorance of one another, as

*Everything is full of gods. Trans.

[58]Thus it happens that the clan has often been confounded with the tribe. Curr especially has been guilty of this confusion, which often imports problems into ethnographers' descriptions ([*The Australian Race*], vol. I, pp. 61ff.).

though each was a complete religion and sufficient unto itself. Instead, they imply one another. Each is only one part of the same whole, an element of the same religion. The men of a clan in no way regard the beliefs of the neighboring clans with the indifference, skepticism, or hostility that is ordinarily inspired by a religion to which one is a stranger; they themselves share the beliefs. The Crow people are also convinced that the Snake people have a mythical snake as their ancestor and owe special qualities and capacities to that origin. Have we not seen that, under certain conditions at least, a man eats a totem that is not his own only after having observed ritual formalities? For example, he requests permission from the individuals of that totem, if there are any present. This is so because that food is not merely profane for him either. He, too, accepts that there are affinities between the members of a clan he is not part of and the animal whose name they bear. Moreover, that commonality of belief is sometimes manifested in the cult. Although, in principle, the rites that concern a totem can be performed only by people of that totem, it is nonetheless very common for representatives of different clans to be present. Indeed, sometimes their role is not one of mere spectating. Although of course they are not the celebrants, they decorate those who are, and they prepare the service. They, too, have an interest in the rite's being conducted; hence, in certain tribes it is they who invite the proper clan to conduct the ceremony.[59] Indeed, there is a whole cycle of rites that must take place in the presence of the assembled tribe: the totemic ceremonies of initiation.[60]

In sum, totemic organization as just described clearly must result from a sort of consensus among all the members of the tribe, without distinction. Each clan cannot possibly have developed its beliefs in an absolutely independent manner; the cults of the various totems complement one another exactly, and so they must necessarily have been in some sense adjusted to one another. In fact, as we have seen, a single totem did not ordinarily repeat itself in the same tribe, and the whole universe was divided among the totems thus constituted in such a way that the same object should not be found in two different clans. So systematic a division would have been impossible to achieve without a tacit or concerted agreement in which the whole tribe would have had to participate. The whole set of beliefs that was born in this way is in part (but only in part) an affair of the tribe.[61]

[59]This is the case, for example, of the Warramunga (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 298).

[60]See, for example, Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 380 et passim.

[61]One could even ask whether tribal totems do not sometimes exist. Thus, among the Arunta, the wild cat is the totem of a particular clan and yet is forbidden to the whole tribe; even the people of other

To summarize: In developing an adequate conception of totemism, we must not enclose ourselves within the boundaries of the clan but consider the tribe as a whole. Each clan's own cult enjoys great autonomy. Indeed, we can anticipate even now that the active ferment of religious life will be found in the clan. On the other hand, all these cults are unified, and totemic religion is the complex system formed by that union, just as Greek polytheism was formed by the union of all the cults that were addressed to the various deities. I have shown that when totemism is understood in this way, it too has a cosmology.

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clans may eat it only in moderation (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 168). But I believe it would be an exaggeration to speak of a tribal totem in that instance, for it does not follow from the prohibition against eating it freely that the animal is a totem. A prohibition may have other causes. Undoubtedly, the religious unity of the tribe is real, but that unity is affirmed with the aid of other symbols. Further on, I will show what those symbols are (Bk. II, chap. 9).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRINCIPAL TOTEMIC BELIEFS (END)

The Individual Totem and the Sexual Totem

Thus far, I have examined totemism solely as a public institution. The only totems discussed have been those shared by a clan, a phratry, or, in a sense, the tribe.[1] The individual had a part in them only as a member of the group. But we understand that there is no religion without an individual aspect. This general observation applies to totemism. Apart from the impersonal and collective totems that are foremost, there are others that belong to each individual, that express his personality, and whose cult he celebrates privately.

I

In some Australian tribes and in most of the Indian societies of North America,[2] each individual maintains a personal relationship with a particular object, which is comparable to the relationship that each clan maintains with its totem. That object is sometimes an inanimate being or something man-made, but it is often an animal. In some cases, only a particular part of the body, such as the head, the feet, or the liver, has the same function.[3]

The name of the thing also serves as the name of the individual. It is his personal name, a first name that is added to his collective totem, just as the

[1]The totems are the tribe's property in the sense that the tribe as a whole has an interest in the cult each clan owes to its totem.

[2]Frazer has made a full compilation of the texts about individual totemism in North America ([James George Frazer], *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. III [London, Macmillan, 1910], pp. 370–456).

[3]For example, among the Hurons, the Iroquois, and the Algonquins ([Pierre François Xavier de] Charlevoix, *Histoire [et description générale de la Nouvelle France]*, vol. VI [Paris, Chez la Veuve Ganeau, 1744], pp. 67–70; [Gabriel] Sagard, *Le Grand voyage au pays des Hurons* [Paris, Tross, 1865], p. 160), and among the Thompson Indians ([James Alexander] Teit, "The Thompson Indians of British Columbia," *AMNH,* vol. II (1900), p. 355).

praenomen of the Romans is added to the *nomen gentilicium*. It is true that this is documented for only a certain number of societies,[4] but it is probably widespread. Indeed, I will presently show that the thing and the individual are of the same kind. Identity of kind entails identity of name. Being given in the course of especially important religious ceremonies, this forename has a quality of sacredness. It is not pronounced in the ordinary circumstances of profane life. Sometimes, indeed, the word used in everyday language to designate the thing is somewhat modified for that special use[5]—this, because the words of everyday language are excluded from religious life.

In the American tribes, at least, an emblem is added to this name, which belongs to each individual and in various ways represents the thing designated by the name. For example, each Mandan wears the skin of the animal whose namesake he is.[6] If it is a bird, he adorns himself with the bird's feathers.[7] The Hurons and the Algonquins tattoo its image on their bodies.[8] It is represented on his weapons.[9] Among the tribes of the Northwest, the individual emblem is carved or sculpted on utensils, houses, and so forth, as is the collective emblem of the clan.[10] The individual emblem serves as a mark of personal property.[11] Often the two coats of arms are combined, which partly explains why the totemic escutcheons show such variety among these peoples.[12]

There are the closest of bonds between the individual and the animal

[4]This is the case for the Yuin ([Alfred William] Howitt, *The Native Tribes [of South-East Australia,* New York, Macmillan, 1904], p. 133); the Kurnai (*Native Tribes,* p. 135); several tribes of Queensland ([Walter Edmund] Roth, *Superstition, Magic and Medicine, North Queensland Ethnography,* Bulletin no. 5 [Brisbane, G. A. Vaughn, 1903], p. 19; [Alfred C.] Haddon, *Head-Hunters, [Black, White, and Brown,* London, Methuen, 1901], p. 193); among the Delaware ([John Gottlieb Ernestus] Heckewelder, "An Account of the History [Manners and Customs] of the Indian Nations [Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania"], *HLCAPS,* vol. I [1819], p. 238); among the Thompson Indians (Teit, "Thompson Indians," p. 355); and among the Salish Statlumh ([Charles] Hill Tout, "Report on the Ethnology of the Statlumh of British Columbia," *JAI,* vol. XXXV [1905], pp. 147ff.).

[5]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 154.

[6][George] Catlin, *Illustration of the Manners, Customs [and Condition of the North American Indians,* 2 vols.], London [H. G. Bohn], 1876, vol. I, p. 36.

[7][George] Catlin, *[Nouvelles des missions d'Amérique, extraits des] lettres édifiantes et curieuses,* 6th ed. [Paris, Martial, 1883], pp. 172ff.

[8]Charlevoix, *Histoire de la nouvelle France,* vol. VI, p. 69.

[9][James Owen] Dorsey, "A Study of Siouan Cults," in *XIth Annual Report* [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1894], p. 443.

[10][Franz] Boas, ["The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the] Kwakiutl [Indians," in *RNM for 1895,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], p. 323.

[11]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 154.

[12]Boas, "Kwakiutl," p. 323.

whose name he bears. The nature of the animal is part and parcel of the man, who has its qualities as well as its faults. For example, it is thought that a man with the eagle as his individual emblem possesses the gift of seeing the future; if he carries the name of the bear, it is said that he is likely to be wounded in fights, the bear being slow, heavy, and easily trapped;[13] if the animal is despised, the man is the object of the same contempt.[14] Indeed, the kinship between the two is so great that in certain circumstances, especially danger, the man is thought capable of assuming the animal's form.[15] Inversely, the animal is regarded as the man's double, his alter ego.[16] The association between the two is so close that their destinies are often considered to be interdependent: Nothing can happen to one without repercussions felt by the other.[17] If the animal dies, the life of the man is threatened. Hence a very common rule is that one must neither kill the animal nor, especially, eat its flesh. When applied to the clan, this prohibition carries with it all sorts of allowances and compromises, but in this case it is far more categorical and absolute.[18]

For its part, the animal protects the man and is a kind of patron. It alerts him to possible dangers and to means of escaping them;[19] it is said to be the man's friend.[20] In fact, since it is often presumed to have miraculous powers,

[13]Miss [Alice C.] Fletcher, "The Import of the Totem, A Study from the Omaha Tribe, *RSI* [Washington, Government Printing Office], 1897, p. 583. Similar facts will be found in Teit, "Thompson Indians," pp. 354, 356; Peter Jones, *History of the Ojibway Indians: [With Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity,* London, A. W. Bennet, 1869], p. 87.

[14]This is, for example, the case of the dog among the Salish Statlumh because of the servile state in which he lives (Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 153).

[15]Langloh Parker [Catherine Sommerville Field Parker], [*The*] *Euahlayi* [*Tribe*] [London, A. Constable, 1905], p. 21.

[16]"The spirit of a man," says Mrs. Parker (ibid.), "is in his Yunbeai (individual totem) and his Yunbeai is in him."

[17]Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 20. It is the same among certain Salish ([Charles] Hill Tout, "Ethnological Report on the Stseelis and Skaulits Tribes [of the Halokmelem Division of the Salish of British Columbia]," *JAI,* vol. XXXIV [1904], p. 324). This is common among the Indians of Central America ([Daniel G.] Brinton, "Nagualism: A Study in Native American Folk-lore and History," *APS,* vol. XXXIII [1894], p. 32).

[18]Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 20; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 147; Dorsey, "Siouan Cults," p. 443. Incidentally, Frazer has surveyed the American cases and has established the universality of this prohibition (*Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. III, p. 450). True, we have seen that in America the individual had to begin by killing the animal whose skin was used to make what the ethnographers call his "medicine bag." But this custom has been found only in five tribes; it is probably a late and altered form of the institution.

[19]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 135, 147, 387, and "On Australian Medicine Men," *JAI,* vol. XVI (1887), p. 34; [James Alexander] Teit, "The Shuswap" [*AMNH,* Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1908], p. 607.

[20][Rev. A.] Meyer, "Manners and Customs of the Aborigines of the Encounter Bay Tribe," in [James Dominick] Woods [*The Native Tribes of South Australia,* Adelaide, E. S. Wigg. 1879], p. 197.

it passes those on to its human partner, who believes them to be proof against bullets, arrows, and every sort of blow.[21] The individual has such confidence in the efficacy of his protector that he braves the greatest dangers and performs the most breathtaking feats of prowess with serene fearlessness. Faith gives him the necessary courage and strength.[22] Nevertheless, the man's ties with his patron are not ones of dependency, pure and simple. The man, for his part, can act upon the animal. He gives it orders and has power over it. A Kurnai whose friend and ally is the shark believes that, with an incantation, he can disperse sharks that threaten a boat.[23] In other cases, the tie contracted in this way is thought to bestow upon the man a special capacity for success in hunting the animal.[24]

By their very nature, these relations seem strongly to imply that the being with which each individual is thus associated can itself be only an individual, not a species. No one has a species as alter ego. In some cases, in fact it quite clearly is such and such a definite tree, rock, or stone that plays this role.[25] Whenever it is an animal, or whenever the lives of the animal and the man are considered to be bound up together, such is necessarily the case. It is not possible to be joined with a whole species in an interdependence of this kind, because there is no day, or for that matter no instant, in which the species does not lose one of its members. Still, the primitive has a certain inability to conceive of the individual apart from the species. The bond that unites him with the one extends altogether naturally to the other; he has the same feeling for both. Thus it comes about that the whole species is sacred to him.[26]

[21][Franz] Boas, "Second General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in [*BAAS*], *VIth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada* [London, Offices of the Association, 1891], p. 93; Teit, "Thompson Indians," p. 336; Boas, "Kwakiutl," p. 394.

[22]Corroborating evidence is to be found in Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," pp. 144–145. Cf. Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 29.

[23]According to information given Frazer by Howitt in a personal letter (*Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. I, p. 495, n.2).

[24]Hill Tout, "Stseelis and Skaulits Tribes," p. 324.

[25]Howitt, "Australian Medicine Men," *JAI,* vol. XVI, p. 34; [Joseph François] Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages américains,* vol. I [Paris, Saugrain l'ainé, 1724], p. 370; Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France,* vol. VI, p. 68. The same is true of the *atai* and the *tamaniu* at Mota ([Robert Henry] Codrington, *The Melanesians,* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891], pp. 250–251).

[26]Consequently, the line of demarcation that Frazer thought he could establish between these animal protectors and the fetishes does not exist. He thought fetishism would begin where the protector being is an individual object and not a class (Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* p. 56); as we know from as early as the tribes of Australia, however, a specific animal sometimes plays this role (see Howitt, "[On] Australian Medicine Men; [or Doctors and Wizards of Some Australian Tribes], *JAI,* vol. XVI, [1887], p. 34). The truth is that the notions of fetish and fetishism do not correspond to anything definite.

This protector being is called by different names in different societies: *nagual* among the Indians of Mexico,[27] *manitou* among the Algonquins, *okki* among the Hurons,[28] *snam* among certain Salish[29] and *sulia* among others,[30] *budjan* among the Yuin,[31] *yunbeai* among the Euahlayi,[32] and so on. Because of the importance these beliefs and practices have among the Indians of North America, some have proposed to create the word *nagualism* or *manitouism* to designate them.[33] But by giving them a special and distinctive name, we may well misconstrue their relationship with totemism. In fact, the same principles are applied, in one case to the clan, in the other to the individual. In both, the belief is the same: There are living ties between things and men, and the things are endowed with special powers from which the human allies benefit. The custom is also the same: Giving the man the name of the thing with which he is associated, and adding an emblem to this name. The totem is the patron of the clan, just as the patron of the individual is a personal totem. So there is good reason for the terminology to make this kinship between the two systems visible. This is why, with Frazer, I will call the cult that each individual renders to his patron *individual totemism*. Use of this terminology is further justified by the fact that in some cases the primitive himself uses the same word to designate the totem of the clan and the animal protector of the individual.[34] Tylor and Powell have rejected it and called for different terms for the two sorts of religious institutions because, in their view, the collective totem is only a name, a shared label without re-

[27] Brinton, "Nagualism," *APS,* vol. XXXIII [1894], p. 32.

[28]Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France,* p. 67.

[29]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 142.

[30]Hill Tout, "Stseelis and Skaulits Tribes," pp. 311ff.

[31]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 133.

[32]Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 20.

[33][Edwin Sidney Hartland], "An American View of Totemism, [A Note on Major Powell's Article] in *Man,* vol. II (1902), 84, pp. 113–115 [This does not mention "nagualism," and says "manitu," not "manituism." Trans.]; [Edward Burnett] Tylor, "Note on the Haida Totem-Post Lately Erected in the Pitt River Museum at Oxford," *Man,* vol. II, (1902), pp. 1–3, [Again, there is no mention of "nagualism." Trans.]; [Andrew] Lang expressed similar ideas in *Social Origins* [London, Longmans, 1903], pp. 133–135. Finally, in a revision of his earlier view, Frazer himself now believes that it is best to designate collective totems and guardian spirits by different names until the relationship that exists between them is better known (*Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. III, p. 456).

[34]This is the case in Australia among the Yuin (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 81) and among the Narrinyeri (Meyer, "The Encounter Bay Tribe," in Woods, *Native Tribes of South Australia,* pp. 197ff.).

ligious characteristics.[35] But to the contrary, we know that it is a sacred thing to an even greater degree than the animal protector. As this study develops, the extent to which the two sorts of totemism are inseparable will be shown.[36]

Nonetheless, however great the kinship between these two institutions, there are important differences between them. Whereas the clan considers itself to be the offspring of the totemic animal or plant, the individual does not believe he has any relation of descent with his personal totem. It is a friend, a partner, and a protector, but it is not a relative. The individual makes use of the virtues it is held to possess, but he is not of the same blood. Second, the members of a clan permit neighboring clans to eat the animal whose name they collectively bear, provided that the necessary formalities are observed. By contrast, the individual not only respects the species to which his personal totem belongs but also does his utmost to defend it against strangers, at least wherever the destinies of the man and the animal are thought to be bound up together.

These two kinds of totems differ most in the manner by which they are acquired.

The collective totem belongs to the legal status of every individual. Generally speaking, it is hereditary; at any rate, it is birth that designates it and men's will has no role. The child sometimes has the totem of its mother (Kamilaroi, Dieri, Urabunna, etc.), sometimes that of its father (Narrinyeri, Warramunga, etc.), and sometimes the totem that is most important at the place where his mother conceived (Arunta, Loritja). But the individual totem is acquired by a deliberate act:[37] Determining it requires a series of rites. The method most widely used among the Indians of America is the following: Toward puberty, as the time of initiation approaches, the young

[35]"The totem no more resembles the patron of the individual," says Tylor, "than an escutcheon resembles an image of a saint." ("The Haida Totem-Post," p. 2.) Likewise, today Frazer rallies to Tylor's opinion, because he now denies that the totem of the clan is in any way religious (*Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. III, p. 452).

[36]See below, Bk. 2, chap. 9.

[37]However, according to a passage in Mathews, the individual totem is hereditary among the Wotjobaluk. "Each individual," he says, "lays claim to an animal, a plant, or an inanimate object as its special and personal totem, which he inherits from his mother" ([Robert Hamilton] Mathews, ["Ethnological Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria"], *RSNSW,* vol. XXXVIII (1904), p. 291). But it is obvious that if all the children of the same family had the totem of their mother as their personal totem, neither they nor their mother would have personal totems. Mathews probably means that each individual chooses his individual totem from among a group of things attributed to the mother's clan. We will see, in fact, that each clan has its own individual totems that are its exclusive property and that the members of other clans cannot use them. In this sense, birth in some measure (but in that measure only) defines the personal totem.

man withdraws to a place apart—a forest, for example. There, during a period that varies from a few days to several years, he submits to all kinds of exercises that are exhausting and contrary to his nature. He fasts, mortifies himself, and mutilates himself. Sometimes he wanders, uttering terrible screams and howls; sometimes he stays still, stretched out on the ground, groaning. He dances sometimes, prays sometimes, and sometimes calls out to his ordinary deities. Proceeding in this way, he finally works himself into a state of intense super-excitement that is very close to delirium. When he has reached this paroxysm, his mental representations easily take on a hallucinatory character. "When," says Heckewelder, "a boy is on the eve of being initiated, he is subjected to an alternating regime of fasting and medical treatment; he abstains from all food, he swallows the most powerful and repulsive drugs; on occasion, he drinks intoxicating concoctions until his mind is genuinely in a state of confusion. At that moment, he has or believes he has visions, extraordinary dreams to which the entire exercise has naturally predisposed him. He imagines himself flying through the air, moving under the ground, jumping over valleys from one summit to the other, fighting and defeating giants and monsters."[38] Under these conditions, if while dreaming or awake he sees (or thinks he sees, which amounts to the same thing) an animal appearing to him that seems to show friendly intentions, he will imagine he has discovered the patron that he has been waiting for.[39]

This process is rarely used in Australia.[40] There, the personal totem seems instead to be imposed by a third person, either at birth[41] or at initiation.[42] It is usually a relative who plays this role, or it can be a person with special powers, such as an old man or a magician. Divination is sometimes used for this purpose. At Charlotte Bay, at Cape Bedford, or on the Proserpine River, for example, the grandmother or another old woman takes a small part of the

[38]Heckewelder, "Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations," *HLCAPS,* vol. I, p. 238.

[39]See Dorsey, "Siouan Cults," p. 507; Catlin, *North American Indians,* vol. I, p. 37; Fletcher, "The Import of the Totem," in *Smithsonian Rep. for 1897,* p. 580; Teit, "Thompson Indians," pp. 317–320; Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 144.

[40]Still, one finds examples. The Kurnai magicians see their personal totems revealed in dreams (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 387, and "Australian Medicine Men," p. 34). The men of Cape Bedford believe that when an old man dreams of something during the night, that thing is the personal totem of the first person he will meet the next day (Roth, *Superstition, Magic, and Medicine,* p. 19). But it is probable that only complementary and accessory personal totems are acquired by this method; for, as I say in the text, within that same tribe, a different process is used at initiation.

[41]In certain tribes about which Roth speaks (*Superstition, Magic and Medicine*); and in certain tribes in the vicinity of Maryborough (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 147).

[42]Among the Wiradjuri (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 406, and "Australian Medicine Men," p. 50).

umbilical cord attached to the placenta and whirls it quite forcefully. During this time, other old women seated in a circle propose different names, one after the other. The name that is pronounced just at the moment the cord breaks is adopted.[43] Among the Yaraikanna of Cape York, the young novice is given a little water to rinse his mouth after his tooth has been pulled, and he is asked to spit into a bucket filled with water. The old men carefully examine the kind of clot that is formed by the blood and saliva he has spat out, and the natural object of which its shape reminds them becomes the personal totem of the young man.[44] In other cases, the totem is transmitted directly from one individual to another, for example, from father to son or uncle to nephew.[45] This method is also used in America. In an example that Hill Tout reports, the operator was a shaman[46] who wanted to transmit his totem to his nephew:

> The uncle took the symbolic emblem of his *snam* (personal totem), which in this case was the dried skin of a bird. He asked his nephew to blow on it, then he himself did likewise and pronounced some secret words. It then seemed to Paul (which was the nephew's name) that the skin became a living bird that began to fly around them for several moments before disappearing. Paul received instructions to procure the skin of a bird of the same species that very day, and to wear it; this he did. The following night, he had a dream in which the *snam* appeared to him in the form of a human being who revealed to him the secret name by which it might be summoned, and who promised him its protection.[47]

Not only is the individual totem acquired, not given, but more than that, the acquisition of one is not obligatory everywhere. There are many Australian tribes in which that custom seems to be completely unknown.[48] And

[43]Ibid.

[44]Haddon, *Head Hunters,* pp. 193ff.

[45]Among the Wiradjuri, [Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 406, and "On Australian Medicine Men," in *JAI,* vol. XVI, p. 50].

[46]In general, it seems clear that these transmissions from father to son occur only when the father is a shaman or a magician. This is also the case among the Thompson Indians (Teit, "The Thompson Indians," p. 320) and among the Wiradjuri, to whom reference has been made.

[47]Hill Tout ("Ethnology of the Statlumh," pp. 146–147). The basic rite is the one that consists of blowing on the skin. If it had not been done correctly, the transmission would not have occurred because the breath is the soul. When both blow on the skin of the animal, the magician and the recipient exhale parts of their souls, and these parts interpenetrate one another while communing with the nature of the animal, which is also (in the form of its symbol) a participant in the ceremony.

[48][Northcote Whitridge] Thomas, "Further Remarks on Mr. Hill Tout's Views on Totemism," in *Man,* vol. IV (1904), 53, p. 85.

even where it does exist, it is often optional. Among the Euahlayi, all the magicians have individual totems from which they get their powers, but a great many laymen have none at all. It is a favor the magician can dispense but one he reserves for his friends and favorites and for those who aspire to become his colleagues.[49] Likewise, among certain Salish, only individuals who want to excel in war or hunting, or who aspire to become shamans, equip themselves with protectors of this sort.[50] Thus, at least among certain peoples, the individual totem seems to be regarded more as an advantage or a convenience than as a necessity. It is good to obtain one, but there is no obligation to do so. On the other hand, there is no obligation to settle for only one. If one wants to be better protected, nothing stands in the way of trying to obtain several;[51] and inversely, if the protector one has played its role poorly, it can be replaced.[52]

But while there is something more optional and free about individual totemism, it has staying power that the totemism of the clan cannot match. One of Hill Tout's main informants was a baptized Salish. Although he had sincerely abandoned all the beliefs of his ancestors and had become a model catechist, his faith in the efficacy of personal totems remained unshakable.[53] Similarly, although no visible traces of collective totemism are left in the civilized countries, a notion of solidarity between each individual and an animal, plant, or some other external object is the basis of customs that can still be observed in several European countries.[54]

II

Between individual and collective totemism, there is an intermediate form that has something of both: sexual totemism. Found only in Australia and in a small number of tribes, it has been reported mainly in Victoria and in New

[49]Langloh Parker, *Euahlayi*, pp. 20, 29.

[50]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," pp. 143, 146; "Stseelis and Skaulits Tribes," p. 324.

[51]Parker, *Euahlayi*, p. 30; Teit, "The Thompson Indians," p. 320; Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 144.

[52]Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, vol. VI, p. 69.

[53]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 145.

[54]Thus, at the birth of a child, people plant a tree on which they lavish pious care, for they believe that its fate and the infant's are conjoined. In his *Golden Bough*, Frazer reported numerous customs or beliefs that express the same idea in various ways (Cf. [Edwin Sidney] Hartland, *Legend of Perseus*, vol. II [London, D. Nutt, 1894–1896], pp. 1–55).

South Wales.[55] True, Mathews claims to have observed it in every part of Australia he visited but without providing specifics to support his claim.[56]

Among these different peoples, all the men of the tribe, on the one hand, and, on the other, all the women form what amounts to two distinct and even antagonistic societies, no matter what clan they belong to. Each of these two sexual corporations believes itself to be joined by mystical ties to a specific animal. Among the Kurnai, all the men consider themselves as brothers of the emu-wren (Yeerùng), all the women as sisters of the linnet (Djeetgùn); all the men are Yeerùng and all the women Djeetgùn. Among the Wotjobaluk and the Wiradjuri, respectively, this role is played by the bat and the nightjar (a sort of screech owl). In other tribes, the woodpecker replaces the nightjar. Each sex sees the animal to which it is kin as a protector that must be treated with great respect. To kill or eat it is therefore forbidden.[57]

This animal protector plays the same role with respect to each sexual society that the totem of the clan plays with respect to the clan. Hence the phrase "sexual totemism," which I take from Frazer,[58] is warranted. In particular, this new sort of totem resembles that of the clan as well, in the sense that it too is collective. It belongs without distinction to all individuals of the same sex. It resembles the clan totem also in that it implies a relationship of descent and common blood between the animal patron and the corresponding sex. Among the Kurnai, all the men are said to be descended from Yeerùng and all the women from Djeetgùn.[59] The first observer to have described that curious institution, as early as 1834, used the following terms: "Tilmun, a small bird the size of a thrush (a sort of woodpecker), is considered by the women as having been the first to make women. These birds are

[55]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 148ff. [Lorimer] Fison and [Alfred William] Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* [Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], pp. 194, 201ff. [James] Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* [Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1881], p. 52. Petrie reports it also in Queensland ([Constance Campbell Petrie], *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* [Ferguson, Watson, 1904], pp. 62, 118).

[56]Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 339. Should one see a trace of sexual totemism in the following custom of the Warramunga? Before a dead person is buried, a bone from the arm is kept. If it is a woman's, feathers of the emu are added to the bark in which it is shrouded; if a man's, the feathers of an owl ([Sir Baldwin Spencer and F. James Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], p. 169).

[57]There is even a case cited in which each sexual group has two sexual totems; in this way would the Wiradjuri have joined the sexual totems of the Kurnai (emu-wren and linnet) with those of the Wotjobaluk (bat and nightjar wood owl). See Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 150.

[58]Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy,* p. 51.

[59]Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* p. 215.

held in veneration by women only."[60] Thus it was a great ancestor. Seen from another point of view, this totem resembles the individual totem, in that each member of the sexual group is believed to be personally allied with a definite individual of the corresponding animal species. The two lives are so closely linked that the death of the animal brings about that of the human. "The life of a bat," say the Wotjobaluk, "is the life of a man."[61] This is why each sex not only honors its totem but also forces the members of the other sex to do so as well. Any violation of this prohibition gives rise to real and bloody battles between men and women.[62]

In sum, what is truly unique about these totems is that, in a sense, they amount to tribal totems. Indeed, they arise from the fact that people conceive of the whole tribe as being the offspring of a legendary couple. Such a belief seems to imply that the sense of tribe has become strong enough to overcome the particularism of the clans to some extent. As to the reasons that separate origins are assigned to men and women, one must probably look to the fact that the sexes live apart.[63]

It would be interesting to know how, in the mind of an Australian, sexual totems are related to clan totems—what relations there are between the two ancestors that are placed at the origin of the tribe and those from which each particular clan is thought to descend. But the ethnographic data we have at present do not permit us to resolve that question. Furthermore, the natives may never have asked that question of themselves, however natural and even necessary it may seem to us, for they do not feel the need to coordinate and systematize their beliefs to the same extent we do.[64]

[60]Threlkeld, cited by Mathews, "The Aboriginal Tribes," p. 339.

[61]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 148, 151.

[62]Fison and Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* pp. 200–203; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 149; Petrie, *Reminiscences,* p. 62. Among the Kurnai, these bloody struggles often end in marriages, to which they are a kind of ritual prologue. Sometimes the battles become mere games (*Tom Petrie's Reminiscences*).

[63]On this point, see my study [Emile Durkheim] "La Prohibition de l'inceste et ses origines," in *AS,* vol. I (1898), pp. 44ff.

[64]However we will see below (Chap. 9) that there is a relationship between sexual totems and the high gods.

CHAPTER FIVE

ORIGINS OF THESE BELIEFS

Critical Examination of the Theories

The beliefs I have just reviewed are clearly religious in nature, for they involve a classification of things as sacred and profane. Spiritual beings are doubtless not at issue. In the course of my exposition, I have had no need even to say the words "spirits," "genies," or "divine personages." However, if, for this reason, some writers (about whom I shall have more to say) have refused to see totemism as a religion, it is because they have been operating with a mistaken idea of the religious phenomenon.

At the same time, religion is guaranteed to be the most primitive that can be observed now and in all probability the most primitive that has ever existed, for it is inseparable from social organization based upon clans. I have shown that totemism can only be defined in terms of that social organization and, furthermore, that clans, in the form they take in a great many Australian societies, could not have come into being without the totem. The members of a single clan are joined to one another by neither common residence nor common blood, since they are not necessarily consanguineous and are often scattered throughout the tribal territory. Their unity arises solely from having the same name and the same emblem, from believing they have the same relations with the same categories of things, and from practicing the same rites—in other words, from the fact that they commune in the same totemic cult. Thus, at least insofar as the clan is not identical with the local group, totemism and the clan imply one another. Organization based on clans is the simplest we know, for it exists in all its essentials the moment a society has two primary clans. It follows that there cannot be a simpler society, so long as none with only a single clan has yet been found—and I believe no trace of that has been up to now. A religion so closely allied with the social system that is simpler than all others can be regarded as the most elementary we can know. If we can find out the origin of the beliefs just analyzed, we may well discover by the same stroke what kindled religious feeling in humanity.

It is useful, before addressing this problem, to examine the most authoritative solutions that have been offered.

I

We start with a group of scholars who believe they can explain totemism by deriving it from an earlier religion. For Tylor[1] and for Wilken,[2] totemism is a special form of the ancestor cult. For them, transmigration of souls—widespread, to be sure—is the doctrine that served as a transition between these two religious systems. A great many peoples believe that the soul does not remain eternally disembodied after death but comes again to animate some living body. Besides, "as the psychology of the inferior races establishes no clear-cut line of demarcation between the souls of men and those of animals, it has no trouble accepting the transmigration of human souls into the bodies of animals."[3] Tylor cites a number of such cases.[4] Under these circumstances, the religious respect inspired by the ancestor is quite naturally transferred to the animal with which it is thenceforth assimilated. The animal thus serving all that ancestor's descendants as the vessel of a revered being becomes a sacred thing and the object of a cult—in short, a totem for the clan that is the ancestor's issue.

Facts reported by Wilken about the societies of the Malay Archipelago would tend to prove that this is indeed the way in which totemic beliefs developed there. In Java and Sumatra, crocodiles are especially honored; people view them as benevolent protectors and make offerings to them. The cult that is also rendered to them stems from the belief that they incarnate the souls of ancestors. The Malays of the Philippines consider the crocodile to be their grandfather. The tiger is treated in the same way, for the same reasons. Similar beliefs have been found among the Bantu peoples.[5] In Melanesia, an

[1][Edward Burnett Tylor], *Primitive Culture,* vol. I [New York, Henry Holt, 1874], [vol. I,] p. 402, vol. II, p. 237, and "Remarks on Totemism, with Special Reference to Some Modern Theories [Respecting] It," in *JAI,* vol. XXVIII [1899, pp. 133–148], and vol. I, new series, p. 138.

[2][Albertus Christian Kruijt Wilken], *Het Animisme bij den Volken van den indischen Archipel* ['s Gravenhage, M. Nijhoff, 1906], pp. 69–75.

[3]Tylor, *Primitive Culture* [vol. II, p. 6].

[4]Ibid. [vol. II, pp. 6–18].

[5]G. McCall Theal, *Records of South-Eastern Africa,* vol. VII. I know this work only through an article by [James George] Frazer, "South African Totemism," which appeared in *Man* [vol. I], 1901, no. 111 [pp. 135–136].

influential man who is at the point of death sometimes announces his desire to be reincarnated in such and such an animal or plant. It is easy to see that some particular object chosen for his posthumous residence thereafter becomes sacred for his whole family.[6] Far indeed from being a primitive fact, then, totemism would then be merely the product of a more complex predecessor religion.[7]

The societies from which these examples are drawn have already attained a relatively high level of culture; at any rate, they have gone beyond the phase of pure totemism. In those societies, there are families, not totemic clans.[8] Indeed, the majority of the animals that are given religious honors are venerated not by specific family groups but by entire tribes. Thus, even if these beliefs and practices may be related to the ancient totemic cults, they are hardly well suited to revealing the origins of those cults to us,[9] since now they represent those cults only in altered forms. It is not by considering an institution when it is in full decline that we can gain an understanding of how it was formed. If we wish to know how totemism was born, it must be observed neither in Java nor in Sumatra nor in Melanesia, but in Australia. Here we find neither the cult of the dead[10] nor the doctrine of transmigration. Of course, the mythical heroes who founded the clan are believed to be regularly reincarnated—*but in human bodies only.* As we will see, each birth is the result of such a reincarnation. Thus, if the animals of the totemic species are the objects of rites, it is not because ancestral spirits are held to reside in them. While it is true that these first ancestors are often depicted in animal form (and this representation, which is very common, is an important fact that will have to be explained), belief in metempsychosis could not have given rise to it in the societies of Australia, since that belief is unknown there.

Moreover, far from being able to explain totemism, the belief itself presupposes one of the fundamental principles on which totemism rests; that is,

[6][Robert Henry] Codrington, *The Melanesians* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891], pp. 32–[33], and a personal letter of the same author cited by Tylor in "Remarks on Totemism," p. 147.

[7]Such also, with minor differences, is the solution adopted by [Wilhelm] Wundt (*Mythus und Religion* [3 vols., as vol. II, parts 1–3 of *Völkerpsychologie, Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythus und Sitte,* Leipzig, W. Englemann, 1900–1909], vol. II, p. 269).

[8]It is true that, for Tylor, the clan is but an enlarged family, so in his way of thinking, what can be said of the one group applies to the other ("Remarks on Totemism," p. 157). But this idea is highly questionable. Only the clan presupposes the totem, which has its full meaning only in and through the clan.

[9]In the same vein, [Andrew] Lang, *Social Origins* [London, Longmans, 1903], p. 150.

[10]See above, p. 59.

it assumes the very thing that must be explained. In fact, it implies, just as totemism implies, a concept of men as being closely akin to animals. If these two realms were clearly distinguished in people's minds, the soul would not be thought capable of passing so easily from one into the other. Indeed, the body of the animal would have to be considered its true homeland, because the human soul is presumed to go there the moment it regains its freedom. The doctrine of transmigration indeed postulates this singular affinity but by no means explains it. The only explanation Tylor offers is that on occasion certain traits of the man's anatomy and psychology remind people of the animal. "The savage," he says, "observes the half-human traits, actions, and characteristics of animals with sympathetic wonderment. Is the animal not the very incarnation, we might say, of qualities that are familiar to man; and when we apply epithets like lion, bear, fox, owl, parrot, viper, and worm to certain men, are we not epitomizing in a word certain traits characteristic of a human life?"[11] But if one does come upon any of these resemblances, they are ambiguous and rare. Man looks like his relatives and his friends most of all, not like plants or animals. Such rare and dubious similarities could not defeat such consistent and obvious ones, nor could they encourage man to imagine himself and his ancestors in forms that fly in the face of all his everyday experience. So the question remains, and since it is not solved, totemism cannot be said to have been explained.[12]

Finally, this whole theory rests on a fundamental misunderstanding. For Tylor as for Wundt, totemism is nothing more than a special case of animal

[11]Tylor, *Primitive Culture,* vol. II, p. 17. [Cf. Tylor's English text: "The half-human features and actions and characters of animals are watched with wondering sympathy by the savage, as by the child. The beast is the very incarnation of familiar qualities of man: and such names as lion, bear, fox, owl, parrot, viper, worm, when we apply them as epithets to men, condense into a word some leading features of a human life." Trans.]

[12][Wilhelm] Wundt, who took up Tylor's theory in its basic outlines, tried to explain this mysterious relation of man and animal otherwise—with sight of the decomposing corpse supposedly suggesting the idea of it. Having seen the worms that come out of the body, they believed that the soul was incarnated in them and departed with them. So the worms and by extension the reptiles (snakes, lizards, etc.) would be the first animals to have served as vessels for the souls of the dead; consequently, they would also have been the first to be venerated and to play the role of totems. Only later would other animals, and even plants and inanimate objects, have been elevated to the same rank. But this hypothesis does not rest on even the beginnings of a proof. Wundt claims (*Mythus und Religion,* vol. II, p. 269) that the reptiles are much more common totems than the other animals, from which he concludes that they are the most primitive. But it is impossible for me to see what can justify that assertion, in support of which the author does not adduce a single fact. It in no way emerges from the lists of totems collected, whether in Australia or in America, that any animal species, anywhere, has had a preponderant role. Totems vary from one region to another with the state of the flora and fauna. Moreover, if the original set of totems had been so narrowly restricted, it is not clear how totemism would have been able to satisfy the fundamental principle that two clans or subclans of a single tribe must have different totems.

worship.[13] We know, quite to the contrary, that it must be seen as something entirely different from a sort of zoolatry.[14] The animal is not worshipped. And far from being subordinated to it as a believer is to his god, the man is almost its equal and sometimes even treats it as his property. If the animals of the totemic species really were thought of as incarnating the ancestors, members of other clans would not be allowed to eat their flesh freely. In reality, the cult is not addressed to the animal itself but to the emblem, that is, to the image of the totem. In fact, there is no connection between this religion of the emblem and the cult of the ancestors.

Whereas Tylor reduces totemism to the cult of the ancestors, Jevons ties it to the cult of nature.[15] This is how he does so.

In the grip of confusion brought upon him by irregularities in the course of natural phenomena, man supposedly populated the world with supernatural beings.[16] Having done this, he felt the need to come to terms with the awesome forces with which he had surrounded himself. He understood that the best way to avoid being crushed by them was to ally himself with certain of them, thereby garnering their help. At that moment in history, he knew no other form of alliance and association than that created by kinship. All the members of the same clan help one another because they are kin or (what amounts to the same thing) because they consider one another as kin; on the other hand, different clans treat one another as enemies because they are of different blood. So the only way to arrange the support of supernatural beings was to adopt them and to have oneself adopted by them as kin. The well-known procedures of blood covenant enabled man to obtain this result easily. But since, at that moment, the individual did not yet have his own personality, because he was viewed only as a certain part of his group—that is, his clan—it was not the individual but the clan as a unit that contracted the kinship jointly. For the same reason, the individual did not contract it with a particular object but with the natural group, that is, with the species to which the object belonged. Man thinks of the world as he thinks of himself and, just as he does not think of himself as being separate from his clan, so he cannot

[13]"Certain animals are sometimes worshipped," says Tylor, "because they are regarded as the incarnation of the divine soul of the ancestors; this belief constitutes a sort of common denominator between the cult rendered to the shades and the cult rendered to the animals" (*Primitive Culture,* vol. II, p. 305; cf. 309 *in fine*). Similarly, Wundt presents totemism as a branch of animalism (*Mythus und Religion,* vol. II, p. 234).

[14]See above, p. 139.

[15][Frank Byron] Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion* [London, Methuen, 1902, pp. 96ff.].

[16]See above, p. 25.

think of a thing as being separate from the species to which it belongs. According to Jevons, a species of things that is united with a clan by ties of kinship is a totem.

It is certain that totemism involves a close association between a clan and a definite category of objects. But the notion Jevons puts forward—that such an association was contracted deliberately, in full awareness of the goal sought—seems in little accord with what history teaches us. Religions are complex things, and the needs they satisfy are so numerous and so obscure that they cannot possibly have originated in a well-considered act of will. Moreover, this hypothesis both sins by oversimplification and abounds in unlikelihoods. Man is said to have tried to garner the help of the supernatural beings to which things are subordinate. But in that case, he ought to have addressed himself to the most powerful among them, to those whose protection was likely to produce the maximum result.[17] Instead, the beings with which he has cemented this mystical kinship most often include the humblest that exist. Furthermore, if it truly was only a matter of creating allies and defenders, man would have tried to have as many as possible; there is no such thing as being too well protected. Yet each clan routinely contents itself with a single totem—that is, with a single protector—leaving the other clans to enjoy their own in perfect freedom. Each group strictly encloses itself within its own religious domain, never trying to encroach upon that of its neighbors. Within the terms of the hypothesis we are examining, such discretion and restraint are unintelligible.

II

Further, all of these theories wrongly omit a question that is central to the subject as a whole. We have seen that there are two sorts of totemism: that of the individual and that of the clan. The close links between them are too obvious for them to be unrelated. So, it is appropriate to ask whether the one is not derived from the other and, if the answer is yes, to ask which is the more primitive. According to the solution adopted, the problem of how totemism originated will be framed in different terms. This question is all the more pressing since it is of very general interest. Individual totemism is the individual aspect of the totemic cult. Thus, if it came first, we must say that religion

[17]Jevons himself recognizes this. "There is good reason to presume," he says, "that in the choice of an ally, man would have preferred . . . the species that possessed the greatest power" (*History of Religions*, p. 101).

was born in the individual consciousness, that it responds above all to individual aspirations, and that it has taken a collective form only secondarily.

The simplistic reasoning that still too often guides ethnographers and sociologists, in this case as in others, was bound to lead a number of scholars to explain the complex by the simple and the totem of the group by that of the individual. And indeed, the theory argued by Frazer in his *Golden Bough,*[18] by Hill Tout,[19] Miss Fletcher,[20] Boas,[21] and Swanton,[22] is of this kind. Moreover, since religion is widely viewed as an altogether private and personal thing, this theory has the advantage of being in accord with the idea many people have of religion. Within this perspective, the totem of the clan can only be an individual totem that has spread. A prominent man who has experienced the value of a totem he freely chose for himself transmits it to his descendants. Multiplying as time goes on, these descendants eventually form the extended family that is the clan; thus does the totem become collective.

Hill Tout thought he found support for that theory in the way totemism is understood in certain societies of the American Northwest, notably by the Salish and the Thompson River Indians. Both individual totemism and the totemism of the clan are found among these peoples, but they either do not coexist in the same tribe or are unequally developed when they do. They vary in inverse proportion with one another. Where the clan totem tends to be the general rule, individual totem tends to disappear, and vice versa. Is this not to say that the first is a more recent form of the second, which replaces and thus excludes it?[23] Mythology appears to confirm this interpretation. In the same societies, it turns out, the ancestor of the clan is not a totemic animal, but the founder of the group is usually depicted as a human being who

[18][James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion,* 2d ed., vol. III, New York, Macmillan, 1894], pp. 416ff.; see esp. p. 419 n. 5. In more recent articles, to be analyzed below, Frazer has put forward a different theory that nevertheless does not completely exclude from his thinking the one presented in the *Golden Bough.*

[19][Charles Hill Tout], "The Origin of the Totemism of the Aborigines of British Columbia," *RSC,* vol. VII, §2 (2d series), (1901) pp. 3ff. Similarly, "Report on the Ethnology of the Statlumh," *JAI,* vol. XXXV (1905), p. 141. Hill Tout has answered various objections that have been made against his theory in volume IX of the *RSC,* pp. 61–99.

[20]Alice C. Fletcher, "The Import of the Totem: [A Study from the Omaha Tribe]," *RSI for 1897* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1898), pp. 577–586.

[21]Franz Boas, "The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians" [in *RNM for 1895,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], pp. 323ff., 336–338, 393.

[22][John Reed Swanton], "The Development of the Clan System [and of Secret Societies among the North-Western Tribes]," in *AA,* vol. VI (new ser., 1904), pp. 477–864.

[23]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 142.

at some point entered into relations and close dealings with a mythical animal, from which he is held to have acquired his totemic emblem. This emblem, with the special powers that are attached to it, is then passed by inheritance to the descendants of the mythical hero. Hence these peoples themselves appear to see the collective totem as an individual one that was passed on in a single family.[24] Furthermore, even today a father sometimes transmits his own totem to his children. So to imagine that the collective totem has had this same origin universally is no more than to state that something still observable in the present was the same in the past.[25]

Still to be explained is the origin of individual totemism. The response to this question varies among authors.

Hill Tout views it as a special case of fetishism. For him, it is the individual who, feeling himself surrounded by dreaded spirits, feels the same emotion that Jevons attributed to the clan: To sustain himself, he seeks some powerful protector in the hidden world. Thus is the custom of the personal totem established.[26] For Frazer, this same institution is a subterfuge, a military ruse men invent to escape certain dangers. We know that, according to a very common belief in a great many lower societies, the human soul can temporarily leave the body in which it lives, without ill effects; no matter how far away from the body it may go, it goes on animating that body by a kind of action at a distance. But at certain critical moments when life is thought to be particularly threatened, there may be something to gain by withdrawing the soul from the body and depositing it in a place or thing where it would be safer. There are, in fact, various methods of extracting the soul, thereby removing it from some real or imaginary danger.

For example, when people are on the point of entering a newly built house, a magician extracts their souls and places them in a bag, for return to the owners once the threshold has been crossed. This is done because the moment of entering a new house is exceptionally critical. There is a risk of disturbing and thus offending the spirits that live in the ground, especially under the door sill, and if a man did not take precautions, they could make him pay dearly for his boldness. Once the danger is past, once he has been able to prevent their anger, and even garner their support by conducting cer-

[24]Ibid., p. 150. Cf. [Franz Boas, "First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia," in *BAAS, Fifth Report of the Committee on the North-Western Tribes of the Dominion of Canada* (London, Offices of the Association, 1890),] p. 24. I have reported a myth of this sort above.

[25]Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 147.

[26]Hill Tout, "Totemism of the Aborigines," p. 12.

tain rites, the souls can safely return to their usual place.[27] This same belief, Hill Tout thinks, gave rise to the individual totem. To protect themselves from magical charms, men thought it prudent to hide their souls in the anonymous crowd of an animal or plant species. But having set up such dealings, each individual found himself closely joined with the animal or plant in which his life-principle presumably resided. Two beings so closely joined ended up by being considered more or less indistinguishable: They were thought to participate in one another's nature. Once accepted, this belief eased and activated the transformation of the personal totem into a hereditary totem and, thereafter, into a collective one, for it seemed altogether obvious that this kinship of nature must be transmitted by heredity from father to children.

I will not tarry long in discussing these two explanations of the individual totem. They are ingenious intellectual constructions, but they are totally without empirical support. For totemism to be reducible to fetishism, it would have to be established that fetishism preceded totemism. Not only is no evidence given to prove this hypothesis, but it is also contradicted by all we know. The ill-defined collection of rites that are given the name fetishism seems to appear only among peoples who have already arrived at a certain level of civilization; it is a kind of cult that is unknown in Australia. The churinga has been called a fetish,[28] true enough, but even if that characterization was warranted, it could not demonstrate the priority that is assumed. Quite to the contrary, the churinga presupposes totemism, since in its very essence it is an instrument of the totemic cult and since it owes the virtues ascribed to it to totemic beliefs alone.

Turning now to Frazer's theory, this author assumes a kind of thoroughgoing idiocy on the part of the primitive that the facts do not allow us to ascribe to him. He does have a logic, strange though it may sometimes seem to us. Short of being utterly without logic, he could not be guilty of the reasoning that is imputed to him. Nothing was more natural than for him to have believed that he could ensure the survival of his soul by hiding it in a secret and inaccessible place, as so many heroes of myths and legends are said to have done. But how could he have judged his soul to be safer in an animal's body than in his own? Of course, the chances are that it could more

[27]Frazer, *The Golden Bough* vol. III, pp. 351ff. Wilken had already noted similar facts in "De Simonsage," in *De Gids, 1890;* "De Betrekking tusschen Menschen-Dieren en Plantenleve," in *Indische Gids,* 1884, 1888; *Ueber das Haaropfer,* in *Revue coloniale internationale,* pp. 1886–1887.

[28]For example, [Erhard] Eylmann in *Die Eingeborenen der Kolonie Südaustralien* [Berlin, D. Reimer, 1908], p. 199.

easily have escaped the spells of the magician by being lost in the species, but it thereby found itself at the same time a sitting duck for hunters. Hiding it in a physical form that exposed it to danger at all times was an odd way to shelter it.[29] Most of all, it is inconceivable that whole peoples should have been able to give themselves over to such an eccentricity.[30] Finally, in a great many cases, the function of the individual totem is manifestly very different from the function Frazer ascribes to it. First and foremost, it is a means of conferring unusual powers upon magicians, hunters, and warriors.[31] So far as the solidarity of the man with the thing is concerned (given all the drawbacks of solidarity), it is accepted as an unavoidable consequence of the rite, but is not desired in and of itself.

Another reason not to tarry over this controversy is that it is beside the point. What is important to know, above all, is whether the individual totem really is the primitive fact from which the collective totem derives. Depending upon our answer, we will have to look in two opposite directions for the seat of religious life.

There is such a confluence of decisive facts against the hypothesis of Hill Tout, Miss Fletcher, Boas, and Frazer that one wonders how it could have been accepted so easily and so widely.

First, we know that man often has a pressing interest not only in respecting the animals of the species that serves as his personal totem but also in having it respected by his fellow men: His own life is at stake. Thus, even

[29]Mrs. Parker says of the Euahlayi that if the Yunbeai "confers exceptional power, it also exposes one to exceptional dangers, for all that injures the animal injures the man" ([Catherine Somerville Field Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe,* London, A. Constable, 1905], p. 29).

[30]In an earlier work ("The Origin of Totemism," in *FR* (May, 1899), pp. 844–845), Frazer raises the objection himself. He says, "If I left my soul in the body of a rabbit, and if my brother John (member of a different clan) kills, roasts, and eats that rabbit, what happens to my soul? To prevent this danger, my brother John has to know this situation of my soul, and in consequence, when he kills a rabbit, he must be careful to take that soul out of it and give it back to me before cooking the animal and making it his dinner." Frazer believes he finds this practice customary in the tribes of central Australia. Each year, during a rite that I will describe below, when the animals of the new generation reach maturity, the first game killed is presented to the men of the totem, who eat a little; and it is only afterward that the men of the other clans may eat it freely. This, says Frazer, is a means of returning to the men of the totem the soul that they may have entrusted to those animals. But apart from the fact that this interpretation of the rite is completely arbitrary, it is difficult not to find this method of protection extraordinary. The ceremony is annual, allowing many days to pass after the moment the animal was killed. During this time, what has become of the soul it guarded and of the individual whose life-principle of life that soul is? But it is pointless to emphasize all that is unlikely about that explanation.

[31]Parker, *Euahlayi,* p. 20; [Alfred William] Howitt, "Australian Medicine Men," in *JAI,* vol. XVI (1887), 34, [49–50]; Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 146.

if collective totemism was not the generalized form of the individual totem, it should rest on the same principle. Not only should the people of a clan abstain from killing and eating their totemic animal themselves, but they should also do everything in their power to impose this same restriction upon others. As it turns out, far from imposing any such privation on the whole tribe, each clan (by means of the rites that I will later describe) takes steps to ensure that the plant or animal whose name it bears increases and prospers, so as to provide abundant food to the other clans. Thus it should at least be granted that individual totemism profoundly transformed itself in becoming collective and that this transformation must be explained.

Second, how can this hypothesis explain why, except where totemism is in decline, two clans of the same tribe always have different totems? Nothing would seem to prevent two or several members of a single tribe from choosing personal totems from the same animal species, despite their having no tie of kinship, and then passing it on to their descendants. Does it not happen today that two distinct families bear the same name? The strictly regulated manner in which totems and subtotems are distributed between the two phratries first, and then among the various clans of each phratry, obviously presupposes a societal consensus and a collective organization. In other words, totemism is something other than an individual practice that has spontaneously generalized itself.

Furthermore, collective totemism can be reduced to individual totemism only if the differences between them are misconstrued. The one is assigned to the child by birth and is an element of his civil status. The other is acquired in the course of life and presupposes the performance of a specific rite as well as a change of state. Some think they are lessening this distance by inserting between them, as a kind of middle term, the right that anyone who has a totem supposedly has to transmit it to whomever he pleases. But wherever one observes them, such transfers are rare and relatively exceptional; they can be done only by magicians or other persons gifted with special powers,[32] and, in any event, they can take place only by means of ritual ceremonies that effect the change. So it would then be necessary to explain how something that was the prerogative of certain people later became the right of all; how something that implied a profound change in the religious and moral constitution of the individual could have become an element of that

[32]According to Hill Tout himself, "The gift or transmission (of a personal totem) can only be effectuated by certain persons like shamans or men who possess great mystical power" ("Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 146). Cf. Parker, *Euahlayi*, pp. 29–30.

constitution; and, finally, how a transmission that at first was the outcome of a rite, was considered thereafter to produce itself, inescapably and without the intervention of any human will.

In support of his interpretation, Hill Tout alleges that certain myths impute an individual origin to the totem of the clan. They tell how the totemic emblem was acquired by a particular individual who then transmitted it to his descendants. These myths, however, are taken from Indian tribes in North America, that is, from societies that have attained a rather high level of culture. How could a mythology so far removed from its origins enable us to reconstruct the original form of an institution with any confidence? The likelihood is that intervening causes greatly distorted the memory that these men could have kept. More than that, it is very easy to set against these myths other myths that seem more primitive and whose meaning is entirely different. In the myths, the totem is represented as the very being from which the clan is descended. Hence it constitutes the substance of the clan; individuals carry it from birth, and, far from having come to them from outside themselves, it is part of their flesh and blood.[33] Furthermore, the very myths on which Hill Tout relies themselves echo that ancient idea. The eponymous founder of the clan does indeed have the form of a man, but it is a man thought to have ended up resembling a definite species of animals after having lived among them. This probably happened because there came a time when minds became too sophisticated to go on accepting, as they had in the past, that men could be an animal's offspring. They therefore substituted a human being for the animal ancestor, the idea of which had become untenable; but they imagined the man as having acquired certain animal features by imitation or by other means. Thus, even this recent mythology bears the mark of a more distant epoch when the totem of the clan was not at all conceived of as a sort of individual creation.

But this hypothesis does not merely raise serious logical difficulties; it is also directly contradicted by the facts that follow.

If individual totemism was the primitive fact, then the more primitive the societies, the more developed and more apparent it should be; and inversely, we would expect to see it lose ground to the collective totem among the more advanced peoples and then disappear. The opposite is true. The Australian tribes are far more backward than those of North America, but Australia is the classic locale of collective totemism. *In the great majority of*

[33]Cf. [Edwin Sidney] Hartland, "Totemism and Some Recent Discoveries," *Folklore,* vol. XI [1900], pp. 59ff.

tribes, it reigns alone, whereas there is none, to my knowledge, in which individual totemism is practiced alone.[34] Individual totemism in its characteristic form is found in an infinitesimal number of tribes.[35] And where it is found, it is most often in only a rudimentary state, consisting of individual and optional practices without wider scope. Only magicians know the art of creating mystical relationships with the animal species to which they are not naturally related. Ordinary folk do not enjoy this privilege.[36] In America, on the other hand, the collective totem is in full decline, and in the societies of the Northwest particularly, it no longer has anything more than a rather unobtrusive religious character. Inversely, the individual totem plays a large role among these same peoples, where it is credited with great efficacy and has become an authentically public institution. This is so because it is characteristic of a more advanced civilization. This, no doubt, is how the inversion between these two forms of totemism that Hill Tout thought he saw is to be understood. If individual totemism is almost entirely absent where collective totemism is fully developed, it is not because the second gave way to the first but the other way around: because not all the conditions necessary to its existence have been met.

Still more conclusive is the fact that individual totemism, far from having given rise to the totemism of the clan, presupposes the clan. Individual totemism was born in and moves within the framework of collective totemism, forming an integral part of it. In fact, in the very societies where it is preponderant, the novices may not take just any animal as their personal totem; they are not permitted to make their choices outside a certain number of particular species assigned to each clan. On the other hand, the species that belong to each clan thus become its exclusive property; the members of a foreign clan may not usurp them.[37] Those species are thought of as having close ties of dependence with the one that serves as the totem of the entire clan. Indeed, in some cases, these relationships are detectable, such as those

[34]Except perhaps among the Kurnai, but in that tribe, there are sexual as well as personal totems.

[35]Among the Wotjobaluk, the Buandik, the Wiradjuri, the Yuin and the tribes neighboring Maryborough (Queensland). See [Alfred William] Howitt, *Native Tribes [of South-East Australia,* New York, Macmillan, 1904], pp. 114–147; [Robert Hamilton] Mathews, "Ethnological Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria", *RSNSW,* vol. XXXVIII (1904), p. 291. Cf. [Northcote Whitridge] Thomas, "Further Notes on Mr. Hill Tout's *Views of Totemism,*" in *Man* [vol. IV], 1904, 53, p. 85.

[36]This is true for the Euahlayi and for phenomena of personal totemism noted by Howitt in "Australian Medicine Men," pp. 34, 45, 49–50.

[37]Fletcher, "The Import of the Totem," p. 586; Boas, "The Kwakiutl Indians," p. 322. Similarly, Boas, "First Report on the Indians of British Columbia," p. 25; Hill Tout, "Ethnology of the Statlumh," p. 148.

in which the individual totem represents a part or a particular aspect of the collective totem.[38] Among the Wotjobaluk, each member of the clan considers the personal totems of his fellows as being somewhat his own;[39] hence these are most probably subtotems. Just as the species presupposes the genus, so the subtotem presupposes the totem. Therefore, the first form of individual religion that we meet in history appears to us not as the active principle of the public religion but as merely an aspect of it. Far from being the seed of the collective cult, the cult that the individual organizes for himself, and within his inner self, is in a sense the collective cult adapted to the needs of the individual.

III

In a more recent book,[40] which was suggested to him by the books of Spencer and Gillen, Frazer tried to replace the explanation of totemism that he originally proposed (and that I have just discussed) with a new one. This new explanation rests on the postulate that the totemism of the Arunta is the

[38]The proper names of different *gentes,* says Boas of the Tlinkit, are derived from their respective totems, each *gens* having its special names. The connection between the name and the totem (collective) is sometimes not very apparent, but it always exists (Boas, "First Report on the Indians of British Columbia," p. 25). The phenomenon of individual names' being the property of the clan, and distinctive to it as surely as its totem, is also observed among the Iroquois ([Lewis Henry] Morgan, *Ancient Society: [Or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization,* London, Macmillan, 1877], p. 78); among the Wyandot ([John Wesley] Powell, "Wyandot Government," *First Annual Report,* [1879–1880], *BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1881], p. 59); among the Shawnee, the Sauk, the Fox (Morgan, *Ancient Society,* pp. 72, 76–77); among the Omaha ([James Owen] Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology," in *Third Annual Report* [(1881–1882)] [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1884], pp. 227ff.). We know what relation exists between given names and personal totems (see above, p. 159.)

[39]"For example," says Mathews, "if you ask a Wartwurt man what his totem is, he will first tell you his personal totem, but, most likely, he will then enumerate the other personal totems of his clan" ("The Aboriginal Tribes," p. 291).

[40][James George] Frazer, "The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism among the Australian Aborigines," in *FR* [vol. LXXXIV, old series, vol. LXVIII, new series] (July 1905), pp. 162ff., and (September 1905), p. 452. Cf. Frazer "The Origin of Totemism," *FR,* vol. LXXI, old series, vol. LXV, new series (April 1899), pp. 648ff. and (May 1899), pp. 835ff. These latter articles, which are a little older, differ from the more recent on one point, but the core is not fundamentally different. Both are reproduced in *Totemism and Exogamy,* vol. I [London, Macmillan, 1910], pp. 89–172. See, in the same vein, [Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen, "Some Remarks on Totemism as Applied to Australian Tribes," *JAI,* vol. XXVIII (1899), pp. 275–280, and the comments of Frazer on the same subject, *Totemism and Exogamy,* London, Macmillan, 1910, pp. 281–286.

most primitive we know. Frazer even goes so far as to say that it barely differs from the truly and absolutely original type.[41]

What is noteworthy about this explanation is that the totems are attached neither to persons nor to definite groups of persons but to places. Each totem does indeed have its center in a particular place. It is there that the souls of the first ancestors who formed the totemic group at the beginning of time are thought to have their preferred residence. There is the sanctuary where the churingas are kept; there, the cult is celebrated. This geographic distribution of totems also determines the manner in which the clans recruit their members. The child's totem is thus neither its father's nor its mother's but the one whose center is at the place where its mother believes she felt the first symptoms of her coming motherhood. The Arunta does not know the precise relations that connect the fact of begetting to the sexual act,[42] it is said, but attributes every conception to a kind of mystic impregnation. According to him, conception implies that an ancestral soul has gone into the body of a woman, there to become the principle of a new life. Thus, when the woman feels the first stirrings of the infant, she imagines that she has just been entered by one of the souls whose primary residence is at the place where she finds herself. And since the child born thereafter is none other than that ancestor reincarnate, it necessarily has the same totem, which is to say that its clan is determined by the locality where he is held to have been mystically conceived.

This local totemism would then be the original form of totemism, or at most but a very short step away from it. Frazer explains its origin thus.

At the precise instant when the woman feels she is pregnant, she must be thinking that the spirit with which she believes herself possessed has come to her from the objects surrounding her, and in particular from one that was attracting her attention at that instant. If she has been busy collecting some plant or looking after an animal, she will believe that the soul of this animal or that plant has passed into her. First among the things to which she would be especially inclined to attribute her pregnancy are the foods she has just eaten. If she has recently had emu or yam, she will be in no doubt that an emu or a yam has been born and is developing in her. That being the case,

[41]"Perhaps we may . . . say that it is but one remove from the original pattern, the absolutely primitive type of totemism" (Frazer, "The Beginnings," p. 455).

[42]On this point, the testimony of [Carl] Strehlow confirms that of Spencer and Gillen ([*Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*], vol. II [New York, Dover, 1968], p. 52). In the opposite vein, see [Andrew] Lang, *The Secret of the Totem* [London, Longmans, 1905], p. 190.

one understands why, in turn, the baby should be considered a kind of yam or emu, why he should regard himself as a kinsman of animals or plants of the same species, why he should show them friendship and consideration, why he should bar himself from eating them, and so forth.[43] From then on, totemism exists in its fundamental features. Since, supposedly, the native's idea of conception gave birth to totemism, Frazer calls this primeval totemism "conceptional."

All the other forms of totemism would then derive from this first type. "If several women, one after another, perceive the first signs of maternity in the same place and the same circumstances, that place will be regarded as being haunted by spirits of a particular sort; and so, in time, the region will be endowed with totemic centers and divided into totemic districts."[44] This is how, on Frazer's account, the local totemism of the Arunta was born. For the totems to become detached from their territorial base, all it will take is to imagine that instead of remaining immutably fixed in one place, the ancestral souls can move freely over the whole territory and follow the travels of the men and women who are of the same totem as they. In that fashion, it will be possible for a woman to be impregnated by a spirit of her own totem or her husband's, even though she is living in a different totemic district. Depending on whether it is the husband's totem or the wife's that is imagined to be trailing the young couple, on the lookout for opportunities to reincarnate itself, the child's totem will be that of its father or mother. In fact, the Gnanji and the Umbaia, on the one hand, and the Urabunna, on the other, do indeed explain their systems of descent in this way.

But like Tylor's, this theory begs the question. If it is to be imaginable that human souls are the souls of animals or plants, it must already be believed that man takes what is most fundamental to him from either the animal or plant world. This belief is precisely one of those on which totemism is based, so to put it forward as self-evident is to assume what must be explained.

Moreover, the religious character of the totem is wholly unexplainable in terms of this view, for the vague belief in an obscure kinship of man and animal is not enough to found a cult. This merging of distinct realms cannot lead to dividing the world between the sacred and the profane. It is true that

[43]A closely related idea had already been expressed by [Alfred C.] Haddon in his "Address to the Anthropological Section" (*BAAS*, 1902, 8ff.). He assumes that each local group originally had a food that was especially its own. The plant or animal that thus served as the principal item of consumption would have become the totem of the group. All these explanations imply that the prohibitions against eating the totemic animal were not original and were even preceded by the opposite prescription.

[44]Frazer, "The Beginnings," p. 458.

Frazer is self-consistent and refuses to see totemism as a religion—on the grounds that there are neither spiritual beings nor prayers nor invocations nor offerings, and so on. According to him, it is only a system of magic, by which he means a crude and erroneous sort of science, a first try at discovering the laws of things.[45] But we know what is wrong with this idea of religion and magic. There is religion as soon as the sacred is distinguished from the profane, and we have seen that totemism is a vast system of sacred things. So to explain it is to show how those things came to acquire that trait.[46] Tylor does not even set this problem.

What brings about the downfall of this system is that the postulate on which it rests is untenable. All of Frazer's argumentation assumes that the local totemism of the Arunta is the most primitive known, and in particular that it is distinctly prior to hereditary totemism, whether matrilineal or patrilineal. By following only the facts available in the first work of Spencer and Gillen, I have been able to conjecture that there must have been a moment in the history of the Arunta people when the totems were transmitted by inheritance from the mother to the children instead of being attached to localities.[47] This conjecture is definitively proved by the new facts that Strehlow[48] discovered and that confirm previous observations by Schulze.[49] In fact, these two authors inform us that, even now, in addition to his local totem, each Arunta has another that is independent of any geographic condition and belongs to him by birth: that of his mother. Like the first, this second totem is considered by the natives as a friendly and protective power that provides for their food, warns them of possible dangers, and so forth. They are permitted to take part in its cult. When they are buried, the body is so arranged that the

[45]Frazer, "The Origin of Totemism," p. 835, and "The Beginnings," pp. 162ff.

[46]All the while seeing totemism as nothing but a system of magic, Frazer recognizes that one sometimes finds in magic the first seeds of religion properly so called ("The Beginnings," p. 163). On the way in which he thinks religion developed out of magic, see *Golden Bough,* 2d ed., vol. I, pp. 75–78 n. 2.

[47][Emile Durkheim], "Sur le totémisme," *AS,* vol. V (1902), pp. 82–121. Cf. on this same question, [Edwin Sidney] Hartland, "Presidential Address [Totemism and Some Recent Discoveries,]" *Folklore,* vol. XI [(1900)] p. 75; [Andrew] Lang, "A Theory of Arunta Totemism," *Man* [vol. IV] (1904), no. 44, [pp. 67–69]; Lang, "Conceptional Totemism and Exogamy," *Man,* vol. VII, 1907, 55, pp. 88–90; Lang, *The Secret of the Totem,* ch. IV; [Northcote W.] Thomas, "Arunta Totemism [a Note on Mr. Lang's Theory]," *Man,* vol. IV, (1904), 68, pp. 99–101; P. W. Schmidt, "Die Stellung der Aranda unter den australischen Stämmen, in *ZE,* vol. XL (1908), pp. 866ff.

[48]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, pp. 57–58.

[49][Rev. Louis] Schulze, "Aborigines of the Upper and Middle Finke River," *RSSA,* vol. XVI, 1891, pp. 238–239.

face is turned toward the region where the mother's totemic center is this, because the center is also in some respect that of the deceased. And thus, it is given the name *tmara altjira,* which means, "camp of the totem that is associated with me." Hence it is certain that, among the Arunta, hereditary totemism in the maternal line did not come later than local totemism but, quite the contrary, must have preceded it. Today the maternal totem has no more than an accessory and complementary role; it is a second totem, and this explains why it could have escaped such careful and well-informed observers as Spencer and Gillen. But for that totem to have been able to maintain itself in this second rank, used side by side with the local totem, there must have been a time when it occupied the first rank in religious life. It is in part a totem that has lapsed, but one that harks back to an era when the totemic organization of the Arunta was very different from today's. Thus is Frazer's entire construction undermined at its foundation.[50]

IV

Although Andrew Lang has vigorously attacked Frazer's theory, his own, as proposed in recent works,[51] is close to it on more than one point. Indeed, like Frazer, he takes the whole of totemism to consist of belief in a sort of consubstantiality between man and animal, but he explains it differently.

He derives it entirely from the fact that the totem is a name. According to him, from the moment organized human groups come into existence,[52] each feels the need to distinguish itself from the neighboring groups with which it is in contact and, to this end, gives them different names. Names taken from the environing flora and fauna are preferred, because animals and plants can easily be designated by means of gestures or represented by draw-

[50]It is true that Frazer says, in the conclusion of *Totemism and Exogamy* (vol. IV, pp. 58–59), that there exists a still more ancient totemism than that of the Arunta. It is that which [W. H. R.] Rivers observed on the Banks Islands ("Totemism in Polynesia and Melanesia," *JAI* vol. XXXIX [1909], p. 172. Among the Arunta, it is an ancestor spirit that is held to impregnate the mother; on the Banks Islands, it is an animal or plant spirit, as the theory supposes. But as the ancestral spirits of the Arunta have an animal or plant form, the difference is upheld. Hence, I have not treated it in my exposition.

[51]Lang, *Social Origins,* esp. chap. 8, "The Origin of Totem Names and Beliefs"; and *The Secret of the Totem.*

[52]Especially in his *Social Origins,* Lang uses conjecture to try to reconstruct the form these original groups must have had. It seems unnecessary to restate those hypotheses, which do not affect his theory of totemism.

ings.[53] The more or less exact resemblances that men can have with one or another of those objects defines the manner in which these collective namings are distributed among the groups.[54]

It is well known that "for primitive minds, names and the things designated by those names are joined in a mystic and transcendental relationship."[55] For example, the name an individual bears is not regarded simply as a word or a conventional sign but as an essential part of the individual himself. Thus, when it is the name of an animal, the man who bears it must necessarily believe that he possesses the most characteristic traits of that animal. This idea gained credence the more easily as the historical origins of these namings receded into the past and gradually disappeared from people's memories. Myths formed to make this strange ambiguity of human nature easier to envisage. To explain it, people thought of the animal as the man's ancestor or of both as descendants of a common ancestor. Thus were conceived the bonds of kinship that are said to join each clan with the species whose name it bears. Once the origins of that mythical kinship are explained, it seems to our author that the mystery of totemism is gone.

But, then, from what does the religious character of totemic beliefs and practices arise? Man's belief that he is an animal of some species does not explain why he imputes amazing virtues to that species or, most of all, why he renders a genuine cult to the images that symbolize it. To this question Lang offers the same response as Frazer: He denies that totemism is a religion. "I find in Australia," he says, "no example of religious practices such as praying to, feeding, or burying the totem."[56] Only in a later age and after it was already organized was totemism, so to speak, attracted to and absorbed into a system of properly religious ideas. According to an observation by Howitt,[57] when the natives set out to explain the totemic institutions, they attribute them neither to the totems themselves, nor to a man, but to some supernatural being such as Bunjil or Baiame. "If," says Lang, "we accept this testimony, one source of the religious character of totemism stands revealed to us.

[53]On this point, Lang is close to the theory of Julius Pikler (see [Julius] Pikler and [Felix] Szomlo, *Der Ursprung des Totemismus. Ein Beitrag zur materialistischen Geschichtstheorie* [Berlin, K. Hoffmann, 1900], p. 36). The difference between the two hypotheses is that Pikler ascribes greater importance to the pictographic representation of the name than to the name itself.

[54]Lang, *Social Origins,* p. 166.

[55]Lang, *The Secret of the Totem,* pp. 116–117, 121.

[56]Ibid., p. 136.

[57]Howitt, "Further Notes on the Australian Class Systems," *JAI* [vol. XVIII, 1889], pp. 53–54; cf. *Native Tribes,* pp. 89, 488, 498.

Totemism obeys the decrees of Bunjil, as the Cretans obeyed the decrees of Zeus at Minos." According to Lang, the notion of high gods was formed outside the totemic system. Therefore this system is not in itself a religion; it became colored with religiousness only through contact with a religion, properly so called.

But those very myths are in conflict with Lang's idea of totemism. If the Australians had seen the totem as nothing more than a human and profane thing, they would not have imagined making a divine institution out of it. If, on the other hand, they felt the need to relate the totem to a deity, they did so because they acknowledged its sacredness. These mythological interpretations thus display, but do not explain, the religious nature of totemism.

Besides, Lang himself realizes that this solution cannot possibly do. He admits that totemic things are treated with religious respect[58] and that, in particular, the blood of the animal (like that of the man, incidentally) is the object of multiple prohibitions or of taboos, as he says, that this more or less late mythology cannot explain.[59] Where, then, do they come from? Lang answers the question in these terms: "As soon as the groups with names of animals had developed universally held beliefs about wakan and mana, or about the mystical and sacred quality of the blood, the various totemic taboos must also have made their appearance."[60] As we will see in the next chapter, the words *wakan* and *mana* imply the idea of *sacred* itself (the first is taken from the language of the Sioux, the second from that of the Melanesian peoples). To explain this sacredness of totemic things by postulating it is to answer the question with the question. What should be shown is where this notion of wakan comes from, and how it is applied to the totem and to all that derives from the totem. So long as these two problems go unsolved, nothing is explained.

V

I have reviewed these principal explanations of totemic beliefs,[61] trying to do justice to each one individually. Now that this examination is completed, I can note that all are subject to the same criticism.

[58]"With reverence," as Lang says (*The Secret of the Totem*, p. 111).

[59]To these taboos, Lang adds those that are at the basis of the practices of exogamy.

[60]Lang, ibid., pp. 136–137.

[61]I have not spoken about Spencer's theory. This is because it is only a special case of the general theory by which he explains the transformation of the cult of the dead into a cult of nature. Having already set it forth, I would be repeating myself here.

If we restrict our inquiry to what these formulas literally say, they seem to fall into two categories. Some (Frazer's and Lang's) deny the religious character of totemism, but that amounts to denying the facts. Others acknowledge this religious character but believe they can explain it by deriving it from an earlier religion, treating totemism as its offspring. In reality, this distinction is more apparent than real, the first category being contained within the second. Neither Frazer nor Lang has been able to hold on to his principle entirely and explain totemism as if it was not a religion. The nature of the facts forced them to slide notions of a religious nature into their explanations. We have just seen how Lang had to bring in the idea of the sacred, the bedrock idea of any religion. For his part, Frazer overtly calls on the ideas of soul and spirit in the two theories he proposed, one after the other. In his view, totemism arises either from the fact that men believed they could safely place their souls in external objects or from the fact that they attributed conception to a kind of disembodied impregnation, the agent of which is a spirit. Since the soul and, even more, the spirit are sacred things and objects of rites, the ideas that express them are fundamentally religious. In consequence, it is in vain that Frazer makes totemism out to be merely a system of magic, for he too manages to explain it only in terms of another religion.

But I have shown the inadequacies of naturism and animism. One cannot use them, as Tylor and Jevons did, without exposing oneself to the same objections. And yet neither Frazer nor Lang seems even to glimpse the possibility of another hypothesis.[62] From another standpoint, we see that totemism is closely allied with the most primitive social organization that is known and even, in all probability, that is conceivable. Therefore, to assume it to have been preceded by another religion different from it only in degree is to leave behind the data of observation and enter the domain of arbitrary and unverifiable conjectures. If we wish to stay in accord with the results previously obtained, we must, while affirming the religious nature of totemism, refrain from reducing it to a religion different from it. This is not because there could be any question of designating nonreligious ideas as its causes. But among the representations that are part of its origin, and of which it is the result, there may be some that by themselves invoke its religious character, and invoke it directly. These are the ones we must look for.

[62]Except that Lang derives the idea of high gods from another source. It is supposedly due, as I have said, to a sort of primitive revelation. But Lang does not include this idea in his explanation of totemism.

CHAPTER SIX

ORIGINS OF THESE BELIEFS (CONTINUED)

*The Notion of Totemic Principle, or Mana, and the Idea of Force**

Since individual totemism comes after that of the clan and in fact seems to be derived from it, clan totemism must be taken up first. Before going further, however, since my analysis thus far has broken it down into a multiplicity of beliefs that may appear disparate, I must try to visualize its internal coherence.

I

We have seen that totemism places figurative representations of the totem in the first rank of the things it considers sacred; then come the animals or plants whose name the clan bears, and finally the members of the clan. Since all these things are sacred in the same right, albeit unequally so, their religiousness cannot arise from any of the particular traits that distinguish them from one another. If a given animal or plant is the object of reverent fear, that reverence is not evoked by its particular traits. The members of the clan have the same status, albeit to a slightly lesser degree, and the mere image of this same plant or animal evokes even more marked respect. Obviously the similar feelings that these dissimilar kinds of things evoke in the consciousness of the faithful, and that constitute their sacredness, can derive only from a principle that is shared by all alike—totemic emblems, people of the clan, and individuals of the totemic species. This is the common principle to which the

*It may be that, here, the shift from *notion* to *idée* connotes a difference in clarity and distinctness. It may also be that Durkheim's shifts among those terms, plus *conception* and *concept*, sometimes amount to no more than stylistic variation. I have left the question open in this chapter by rendering each with its English counterpart.

cult is in reality addressed. In other words, totemism is not the religion of certain animals, certain men, or certain images; it is the religion of a kind of anonymous and impersonal force that is identifiable in each of these beings but identical to none of them. None possesses it entirely, and all participate in it. Such is its independence from the particular subjects in which it is incarnated that it both precedes and outlives them. The individuals die; the generations pass on and are replaced by others; but this force remains always present, alive, and the same. It animates the generations of today as it animated those of yesterday and will animate those of tomorrow. Taking the word "god" in a very broad sense, one could say that it is the god that each totemic cult worships. But it is an impersonal god, without name, without history, immanent in the world, diffused in a numberless multitude of things.

And yet we still have only an incomplete idea of the true ubiquity that quasi-divine entity has. It does not merely pervade the whole totemic species, the whole clan, and all the objects that symbolize the totem; the scope of its influence is wider still. We have seen that, above and beyond those eminently sacred things, all the things that are ascribed to the clan as dependents of the principal totem have some measure of the same sacredness. Because certain of them are protected by restrictions and others have definite functions in the cult ceremonies, they too are to some degree religious. This quality of religiousness does not differ in kind from that of the totem under which they are classified; it necessarily derives from the same principle. This is so because—to repeat the metaphorical expression I just used—the totemic god is in them, just as it is in the totemic species and in the people of the clan. That it is the soul of so many different beings shows how different it is from the beings in which it resides.

But the Australian does not conceive of this impersonal force abstractly. Influences that we will have to seek out led him to conceive of it in the form of an animal or plant, that is, in the form of a material thing. Here, in reality, is what the totem amounts to: It is the tangible form in which that intangible substance is represented in the imagination; diffused through all sorts of disparate beings, that energy alone is the real object of the cult. We are now in a better position to comprehend what the native means when he affirms, for example, that the people of the Crow phratry are crows. He does not exactly mean that they are crows in the everyday empirical sense of the word, but that the same principle is found in all of them. That principle constitutes what they all most fundamentally are, is shared between people and animals of the same name, and is conceptualized as having the outward form of the crow. In this way the universe, as totemism conceives it, is pervaded and enlivened by a number of forces that the imagination represents in forms that, with only a few exceptions, are borrowed from either the animal or the plant

kingdom. There are as many of these forces as there are clans in the tribe, and each of them pervades certain categories of things of which it is the essence and the life-principle.

When I speak of these principles as forces, I do not use the word in a metaphorical sense; they behave like real forces. In a sense, they are even physical forces that bring about physical effects mechanically. Does an individual come into contact with them without having taken proper precautions? He receives a shock that has been compared with the effect of an electrical charge. They sometimes appear to be conceived of more or less as fluids that escape via the extremities.[1] When they enter into a body that is not meant to receive them, they cause sickness and death by a wholly mechanical reaction.[2] Outside man, they play the role of life-principle; as we will see,[3] by acting upon them, the reproduction of species is ensured. All life is based on them.

And in addition to their physical nature, they have a moral nature. When a native is asked why he follows his rites, he replies that ancestors have always done so and that he must follow their example.[4] If he conducts himself with totemic beings in this or that way, it is not only because the forces that reside in them are inaccessible and forbidding in a physical sense, but also because he feels morally obligated so to conduct himself; he feels he is obeying a sort of imperative, fulfilling a duty. He not only fears but also respects the sacred beings. Moreover, the totem is a source of the clan's moral life. All the beings that participate in the same totemic principle consider themselves, by that very fact, to be morally bound to one another; they have definite obligations of assistance, vengeance, and so on, toward each other, and it is these that constitute kinship. Thus, the totemic principle is at once a physical force and a moral power, and we will see that it is easily transformed into divinity proper.

This is by no means specific to totemism. Even in the most advanced religions, there is perhaps no god that has failed to retain some of this ambiguity and that does not perform both cosmic and moral functions. At the same time as it is a spiritual discipline, every religion is a sort of technique that

[1]In a Kwakiutl myth, for example, an ancestor hero pierces the head of an enemy by stretching forth his fingers ([Franz] Boas, ["First General Report on the Indians of British Columbia,"] in *BAAS, Vth Report of the Committee on the Northern Tribes of the Dominion of Canada* [London, Offices of the Association, 1890], p. 30).

[2]References in support of this assertion will be found on p. 128, n. 1, and p. 325, n. 98.

[3]See Bk III, chap. 2.

[4]See, for example, [Alfred William] Howitt, *Native Tribes, [of South-East Australia,* New York, Macmillan, 1904], p. 482; [C. W.] Schürmann, "The Aboriginal Tribes of Port Lincoln," in [James Dominick] Woods, *[The] Native Tribes of S. Australia* [Adelaide, E. S. Wigg, 1879], p. 231.

helps man to confront the world more confidently. Even for the Christian, is God the Father not the guardian of physical order, as well as the legislator and judge of human conduct?

II

Perhaps some will ask whether, by interpreting totemism in this way, I am not imputing ideas to the primitive that are beyond his intellect. In truth, I am not in a position to state positively that he imagines these forces with the relative clarity that I have had to give them in my analysis. I can show quite clearly that this idea is implicit in the beliefs taken as a whole and that it is central to them, but I cannot say to what extent it is explicitly conscious or, on the other hand, only implicit and vaguely felt. There is no way to specify the degree of clarity that an idea such as this one can have in consciousnesses obscure* to us. At any rate, what shows quite well that the idea is in no way beyond the primitive, and even confirms the result I have just arrived at, is this: Whether in societies akin to the Australian tribes or in those very tribes, we find—and in explicit form—conceptions that differ only in degree and nuance from the foregoing.

The native religions of Samoa have certainly passed the totemic phase. They have genuine gods with names of their own and, to some degree, distinctive personal traits. Yet the relics of totemism are hard to dispute. In fact, each god is attached to a territorial or familial group, just as the totem has its clan.[5] Each of these gods is conceived of as immanent in a definite animal species. It certainly does not reside in any particular subject. It is in all at the same time, pervasive throughout the species. When an animal dies, the people of the group that venerate it mourn and render it their pious respects because a god inhabits it, but the god has not died. Like the species, it is eternal. Nor, indeed, is the god confused with the preceding generation, for it was already the soul of the one that preceded, just as as it will be the soul of the one to follow.[6] Thus, it has all the characteristics of the totemic principle but

* *Consciences obscures.* Whether the obscurity is in the mind of the observed or the observer is ambiguous. Swain, who says "obscure minds" (p. 219), seems to have opted for the mind of the observed. I opted for the observer's, in light of the next sentence and the general context provided by the chapter.

[5][James George] Frazer even takes up from Samoa many facts that he presents as characteristically totemic (see *Totemism [and Exogamy,* London, Macmillan, 1910], pp. 6, 12–15, 24, etc.). True enough, I have said that Frazer was not always sufficiently critical in his choice of examples. But obviously such numerous borrowings would have been impossible if in Samoa there really had not been important survivals from totemism.

[6]See [George] Turner, *Samoa* [London, Macmillan, 1884], p. 21, and chaps. IV and V.

a totemic principle that the imagination has developed in somewhat personal forms. Even so, this personal quality should not be overblown, as it is hardly compatible with the qualities of pervasiveness and ubiquity. If the contours of the totemic principle were clearly defined, it would not be able to spread as it does and infuse a multitude of things.

In this case, the notion of impersonal religious force is unquestionably beginning to change. In other cases, however, it is maintained in its abstract purity and even achieves distinctly greater generality than in Australia. Although the totemic principles to which the various clans of the same tribe address themselves are distinct from one another, they remain fundamentally comparable to one another, for they all play the same role in their respective domains. There are societies that attained the sense of this shared nature and then advanced to the idea of a single religious force that unifies the universe, all that is; all the other sacred principles are but modalities of that force. And since those societies are still thoroughly imbued with totemism and bound to a social organization identical to that of the Australian peoples, totemism may be said to have carried that idea in its womb.

This can be observed in many American tribes, especially in those belonging to the great family of the Sioux: Omaha, Ponka, Kansas, Osage, Assiniboin, Dakota, Iowa, Winnebago, Mandan, Hidatsa, and the others. Several of these societies, such as the Omaha[7] and the Iowa,[8] are still organized in clans; others were not long ago and, Dorsey says, "all the foundations of the totemic system, just as in other societies of the Sioux,"[9] are still identifiable in them. Among these peoples, there is a preeminent power above all the particular gods men worship, which they call *wakan*[10]—all the rest being, in a sense, derivations of it. Because of the preeminent status assigned to this principle in the Sioux pantheon, it has sometimes been seen as a kind of sovereign god, a Jupiter or a Yahweh, and travelers have often translated *wakan* as "great spirit." This was a profound misunderstanding of its true nature.

Wakan is not in any way a personal being; the natives do not imagine it in definite forms. "They say," reports an observer cited by Dorsey, "that they

[7]Alice [C.] Fletcher, "A Study of the Omaha Tribe: [The Import of the Totem"], in *RSI for 1897* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1898], pp. [582–583].

[8][James Owen] Dorsey, "Siouan Sociology," in *Fifteenth Annual Report, BAE* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], p. 238.

[9]Ibid., p. 221.

[10]Riggs and [James Owen] Dorsey, *Dakota English Dictionary,* in *CNAE,* vol. VII [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1890], p. 508. Several observers cited by Dorsey identify the word *wakan* with the words *wakanda* and *wakanta,* which are derived from it but have a more precise meaning.

have never seen wakanda, so they cannot pretend to personify it."[11] It cannot even be defined by specific attributes and qualities. "No term," says Riggs, "can express the meaning of the word among the Dakota. It embraces all mystery, all secret power, all divinity."[12] All the beings that the Dakota revere, "the earth, the four winds, the sun, the moon, the stars, are manifestations of that mysterious life and power" that circulates through all things. It is imagined as the wind, as a breath that has its seat at the four cardinal points and moves everything.[13] It is the voice that is heard when the thunder resounds;[14] the sun, moon, and stars are wakan.[15] But enumeration cannot exhaust this infinitely complex notion. It is not a defined or definable power, the power to do this or that; it is Power in the absolute, without qualification or limitation of any kind. The various divine powers are only particular manifestations and personifications; each of them is this power seen in one of its many aspects.[16] This led one observer to say that "it is basically a protean god, changing its attributes and functions according to circumstance."[17] And the gods are not the only beings it animates. It is the principle of all that lives, all that acts, all that moves. "All life is wakan. And so it is for all that manifests any power—whether it be positive action, like the winds and the clouds gathering in the sky, or passive resistance, like the rock at the side of the path."[18]

The same idea is found among the Iroquois, whose social organization is still more markedly totemic. The word *orenda* that is used to express it is exactly equivalent to the wakan of the Sioux. "It is a mystic power," says Hewitt, "that the savage conceives of as inherent in all the objects that make up the environment in which he lives . . . , in rocks, streams, plants and trees,

[11][James Owen] Dorsey, "A Study of Siouan Cults," in *Eleventh Annual Report,* [vol. XI], §21, *BAE* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1893], p. 372. Miss Fletcher, while no less clearly recognizing the impersonal character of wakanda, adds that a certain anthropomorphism has slowly become grafted on to this idea. But this anthropomorphism concerns the various manifestations of wakanda. The rock or tree where they think they feel the presence of wakanda are addressed as if they were personal beings, but the wakanda itself is not personified (*RSI for 1897,* p. 579).

[12][Stephen Return] Riggs, *Tah-Koo Wah-Kon* [*or the Gospel among the Dakotas,* Boston, Congregational Publishing Society, 1869], pp. 56–57, cited after Dorsey "Siouan Cults," §95, p. 433.

[13]Dorsey, "Siouan Cults," §33, p. 380.

[14]Ibid., §35 [p. 381].

[15]Ibid., §28, p. 376; §30, p. 378; cf. §138, p. 449.

[16]Ibid., §95, p. 432.

[17]Ibid., §92, p. 431.

[18]Ibid., §95, p. 433.

animals and man, winds and storms, clouds, thunder, flashes of lightning, etc."[19] This power is "regarded by the undeveloped intellect of man as the efficient cause of all the phenomena and of all the activities that are occurring around him."[20] A sorcerer or a shaman has orenda, as does a man who is successful in his affairs. Basically nothing in the world is without its own share of orenda, but the shares are unequal. Some beings—men or things—are favored, and others are relatively disadvantaged; all of life is made up of struggles among these orenda of unequal intensity. The most intense subjugate the weakest. Does a man win out over his competitors in the hunt or in war? It is because he has more orenda. If an animal escapes the hunter who chases him, it is because the animal's orenda was greater than the hunter's.

The same idea is found among the Shoshone, with the name *pokunt*; among the Algonquins, *manitou*;[21] *mauala* among the Kwakiutl;[22] *yek* among the Tlingit;[23] and *sgâna* among the Haida.[24] But it is not peculiar to the Indians of America; it was first studied in Melanesia. On certain Melanesian islands, it is true, the social organization is no longer based on totemism, but totemism is still visible on all of them[25]—notwithstanding what Codrington has said on the subject. We find among these peoples, under the name "mana," a notion that is exactly equivalent to the wakan of the Sioux and the orenda of the Iroquois. Here is Codrington's definition of it:

> The Melanesians believe in the existence of a force absolutely distinct from any physical force, that works in all kinds of ways, for good or evil, and that it is in man's best interest to take in hand and control: That force is mana. I

[19][J. N. B. Hewitt], "Orenda and a Definition of Religion," in *AA*, vol. IV (1903), p. 33.

[20]Ibid., p. 36.

[21]Tesa, *Studi del Thavenet*, p. 17.

[22][Franz] Boas, ["The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the] Kwakiutl [Indians," in *RNM for 1895*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1897], p. 695.

[23][John Reed] Swanton, "Social Condition, Beliefs [and Linguistic Relationship] of the Tlingit Indians," *Twenty-Sixth Report BAE* [Washington, Government Printing Office, 1905], p. 451 n. 3.

[24][John Reed] Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* [Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1905], p. 14. Cf. *Tlingit Indians*, p. 479.

[25]In certain Melanesian societies (Banks Islands, northern New Hebrides), the two exogamic phratries that characterize Australian organization crop up again ([R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891], pp. 23ff.). In Florida, there are true totems, called *butos* (p. 31). An interesting discussion on this point is to be found in A. Lang, *Social Origins* [London, Longmans, 1903], pp. 176ff. Cf. on the same subject, and in the same vein, W. H. R. Rivers, "Totemism in Polynesia and Melanesia," in *JAI*, vol. XXXIX [1909], pp. 156ff.

> believe I understand the meaning this term has for the natives. . . . It is a force, a nonmaterial and, in a sense, supernatural influence; but it reveals itself by physical force, or else by any kind of power and superiority that man possesses. Mana is by no means fixed on a definite object; it can be carried by any sort of thing. . . . The whole religion of the Melanesian consists in procuring mana for himself, for his own benefit or someone else's.[26]

Is this not the same notion of a diffuse and anonymous force whose seed in Australian totemism we were uncovering a moment ago? The impersonality is the same. As Codrington says, we must avoid seeing it as a kind of supreme being; such an idea "is absolutely alien" to Melanesian thought. The ubiquity is the same. Mana has no definite location and is everywhere. All forms of life, and all the active potencies of men, living things, or mere minerals are ascribed to its influence.[27]

Therefore, it is by no means reckless to impute to the Australian societies an idea such as the one I have drawn from my analysis of totemic beliefs: The same idea is to be found, though at a higher level of generalization and abstraction, in religions whose roots go back to Australian thought and that visibly bear its mark. The two conceptions are obviously akin, differing only in scale. Whereas mana is diffused throughout the whole universe, what I have called the god (or more accurately, the totemic principle) is localized in a broad but nonetheless more limited circle of creatures and things of various species. It is mana, but a rather more specialized mana—even though, in the end, this specialization may only be quite relative.

There are cases, moreover, in which this kin relation becomes especially apparent. Among the Omaha, all kinds of individual and collective totems exist;[28] both are forms of wakan. "The Indian's faith in the efficacy of the totem," says Miss Fletcher, "was based on his conception of nature and life. That conception was complex and involved two key ideas. First, all things, animate and inanimate, are imbued with a common life-principle; and second, this life is continuous."[29] This common life-principle is wakan. The totem is the means by which the individual is put in touch with that source of energy. If the totem has powers, it has them because it incarnates wakan.

[26]Codrington, *The Melanesians,* p. 118 n. 1; [Richard Heinrich Robert] Parkinson, *Dreissig Jahre in der Südsee* [Stuttgart, Strecker und Schroeder, 1907], pp. 178, 392, 394, etc.

[27]An analysis of this idea is to be found in [Henri] Hubert and [Marcel] Mauss, ["Esquisse d'une] théorie générale de la magie," *AS,* vol. VII [1904], p. 108.

[28]There are totems not only of clans but also of brotherhoods (Fletcher, "Import of the Totem," pp. 581ff.).

[29]Ibid. [pp. 578–579].

If the man who has violated the prohibitions that protect his totem is stricken by illness or death, it is because the mysterious force that he ran afoul of, wakan, reacted against him with an intensity proportionate to the shock it suffered.[30] Inversely, just as the totem is wakan, so the manner in which wakan is conceived sometimes recalls its totemic origins. As Say tells us, among the Dakota, the *wahconda* is manifested sometimes in the form of a gray bear, sometimes a bison, a beaver, or other animal.[31] This formulation cannot, of course, be unreservedly accepted. Since wakan resists all personification, it is unlikely to have been conceived of in its abstract generality by means of precise symbols. However, Say's observation probably is applicable to the particular forms it takes as it becomes specialized amid the concrete reality of life. If there truly was a time when those specializations of wakan evidenced such a marked affinity with animal form, that would be further proof of the close ties between that notion and totemic beliefs.[32]

Besides, one can explain why the idea of mana could not attain the degree of abstraction and generalization in Australia that it did in more advanced societies. The reason is not merely some insufficient capacity of the Australian to think abstractly and generalize; it is above all the nature of the social milieu that imposed this particularism. As long as totemism remains the basis of cult organization, the clan maintains an autonomy within the religious society that, although not absolute, nonetheless remains very pronounced. Undoubtedly, one can say in a sense that each totemic group is only a chapel of the tribal Church,* but a chapel that enjoys broad independence. Although the cult that is celebrated within the clan does not form a whole sufficient unto itself, the relations it has with the others are merely external. The cults are juxtaposed but not interpenetrating. The totem of a clan is fully sacred only for that clan. As a result, the group of things assigned to each clan, and that are part of the clan in the same right as the men, has the same individuality and the same autonomy. Each of them is imagined as being irreducible to similar groups that are radically discontinuous with it and as constituting what amounts to a distinct realm. Under these conditions, it would occur to no one that these heterogeneous worlds were only different

*Here again, Durkheim capitalizes.

[30]Ibid., p. 583. Among the Dakota, the totem is called wakan. See Riggs and Dorsey, *Dakota Texts and Grammar,* in *CNAE* [vol. IX, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1893], p. 219.

[31]"James's Account of Long's Expedition in the Rocky Mountains," vol. I, p. 268 (cited by Dorsey in "Siouan Cults," §92, p. 431).

[32]I do not mean to argue that in principle every theriomorphic representation of religious forces is the mark of a preexisting totemism. But in terms of societies where totemism is still apparent, as in the case of the Dakota, it is natural to think that these conceptions are not unknown to it.

manifestations of one and the same fundamental force. It must have been assumed instead that a specifically different mana corresponded to each of them, the power of which could not extend beyond the clan and the things assigned to it. The notion of one universal mana could be born only when a religion of the tribe developed above the clan cults and absorbed them more or less completely. It is only with the sense of tribal unity that a sense of the world's unity arose. I will show later on[33] that the societies of Australia were already acquainted with a cult shared by the entire tribe. But although that cult represents the highest form of the Australian religions, it did not succeed in rupturing the principles on which they rest and transforming them. Totemism is basically a federative religion that cannot go beyond a certain level of centralization without ceasing to be itself.

One characteristic fact illuminates the profound reason why the notion of mana has been kept so specialized in Australia. The religious forces proper—those thought of as totems—are not the only ones the Australian believes he must reckon with. There are also the forces that the magician especially has at his disposal. Whereas the religious forces are considered to be salutary and beneficent in principle, the function of magic forces is above all to cause death and illness. They differ both in the nature of their effects and in the relations they have with social organization. A totem always belongs to a clan; magic, on the other hand, is a tribal and even an intertribal institution. Magical forces do not particularly belong to any definite group of the tribe. To use those forces, it is enough to have the efficacious recipes. Similarly, everyone is vulnerable to their effects and so must try to guard against them. These are nebulous forces that are not attached to any definite social division and can even extend their influence beyond the tribe. It is noteworthy that, among the Arunta and the Loritja, they are conceived of simply as aspects and particular forms of one and the same force, called in Arunta *Arungquiltha* or *Arúnkulta*.[34] "It is," say Spencer and Gillen, "a term of rather vague meaning; but, basically, one always finds the idea of a supernatural power endowed with an evil nature. . . . This word is applied indiscriminately either to the evil influence that comes from an object or to the very object in which it temporarily or permanently resides."[35] "By Arúnkulta," says Strehlow, "the

[33]See Bk. II, chap. 9 §4, pp. 288–298.

[34]The first spelling is that of [Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen; the second, [Carl] Strehlow's.

[35]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1899], p. 548, n. 1. Granted, Spencer and Gillen add, "The best way of rendering the idea would be to say that the arungquiltha object is possessed by an evil spirit." But that free translation is an unwarranted interpretation by them. The notion of arungquiltha in no way implies the existence of spiritual beings. This point emerges from Strehlow's context and definition.

native means a force that suddenly suspends life and brings death to whomever it enters."[36] This term is applied to bones, to the pieces of wood that give off evil spells, and to animal or plant poisons. It is very definitely a harmful mana. Grey mentions a completely identical notion in the tribes he has observed.[37] Among these dissimilar peoples, then, the properly religious forces do not manage to break free of a certain heterogeneity, but the magical forces are conceived of as being all of the same nature; they are conceived of generically. The reason is this: Since the magical forces hover above the divisions and subdivisions of the social organization, they move in a homogeneous and continuous space where they do not encounter anything to differentiate them. On the other hand, since religious forces are localized within definite and distinct social settings, they become differentiated and specialized according to the setting in which they happen to be.

From this we see to what extent the notion of impersonal religious force is in the letter and spirit of Australian totemism, for it constitutes itself distinctly as soon as no contrary cause opposes it. Granted, the arungquiltha is a purely magical force. But magic forces and religious forces are not different in their essence.[38] Indeed, they are sometimes designated by the same word. In Melanesia, the magician and his charms have mana just as do the agents and rites of the regular cult.[39] Among the Iroquois,[40] the word "orenda" is used in the same way. Therefore, we can legitimately infer the nature of each from that of the other.[41]

[36]Strehlow, *Die Aranda- [und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien]*, vol. II [Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], p. 76n.

[37]With the name Boyl-ya ([George] Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions [in North-West and Western Australia]*, vol. II [London, T. W. Boone, 1841], pp. 337–338).

[38]See above, p. 400. Moreover, Spencer and Gillen implicitly recognize this when they say that the arungquiltha is "a supernatural force." Cf. Hubert and Mauss, "Théorie générale," p. 119.

[39]Codrington, *The Melanesians,* pp. 191ff.

[40]Hewitt, "Orenda," p. 38.

[41]One may even ask whether a concept analogous to wakan or mana is altogether lacking in Australia. As it happens, the word "churinga" (or *Tjurunga,* in Strehlow's spelling) has closely related meaning among the Arunta. Spencer and Gillen say that this term designates "all that is secret or sacred. It is applied as much to an object as to the quality it possesses" (*Native Tribes,* p. 648). This is almost the definition of mana. Sometimes, indeed, Spencer and Gillen use that word to designate religious power or force in general. In describing a ceremony among the Kaitish, they say that the celebrant is "full of churinga," that is, they continue, full of "the magical power that emanates from the objects called churingas." However, it does not seem that the notion of churinga is constituted in Australia with the clarity and precision that the notion of mana has in Melanesia or that wakan has among the Sioux.

III

The result to which the preceding analysis has led us is relevant not only to the history of totemism but also to the formation of religious thought generally.

On the grounds that man is at first ruled mainly by his senses and by sensuous representations, it has often been argued that he began by imagining the divine in the concrete form of definite and personal beings. The facts do not confirm that presumption. I have just described a logically unified set of religious beliefs that I have good reason to consider very primitive, and yet I have not encountered personalities of this kind. The totemic cult proper is addressed neither to such and such definite animals nor to such and such definite plants but to a sort of diffuse power that permeates things.[42] Even in the advanced religions that have arisen out of totemism, like those we see appearing among the Indians of North America, that idea, far from being effaced, becomes more conscious of itself, expressing itself with a clarity it did not previously have, and at the same time taking on greater generality. That idea dominates the whole religious system.

Such is the basic material from which were made the various beings that religions of all times have worshipped and sanctified. The spirits, demons, genies, and gods of every degree are only the concrete forms taken by this energy (this "potentiality," as Hewitt calls it[43]) as it became individualized and fixed upon some definite object or point in space, and condensed around some being that is ideal or legendary, yet conceived of as real in popular imagination. A Dakota interviewed by Miss Fletcher described this essential consubstantiality in language full of bold images:

> All that moves stops at one place or another, at one moment or another. The bird that flies stops somewhere to make its nest, somewhere else to rest from flight. The man who walks stops when he pleases. The same is true for the deity. The sun, so bright and magnificent, is one place where the deity has stopped. The trees and the animals are others. The Indian thinks of these places and sends his prayers there, that they may reach the place where god has stopped and thus obtain succor and benediction.[44]

In other words, wakan (for that is what he was talking about) goes and comes through the world, and the sacred things are the places where it has alighted.

[42]Certainly, we will see below (Bk. II, chaps. 8 and 9) that the idea of mythic personality is not altogether foreign to totemism. But I will show that these conceptions result from secondary formations. Far from being the basis of the beliefs just analyzed, they derive from those beliefs.

[43]Hewitt, "Orenda," p. 38.

[44]"Report of the Peabody Museum," vol. III, p. 276n. (cited by Dorsey, "Siouan Cults," p. 435).

Here we find ourselves far from naturism and animism alike. If the sun, moon, and stars have been worshipped, they have not owed this honor to their inherent nature or distinctive properties but to the fact that they were conceived of as participating in that force which alone gives things their sacredness and is found in many other beings, even the very smallest. The souls of the dead have been objects of rites not because they are considered to be made of some fluid and ethereal substance and not because they resemble the shadow of a body or its reflection on the face of the deep. Lightness and fluidity are not enough to confer sacredness on them; they have been invested with that honor only insofar as they possessed some of that very force, the fount of all that is religious.

Why we could not define religion by the idea of mythical personalities, gods, or spirits now becomes clearer. That way of imagining religious things is by no means inherent in their nature. At the origin and basis of religious thought, we find not definite and distinct objects or beings that in themselves possess sacredness but indefinite powers and anonymous forces. They are more or less numerous in different societies (sometimes, indeed, they are only one force), and their impersonality is exactly comparable to that of the physical forces whose manifestations are studied by the sciences of nature. Turning to particular sacred things, those are but individualized forms of this basic principle. Thus, it is not surprising that even in religions in which gods indisputably exist, there are rites that are efficacious by themselves, independent of divine action. This is so because that force can attach to words spoken and gestures made, as well as to material substances. Voice and movement can serve as its vehicle, and it can produce its effects through them without help from any god or spirit. Indeed, let that force become primarily concentrated in a rite, and through it that rite will become the creator of deities.[45] This is also why there is perhaps no divine personality without an impersonal element. Even those who most clearly imagine divine personality in a concrete and tangible form imagine it at the same time as an abstract power that can be defined only by the nature of its effects, as a force that deploys itself in space and that is in each of its effects, at least in part. It is the power to produce the rain or the wind, the harvest or the light of day; Zeus is in each drop of rain that falls, just as Ceres is in each sheaf of the harvest.[46] Indeed, more often than not, this efficacy is so incompletely defined that the believer can

[45]See above, p. 33.

[46]Expressions such as Ζεὺς ὑει, or *Ceres succiditur,* show that this conception lived on in Greece and in Rome. Moreover [Hermann] Usener, in his *Götternamen: [Versuch einer Lehre von der religiosen Debriffebildung,* Bonn, F. Cohen, 1896], has clearly shown that the gods of Greece, as of Rome, were originally impersonal forces that were only thought of in terms of their attributes.

have only a very vague notion of it. Moreover, this vagueness has made possible the unions and divisions in the course of which the gods were fragmented, dismembered, and combined in all sorts of ways. There is perhaps not a single religion in which the original mana, whether unitary or compound, has fully evolved into a well-defined number of discrete beings that are sealed off from one another. Each of those beings retains a nebulous sort of impersonality that enables it to enter into new combinations—it has that capacity not simply because it remains as a relic but because it is in the nature of religious forces to be incapable of full individualization.

This conception, which the study of totemism alone suggested to me, is further recommended by the fact that, of late, several scholars have been led to it independently, in the course of quite different research. There is an emerging tendency toward spontaneous agreement on this point, which is worth noting for it creates a presumption of objectivity.

As early as 1899, I was arguing the necessity of not putting any notion of mythical personality into the definition of religion.[47] In 1900, Marrett called attention to the existence of a phase in religion that he called preanimist, in which the rites were addressed to impersonal forces, such as Melanesian mana or the wakan of the Omaha and the Dakota.[48] Nevertheless, Marrett did not go so far as to hold that, always and in all cases, the notion of spirit logically or chronologically comes after that of mana or is derived from it. Indeed, he seemed disposed to allow that it is sometimes formed independently, and hence that religious thought flows from a double source.[49] On the other hand, he conceived mana as a property inherent in things, as an element of their specific character. According to him, mana is simply the trait we impute to anything that departs from the ordinary, to everything that makes us feel admiration or fear.[50] This was tantamount to rehabilitating the naturist theory.[51]

A short time later, Hubert and Mauss, setting out to devise a general the-

[47][Emile Durkheim, "De la] Définition des phénomènes religieux," *AS*, vol. II [1897–1898], pp. 14–16.

[48][R. R. Marrett], "Preanimistic Religion," in *Folk-lore*, vol. XI (1900), pp. 162–182.

[49]Ibid., p. 179. In a more recent work, "The Conception of Mana" (in *TICHR*, vol. II [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1908], pp. 54ff.), Marrett tends even more to subordinate the animist conception to the notion of mana. However, his thought remains hesitant and reserved on this point.

[50]Ibid., p. 168.

[51]This return of preanimism to naturism is still more marked in a communication by Clodd at the Third Congress on the History of Religions ("Preanimistic Stages in Religion," in *TICHR*, vol. I, pp. 33).

ory of magic, established that magic as a whole is based on the notion of mana.[52] Given the close kinship of magical rites with religious ones, we might expect the same theory to be applicable to religion. Preuss argued this in a series of articles that appeared in *Globus*[53] the same year. Relying on facts he had drawn mainly from American civilizations, Preuss set out to show that the ideas of soul and spirit were formed only after those of impersonal power and force, that soul and spirit are only transformations of impersonal power and force, and that until fairly recent times, those latter retained the mark of their original impersonality. He did indeed show that, even in the advanced religions, spirit and soul are conceived of in the form of vague discharges spontaneously emitted from the things in which the mana resides, and sometimes tending to escape using all available routes: mouth, nose, and every other body opening, breath, gaze, speech, and so on. At the same time, Preuss showed their protean quality, the extreme plasticity that enables them to serve the most varied uses, in succession and almost simultaneously.[54] True enough, if that author's terminology was taken literally, one might think those forces are, for him, of a magical and not a religious nature. He calls them charms (*Zauber, Zauberkräfte*). But since he shows them to be active in rites that are fundamentally religious, for example, the great Mexican ceremonies[55], it is evident that, by using such terms, he does not mean to place those forces outside religion. If he uses them, it is probably for want of others that better indicate their impersonality and the sort of mechanism by which they operate.

Thus, the same idea is tending to appear from all quarters.[56] The impression increasingly is that the mythological constructions, even the most elementary ones, are secondary[57] products overgrowing a substratum of beliefs—simpler and more obscure, vaguer and more fundamental—that con-

[52]Hubert and Mauss, "Théorie générale de la magie," pp. 108ff.

[53][Konrad Theodor] Preuss, "Der Ursprung der Religion und Kunst," in *Globus,* vol. LXXXVI (1904), pp. 321, 355, 376, 389; vol. LXXXVII, pp. 333, 347, 380, 394, [419].

[54]Ibid., vol. LXXXVII, p. 381.

[55]He clearly opposes them to all influences that are profane in nature (ibid., vol. LXXXVI, p. 379a).

[56]They are found even in the recent theories of Frazer. If this scholar refuses to ascribe a religious character to totemism so as to make it a kind of magic, he does so precisely because the forces that the totemic cult puts into operation are impersonal, like those the magician manipulates. Frazer recognizes the fundamental fact I have just established, but he draws a different conclusion from it than I do, because, according to him, there is religion only if there are mythical personalities.

[57]However, I do not take this word in the same sense as Preuss and Marrett. According to them, there was a definite moment in religious evolution when men knew neither souls nor spirits, a *preanimist* phase. This hypothesis is highly questionable. I will offer further explanation on this point below (Bk. II, chaps. 8 and 9).

stitute the firm foundations on which the religious systems were built. This is the primitive stratum that the analysis of totemism has enabled us to reach. The various writers whose research I have just mentioned arrived at that conception using facts taken from quite disparate religions, some of which correspond to an already well-advanced civilization—the religions of Mexico, for example, which Preuss used a great deal. It might then be asked whether the theory was applicable to the simplest religions as well. But since one can descend no further than totemism, we run no risk of error. At the same time, we may possibly have found the original notion from which the ideas of wakan and mana are derived: the notion of the totemic principle.[58]

IV

The role that notion has played in the development of religious ideas is not the only reason for its primary importance. It has a secular aspect that gives it relevance for the history of scientific thought as well. It is the notion of force in its earliest form.

In the world as the Sioux conceive it, wakan plays the same role as the forces by which science explains the varied phenomena of nature. This is not to say that it is thought of in the form of an exclusively physical energy; we will see in the next chapter that, instead, the elements used to form an idea of it are taken from the most disparate realms. But precisely that composite nature enables it to be used as a principle of universal explanation. The whole of life comes from it;[59] "all life is wakan"; and by the word "life" must be understood all that acts and reacts and all that moves and is moved, as much in the mineral kingdom as in the biological one. Wakan is the cause of all the movement that takes place in the universe. We have also seen that the orenda of the Iroquois is "the efficient cause of all the phenomena, and all the activities, that manifest themselves around man." It is a power "inherent in all bodies and all things."[60] It is orenda that makes the wind blow, the sun shine and warm the earth, the plants grow, the animals multiply, and that makes

[58]On this same question, see the article of Alessandro Bruno, "Sui fenomeni magico-religiosi delle comunità primitive," in *Rivista italiana di Sociologia,* vol. XII, fasc. IV–V, pp. 568ff., and an unpublished paper by W. Bogoras at the XIVth Congress of Americanists, held at Stuttgart in 1904. This paper is analyzed by Preuss in *Globus,* vol. LXXXVI, p. 201.

[59]"All things," says Miss Fletcher, "are pervaded by a common principle of life." "Import of the Totem," p. 579.

[60]Hewitt, "Orenda," p. 36.

man strong, skillful, and intelligent. When the Iroquois says that the life of all nature is the product of conflicts between the unequally intense orenda of different beings, he is expressing in his language the modern idea that the world is a system of forces that limit, contain, and equilibrate one another.

The Melanesian imputes the same sort of efficacy to mana. It is thanks to his mana that a man succeeds in hunting or in war, that his gardens produce a good yield, that his herds prosper. Because it is full of mana, the arrow reaches its mark, a net takes many fish, a canoe holds the sea well,[61] and so on. It is true that if certain of Codrington's phrases were taken literally, mana would be the cause to which people specifically ascribe "all that exceeds the power of man, all that is outside the ordinary course of nature."[62] But it emerges from the very examples he cites that the sphere of mana is a good deal broader than that. In reality, it serves to explain usual and everyday phenomena. There is nothing superhuman or supernatural in the fact that a boat sails or a hunter takes game. Among those events of everyday life, there are some so insignificant and so familiar that they go by unperceived: No one takes note of them, and, consequently, no one feels a need to explain them. The concept of mana is applied only to those that are important enough to provoke reflection, to awaken a modicum of interest and curiosity. For all that, however, they are not miraculous. And what is true of mana as well as orenda or wakan is equally true of the totemic principle. By that principle are maintained the lives of the clan's people, the lives of the animals or plants of the totemic species, the lives of all things that are classified under the totem and participate in its nature.

Thus the idea of force is of religious origin. From religion, philosophy first and later the sciences borrowed it. Such is the intuition Comte already had when he called metaphysics the heir of "theology." But his conclusion was that, because of its metaphysical origins, the idea of force was fated to disappear from science, and he denied it any objective meaning. I will show, to the contrary, that religious forces are real, no matter how imperfect the symbols with whose help they were conceived of. From this it will follow that the same is true for the concept of force in general.

[61]Codrington, *The Melanesians,* pp. 118–120.

[62]Ibid., p. 119.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ORIGINS OF THESE BELIEFS (CONCLUSION)

Origin of the Notion of Totemic Principle, or Mana

The proposition established in the preceding chapter defines the terms in which the problem of how totemism originated must be posed. The central notion of totemism is that of a quasi-divine principle that is immanent in certain categories of men and things and thought of in the form of an animal or plant. In essence, therefore, to explain this religion is to explain this belief—that is, to discover what could have led men to construct it and with what building blocks.

I

It is manifestly not with the feelings the things that serve as totems are capable of arousing in men's minds. I have shown that these are often insignificant. In the sort of impression lizards, caterpillars, rats, ants, frogs, turkeys, breams, plum trees, cockatoos, and so forth make upon man (to cite only the names that come up frequently on lists of Australian totems), there is nothing that in any way resembles grand and powerful religious emotions or could stamp upon them a quality of sacredness. The same cannot be said of stars and great atmospheric phenomena, which do have all that is required to seize men's imaginations. As it happens, however, these serve very rarely as totems; indeed, their use for this purpose was probably a late development.[1] Thus it was not the intrinsic nature of the thing whose name the clan bore that set it apart as the object of worship. Furthermore, if the emotion elicited by the thing itself really was the determining cause of totemic rites and beliefs, then this thing would also be the sacred being par excellence, and the

[1]See above, p. 102.

animals and plants used as totems would play the leading role in religious life. But we know that the focus of the cult is elsewhere. It is symbolic representations of this or that plant or animal. It is totemic emblems and symbols of all kinds that possess the greatest sanctity. And so it is in totemic emblems and symbols that the religious source is to be found, while the real objects represented by those emblems receive only a reflection.

The totem is above all a symbol, a tangible expression of something else.[2] But of what?

It follows from the same analysis that the totem expresses and symbolizes two different kinds of things. From one point of view, it is the outward and visible form of what I have called the totemic principle or god; and from another, it is also the symbol of a particular society that is called the clan. It is the flag of the clan, the sign by which each clan is distinguished from the others, the visible mark of its distinctiveness, and a mark that is borne by everything that in any way belongs to the clan: men, animals, and things. Thus, if the totem is the symbol of both the god and the society, is this not because the god and the society are one and the same? How could the emblem of the group have taken the form of that quasi-divinity if the group and the divinity were two distinct realities? Thus the god of the clan, the totemic principle, can be none other than the clan itself, but the clan transfigured and imagined in the physical form of the plant or animal that serves as totem.

How could that apotheosis have come about, and why should it have come about in that fashion?

II

Society in general, simply by its effect on men's minds, undoubtedly has all that is required to arouse the sensation of the divine. A society is to its members what a god is to its faithful.* A god is first of all a being that man conceives of as superior to himself in some respects and one on whom he believes he depends. Whether that being is a conscious personality, like Zeus or Yahweh, or a play of abstract forces as in totemism, the faithful believe

*Le fidèle. To avoid translating this term, which connotes loyal adherence, as "the believer," thereby leaving no room for a contrast with le croyant, which connotes belief, I have usually rendered it as "the faithful." Durkheim analyzes the stance of what one might call the "unbelieving faithful." See Bk. III, chap. 3, §2.

[2]In the small book cited above, [Julius] Pikler, [*Der Ursprung der Totemismus. Ein Beitrag zur materialischen Geschichtheorie*, Berlin, K. Hoffmann, 1900] has already expressed, in a somewhat dialectical fashion, the belief that this fundamentally is what the totem is.

they are bound to certain ways of acting that the nature of the sacred principle they are dealing with has imposed upon them. Society also fosters in us the sense of perpetual dependence. Precisely because society has its own specific nature that is different from our nature as individuals, it pursues ends that are also specifically its own; but because it can achieve those ends only by working through us, it categorically demands our cooperation. Society requires us to make ourselves its servants, forgetful of our own interests. And it subjects us to all sorts of restraints, privations, and sacrifices without which social life would be impossible. And so, at every instant, we must submit to rules of action and thought that we have neither made nor wanted and that sometimes are contrary to our inclinations and to our most basic instincts.

If society could exact those concessions and sacrifices only by physical constraint, it could arouse in us only the sense of a physical force to which we have no choice but to yield, and not that of a moral power such as religions venerate. In reality, however, the hold society has over consciousness owes far less to the prerogative its physical superiority gives it than to the moral authority with which it is invested. We defer to society's orders not simply because it is equipped to overcome our resistance but, first and foremost, because it is the object of genuine respect.

An individual or collective subject is said to inspire respect when the representation that expresses it in consciousness has such power that it calls forth or inhibits conduct automatically, *irrespective of any utilitarian calculation of helpful or harmful results.* When we obey someone out of respect for the moral authority that we have accorded to him, we do not follow his instructions because they seem wise but because a certain psychic energy intrinsic to the idea we have of that person bends our will and turns it in the direction indicated. When that inward and wholly mental pressure moves within us, respect is the emotion we feel. We are then moved not by the advantages or disadvantages of the conduct that is recommended to us or demanded of us but by the way we conceive of the one who recommends or demands that conduct. This is why a command generally takes on short, sharp forms of address that leave no room for hesitation. It is also why, to the extent that command is command and works by its own strength, it precludes any idea of deliberation or calculation, but instead is made effective by the very intensity of the mental state in which it is given. That intensity is what we call moral influence.

The ways of acting to which society is strongly enough attached to impose them on its members are for that reason marked with a distinguishing sign that calls forth respect. Because these ways of acting have been worked out in common, the intensity with which they are thought in each individual mind finds resonance in all the others, and vice versa. The representations

that translate them within each of us thereby gain an intensity that mere private states of consciousness can in no way match. Those ways of acting gather strength from the countless individual representations that have served to form each of them. It is society that speaks through the mouths of those who affirm them in our presence; it is society that we hear when we hear them; and the voice of all itself has a tone that an individual voice cannot have.[3] The very forcefulness with which society acts against dissidence, whether by moral censure or physical repression, helps to strengthen this dominance,[4] and at the same time forcefully proclaims the ardor of the shared conviction. In short, when something is the object of a state of opinion, the representation of the thing that each individual has draws such power from its origins, from the conditions in which it originated, that it is felt even by those who do not yield to it.* The mental representation of a thing that is the object of a state of opinion has a tendency to repress and hold at bay those representations that contradict it; it commands instead those actions that fulfill it. It accomplishes this not by the reality or threat of physical coercion but by the radiation of the mental energy it contains. The hallmark of moral authority is that its psychic properties alone give it power. Opinion, eminently a social thing, is one source of authority. Indeed, the question arises whether authority is not the daughter of opinion.[5] Some will object that science is often the antagonist of opinion, the errors of which it combats and corrects. But science can succeed in this task only if it has sufficient authority, and it can gain such authority only from opinion itself. All the scientific demonstrations in the world would have no influence if a people had no faith in science. Even today, if it should happen that science resisted a very powerful current of public opinion, it would run the risk of seeing its credibility eroded.[6]

*For example, the thief acknowledges a "state of opinion" by taking precautions not to be discovered. As this example suggests, once upon a time Durkheim's term *opinion* could have been translated as "public opinion" without confusion, but not in America today. Our present usage connotes the discrete bits of "opinion" that pollsters elicit through replies to questionnaires. Trans.

[3]See my [*De la*] *Division du travail social: Etude sur l'organisation de sociétés supérieures,* 3d ed. [Paris, F. Alcan, 1902], pp. 64ff.

[4]Ibid., p. 76.

[5]This is the case at least for all moral authority that is recognized as such by a group.

[6]I hope this analysis and those that follow will put an end to an erroneous interpretation of my ideas, which has more than once led to misunderstanding. Because I have made constraint the *external feature* by which social facts can be most easily recognized and distinguished from individual psychological ones, some have believed that I consider physical constraint to be the entire essence of social life. In reality, I have never regarded constraint as anything more than the visible, tangible expression of an underlying, inner fact that is wholly ideal: *moral authority.* The question for sociology—if there can be said to be *one* so-

Because social pressure makes itself felt through mental channels, it was bound to give man the idea that outside him there are one or several powers, moral yet mighty, to which he is subject. Since they speak to him in a tone of command, and sometimes even tell him to violate his most natural inclinations, man was bound to imagine them as being external to him. The mythological interpretations would doubtless not have been born if man could easily see that those influences upon him come from society. But the ordinary observer cannot see where the influence of society comes from. It moves along channels that are too obscure and circuitous, and uses psychic mechanisms that are too complex, to be easily traced to the source. So long as scientific analysis has not yet taught him, man is well aware that he is acted upon but not by whom. Thus he had to build out of nothing the idea of those powers with which he feels connected. From this we can begin to perceive how he was led to imagine those powers in forms that are not their own and to transfigure them in thought.

A god is not only an authority to which we are subject but also a force that buttresses our own. The man who has obeyed his god, and who for this reason thinks he has his god with him, approaches the world with confidence and a sense of heightened energy. In the same way, society's workings do not stop at demanding sacrifices, privations, and efforts from us. The force of the collectivity is not wholly external; it does not move us entirely from outside. Indeed, because society can exist only in and by means of individual minds,[7] it must enter into us and become organized within us. That force thus becomes an integral part of our being and, by the same stroke, uplifts it and brings it to maturity.*

This stimulating and invigorating effect of society is particularly apparent in certain circumstances. In the midst of an assembly that becomes worked

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ciological question—is to seek, throughout the various forms of external constraint, the correspondingly various kinds of moral authority and to discover what causes have given rise to the latter. Specifically, the main object of the question treated in the present work is to discover in what form the particular kind of moral authority that is inherent in all that is religious was born, and what it is made of. Further, it will be seen below that in making social pressure one of the distinguishing features of sociological phenomena, I do not mean to say that this is the only one. I will exhibit another aspect of collective life, virtually the opposite of this one, but no less real. (See p. 213.)

* *L'élève et le grandit.* This phrase can also mean "uplifts and enlarges" it. Swain chose the verbs "elevate" and "magnify." Durkheim may have intended both the physical and the moral meanings: "to lift" as well as "to bring up" or "rear"; to "enlarge" as well as to "raise in stature" or "bring to maturity."

[7]Which does not mean, of course, that collective consciousness does not have specific traits (Durkheim, "Représentations individuelles et représentations collectives," *RMM*, vol. VI ([1898]), pp. 273ff.).

up, we become capable of feelings and conduct of which we are incapable when left to our individual resources. When it is dissolved and we are again on our own, we fall back to our ordinary level and can then take the full measure of how far above ourselves we were. History abounds with examples. Suffice it to think about the night of August 4*, when an assembly was suddenly carried away in an act of sacrifice and abnegation that each of its members had refused to make the night before and by which all were surprised the morning after.[8] For this reason all parties—be they political, economic, or denominational—see to it that periodic conventions are held, at which their followers can renew their common faith by making a public demonstration of it together. To strengthen emotions that would dissipate if left alone, the one thing needful is to bring all those who share them into more intimate and more dynamic relationship.

In the same way, we can also explain the curious posture that is so characteristic of a man who is speaking to a crowd—if he has achieved communion with it. His language becomes high-flown in a way that would be ridiculous in ordinary circumstances; his gestures take on an overbearing quality; his very thought becomes impatient of limits and slips easily into every kind of extreme. This is because he feels filled to overflowing, as though with a phenomenal oversupply of forces that spill over and tend to spread around him. Sometimes he even feels possessed by a moral force greater than he, of which he is only the interpreter. This is the hallmark of what has often been called the demon of oratorical inspiration. This extraordinary surplus of forces is quite real and comes to him from the very group he is addressing. The feelings he arouses as he speaks return to him enlarged and amplified, reinforcing his own to the same degree. The passionate energies that he arouses reecho in turn within him, and they increase his dynamism. It is then no longer a mere individual who speaks but a group incarnated and personified.

Apart from these passing or intermittent states, there are more lasting ones in which the fortifying action of society makes itself felt with longer-term consequences and often with more striking effect. Under the influence

*Durkheim is probably alluding to the night of 4 August 1789, when France's new National Assembly ratified the total destruction of the feudal regime.

[8]The proof of this is the length and passion of the debates at which legal form was given to the resolutions in principle that were taken in a moment of collective enthusiasm. More than one, among clergy and nobility alike, called that famous night "dupes' night," or, with Rivarol, the "Saint Bartholomew's of the landed estates." [This apparently alludes to two events. The *Journée des Dupes* was the day, not the night, of 30 November 1630, when Cardinal Richelieu's enemies came to believe the cardinal had lost the king's ear for good and had fallen in disgrace; they were proved wrong. *La St. Barthélemy* was a massacre of Protestants 23–24 August 1527, which led to civil war. Trans.] See [Otto] Stoll, *Suggestion und Hypnotismus in der Völkerpsychologie,* 2d ed. [Leipzig, Veit, 1904], p. 618 n. 2.

of some great collective shock in certain historical periods, social interactions become much more frequent and active. Individuals seek one another out and come together more. The result is the general effervescence that is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs. The result of that heightened activity is a general stimulation of individual energies. People live differently and more intensely than in normal times.* The changes are not simply of nuance and degree; man himself becomes something other than what he was. He is stirred by passions so intense that they can be satisfied only by violent and extreme acts: by acts of superhuman heroism or bloody barbarism. This explains the Crusades,[9] for example, as well as so many sublime or savage moments in the French Revolution.[10] We see the most mediocre or harmless bourgeois transformed by the general exaltation into a hero or an executioner.[11] And the mental processes are so clearly the same as those at the root of religion that the individuals themselves conceived the pressure they yielded to in explicitly religious terms. The Crusaders believed they felt God present among them, calling on them to go forth and conquer the Holy Land, and Joan of Arc believed she was obeying celestial voices.[12]

This stimulating action of society is not felt in exceptional circumstances alone. There is virtually no instant of our lives in which a certain rush of energy fails to come to us from outside ourselves. In all kinds of acts that express the understanding, esteem, and affection of his neighbor, there is a lift that the man who does his duty feels, usually without being aware of it. But that lift sustains him; the feeling society has for him uplifts the feeling he has for himself. Because he is in moral harmony with his neighbor, he gains new confidence, courage, and boldness in action—quite like the man of faith who believes he feels the eyes of his god turned benevolently toward him. Thus is produced what amounts to a perpetual uplift of our moral being. Since it varies according to a multitude of external conditions—whether our relations with the social groups that surround us are more or less active and what those groups are—we cannot help but feel that this moral toning up has an external cause, though we do not see where that cause is or what it is. So we readily conceive of it in the form of a moral power that, while immanent in us, also represents something in us that is other than ourselves. This is

* *On vit plus et autrement qu'en temps normal.*

[9]Ibid., pp. 353ff.

[10]Ibid., pp. 619, 635.

[11]Ibid., pp. 622ff.

[12]Feelings of fear or sadness can also develop and intensify under the same influences. As we will see, those feelings correspond to a whole aspect of religious life (Bk. III, chap. 5).

man's moral consciousness and his conscience.* And it is only with the aid of religious symbols that most have ever managed to conceive of it with any clarity at all.

In addition to those free forces that continuously renew our own, there are other forces congealed in the techniques we use and in traditions of all kinds. We speak a language we did not create; we use instruments we did not invent; we claim rights we did not establish; each generation inherits a treasury of knowledge that it did not itself amass; and so on. We owe these varied benefits of civilization to society, and although in general we do not see where they come from, we know at least that they are not of our own making. It is these things that give man his distinctiveness among all creatures, for man is man only because he is civilized. Thus he could not escape the sense of mighty causes existing outside him, which are the source of his characteristic nature and which, like benevolent forces, help and protect him and guarantee him a privileged fate. He naturally accorded to those powers a respect commensurate with the great value of the benefits that he attributed to them.[13]

Thus the environment in which we live seems populated with forces at once demanding and helpful, majestic and kind, and with which we are in touch. Because we feel the weight of them, we have no choice but to locate them outside ourselves, as we do for the objective causes of our sensations. But from another point of view, the feelings they provoke in us are qualitatively different from those we have for merely physical things. So long as these perceptions are no more than the empirical characteristics that ordinary experience makes manifest, and so long as the religious imagination has not yet transfigured them, we feel nothing like respect for them, and they have nothing of what it takes to lift us above ourselves. Therefore the representations that express them seem to us very different from those that collective influences awaken in us. The two sorts of representation form two kinds of mental state, and they are as separate and distinct as the two forms of life to which they correspond. As a result, we feel as though we are in touch with two distinct sorts of reality with a clear line of demarcation between them: the world of profane things on one side, the world of sacred things on the other.

*Conscience. To bring out that the French conscience refers simultaneously to intellectual cognition and moral obligation, I have used both "conscience" and "consciousness."

[13]Such is the other aspect of society, which seems to us demanding as well as good and kindly. It dominates us; it helps us. If I have defined social fact more by the first characteristic than by the second, it is because the dominance is more easily observable and because it is expressed by external and visible signs; but I am far from ever having intended to deny the reality of the second. ([Emile Durkheim,] *Les Règles de la méthode sociologique,* 2d ed. [Paris, Alcan, 1901], preface, p. xx n.1).

Furthermore, now as in the past, we see that society never stops creating new sacred things. If society should happen to become infatuated with a man, believing it has found in him its deepest aspirations as well as the means of fulfilling them, then that man will be put in a class by himself and virtually deified. Opinion will confer on him a grandeur that is similar in every way to the grandeur that protects the gods. This has happened to many sovereigns in whom their epochs had faith and who, if not deified outright, were looked upon as direct representatives of the godhead. A clear indication that this apotheosis is the work of society alone is that society has often consecrated men whose personal worth did not warrant it. Moreover, the routine deference that men invested with high social positions receive is not qualitatively different from religious respect. The same movements express it: standing at a distance from a high personage; taking special precautions in approaching him; using a different language to speak with him and gestures other than those that will do for ordinary mortals. One's feeling in these circumstances is so closely akin to religious feeling that many do not distinguish between them. Sacredness is ascribed to princes, nobles, and political leaders in order to account for the special regard they enjoy. In Melanesia and Polynesia, for example, people say that a man of influence possesses mana and impute his influence to this mana.[14] It is clear, nonetheless, that his position comes to him only from the importance that opinion gives him. Thus, both the moral power conferred by opinion and the moral power with which sacred beings are invested are of fundamentally the same origin and composed of the same elements. For this reason, one word can be used to designate both.

Just as society consecrates men, so it also consecrates things, including ideas. When a belief is shared unanimously by a people, to touch it—that is, to deny or question it—is forbidden, for the reasons already stated. The prohibition against critique is a prohibition like any other and proves that one is face to face with a sacred thing. Even today, great though the freedom we allow one another may be, it would be tantamount to sacrilege for a man wholly to deny progress or to reject the human ideal to which modern societies are attached. Even the peoples most enamored of free thinking tend to place one principle above discussion and regard it as untouchable, in other words, sacred: the principle of free discussion itself.

Nowhere has society's ability to make itself a god or to create gods been more in evidence than during the first years of the Revolution. In the general enthusiasm of that time, things that were by nature purely secular were

[14][Robert Henry] Codrington, *The Melanesians* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891], pp. 50, 103, 120. Moreover, it is generally believed that in the Polynesian languages, the word *mana* originally meant "authority." (See [Edward] Tregear, *Maori Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, s.v. [Wellington, Lyon and Blair, 1891].)

transformed by public opinion into sacred things: Fatherland, Liberty, Reason.[15] A religion tended to establish itself spontaneously, with its own dogma,[16] symbols,[17] altars,[18] and feast days.[19] It was to these spontaneous hopes that the Cult of Reason and the Supreme Being tried to give a kind of authoritative fulfillment. Granted, this religious novelty did not last. The patriotic enthusiasm that originally stirred the masses died away,[20] and the cause having departed, the effect could not hold. But brief though it was, this experiment loses none of its sociological interest. In a specific case, we saw society and its fundamental ideas becoming the object of a genuine cult directly—and without transfiguration of any kind.

All these facts enable us to grasp how it is possible for the clan to awaken in its members the idea of forces existing outside them, both dominating and supporting them—in sum, religious forces. There is no other social group to which the primitive is more directly or tightly bound. The ties that bind him to the tribe are looser and less strongly felt. Although the tribe is certainly not foreign to him, it is with the people of his clan that he has most in common, and it is the influence of this group that he feels most immediately, and so it is also this influence, more than any other, that was bound to find expression in religious symbols.

This first explanation is too general, though, since it can be applied indiscriminately to any kind of society and hence to any kind of religion. Let us try to specify what particular form collective action takes in the clan and how in the clan it brings about the sense of the sacred, for collective action is nowhere more easily observable or more obvious than in its results.

III

Life in Australian societies alternates between two different phases.[21] In one phase, the population is scattered in small groups that attend to their occupa-

[15]See Albert Mathiez, *Les Origines des cultes révolutionnaires 1789–1792* [Paris, G. Bellais, 1904].

[16]Ibid., p. 24.

[17]Ibid., pp. 29, 32.

[18]Ibid., p. 30.

[19]Ibid, p. 46.

[20]See [Albert] Mathiez, *La Théophilanthropie et le culte décadaire* [Paris, F. Alcan, 1903], p. 36.

[21]See [Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen, *Northern Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], p. 33.

tions independently. Each family lives to itself, hunting, fishing—in short, striving by all possible means to get the food it requires. In the other phase, by contrast, the population comes together, concentrating itself at specified places for a period that varies from several days to several months. This concentration takes place when a clan or a portion of the tribe[22] is summoned to come together and on that occasion either conducts a religious ceremony or holds what in the usual ethnographic terminology is called a *corroboree*.[23]

These two phases stand in the sharpest possible contrast. The first phase, in which economic activity predominates, is generally of rather low intensity. Gathering seeds or plants necessary for food, hunting, and fishing are not occupations that can stir truly strong passions.[24] The dispersed state in which the society finds itself makes life monotonous, slack, and humdrum.[25] Everything changes when a corroboree takes place. Since the emotional and passionate faculties of the primitive are not fully subordinated to his reason and will, he easily loses his self-control. An event of any importance immediately puts him outside himself. Does he receive happy news? There are transports of enthusiasm. If the opposite happens, he is seen running hither and yon like a madman, giving way to all sorts of chaotic movements: shouting, screaming, gathering dust and throwing it in all directions, biting himself, brandishing his weapons furiously, and so on.[26] The very act of congregating is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation. Every emotion expressed resonates without interference in consciousnesses that are wide open

[22]Indeed there are ceremonies, notably those that take place for initiation, to which members of foreign tribes are summoned. A system of messages and messengers is organized for the purpose of giving the notice that is indispensable for the grand ceremonies. (See [Alfred William] Howitt, "Notes on Australian Message-Sticks and Messengers," *JAI*, vol. XVIII (1889) [pp. 314–334]; Howitt, *Native Tribes [of South-East Australia*, New York, Macmillan, 1904], pp. 83, 678–691; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes [of Central Australia*, London, Macmillan, 1899], p. 159; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 551.

[23]The corroboree is distinguished from a religious rite proper in that it is accessible to women and the uninitiated. But although these two sorts of collective celebrations must be distinguished, they are closely related. I will return to and explain this relationship.

[24]Except in the case of the large bush-beating hunts.

[25]"The peaceful monotony of this part of his life," say Spencer and Gillen (*Northern Tribes*, p. 33).

[26]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 683. Here it is the demonstrations that take place when an embassy sent to a foreign group returns to camp with news of a favorable result. [Durkheim will not be the one to report that the embassy in question had been entrusted to women. Howitt does not say what the women's mission was about. Trans.] Cf. [Robert] Brough Smyth, [*The Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. 1 [Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1878], p. 138; [Reverend Louis] Schulze, "Aborigines of the Upper and Middle Finke River," *RSSA*, vol. XVI [1891], p. 222.

to external impressions, each one echoing the others. The initial impulse is thereby amplified each time it is echoed, like an avalanche that grows as it goes along. And since passions so heated and so free from all control cannot help but spill over, from every side there are nothing but wild movements, shouts, downright howls, and deafening noises of all kinds that further intensify the state they are expressing. Probably because a collective emotion cannot be expressed collectively without some order that permits harmony and unison of movement, these gestures and cries tend to fall into rhythm and regularity, and from there into songs and dances. But in taking on a more regular form, they lose none of their natural fury. A regulated commotion is still a commotion. The human voice is inadequate to the task and is given artificial reinforcement: Boomerangs are knocked against one another; bull roarers are whirled. The original function of these instruments, used widely in the religious ceremonies of Australia, probably was to give more satisfying expression to the excitement felt. And by expressing this excitement, they also reinforce it. The effervescence often becomes so intense that it leads to outlandish behavior; the passions unleashed are so torrential that nothing can hold them. People are so far outside the ordinary conditions of life, and so conscious of the fact, that they feel a certain need to set themselves above and beyond ordinary morality. The sexes come together in violation of the rules governing sexual relations. Men exchange wives. Indeed, sometimes incestuous unions, in normal times judged loathsome and harshly condemned, are contracted in the open and with impunity.[27] If it is added that the ceremonies are generally held at night, in the midst of shadows pierced here and there by firelight, we can easily imagine the effect that scenes like these are bound to have on the minds of all those who take part. They bring about such an intense hyperexcitement of physical and mental life as a whole that they cannot be borne for very long. The celebrant who takes the leading role eventually falls exhausted to the ground.[28]

To illustrate and flesh out this unavoidably sketchy tableau, here is an account of scenes taken from Spencer and Gillen.

One of the most important religious celebrations among the Warra-

[27]See Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 96–97, *Northern Tribes,* p. 137; Brough Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria,* vol. II, p. 319. This ritual promiscuity is practiced especially during initiation ceremonies (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 267, 381; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 657) and in totemic ceremonies (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 214, 237, 298). The ordinary rules of exogamy are violated during totemic ceremonies. Nevertheless, among the Arunta, unions between father and daughter, son and mother, brothers and sisters (all cases of blood kinship) remain forbidden (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes* [pp. 96–97]).

[28]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 535, 545. This is extremely common.

munga concerns the snake Wollunqua. It is a series of rites that unfold over several days. What I will describe takes place on the fourth day.

According to the protocol in use among the Warramunga, representatives of the two phratries take part, some as celebrants and others as organizers and participants. Although only the people of the Uluuru phratry are authorized to conduct the ceremony, the members of the Kingilli phratry must decorate the participants, prepare the site and the instruments, and serve as the audience. In this capacity, they are responsible for mounding damp sand ahead of time, on which they use red down to make a drawing that represents the snake Wollunqua. The ceremony proper, which Spencer and Gillen attended, did not begin until nightfall. Around ten or eleven o'clock, Uluuru and Kingilli arrived on the scene, sat on the mound, and began to sing. All were in a state of obvious excitement ("*every one was evidently very excited*"). A short time later in the evening, the Uluuru brought their wives and handed them over to the Kingilli,[29] who had sexual relations with them. The recently initiated young men were brought in, and the ceremony was explained to them, after which there was uninterrupted singing until three in the morning. Then came a scene of truly wild frenzy ("*a scene of the wildest excitement*"). With fires flickering on all sides, bringing out starkly the whiteness of the gum trees against the surrounding night, the Uluuru knelt in single file beside the mound, then moved around it, rising in unison with both hands on their thighs, kneeling again a little farther along, and so on. At the same time, they moved their bodies left and then right, at each movement letting out an echoing scream—actually a howl—at the top of their voices, *Yrrsh! Yrrsh! Yrrsh!* Meanwhile the Kingilli, in a high state of excitement, sounded their boomerangs, their chief appearing to be even more excited than his companions. When the procession of the Uluuru had circled the mound twice, they rose from their kneeling position, seated themselves, and took to singing again. From time to time, the singing would flag and almost die, then break out suddenly again. At the first sign of day, everyone jumped to their feet; the fires that had gone out were relit; urged on by the Kingilli, the Uluuru furiously attacked the mound with boomerangs, lances, and sticks, and in a few minutes it was in pieces. The fires died and there was profound silence.[30]

The same observers were present at a yet wilder scene among the Warramunga during the fire rituals. All sorts of processions, dances, and songs had been underway by torchlight since nightfall, and the general efferves-

[29]Since the women were also Kingilli, these unions violated the rule of exogamy.

[30]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 237. [This account begins at p. 231. Trans.]

cence was increasingly intense. At a certain moment, twelve of those present each took in hand a large lighted torch; and, holding his own torch like a bayonette, one of them charged a group of natives. The blows were parried with staves and lances. A general melée followed. Men jumped, kicked, reared, and let out wild screams. The torches blazed and crackled as they hit heads and bodies, showering sparks in all directions. "The smoke, the flaming torches, the rain of sparks, the mass of men dancing and screaming—all that, say Spencer and Gillen, created a scene whose wildness cannot be conveyed in words."[31]

It is not difficult to imagine that a man in such a state of exaltation should no longer know himself. Feeling possessed and led on by some sort of external power that makes him think and act differently than he normally does, he naturally feels he is no longer himself. It seems to him that he has become a new being. The decorations with which he is decked out, and the masklike decorations that cover his face, represent this inward transformation even more than they help bring it about. And because his companions feel transformed in the same way at the same moment, and express this feeling by their shouts, movements, and bearing, it is as if he was in reality transported into a special world entirely different from the one in which he ordinarily lives, a special world inhabited by exceptionally intense forces that invade and transform him. Especially when repeated for weeks, day after day, how would experiences like these not leave him with the conviction that two heterogeneous and incommensurable worlds exist in fact? In one world he languidly carries on his daily life; the other is one that he cannot enter without abruptly entering into relations with extraordinary powers that excite him to the point of frenzy. The first is the profane world and the second, the world of sacred things.

It is in these effervescent social milieux, and indeed from that very effervescence, that the religious idea seems to have been born. That such is indeed the origin tends to be confirmed by the fact that what is properly called religious activity in Australia is almost entirely contained within the periods when these gatherings are held. To be sure, there is no people among whom the great cult ceremonies are not more or less periodical, but in the more advanced societies, there is virtually no day on which some prayer or offering is not offered to the gods or on which some ritual obligation is not fulfilled. In Australia, by contrast, the time apart from the feasts of the clan and the

[31]Ibid., p. 391. Other examples of collective effervescence during religious ceremonies are found in Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 244–246, 356–366, 374, 509–510. (The last occurs during a funeral rite.) Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 213, 351.

tribe is taken up almost entirely with secular and profane activities. Granted, even during the periods of secular activity, there are prohibitions that must be and are observed. Freely killing or eating the totemic animal is never permitted, at least where the prohibition has kept its original strictness, but hardly any positive rite or ceremony of any importance is conducted. The positive rites and ceremonies take place only among assembled groups. Thus, the pious life of the Australian moves between successive phases—one of utter colorlessness, one of hyperexcitement—and social life oscillates to the same rhythm. This brings out the link between the two phases. Among the peoples called civilized, on the other hand, the relative continuity between them partially masks their interrelations. Indeed, we may well ask whether this starkness of contrast may have been necessary to release the experience of the sacred in its first form. By compressing itself almost entirely into circumscribed periods, collective life could attain its maximum intensity and power, thereby giving man a more vivid sense of the twofold existence he leads and the twofold nature in which he participates.

But this explanation is still incomplete. I have shown how the clan awakens in its members the idea of external forces that dominate and exalt it by the way in which it acts upon its members. But I still must ask how it happens that those forces were conceived of in the form of the totem, that is, in the form of an animal or plant.

The reason is that some animal or plant has given its name to the clan and serves as the clan's emblem. It is, in fact, a well-known law that the feelings a thing arouses in us are spontaneously transmitted to the symbol that represents it. Black is for us a sign of mourning; therefore it evokes sad thoughts and impressions. This transfer of feelings takes place because the idea of the thing and the idea of its symbol are closely connected in our minds. As a result, the feelings evoked by one spread contagiously to the other. This contagion, which occurs in all cases to some extent, is much more complete and more pronounced whenever the symbol is something simple, well defined, and easily imagined. But the thing itself is difficult for the mind to comprehend—given its dimensions, the number of its parts, and the complexity of their organization. We cannot detect the source of the strong feelings we have in an abstract entity that we can imagine only with difficulty and in a jumbled way. We can comprehend those feelings only in connection with a concrete object whose reality we feel intensely. Thus if the thing itself does not meet this requirement, it cannot serve as a mooring for the impressions felt, even for those impressions it has itself aroused. The symbol thus takes the place of the thing, and the emotions aroused are transferred to the symbol. It is the symbol that is loved, feared, and respected. It

is to the symbol that one is grateful. And it is to the symbol that one sacrifices oneself. The soldier who dies for his flag dies for his country, but the idea of the flag is actually in the foreground of his consciousness. Indeed, the flag sometimes causes action directly. Although the country will not be lost if a solitary flag remains in the hands of the enemy or won if it is regained, the soldier is killed retaking it. He forgets that the flag is only a symbol that has no value in itself but only brings to mind the reality it represents. The flag itself is treated as if it was that reality.

The totem is the flag of the clan, so it is natural that the impressions the clan arouses in individual consciousness—impressions of dependence and of heightened energy—should become more closely attached to the idea of the totem than to that of the clan. The clan is too complex a reality for such unformed minds to be able to bring its concrete unity into clear focus. Besides, the primitive does not see that these impressions come to him from the group. He does not even see that the coming together of a certain number of men participating in the same life releases new energies that transform each one of them. All he feels is that he is lifted above himself and that he is participating in a life different from the one he lives ordinarily. He must still connect those experiences to some external object in a causal relation. Now what does he see around him? What is available to his senses, and what attracts his attention, is the multitude of totemic images surrounding him. He sees the waninga and the nurtunja, symbols of the sacred being. He sees the bull roarers and the churingas, on which combinations of lines that have the same meaning are usually engraved. The decorations on various parts of his body are so many totemic marks. Repeated everywhere and in every form, how could that image not fail to stand out in the mind with exceptionally sharp relief? Thus placed at center stage, it becomes representative. To that image the felt emotions attach themselves, for it is the only concrete object to which they can attach themselves.

The image goes on calling forth and recalling those emotions even after the assembly is over. Engraved on the cult implements, on the sides of rocks, on shields, and so forth, it lives beyond the gathering. By means of it, the emotions felt are kept perpetually alive and fresh. It is as though the image provoked them directly. Imputing the emotions to the image is all the more natural because, being common to the group, they can only be related to a thing that is equally common to all. Only the totemic emblem meets this condition. By definition, it is common to all. During the ceremony, all eyes are upon it. Although the generations change, the image remains the same. It is the abiding element of social life. So the mysterious forces with which men feel in touch seem to emanate from it, and thus we understand how

men were led to conceive them in the form of the animate or inanimate being that gives the clan its name.

Having laid this foundation, we are in a position to grasp the essence of totemic beliefs. Because religious force is none other than the collective and anonymous force of the clan and because that force can only be conceived of in the form of the totem, the totemic emblem is, so to speak, the visible body of the god. From the totem, therefore, the beneficial or fearsome actions that the cult is intended to provoke or prevent will seem to emanate. So it is to the totem that the rites are specifically addressed. This is why the totem stands foremost in the ranks of sacred things.

Like any other society, the clan can only live in and by means of the individual consciousnesses of which it is made. Thus, insofar as religious force is conceived of as embodied in the totemic emblem, it seems to be external to individuals and endowed with a kind of transcendence; and yet, from another standpoint, and like the clan it symbolizes, it can be made real only within and by them. So in this sense, it is immanent in individual members and they of necessity imagine it to be. They feel within themselves the active presence of the religious force, because it is this force that lifts them up to a higher life. This is how man came to believe that he had within him a principle comparable to the one residing in the totem, and thus how he came to impute sacredness to himself—albeit a sacredness less pronounced than that of the emblem. This happens because the emblem is the preeminent source of religious life. Man participates in it only indirectly, and he is aware of that; he realizes that the force carrying him into the realm of sacred things is not inherent in himself but comes to him from outside.

For another reason, the animals or plants of the totemic species had to have the same quality to an even greater degree. For if the totemic principle is none other than the clan, it is the clan thought of in the physical form depicted by the emblem. Now, this is also the form of the real beings whose name the clan bears. Because of this resemblance, they could not fail to arouse feelings similar to those aroused by the emblem itself. Because this emblem is the object of religious respect, they too should inspire respect of the same kind and appear as sacred. Given forms so perfectly identical, the faithful were bound to impute forces of the same kind to both. This is why it is forbidden to kill or eat the totemic animal and why the flesh is deemed to have positive virtues that the rites put to use. The animal looks like the emblem of the clan—like its own image, in other words. And since it looks more like the emblem than the man does, its place in the hierarchy of sacred things is superior to man's. Clearly there is a close kinship between these two beings; both share the same essence, and both incarnate something of the

totemic principle. But because the principle itself is conceived of in animal form, the animal seems to incarnate it more conspicuously than the man does. This is why, if the man respects the animal and treats it as a brother, he gives it at least the respect due an older brother.[32]

But although the totemic principle has its chief residence in a specific animal or plant species, it cannot possibly remain localized there. Sacredness is highly contagious,[33] and it spreads from the totemic being to everything that directly or remotely has to do with it. The religious feelings inspired by the animal passed into the substances it ate, thereby making or remaking its flesh and blood; those feelings passed into the things that resemble it and into the various creatures with which it is in constant contact. Thus, little by little, subtotems attached themselves to totems, and the cosmological systems expressed by the primitive classifications came into being. In the end, the whole world was divided up among the totemic principles of the same tribe.

We now understand the source of the ambiguity that religious forces display when they appear in history—how they come to be natural as well as human and material as well as moral. They are moral powers, since they are made entirely from the impressions that moral collectivity as a moral being makes on other moral beings, the individuals. Such moral powers do not express the manner in which natural things affect our senses but the manner in which the collective consciousness affects individual consciousnesses. Their authority is but one aspect of the moral influence that society exerts on its members. From another standpoint, they are bound to be regarded as closely akin to material things[34] because they are conceived of in tangible forms. Thus they bestride the two worlds. They reside in men but are at the same time the life-principles of things. It is they that enliven and discipline consciences; it is also they that make the plants grow and the animals multiply. Because of its double nature, religion was able to be the womb in which the

[32]It can be seen that this brotherhood, far from being the premise of totemism, is its logical consequence. Men did not come to believe they had duties toward the animals of the totemic species because they believed them to be kin; instead, they imagined that kinship in order to explain the nature of the beliefs and rites of which the animals were the object. The animal was considered man's relative because it was a sacred being like man; it was not treated like a sacred being because people saw him as a relative.

[33]See below, Bk. III, chap. 1, §3.

[34]Furthermore, at the basis of this idea is a well-founded and lasting awareness. Modern science also tends more and more to allow that the duality of man and nature does not preclude their unity, and that, while distinct, physical forces and moral ones are closely akin. We certainly have a different idea of this unity and kinship than the primitive's, but beneath the different symbols, the fact affirmed is the same for both.

principal seeds of human civilization have developed. Because religion has borne reality as a whole within itself, the material world as well as the moral world, the forces that move both bodies and minds have been conceived of in religious form. Thus it is that the most disparate techniques and practices—those that ensure the continuity of moral life (law, morals, fine arts) and those that are useful to material life (natural sciences, industrial techniques)—sprang from religion, directly or indirectly.[35]

IV

The first religious ideas have often been attributed to feelings of weakness and subjection or fear and misgiving, which supposedly gripped man when he came into contact with the world. The victim of a sort of nightmare fabricated by none other than himself, man imagines himself surrounded by those same hostile and fearsome powers, and appeasing them is the point of the rites. I have just shown that the first religions have an altogether different origin. The famous formula *Primus in orbe deos fecit timor** is in no way warranted by the facts. The primitive did not see his gods as strangers, enemies, or beings who were fundamentally or necessarily evil-minded or whose favor he had to win at all costs. Quite the contrary, to him the gods are friends, relatives, and natural protectors. Are these not the names he gives to the beings of the totemic species? As he imagines it, the power to which the cult is addressed does not loom far above, crushing him with its superiority; instead, it is very near and bestows upon him useful abilities that he is not born with. Never, perhaps, has divinity been closer to man than at this moment in history, when it is present in the things that inhabit his immediate surroundings and, in part, is immanent in man himself. In sum, joyful confidence, rather than terror or constraint, is at the root of totemism.

If we set aside funeral rites, the melancholy aspect of any religion, the totemic cult is celebrated with songs, dances, and dramatic performances. Cruel expiations are relatively rare in it, as we will see; even the painful and obligatory maimings that attend initiation are not of this character. The jealous and terrible gods do not make their appearance until later in religious

*First in the world, fear created the gods.

[35]I say that this derivation is sometimes indirect, because of techniques that, in the great majority of cases, seem to be derived from religion only via magic (see [Henri] Hubert and [Marcel] Mauss, [*Esquisse d'une*] *Théorie générale de la magie, AS,* vol. VII [1904], pp. 144ff; magic forces are, I think, only a special form of religious forces. I will have occasion to return more than once to this point.

evolution. This is so because primitive societies are not Leviathans that overwhelm man with the enormity of their power and subject him to harsh discipline;[36] he surrenders to them spontaneously and without resistance. Since the social soul is at that time made up of only a small number of ideas and feelings, the whole of it is incarnated without difficulty in each individual's consciousness. Each individual carries the whole in himself. It is part of him, so when he yields to its promptings, he does not think he is yielding to coercion but instead doing what his own nature tells him to do.[37]

This way of understanding the origin of religious thought escapes the objections that the most respected classical theories are open to.

We have seen that the naturists and the animists purported to construct the notion of sacred beings from the sensations that various physical or biological phenomena evoke in us. I have shown what was impossible and even contradictory about this enterprise. Nothing comes out of nothing. The sensations that the physical world evokes in us cannot, by definition, contain anything that goes beyond that world. From something tangible one can only make something tangible; from extended substance one cannot make unextended substance.* So to be in a position to explain how, under those conditions, the notion of the sacred could have been formed, most theorists were forced to assume that man has superimposed an unreal world upon reality as reality is available to observation. And this unreal world is constructed entirely with the phantasms that agitate his spirit during dreams, or with the often monstrous derangements that, supposedly, the mythological imagination spawned under the deceptive, if seductive, influence of language. But it then became impossible to understand why humanity should have persisted for centuries in errors that experience would very quickly have exposed as such.

From my standpoint, these difficulties disappear. Religion ceases to be an inexplicable hallucination of some sort and gains a foothold in reality. Indeed, we can say that the faithful are not mistaken when they believe in the existence of a moral power to which they are subject and from which they

*_L'étendu_ and _l'inétendu_. Literally, "something extended" and "something unextended," which correspond to Descartes' opposition between _res extensa_ and _res inextensa_, classically the opposition between mind (or soul) and body.

[36]In any case, once he is adult and fully initiated. The rites of initiation, which introduce the young man into social life, in themselves constitute a harsh discipline.

[37]Concerning the specific nature of primitive societies, see [Durkheim,] _Division du travail social,_ pp. 123, 149, 173ff.

receive what is best in themselves. That power exists, and it is society. When the Australian is carried above himself, feeling inside a life overflowing with an intensity that surprises him, he is not the dupe of an illusion. That exaltation is real and really is the product of forces outside of and superior to the individual. Of course, he is mistaken to believe that a power in the form of an animal or plant has brought about this increase in vital energy. But his mistake lies in taking literally the symbol that represents this being in the mind, or the outward appearance in which the imagination has dressed it up, not in the fact of its very existence. Behind these forms, be they cruder or more refined, there is a concrete and living reality.

In this way, religion acquires a sense and a reasonableness that the most militant rationalist cannot fail to recognize. The main object of religion is not to give man a representation of the natural universe, for if that had been its essential task, how it could have held on would be incomprehensible. In this respect, it is barely more than a fabric of errors. But religion is first and foremost a system of ideas by means of which individuals imagine the society of which they are members and the obscure yet intimate relations they have with it. Such is its paramount role. And although this representation is symbolic and metaphorical, it is not unfaithful. It fully translates the essence of the relations to be accounted for. It is true with a truth that is eternal that there exists outside us something greater than we and with which we commune.

That is why we can be certain that acts of worship, whatever they may be, are something other than paralyzed force, gesture without motion. By the very act of serving the manifest purpose of strengthening the ties between the faithful and their god—the god being only a figurative representation of the society—they at the same time strengthen the ties between the individual and the society of which he is a member. We can even understand how the fundamental truth that religion thus contained might have been enough to offset the secondary errors that it almost necessarily entailed and therefore how, despite the unpleasant surprises those errors caused, the faithful were prevented from setting religion aside. More often than not, the prescriptions it counseled for man's use upon things must surely have proved ineffective. But these setbacks could not have profound influence, because they did not strike at what is fundamental to religion.[38]

Nonetheless, it will be objected that even in terms of this hypothesis, religion is still the product of a certain delusion. By what other name can one

[38]Since I will return to this idea and will argue the case more explicitly in treating the rites (Bk. III), for now I confine myself to this general indication.

call the state in which men find themselves when, as a result of collective effervescence, they believe they have been swept up into a world entirely different from the one they have before their eyes?

It is quite true that religious life cannot attain any degree of intensity and not carry with it a psychic exaltation that is connected to delirium. It is for this reason that men of extraordinarily sensitive religious consciousness—prophets, founders of religions, great saints—often show symptoms of an excitability that is extreme and even pathological: These physiological defects predisposed them to great religious roles. The ritual use of intoxicating liquors is to be understood in the same way.[39] The reason is certainly not that ardent faith is necessarily the fruit of drunkenness and mental disorders. However, since experience quickly taught people the resemblances between the mentalities of the delusive and of the seer, they sought to open a path to the second by producing the first artificially. If, for this reason, it can be said that religion does not do without a certain delirium, it must be added that a delirium with the causes I have attributed to it *is well founded.* The images of which it is made are not pure illusions, and unlike those the naturists and the animists put at the basis of religion, they correspond to something real. Doubtless, it is the nature of moral forces expressed merely by images that they cannot affect the human mind with any forcefulness without putting it outside itself, and plunging it into a state describable as "ecstatic" (so long as the word is taken in its etymological sense [ἔκστασις, "stand" plus "out of"]). But it by no means follows that these forces are imaginary. Quite the contrary, the mental excitement they bring about attests to their reality. It provides further evidence that a very intense social life always does a sort of violence to the individual's body and mind and disrupts their normal functioning. This is why it can last for only a limited time.[40]

What is more, if the name "delirium" is given to any state in which the mind adds to whatever is immediately given through the senses, projecting its own impressions onto it, there is perhaps no collective representation that is not in a sense delusive; religious beliefs are only a special case of a very general law. The whole social world seems populated with forces that in reality exist only in our minds. We know what the flag is for the soldier, but in itself it is only a bit of cloth. Human blood is only an organic liquid, yet even

[39]On this point see [Thomas] Achelis, *Die Ekstase [in ihrer kulturellen Bedeutung,* Berlin, J. Rade, 1902], esp. chap. 1.

[40]Cf. [Marcel] Mauss, "Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés eskimos," in *AS,* vol. IX, [1906], p. 127.

today we cannot see it flow without experiencing an acute emotion that its physicochemical properties cannot explain. From a physical point of view, man is nothing but a system of cells, and from the mental point of view, a system of representations. From both points of view, he differs from the animal only in degree. And yet society conceives him and requires that we conceive him as being endowed with a *sui generis* character that insulates and shields him from all reckless infringement—in other words, that imposes respect. This status, which puts him in a class by himself, seems to us to be one of his distinctive attributes, even though no basis for it can be found in the empirical nature of man. A cancelled postage stamp may be worth a fortune, but obviously that value is in no way entailed by its natural properties. There is a sense, of course, in which our representation of the external world is itself nothing but a fabric of hallucinations. The odors, tastes, and colors that we place in bodies are not there, or at least are not there in the way we perceive them. Nevertheless, our sensations of smell, taste, and sight do correspond to certain objective states of the things represented. After a fashion, they do express the properties of particular materials or movements of the ether that really do have their origin in the bodies we perceive as being fragrant, tasty, or colorful. But collective representations often impute to the things to which they refer properties that do not exist in them in any form or to any degree whatsoever. From the most commonplace object, they can make a sacred and very powerful being.

However, even though purely ideal, the powers thereby conferred on that object behave as if they were real. They determine man's conduct with the same necessity as physical forces. The Arunta who has properly rubbed himself with his churinga feels stronger; he is stronger. If he has eaten the flesh of an animal that is prohibited, even through it is perfectly wholesome, he will feel ill from it and may die. The soldier who falls defending his flag certainly does not believe he has sacrificed himself to a piece of cloth. Such things happen because social thought, with its imperative authority, has a power that individual thought cannot possibly have. By acting on our minds, it can make us see things in the light that suits it; according to circumstances, it adds to or takes away from the real. Hence, there is a realm of nature in which the formula of idealism is almost literally applicable; that is the social realm. There, far more than anywhere else, the idea creates the reality. Even in this case, idealism is probably not true without qualification. We can never escape the duality of our nature and wholly emancipate ourselves from physical necessities. As I will show, to express our own ideas even to ourselves, we need to attach those ideas to material things that symbolize them. But, here, the role of matter is at a minimum. The object that serves as a prop for the

idea does not amount to much as compared to the ideal superstructure under which it disappears, and, furthermore, it has nothing to do with that superstructure. From all that has been said, we see what the pseudo-delirium met with at the basis of so many collective representations consists of: It is only a form of this fundamental idealism.[41] So it is not properly called a delusion. The ideas thus objectified are well founded—not, to be sure, in the nature of the tangible things onto which they are grafted but in the nature of society.

We can understand now how it happens that the totemic principle and, more generally, how any religious force comes to be external to the things in which it resides:[42] because the idea of it is not at all constructed from the impressions the thing makes directly on our senses and minds. Religious force is none other than the feeling that the collectivity inspires in its members, but projected outside the minds that experience them, and objectified. To become objectified, it fixes on a thing that thereby becomes sacred; any object can play this role. In principle, none is by nature predestined to it, to the exclusion of others, any more than others are necessarily precluded from it.[43] Where religious force becomes objectified depends entirely upon what circumstances cause the feeling that generates religious ideas to settle here or there, in one place rather than another. The sacredness exhibited by the thing is not implicated in the intrinsic properties of the thing: *It is added to them.* The world of the religious is not a special aspect of empirical nature: *It is superimposed upon nature.*

Finally, this idea of the religious enables us to explain an important principle found at the root of many myths: When a sacred being is subdivided, it remains wholly equal to itself in each of its parts. In other words, from the standpoint of religious thought, the part equals the whole; the part has the same powers and the same efficacy. A fragment of a relic has the same virtues

[41]One can see all that is wrong in theories like the geographic materialism of [Friedrich] Ratzel (see especially his "Der Raum im Geist der Völker" in *Politische Geographie,* [Leipzig, R. Oldenbourg, 1897]), which aim to derive all of social life from its material substrate (either economic or territorial). Their mistake is comparable to Maudsley's in individual psychology. Just as Maudsley reduced the psychic life of the individual to a mere epiphenomenon of its physiological base, they want to reduce all of the psychic life of the collectivity to its physical base. This is to forget that ideas are realities—forces—and that collective representations are forces even more dynamic and powerful than individual representations. On this point, see [Durkheim], "Représentations," *RMM,* 1898.

[42]See pp. 191, 196–197.

[43]Even excrement has a religious quality. See [Konrad Theodor] Preuss, "Der Ursprung der Religion und Kunst," esp. chap. 2, "Der Zauber der Defäkation, *Globus,* vol. LXXXVI [1904], pp. 325ff.

as the whole relic. The smallest drop of blood contains the same active principle as all the blood. As we will see, the soul can be broken up into almost as many parts as there are organs or tissues in the body; each of these partial souls is equivalent to the entire soul. This conception would be inexplicable if sacredness depended on the constitutive properties of the thing serving as its substrate, for sacredness would have to change with that thing, increasing and decreasing with it. But if the virtues the thing is deemed to have are not intrinsic to it, if they come to it from certain feelings that it calls to mind and symbolizes (even though such feelings originate outside it), it can play an evocative role whether it is whole or not, since in that role it does not need specific dimensions. Since the part evokes the whole, it also evokes the same feelings as the whole. A mere scrap of the flag represents the country as much as the flag itself; moreover, it is sacred in the same right and to the same degree.[44]

V

This theory of totemism has enabled us to explain the most characteristic beliefs of the religion, but it rests on a fact that is not yet explained. Given the idea of the totem, the emblem of the clan, all the rest follows, but we must still find out how that idea was formed. The question is twofold and can be broken down in this way: (1) What caused the clan to choose an emblem? (2) Why were those emblems taken from the world of animals and plants, but especially from the world of animals?

That an emblem can be useful as a rallying point for any sort of group requires no argument. By expressing the social unit tangibly, it makes the unit itself more tangible to all. And for that reason, the use of emblematic symbols must have spread quickly, as soon as the idea was born. Furthermore, this idea must have arisen spontaneously from the conditions of life in common, for the emblem is not only a convenient method of clarifying the awareness the society has of itself: It serves to create—and is a constitutive element of—that awareness.

By themselves, individual consciousnesses are actually closed to one another, and they can communicate only by means of signs in which their inner states come to express themselves. For the communication that is opening up between them to end in a communion—that is, in a fusion of all

[44]This principle has passed from religion into magic. It is the alchemists' *Totum ex parte* [the whole from the part. Trans.].

the individual feelings into a common one—the signs that express those feelings must come together in one single resultant.* The appearance of this resultant notifies individuals that they are in unison and brings home to them their moral unity. It is by shouting the same cry, saying the same words, and performing the same action in regard to the same object that they arrive at and experience agreement. Granted, individual representations also bring about repercussions in the body that are not unimportant; still, these effects can be treated as analytically distinct from physical repercussions that come with or after them but that are not their basis.

Collective representations are quite another matter. They presuppose that consciousnesses are acting and reacting on each other; they result from actions and reactions that are possible only with the help of tangible intermediaries. Thus the function of the intermediaries is not merely to reveal the mental state associated with them; they also contribute to its making. The individual minds can meet and commune only if they come outside themselves, but they do this only by means of movement. It is the homogeneity of these movements that makes the group aware of itself and that, in consequence, makes it be. Once this homogeneity has been established and these movements have taken a definite form and been stereotyped, they serve to symbolize the corresponding representations. But these movements symbolize those representations only because they have helped to form them.

Without symbols, moreover, social feelings could have only an unstable existence. Those feelings are very strong so long as men are assembled, mutually influencing one another, but when the gathering is over, they survive only in the form of memories that gradually dim and fade away if left to themselves. Since the group is no longer present and active, the individual temperaments quickly take over again. Wild passions that could unleash themselves in the midst of a crowd cool and die down once the crowd has dispersed, and individuals wonder with amazement how they could let themselves be carried so far out of character. But if the movements by which these feelings have been expressed eventually become inscribed on things that are durable, then they too become durable. These things keep bringing the feelings to individual minds and keep them perpetually aroused, just as

*Since Durkheim said "resultant" (*résultante*) and not "result" (*résultat*), he may have had in mind the mathematical notion of a vector sum of forces. A resultant may be defined as the single force, measured as velocity or acceleration, to which several forces taken together are equivalent. The term also has an analogous literary sense.

would happen if the cause that first called them forth was still acting. Thus, while emblematizing is necessary if society is to become conscious of itself, so is it no less indispensable in perpetuating that consciousness.

Hence, we must guard against seeing those symbols as mere artifices—a variety of labels placed on ready-made representations to make them easier to handle. They are integral to those representations. The fact that collective feelings find themselves joined in this way to things that are alien to them is not purely conventional. It tangibly portrays a real feature of social phenomena: their transcendence of individual consciousnesses. We know, in fact, that social phenomena are born not in the individual but in the group. No matter what part we may play in their genesis, each of us receives them from without.[45] Thus, when we imagine them as emanating from a material object, we are not entirely wrong about their nature. Although they certainly do not come from the specific thing to which we attribute them, still it is true that they originate outside us. And although the moral force that sustains the worshipper does not come from the idol he worships or the emblem he venerates, still it is external to him; and he feels this. The objectivity of the symbol is but an expression of that externality.

Thus, in all its aspects and at every moment of its history, social life is only possible thanks to a vast symbolism. The physical emblems and figurative representations with which I have been especially concerned in the present study are one form of it, but there are a good many others. Collective feelings can just as well be incarnated in persons as in formulas. Some formulas are flags; some real or mythic personages are symbols. But there is one sort of emblem that must have appeared very quickly, quite apart from any reflection or calculation, and it is this one that we have seen playing a considerable role in totemism: tattooing. Well-known facts demonstrate, in fact, that under certain conditions, it is produced by a sort of automatic action. When men of an inferior culture share in a common life, they are often led, almost instinctively, to paint themselves or to imprint images on their bodies that remind them of their common life. According to a text by Procope, the first Christians had the name of Christ or the sign of the cross imprinted on their skin.[46] For a long time, groups of pilgrims who went to Palestine also had themselves tattooed on their arms or wrists with designs representing the

[45]On this point, see [Durkheim], *Règles de la méthode sociologique,* pp. 5ff.

[46]Procopius of Gaza, *Commentarii in Isaiam,* p. 496. [It may be that Durkheim drew this fifth-century reference from *Procopii Gazaei . . . Opera omnia in unum corpus adunata,* Petit Montrouge, J. P. Migne, 1861. Trans.]

cross or the monogram of Christ.[47] The same custom is reported for pilgrimages to certain holy places in Italy.[48] Lombroso reported a curious example of spontaneous tattooing. When twenty young men from an Italian high school were about to separate, they had themselves decorated with tattoos that in various ways recorded the years they had just spent together.[49] The same practice has often been observed among soldiers of the same camp, sailors on the same ship, and prisoners in the same house of detention.[50] In fact, it is understandable, especially where technology is still undeveloped, that tattooing is the most direct and expressive means by which the communion of minds can be affirmed. The best way of testifying to oneself and others that one is part of the same group is to place the same distinctive mark on the body. Proof that such is indeed the *raison d'être* of the totemic image is that, as I have shown, it does not try to copy the appearance of the thing it is considered to represent. It is made of lines and points that are given an entirely conventional meaning.[51] The purpose of the image is not to represent or evoke a particular object but to testify that a certain number of individuals share the same moral life.

The clan is a society that is less able than any other to do without an emblem and a symbol, for there are few societies so lacking in cohesion. The clan cannot be defined by its leader, for although not absent altogether, central authority in it is at best shifting and unstable.[52] Nor can it be any better defined by the territory it occupies for, being nomadic,[53] the clan's population is not closely tied to any definite locality. Furthermore, given the rule of exogamy, the husband and wife must be of different totems. Thus, where the totem is transmitted in the maternal line—and today this descent system is

[47]See Thévenot, [*Suite de*] *voyage* [*de M. de Thévenot*] *au Levant*, Paris, 1689, p. 638. This phenomenon was observed again in 1862: cf. Berchon, "Histoire médicale du tatouage," *Archives de Médicine Navale*, vol. XI (1869), p. 377 n.

[48][Alexandre] Lacassagne, *Les Tatouages:* [*Étude anthropologique et médico légale*, Paris, Baillière, 1881], p. 10.

[49][Césare] Lombroso, *L'Homme criminel*, vol. I [Paris, Alcan, 1885], p. 292.

[50]Ibid., vol. I, pp. 268, 285, 291–292; Lacassagne, *Tatouages*, p. 97.

[51]See above, p. 126.

[52]On the authority of the chiefs, see Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, p. 10; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 25; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 295ff.

[53]At least in Australia. In America, the population is most often sedentary, but the clan in America is a relatively advanced form of organization.

still the most widespread[54]—the children are of a different clan from their father, even when living with him. For all these reasons, we find all sorts of different clans represented within the same family and even within the same locality. The unity of the group can be felt only because of the collective name borne by all the members and because of the equally collective emblem representing the thing designated by that name. A clan is essentially a company of individuals who have the same name and rally around the same symbol. Take away the name and the symbol that gives it tangible form, and the clan can no longer even be imagined. Since the clan was possible only on condition of being imaginable, both the institution of the emblem and its place in the group's life are thus explained.

Still, we must find out why these names and emblems were taken almost exclusively from the animal and plant kingdoms, though mainly from the first.

It seems plausible that the emblem has played a more important role than the name. In any event, today the written sign still holds a more central place in the life of the clan than the spoken one. Now, the emblematic image called for a subject representable by a design. And besides, the things had to be from among those with which the men of the clan were most closely and habitually in contact. Animals met this condition best. For these hunting and fishing populations, animals were in fact the essential element of the economic environment. In this respect, plants took second place, for they are of only secondary importance as food so long as they are not cultivated. Besides, animals have a closer relationship to man's life than do plants, if only because of the kindred nature that joins these two creatures to one another. By contrast, the sun, moon, and stars were too far away and seemed to belong to a different world.[55] Further, since the constellations were not differentiated and classified, the starry sky did not present objects different enough from one another to be serviceable in designating all the clans and subclans of a tribe. On the other hand, the variety of the flora, and especially the fauna,

[54]To be convinced of this, it is enough to look at the map prepared by [Northcote Whitridge] Thomas in *Kinship* [*Organization and Group*] *Marriage in Australia* [Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1906], p. 40. To evaluate this map properly, we must take into account the fact that, for reasons unknown, the author has extended the system of totemic descent through the paternal line as far as the west coast of Australia, even though we have virtually no information about the tribes of this region (and which, besides, is mainly desert).

[55]As I will show in the next chapter, the stars are often considered, even by the Australians, as countries of souls or mythic personages—that is, they seem to constitute a world very different from that of the living.

was almost inexhaustible. For these reasons, the heavenly bodies were unsuited to the role of totems, notwithstanding their brilliance and the powerful impression they make upon the senses. Animals and plants were perfect for it.

An observation by Strehlow permits us to specify the manner in which these emblems were probably chosen. He reports having noticed that the totemic centers are most often situated near a mountain, spring, or gorge where the animals that serve as the group's totem are found in abundance, and he cites various examples.[56] These totemic centers are certainly the consecrated places where the clan held its meetings. It therefore seems likely that each group took as its emblem the animal or plant that was the most plentiful in the neighborhood of the place where it usually assembled.[57]

VI

This theory of totemism will provide us the key to a curious trait of the human mind that, although more pronounced long ago than now, has not disappeared and in any case has played a significant role in the history of thought. This will be yet another opportunity to observe that logical evolution is closely interconnected with religious evolution and, like religious evolution, depends upon social conditions.[58]

If there is a truth that today seems to us completely self-evident, it is this: Beings that differ not only in outward appearance but also in their most fundamental properties—such as minerals, plants, animals, and men—cannot be regarded as equivalent and interchangeable. Long-established practice, which scientific culture has rooted even more deeply in our minds, taught us to set up barriers between realms of nature, barriers whose existence even trans-

[56][Carl Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral Australien*], vol. 1 [Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], p. 4. Cf. along the same lines Schulze, "Aborigines of the . . . Finke River," p. 243.

[57]Of course, as I have already had occasion to show (see p. 156, above), this choice is not made without a more or less well-thought-out agreement among the different groups, since each of them had to adopt a different emblem from that of its neighbors.

[58]The turn of mind treated in this paragraph is identical to the one that [Lucien] Lévy-Bruhl calls the law of participation (*Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures* [Paris, Alcan, 1910], pp. 76ff.). These pages were already written when that work appeared; I publish them in their original form without any change but confine myself to adding certain explanations that indicate where I differ with Lévy-Bruhl in the evaluation of the evidence.

formism* does not deny. For although transformism grants that life could have been born from nonliving matter, and men from animals, it recognizes nonetheless that, once formed, living beings are different from minerals, and men from animals. Within each realm, the same barriers separate different classes. We cannot imagine how one mineral could have the distinctive characteristics of another mineral—or one animal species, those of another species. But these distinctions, which seem to us so natural, are not at all primitive. Originally, all the realms are merged. The rocks have a sex; they have the ability to procreate; the sun, moon, and stars are men and women, who feel and express human feelings, while humans are pictured as animals or plants. This merging is found again and again at the basis of all mythologies. From it arises the ambiguous nature of the beings that figure in myths. Those beings cannot be placed in any definite genus because they simultaneously participate in the most dissimilar ones. Moreover, it is conceded without difficulty that they can move from one into another, and it is through transmutations of this kind that men long believed they could explain the origins of things.

That the anthropomorphic instinct, with which the animists have endowed the primitive, cannot account for this turn of mind is shown by the nature of the errors that are typical of it. These errors arise not from man's having wildly expanded the human realm to the point of encompassing all the others but from his having merged the most disparate realms with one another. He has no more imagined the world in his own image than he has imagined himself in the image of the world. He has done both at once. In the way he thought about things, he of course included human elements, but in the way he thought about himself, he included elements that came to him from things.

However there was nothing in experience that could have suggested these mergers and mixtures to him. From the standpoint of observation

*The 1992 *Petit Robert* dictionary indicates a "scientific" term, *transformisme*, and a "philosophical" term, *evolutionnisme*, dating them, respectively, from 1867 and 1878. Both terms come after Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859). According to André Lalande (*Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, Paris, Alcan, 1902, p. 909), the difference between the two terms is as follows. In one sense, *transformisme* is a more general term in biology than *évolutionnisme*, because it also includes such notions as Lamarck's inheritance of acquired characteristics. In another sense, it is more specific than evolutionism because it is limited to biology, whereas evolutionism became a far more general philosophical notion considered to be applicable to all phenomena. It is clear from the context of the book as a whole that, in these terms, Durkheim had *évolutionnisme* in mind. But I have preserved his "transformism" so as not to obliterate the memory of two overlapping terms that had somewhat different, and no doubt contested, meaning in his day.

through the senses, everything is disparate and discontinuous. Nowhere in reality do we observe beings that merge their natures and change into one another. An exceptionally powerful cause would have had to intervene and so transfigure the real as to make it appear in a form not its own.

It is religion that carried out this transformation; it is religious beliefs that replaced the world as the senses perceive it with a different one. This, the case of totemism shows very well. What is fundamental to totemism is that the people of the clan, and the various beings whose form the totemic emblem represents, are held to be made of the same essence. Once that belief was accepted, the disparate realms were bridged. Man was conceived of as a kind of animal or plant, and the plants and animals as man's kin—or, rather, all these beings, so different according to the senses, were conceived of as participating in the same nature. Hence, the origin of that remarkable capacity to confound what seems to us so obviously distinct: The first forces with which the human intellect populated the universe were elaborated through religion. Since these forces were made of elements taken from different kingdoms, they became the principle common to the most disparate things, which were thereby endowed with one and the same essence.

We know furthermore that these religious ideas are the outcome of definite social causes. Because the clan cannot exist without a name and an emblem, and because that emblem is everywhere before the eyes of individuals, the feelings that society arouses in its members are directed toward the emblem and toward the objects whose image it is. In this way, men had no choice but to conceive the collective force, whose workings they felt, in the form of the thing that served as the flag of the group. Therefore, the most disparate realms found themselves merged in the idea of this force. In one sense, the force was fundamentally human, since it was made of human ideas and feelings; at the same time, it could not but appear as closely akin to the animate or inanimate being that gave it outward form. The cause we are capturing at work is not exclusive to totemism; there is no society in which it is not at work. Nowhere can a collective feeling become consciousness of itself without fixing upon a tangible object;[59] but by that very fact, it participates in the nature of that object, and vice versa. Thus, it is social requirements that have fused together ideas that at first glance seem distinct, and through the great mental effervescence that it brings about, social life has promoted that fusion.[60] This is further evidence that logical understanding is a function of

[59]See above, p. 231.

[60]Another cause accounts for a large part of this fusion: the extreme contagiousness of religious forces. They invade every object in their reach, whatever it may be. Hence the same religious force can animate

society, since logical understanding adopts the conventions and viewpoints that society imprints upon it.

This logic is unsettling, to be sure. Still, we must be careful not to depreciate it: However crude it may seem to us, it was a momentous contribution to the intellectual development of humanity. For through that logic, a first explanation of the world became possible. Of course, the mental habits it implies prevented man from seeing reality as his senses show it to him; but as the senses show it to him, reality has the grave disadvantage of being resistant to all explanation. For to explain is to connect things to other things; it is to establish relationships between things that make them appear to us as functions of one another and as vibrating sympathetically in accordance with an internal law that is rooted in their nature. Sense perception, which sees only from the outside, could not possibly cause us to discover such relationships and internal ties; only the intellect can create the notion of them. When I learn that A regularly precedes B, my knowledge is enriched with a new piece of knowledge, but my intelligence is in no way satisfied by an observation that does not carry a reason with it. I begin to *understand* only if it is possible for me to conceive of B in some way that makes it appear to me as not foreign to A but as united with A in some relation of kinship. The great service that religions have rendered to thought is to have constructed a first representation of what the relations of kinship between things might be. Given the conditions in which it was tried, that enterprise could obviously lead only to makeshift results. But, then, are the results of any such enterprise ever definitive, and must it not be taken up again and again? Furthermore, it was less important to succeed than to dare. What was essential was not to let the mind be dominated by what appears to the senses, but instead to teach the mind to dominate it and to join together what the senses put asunder. As soon as man became aware that internal connections exist between things, science and philosophy became possible. Religion made a way for them. It is because religion is a social thing that it could play this role. To make men take control of sense impressions and replace them with a new way of imagining the real, a new kind of thought had to be created: collective thought. If collective thought alone had the power to achieve this, here is the reason: Creating a whole world of ideals, through which the world of sensed realities seemed transfigured, would require a hyperexcitation of intellectual forces that is possible only in and through society.

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the most dissimilar things, which by that very fact find themselves closely connected and classified in the same genus. I will return to this contagion below, while showing that it is related to the social origins of the idea of the sacred (Bk. III, chap. 1, end).

Hence, that mentality is far from being unrelated to our own. Our own logic was born in that logic. The explanations of contemporary science are more certain of being objective, because they are more systematic and based on more rigorously controlled observations, but they are not different in nature from those that satisfy primitive thought. Today as in the past, to explain is to show how a thing participates in one or several other things. It has been said that the participations whose existence mythologies presuppose violate the principle of contradiction and, on those grounds, are antithetical to the participations that scientific explanations involve.[61] Is not postulating that a man is a kangaroo and the sun a bird identifying one thing with another? We do not think any differently when we say of heat that it is a movement, and of light that it is a vibration of the ether, and so on. Every time we join heterogeneous terms by an internal tie, we of necessity identify contraries. The terms we join in this way are not, of course, the ones the Australian joins. We choose them according to different criteria and for different reasons, but the procedure by which the mind places them into relationship is not essentially different.

Granted, if primitive thought had the sort of universal and abiding indifference to contradiction that has been ascribed to it,[62] on this point it would contrast—and contrast very markedly—with modern thought, which is always careful to remain internally consistent. But I do not believe it possible to characterize the mentality of the lower societies by a sort of one-sided and exclusive inclination not to make distinctions. If the primitive puts together things that we keep separate, inversely, he separates other things that we put together, and he actually conceives of those distinctions as abrupt and pronounced oppositions. Between two beings that are classified in two different phratries, there is not only separation but also antagonism.[63] For this reason, the same Australian who puts the sun and the white cockatoo together opposes the black cockatoo to the white as to its opposite. The two seem to him to belong to two separate genera with nothing in common. There is an even more pronounced opposition between sacred and profane things. They repel and contradict one another so forcefully that the mind refuses to think of them at the same time. They expel one another from consciousness.

Hence, there is no gulf between the logic of religious thought and the logic of scientific thought. Both are made up of the same essential elements,

[61]Lévy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions mentales,* pp. 77ff.

[62]Ibid., p. 79.

[63]See above, p. 146.

although these elements are unequally and differently developed. What appears above all to typify the logic of religious thought is a natural taste as much for unrestrained assimilations as for clashing contrasts. It is given to excess in both directions. When it brings things together, it mixes them together; when it distinguishes between things, it makes them opposites. It knows neither moderation nor nuance but seeks the extremes. As a result, it employs logical mechanisms with a certain gaucheness, but none of them are unknown to it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE NOTION OF SOUL*

In the preceding chapters, we have studied the fundamental principles of totemic religion. We have found that the notions of soul, spirit, and mythic personage are absent from it. Yet although the notion of spiritual beings is not fundamental to totemism or, consequently, to religion in general, there is no religion from which it is absent—hence the importance of trying to discover how it came to be formed. To be sure that notion is in fact the result of a secondary formation, I must show how it is derived from the more fundamental ideas I have previously set forth and explained.

Of all the spirit beings, there is one that must claim our attention first and foremost, since it is the prototype from which the others have been built, and that is the soul.

I

Just as there is no known society without religion, there is no religion, however crudely organized, in which we do not find a system of collective representations dealing with soul—its origin and its destiny. So far as can be judged from the ethnographic data, the idea of soul seems to be contemporaneous with humanity. Indeed, it seems to have had all its basic features from the beginning, and to such an extent that the work of the more advanced religions and philosophy has only been to refine it rather than to add anything truly fundamental. All the Australian societies allow that every human body harbors an interior being, a life-principle that animates it; and that principle is the soul. True, women are sometimes the exception to that general rule:

*The French reads *la notion d'âme* but could have read *"la notion de l'âme."* Durkheim treats "soul" as both a thing and a generic substance that becomes thinglike when it becomes part of an individual. Cf. in this chapter, "the idea of mana" and "the idea of personality."

There are tribes in which they are considered to have no such thing as a soul.[1] If Dawson is to be believed on this subject, the same is true of young children in the tribes he observed.[2] But such cases are unusual, and probably late developments.[3] In fact, the latter case seems suspect and could well be the result of a misinterpretation of the facts.[4]

To determine what idea the Australian has of the soul is not easy, since his idea is vague and variable. But this should by no means surprise us. If we asked our own contemporaries how they imagine the soul, even those who believe the most firmly in its existence, the responses we would get would not have much greater coherence and precision. This is because the idea in question is very complex, containing a multitude of poorly analyzed impressions elaborated over centuries without men's having been fully conscious of that elaboration. Here, nonetheless, are the most basic, if often contradictory, features by which it is defined.

In some cases, we are told that the soul has the external appearance of the body.[5] In others, it is imagined as being the size of a grain of sand, so small that it can pass through the narrowest crevices and the tiniest cracks.[6] We will see that it is also thought of in the form of animals. In other words, its form

[1]This is the case of the Gnanji; see [Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen, *Northern Tribes [of Central Australia,* London, Macmillan, 1904], pp. 170, 546; cf. a similar case, in [Robert] Brough Smyth [*The Aborigines of Victoria,* Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1878], vol. II, p. 269.

[2][James] Dawson, *Australian Aborigines* [Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1881], p. 51.

[3]Among the Gnanji, there surely was a time when women had souls, for today a large number of women's souls still exist, but they never reincarnate themselves; and since, among this people, the soul that animates a newborn is an old one incarnated, it follows from the fact that the souls of women are not reincarnated that women cannot have souls. Incidentally, we can explain that absence of reincarnation. Descent among the Gnanji, which was once matrilineal, now follows the paternal line. The mother does not transmit her totem to her child. Thus the woman never has descendants who perpetuate her; she is *finis familiae suae* [the end of her family. Trans]. To explain that situation, there are only two possible hypotheses: either women do not have souls, or the souls of women are destroyed after death. The Gnanji have adopted the first of those two explanations. Certain peoples of Queensland have preferred the second (see [Walter Edmund] Roth, [*Superstition*] *Magic and Medicine* in *North Queensland Ethnography,* Bulletin no. 5, §68 [Brisbane, G. A. Vaughn, 1903]).

[4]"Children below four or five years of age have neither soul nor future life," says Dawson. But what Dawson translates in this way is simply the absence of funeral rites for very young children. We will see the true meaning of this later on.

[5][James] Dawson, "Australian Aborigines," p. 51; [Langloh] Parker, [Catherine Sommerville Field Parker], *The Euahlayi [Tribe]* [London, A. Constable, 1905], p. 35; [Richard] Eylmann, [*Die*] *Eingeborenen [der Kolonie Sud Australien,* Berlin, D. Reumer, 1908], p. 188.

[6][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* p. 542; Schürmann, "The Aboriginal Tribes of Port Lincoln," in [James Dominick] Woods [*The Native Tribes of South Australia* Adelaide, E. S. Wigg, 1879], p. 235.

is essentially unstable and indefinite;[7] it changes from moment to moment to suit circumstances and according to the demands of myth and rite. The substance of which it is made is no less undefinable. Since it has form, however vague, it is not immaterial. And in fact, during this life, it even has physical needs: It eats and, inversely, can be eaten. Sometimes it leaves the body and feeds on foreign souls during its travels.[8] Once it has become completely emancipated from the body, it is presumed to lead a life wholly similar to the one it led on this earth: It drinks, eats, hunts, and so forth.[9] When it flits about in tree branches, it makes rustlings and cracklings that even profane ears can hear.[10] At the same time, it is held to be invisible to the ordinary person.[11] To be sure, magicians or old men possess the faculty of seeing souls, but this is because they see things that escape our senses, by virtue of special powers they owe to either age or special knowledge. When it comes to ordinary individuals, however, that privilege is enjoyed at only one time in their lives: when they are on the eve of premature death. That near-miraculous vision is therefore regarded as a sinister portent. Now, invisibility is widely regarded as one among the signs of spiritualness.* Thus, the soul is conceived of as being immaterial, to a certain extent, since it does not affect the senses in the way bodies do; it has no bones, say the tribes of the Tully River.[12] To reconcile all these contradictory traits, it is imagined as being made of an infinitely more rarified and subtle material, as something ethereal,[13] comparable to shadow or wind.[14]

*Durkheim says *de la spiritualité*, but the English "spirituality" would mislead.

[7]This is the phrase Dawson uses.

[8]Strehlow [*Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral-Australien*], vol. I [Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], p. 15 n. 1; [Reverend Louis] Schulze, "Aborigines of the Upper Middle Finke River," *RSSA*, vol. XVI [1891], p. 246. This is the theme of the vampire myth.

[9][Strehlow], *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 15; Schulze, "Aborigines," p. 244; Dawson, "Australian Aborigines," p. 51. True, souls are sometimes said to have nothing corporeal about them. According to certain accounts collected by Eylmann (p. 188), they are said to be *ohne Fleisch und Blut* [without flesh and blood. Trans.]. But these radical negatives leave me skeptical. The fact that offerings are not made to the souls of the dead in no way implies, as Roth thinks (*Superstition, Magic, etc.*, §65), that they do not eat.

[10]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §65; *Northern Tribes*, p. 500. Hence the soul sometimes emits odors (Roth, §68).

[11]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §67; Dawson, p. 51.

[12]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §65.

[13]Schürmann, "Aborigines," p. 235.

[14]Parker, *The Euahlayi*, pp. 29, 35; Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §65, 67, 68.

The soul is distinct from and independent of the body because from the beginning of life, it can leave the body for short periods. It leaves the body during sleep, during a faint, and so forth.[15] Indeed, it can remain absent for a time without death's resulting. Even so, life is lessened during those absences, and in fact ends if the soul does not return home.[16] But it is above all at death that this distinctness and independence are most manifest. Whereas the body is no more, with no visible traces remaining, the soul continues to live, having an autonomous existence in a world apart.

But as real as this duality may be, it is in no way absolute. It would be a misunderstanding to conceive the body as a kind of lodging in which the soul resides but with which it has only external relations. Quite the contrary, it is bound to the body with the closest of ties; indeed, it can be separated from the body only with difficulty, and incompletely. We have already seen that it can take at least its external appearance from the body. Therefore, whatever harms the one harms the other; every wound of the body is propagated all the way to the soul.[17] The soul is so intimately connected with the life of the body that it matures and perishes with it. This is why the man who has reached a certain age enjoys privileges denied to young men. As he has advanced in years, the religious principle that is in him has gained capacity and power. But when there is actual senility, when the old man has become unable to play a useful role in the great religious ceremonies or in the vital interests of the tribe that are at stake, he is no longer shown respect. The feebleness of his body is considered to have spread to the soul. No longer having the same powers, the subject is no longer entitled to the same status.[18]

There is not only close interdependence between the soul and the body but also partial assimilation. Just as there is something of the body in the soul, since it sometimes reproduces the body's form, so there is something of the soul in the body. Certain regions and products of the body are thought to have a special affinity with the soul: the heart, the breath, the placenta,[19] the

[15]Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §65; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 15.

[16]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 14 n. 1.

[17][James George] Frazer, "On Certain Burial Customs, as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul," in *JAI,* vol. XV [1886], p. 66.

[18]This is the case among the Kaitish and the Unmatjera. See Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 506, and *Native Tribes,* p. 512.

[19]Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §65–68.

blood,[20] the shadow,[21] the liver, the fat of the liver, and the kidneys,[22] and so forth. These various physical substrates are not mere lodgings for the soul; they are the soul itself viewed from outside. When the blood flows, the soul escapes with it. The soul is not in the breath; it is the breath. It is inseparable from the body part in which it resides—hence the idea that man has multiple souls. Diffused throughout the body, the soul became differentiated and fragmented. In a sense, each organ has individualized the bit of soul it contains, and each bit of soul has thereby become a distinct entity. That of the heart could not be identical with that of the breath, the shadow, or the placenta. All are related, yet they must be distinguished—and they have different names.[23]

Moreover, while the soul is most likely to be localized in certain parts of the body, it is not absent from the others. To varying degrees, it is diffused throughout the whole body. Funeral rites show this quite well. Once the last breath has been exhaled and the soul presumed to have departed, it would seem that the soul should make immediate use of the freedom it has just regained to move at will and return as quickly as possible to its true homeland, which is elsewhere. And yet it stays near the corpse, its bond with the corpse having stretched but not broken. A whole set of rites is necessary to make it go away once and for all. By gestures and expressive movements, it is invited to depart.[24] A way is opened for it, and exits are prepared so that it can fly away the more easily.[25] This is done because it has not come out of the body in one piece; it pervaded the body too completely to be able to leave it all at once. Here originates the common rite of funeral anthropophagy: The flesh of the deceased is eaten because a sacred principle is held to reside in it, that

[20]Ibid., §68. This passage says that when there is fainting from loss of blood, it is because the soul has left. Cf. Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe,* p. 38.

[21]Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe,* pp. 29, 35; Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §65.

[22]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 12, 14. These several passages speak of evil spirits that kill small children and eat their souls, livers, and liver fat, or else their souls, livers, and kidneys. The fact that the soul is thereby placed on the same footing as various tissues and viscera, constituting a food of the same sort, clearly shows its close relationship with them. Cf. Schulze, p. 246.

[23]For example, among the people of the Pennefather River (Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §68), there is one name for the soul that resides in the heart *(ngai),* another for the one that resides in the placenta *(choi),* a third for the one that mingles with the breath *(wanji).* Among the Euahlayi, there are three or even four souls (Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe,* p. 35).

[24]See the description of the Urpmilchima rite, among the Arunta (Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 503ff.).

[25]Ibid., pp. 497, 508.

sacred principle being none other than the soul.[26] The flesh is melted in order to uproot the soul for good, by subjecting it to heat, either of the sun[27] or of man-made fire.[28] The soul flows out with the liquids that result. But since the dried bones retain some part of it still, they are used as sacred objects or as instruments of magic.[29] If the principle they enclose is to be freed completely, the bones are broken.[30]

A moment comes when the irrevocable separation has been made, and the freed soul takes flight. The soul is by nature so intimately connected with the body that this tearing away does not happen without a profound transformation of its condition. Consequently, it then takes another name.[31] Although it retains all the distinctive traits of the individual it animated—his humor, his good and bad qualities[32]—still it has become a new being. From that moment, its new existence begins.

The soul goes to the land of souls. This land is conceived differently from tribe to tribe, and sometimes different ideas are found coexisting in the same society. For some, that land is underground, each totem having its own. It is the place where the first ancestors, the founders of the clan, at a certain moment vanished deep into the earth and where they went to live after death. Thus, in the subterranean world, there is a geographic distribution of the dead corresponding to that of the living. There shines a perpetual sun; there flow rivers that never run dry. Such is the conception that Spencer and Gillen attribute to the tribes of the center, Arunta,[33] Warramunga,[34] and others. It is shared by the Wotjobaluk.[35] Elsewhere, all the dead, whatever their totems, are thought to live together in the same place, which is rather

[26]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 547, 548.

[27]Ibid., pp. 506, 527ff.

[28]Meyer, "The Encounter Bay Tribe," in Woods, p. 198.

[29]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 551, 463; *Native Tribes,* p. 553.

[30]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 540.

[31]For example, among the Arunta and the Loritja (Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 15 n. 2; vol. II, p. 77). During life, the soul is called *guruna* and after death *ltana*. The *ltana* of Strehlow is identical to the *ulthana* of Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes,* pp. 514ff.). The same is true among the Bloomfield River people (Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §66).

[32]Eylmann, "Die Eingeborenen," p. 188.

[33]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 524, 491, 496.

[34]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* pp. 542, 508.

[35][Robert Hamilton] Mathews, "Ethnological Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of N.S. Wales and Victoria," in *RSNSW,* vol. XXXVIII, 1904, p. 287.

vaguely localized: beyond the sea, on an island,[36] or on the shores of a lake.[37] Finally, the dead are sometimes thought to go into the sky, beyond the clouds. "There," says Dawson, "is found a magnificent country, abounding in kangaroos and in game of every kind, and where a joyful life is led. The souls meet there and recognize one another."[38] Certain features included in this tableau were probably taken from the paradise of Christian missionaries.[39] However the idea that the souls, or at least certain souls, go to the sky after death would seem to be indigenous, for it recurs in other parts of the continent.[40]

In general, all the souls have the same fate and lead the same life. However, sometimes a different treatment is applied to them according to their conduct on earth, and one can see making its appearance something that approximates a first sketch of those distinct and even opposite compartments between which the world of the beyond will later be divided. The souls of those who excelled in life as hunters, fighters, dancers, and so forth do not melt into the crowd of the others. A special place is assigned to them,[41] sometimes the sky.[42] Indeed, Strehlow reports that, according to one myth, the souls of the mean are devoured by dreadful spirits and annihilated.[43] Nonetheless, these conceptions are still quite vague in Australia;[44] they begin to acquire a modicum of definition and clarity only in more advanced societies, such as those of America.[45]

[36]Strehlow, vol. I, pp. 15ff. Thus, according to Strehlow, among the Arunta the dead live on an island—but, according to Spencer and Gillen, in an underground place. It is probable that the two myths coexist and are not the only ones. We will see that there is even a third. On that conception of the island of the dead, cf. Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 498; C. W. Schürmann, "Aboriginal Tribes of Port Lincoln," in Woods, p. 235; Eylmann, p. 189.

[37]Schultze, "Aborigines of . . . Finke River," p. 244.

[38]Dawson [*The Australian Aborigines*], p. 51.

[39]Among these same tribes, there are obvious traces of a more ancient myth, according to which the souls lived in an underground place (ibid.).

[40]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri" [in James Dominick Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia,* Adelaide, E. S. Wigg, 1879], pp. 18–19; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 473; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 16.

[41]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 498.

[42]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 16; Eylmann, "Die Eingeborenen," p. 189; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 473.

[43]These are the spirits of the ancestors of a special clan, the Venom Pouch clan (*Giftdrüsenmänner*).

[44]Sometimes the missionaries' influence is obvious. Dawson tells us of an authentic hell opposed to the paradise. He himself tends to regard this idea as a European import.

[45]See Dorsey, "Siouan Cults," in *XIth Rep.,* pp. 419–420, 422, 485; cf. Marillier, *La Survivance de l'âme et l'idée de justice chez les peuples non civilisés, Rapport de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes,* 1893.

II

Such, in their most elementary form and stripped down to their most basic traits, are the beliefs relative to the nature of the soul and its destiny. We must now try to account for them. What is it that could have led man to think that there were two beings in him, one having characteristics as special as those just enumerated? To answer this question, let us begin by trying to find out what origin the primitive ascribes to the spirit principle that he thinks he feels within himself. If properly analyzed, his own idea will set us on the road to the answer.

Following the method I set out to use, I will study the ideas in question in a group of societies where they have been observed with exceptional precision: the tribes of central Australia. Therefore, although it is broad, the area of our observation will be limited. Still, there is reason to believe that the same ideas in various forms are or have been widespread, even outside Australia. Furthermore, and above all, the idea of soul is not distinctly different in these central tribes than in the other Australian societies, but has the same basic features everywhere. Since the same effect always has the same cause, there are grounds for thinking that this idea, which is the same everywhere, does not have different causes in different places. So the origin that the study of the tribes specifically in question will lead us to attribute to it should be regarded as true of the others as well. These tribes will provide the occasion to make a sort of experiment, the results of which, like those of any well-made experiment, will be generalizable. The homogeneity of Australian civilization would suffice in itself to warrant this generalization, but I will take the precaution of testing it against facts taken from among other peoples, in both Australia and America.

Since the ideas that are to provide the basis of our demonstration have been reported differently by Spencer and Gillen than by Strehlow, I will set forth these two versions, one after the other. Proper interpretation will show that they differ more in form than in substance and in the end have the same sociological import.

According to Spencer and Gillen, the souls that come in each generation to animate the bodies of the newborn do not result from special and original creations. All these tribes would agree that there is a finite stock of souls that are reincarnated periodically, the number of which cannot be increased by even a single one.[46] When an individual dies, his soul leaves the body in

[46]They can temporarily duplicate themselves, as we will see in the next chapter, but these doubles do not add even one to the number of souls capable of being reincarnated.

which it resided and, once the mourning is over, goes to the land of souls. After a certain period, the soul comes back to reincarnate itself, and it is these reincarnations that bring about conceptions and births. These fundamental souls are the ones that animated the founding ancestors of the clan at the very beginning of things. In a certain epoch beyond which the imagination does not go, and which is considered the very beginning of time, beings existed that were descended from none. For this reason, the Arunta calls these the *Altjirangamitjina*,[47] the uncreated ones—the ones that, from all eternity, are. According to Spencer and Gillen, the Arunta gives the name *Alcheringa*[48] to the period in which these mythic beings are thought to have lived. Organized in totemic clans like the men of today, they spent their time traveling, in the course of which they performed all kinds of prodigious deeds, which are recollected in myths. But a time came when that terrestrial life ended. Separately or in groups, they vanished into the ground. Their bodies changed into trees or rocks, still seen in the places where they are thought to have disappeared.* But their souls endure; they are immortal. They even continue to frequent the same places where the existence of their first hosts came to an end. Because of the memories attached to them, these places too have a quality of sacredness; to be found there are the *oknanikilla,* those sanctuaries in which the churingas of the clan are kept and which are like centers for the various totemic cults. When one of the souls that wander about one of these sanctuaries enters the body of a woman, conception results and later a birth.[49] Thus each individual is considered a new avatar of a definite ancestor. The individual is this very ancestor, reborn in a new body and with new features. But who were those ancestors?

First, they were endowed with infinitely greater capacities than those possessed by the men of today, including the most respected old men and the most renowned magicians. Virtues that may be called miraculous are attributed to them: "They could travel on the ground, under the ground, and in the air; by opening a vein, each of them could flood whole regions or, in-

*This sentence is absent from Swain's translation.

[47]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, p. 2.

[48]*Native Tribes,* p. 73 n. 1.

[49]On that body of ideas, see Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 119, 123–127, 387ff.; *Northern Tribes,* pp. 145–174. Among the Gnanji, conception does not necessarily occur near the *oknanikilla.* But they believe that each couple is accompanied on its peregrinations about the continent by a swarm of souls from the husband's totem. When the occasion comes, one of these souls goes into the body of the woman and impregnates her, wherever she may be (*Northern Tribes,* p. 169).

versely, cause new lands to emerge; in a wall of rocks, they would cause a lake to appear, or open a gorge as a passage-way; where they planted their nurtunja, rocks or trees came out of the ground."[50] It is they who gave the land its present form and who created all sorts of beings, men and animals. They are almost gods. Hence their souls also have a godlike quality. And since the souls of men are these ancestral souls reincarnated in human bodies, the souls themselves are sacred beings.

Second, these ancestors were not men in the true sense of the word, but animals or plants, or else mixed beings in which the animal or plant element predominated. "The ancestors who lived in those legendary times," say Spencer and Gillen, "were, in the opinion of the natives, so closely allied with the animals and plants whose names they bore that an Alcheringa personage who belongs to the Kangaroo totem, for example, is often portrayed in the myths as a man-kangaroo or a kangaroo-man. Its human personality is often absorbed by that of the plant or animal from which it is thought to be descended."[51] Their souls, which still endure, are necessarily of the same nature. The human and animal elements are joined inside them, with the animal having a certain tendency to predominate. So they are made of the same substance as the totemic principle, for we know that the defining characteristic of the totemic principle is that it possesses this dual aspect, synthesizing and amalgamating these two kingdoms within itself.

Since no other souls but these exist, we arrive at the conclusion that, in general terms, the soul is none other than the totemic principle incarnated in each individual. Nothing about this derivation should surprise us. We already know that this principle is immanent in each member of the clan, and that by permeating individuals, it inevitably becomes individualized. Since consciousnesses (of which it thereby becomes an integral element) differ from one another, the principle becomes differentiated in their image. Since each consciousness has its own form, the soul in each takes a distinct form. In itself, it undoubtedly remains a force external to and foreign to the man, but the portion of it that each is thought to possess cannot help but develop close affinities with the individual subject in which it resides. The soul participates in the nature of that subject, becoming in some measure the subject's own property. In this way, it comes to have two contradictory features, but their coexistence is among the distinguishing traits of the idea of soul. Today, as at other times, the soul is that which is best and most profound in

[50][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes*, pp. 512–513; cf. chaps. X and XI.

[51]Ibid., p. 119.

us, on the one hand, and the eminent part of our being; on the other, it is a temporary guest that has come to us from outside, that lives a life inside us that is distinct from the body's, and that must one day regain its complete independence. In short, just as society exists only through individuals, the totemic principle lives only in and through the individual consciousnesses whose coming together forms the clan. If they did not feel the totemic principle within them, it would not be; it is they who put it into things. And so it must subdivide and fragment among individuals. Each of these fragments is a soul.

A myth that is found in a rather large number of societies of the center (and that, by the way, is but a special form of the preceding) shows even better that the raw material from which the idea of soul is made is of this kind. In these tribes, tradition places at the origin of each clan not several ancestors but only two,[52] or even only one.[53] So long as it remained alone, this single being contained within itself the whole totemic principle, for at that moment there was as yet nothing to which that principle could have been passed on. According to the same tradition, all the human souls that exist, both those now animating the bodies of men and those now unused but in reserve for the future, issued from that one personage and are made from the same substance. In moving on the surface of the earth, in stirring and shaking itself, it brought them out of its body and sowed them in the various places it is said to have traversed. Is this not to say, symbolically, that these are portions of the totemic deity?

Such a conclusion, however, presupposes that the tribes discussed accept the doctrine of reincarnation. Yet, according to Strehlow, that doctrine is unknown among the Arunta—that is, the society that Spencer and Gillen studied longest and best. If in this case these two observers were so mistaken, the whole of their study would have to be considered suspect, so it is important to determine the real scope of this divergence.

Once the rites of mourning free it from the body for good, the soul is not reincarnated, according to Strehlow. It goes to the island of the dead, where it spends its days sleeping and its nights dancing, until it rains on earth. It returns at that moment to the milieu of the living and plays the role of protective genie for young sons or, in the absence of the sons, among the grandsons left behind; it enters their bodies and assists their growth. So it remains

[52]Among the Kalish (*Northern Tribes,* pp. 154), and among the Urabunna (*Northern Tribes,* p. 146).

[53]This is the case among the Warramunga and related tribes, Walpari, Wulmala, Worgaia, Tjingilli (*Northern Tribes,* p. 161), and also among the Umbaia and the Gnanji (*Northern Tribes,* p. 170).

in the midst of its former family for a year or two, then returns to the land of souls. After a certain period, it leaves yet again to make a new sojourn on earth—moreover, its last. The time comes when it must again travel the road to the island of the dead, this time irrevocably; and there, after various incidents that need not be reported in detail, a storm occurs during which it is struck by lightning. Its career is finally over.[54]

Thus, it cannot reincarnate itself, and thus, conceptions and births are not due to the reincarnation of souls that periodically begin new existences in new bodies. To be sure, Strehlow, like Spencer and Gillen, declares that, for the Arunta, sexual intercourse is by no means the sufficient condition of procreation,[55] which instead is the outcome of mystic operations—different operations, however, from those Spencer and Gillen made known to us. It comes about in one of the two following ways.

Everywhere the Alcheringa ancestor[56] is thought to have sunk into the ground, there is a rock or a tree representing the body. According to Spencer and Gillen,[57] the tree or rock that has this mystic relation with the departed heroes is called *nanja* and, according to Strehlow, *ngarra*.[58] Sometimes it is a water hole that is said to have been formed in this way. On each of these trees and rocks, and in each of these water holes, live the embryos of babies, called *ratapa*,[59] which belong to the very same totem as the corresponding ancestor. For example, on a gum tree that represents an ancestor of the Kangaroo clan, there are ratapas that are all of the Kangaroo totem. If a woman belonging to the marriage class to which mothers of these ratapas must ordinarily belong

[54]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 15–16. For the Loritja, see Strehlow, [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 7.

[55]Strehlow goes so far as to say that sexual relations are not even considered a necessary condition, a sort of preparation for conception (vol. II, p. 52 n. 7). It is true that he adds, a few lines further on, that the old men know perfectly well the relationship between physical intercourse and procreation—and that, so far as animals are concerned, even children know. This is bound to dilute somewhat the import of the first statement.

[56]I generally use the terminology of Spencer and Gillen, rather than that of Strehlow, because it has been sanctioned by long usage.

[57]*Native Tribes*, pp. 124, 513.

[58][Strehlow, *Aranda*], vol. I, p. 5. According to Strehlow, *ngarra* means "eternal." Among the Loritja, only rocks have this function.

[59]Strehlow translates it as *Kinderkeime* ("seeds of children"). However, Spencer and Gillen are far from having ignored the myth of the ratapa and the customs connected to them. They speak of it explicitly in *Native Tribes*, pp. 366ff. and 552. They note the existence of rocks called *Erathipa* in various parts of the Arunta territory, from which emanate "spirit children," souls of children, that enter into the bodies of women and impregnate them. According to Spencer and Gillen, *Erathipa* means "child," although they go on to say that this word is rarely used in this sense in everyday conversation (ibid., p. 338).

should happen to pass by,[60] one of them will be able to enter her through the hip. The woman learns of this possession through the characteristic pains that are the first signs of pregnancy. The child conceived in this way will naturally be from the same ancestor on whose mystical body it resided before incarnating itself.[61]

In other cases, the procedure used is slightly different, with the ancestor acting in person. At a given moment, the ancestor leaves its underground retreat and throws at the woman a small churinga of a special shape, called a *namatuna*.[62] The churinga enters the body of the woman and there takes human form, while the ancestor disappears again into the earth.[63]

These two modes of conception are held to be equally common. The shape of the child's face reveals the manner in which it was conceived. According to the width or narrowness of the face, conception is said to be due to the incarnation of a ratapa or a namatuna. Strehlow also notes a third method of impregnation, in addition to these two, but one that is said to be much rarer. After its namatuna has entered the body of the woman, the ancestor itself enters and voluntarily submits to a new birth. In this case, conception would result from a true reincarnation of the ancestor. But this case is highly unusual, and furthermore, when the man so conceived dies, the ancestral soul that animated him departs, as do ordinary souls, for the island of the dead, where it is finally destroyed after the usual period. It does not undergo new reincarnations.[64]

Such is Strehlow's version.[65] In his view, it is radically opposed to that of Spencer and Gillen. In reality, however, it differs only in the literal detail of the formulas and symbols, and, variations of form aside, the mythical theme is the same in both cases.

In the first place, all these observers agree in viewing every conception as the result of an incarnation. According to Strehlow, what is incarnated is not a

[60]The Arunta are divided sometimes into four, sometimes into eight marriage classes. The class of a child is determined by that of its father; inversely, the father's can be deduced from the child's. (See Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 70ff.; Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. I, pp. 6ff.) We must still find out how the ratapa acquires a definite class; I will return to this point.

[61]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 52. Sometimes, albeit seldom, conflicts do arise over which is the child's totem. Strehlow cites a case (p. 53).

[62]This is the same word as *namatwinna,* which is found in Spencer and Gillen (*Native Tribes,* p. 541).

[63]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 53.

[64]Ibid., vol. II, p. 56.

[65]Mathews ascribes a similar theory of conception to the Tjingilli (also known as Chingalee). [Possibly, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Queensland Branch of the Royal Geographic Society of Australasia,* Brisbane], vol. XXII (1907), pp. 75–76. [This source remains obscure to me. Trans.]

soul but a ratapa or a namatuna. What, then, is a ratapa? It is, says Strehlow, a complete embryo, made of both a soul and a body, but the soul is always conceived of in physical forms. Since it sleeps, dances, hunts, eats, and so forth, it has a corporeal element as well. Inversely, the ratapa is invisible to ordinary men; no one sees it entering the woman's body;[66] it is made of material quite comparable to that of the soul. In this respect, therefore, it does not seem possible to differentiate clearly between the two. These are, in sum, mythical beings that are conceived more or less on the same model. Schulze calls them child-souls.[67] Moreover, like the soul, the ratapa has the closest relations with the ancestor of which the sacred tree or rock is a materialized form. It is of the same totem, the same phratry, and the same marriage class as that ancestor.[68] Its place in the social organization of the tribe is exactly the one the ancestor is said to have held once upon a time. It has the same name.[69] This is proof that these two personalities are very closely related to one another.

There is more: This kinship goes as far as complete identification. It is actually on the mystical body of the ancestor that the ratapa took form; it comes from this body and is like a bit that detached itself. In sum, therefore, what enters the womb of the mother and becomes the child is part of the ancestor. And by this route, we come back to the idea of Spencer and Gillen: Birth is due to the incarnation of an ancestral personage. Of course, what is incarnated is not the whole personage but only an emanation of it. However, this difference is of entirely secondary interest, for this reason: When a sacred being divides and replicates itself, it is found again, and with all its fundamental traits, in each of the fragments into which it has been divided. Basically, then, the Alcheringa ancestor is wholly within the element of itself that becomes a ratapa.[70]

[66]Sometimes the ancestor who is thought to have thrown the namatuna shows itself to the woman in the form of an animal or a man. This is further proof of the affinity the ancestral soul has for physical form.

[67]Schulze, "Aborigines of . . . Finke River," p. 237.

[68]This arises from the fact that the ratapa can only incarnate itself in the body of a woman who belongs to the same marriage class as the mother of the mythical ancestor. Thus I do not understand how Strehlow could say (*Aranda,* vol. I, p. 42, *Anmerkung*) that, except in this case, the myths do not assign the Alcheringa ancestors to definite marriage classes. His own theory of conception presupposes just the opposite (cf. II, pp. 53ff.).

[69]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 58.

[70]The difference between the two versions narrows even more and diminishes almost to nothing if we notice that when Spencer and Gillen tell us that the ancestral soul is incarnated in the body of the woman, their mode of expression must not be taken literally. It is not the whole soul that comes to impregnate the mother but only an emanation of that soul. Indeed, on their own avowal, a soul equal and even superior in power to the one that is incarnated continues to reside in the nanja tree or rock (see *Native Tribes,* p. 514). I will have occasion to return to this point (cf. below, p. 277).

The second mode of conception that Strehlow distinguishes has the same meaning. In fact, the churinga, and especially the particular churinga that is called the namatuna, is considered an avatar of the ancestor: It is the ancestor's body, according to Strehlow,[71] just as the nanja tree is. In other words, the personality of the ancestor, its churinga, and its nanja tree are sacred things, which elicit the same feelings, and to which the same religious value is ascribed. Therefore, they change into one another: A sacred tree or rock came out of the ground in the place where the ancestor lost a churinga, just as in the places where he himself sank into the ground.[72] There is a mythical equivalence between an Alcheringa personage and his churinga, then; so when the personage throws a namatuna into a woman's body, it is as if that very personage entered her. In fact, we have seen that it sometimes enters in person, following the namatuna; and, according to other accounts, the personage enters before the namatuna, as if opening a way for it.[73] The fact that these themes coexist in the same myth shows definitively that the one is only a duplicate of the other.

Furthermore, no matter how conception occurs, there is no doubt that each individual is bound to a definite Alcheringa ancestor by extremely close ties. First, each man has his recognized ancestor; two persons cannot simultaneously have the same one. In other words, an Alcheringa being never has more than one representative among the living.[74] What is more, the one is only an aspect of the other. In fact, as we already know, the churinga left by the ancestor expresses his personality. If we adopt the interpretation that Strehlow reports, which is perhaps the more satisfactory, we will say that it is the ancestor's body. But this same churinga is related in the same way to the individual who is thought to have been conceived under the influence of the ancestor, that is, the one who is the fruit of his mystical labors. When the young neophyte is brought into the sanctuary of the clan, he is shown the churinga of his ancestor with the words: "You are this body; you are the

[71]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. II, pp. 76, 81. According to Spencer and Gillen, the churinga is not the body of the ancestor but the object in which the ancestor's soul resides. These two mythical interpretations are basically identical, and it is easy to see how one was able to pass over into the other: The body is the place where the soul resides.

[72]Ibid., vol. I, p. 4.

[73]Ibid., vol. I, pp. 53–54. In these accounts, the ancestor begins by entering the womb of the woman, bringing on the characteristic discomforts of pregnancy. Then he exits and only afterward leaves the namatuna.

[74]Ibid., vol. II, p. 76.

same thing as this."[75] Thus, in Strehlow's phrase, the churinga is "the common body of the individual and his ancestor."[76] From one point of view, at least, their two personalities have to be merged in order for them to have the same body. Strehlow explicitly recognizes this. He says: "By the Tjurunga (churinga), the individual is joined with his personal ancestor."[77]

To summarize, for Strehlow as well as for Spencer and Gillen, there is a religious and mystical principle in each newborn that emanates from an Alcheringa ancestor. It is this principle that forms the essence of each individual. So this principle is the individual's soul; or, in any case, the soul is made of the same matter and substance. I have relied on this fundamental fact only to determine the nature and origin of the idea of soul. The different metaphors by means of which this could have been expressed are of entirely secondary interest to me.[78]

Far from contradicting the data on which my thesis rests, the recent observations of Strehlow bring us new evidence that confirms it. My reasoning consisted of inferring the totemic nature of the human soul from the totemic nature of the ancestral soul, of which the human one is an emanation and a kind of replica. Certain of the new facts that we owe to Strehlow demonstrate this characteristic of both, even more unequivocally than those relied upon until now. First, like Spencer and Gillen, Strehlow insists on "the intimate relations that join each ancestor to an animal, a plant or another natural object." Certain of these Altjirangamitjina (these are the Alcheringa of Spencer and Gillen), he says, "must be directly manifested in the form of animals; others take animal form temporarily."[79] Even now, they are continually transforming themselves into animals.[80] In any case, and whatever their

[75]Ibid., p. 81. Here is the word-for-word translation of the terms used, as Strehlow gives them to us: *Dies du Körper bist; dies du der ähnliche.* In one myth, a civilizing hero, Mangarkunjerkunja, presents to each man the churinga of his ancestor, telling him, "You were born from this churinga" (ibid., p. 76).

[76]Ibid.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Basically, the only real divergence between Strehlow, on the one hand, and Spencer and Gillen, on the other, is the following. For Spencer and Gillen, after death the soul of the individual returns to the nanja tree where it is again assimilated into the soul of the ancestor (*Native Tribes,* p. 513); for Strehlow, it leaves for the island of the dead, where it is eventually destroyed. In neither myth does it survive individually. I make no attempt to determine the cause of this divergence. Possibly Spencer and Gillen, who do not speak of the island of the dead, made an error of observation. Possibly also, the myth is not the same among the eastern Arunta, which Spencer and Gillen mainly observed, and in the other parts of the tribe.

[79]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 51.

[80]Ibid., vol. II, p. 56.

outward appearance, "in each of them, the special and distinctive qualities of the animal are quite evident." For example, the ancestors of the Kangaroo clan eat grass and flee the hunter, like real kangaroos; those of the Emu clan feed and flee like emus,[81] and so on. And consider this: Those of the ancestors who had a plant totem became the same plant at death.[82] Furthermore, this close kinship of the ancestor and the totemic being is so strongly felt by the native that it affects terminology. Among the Arunta, the child calls *altjira* the totem of its mother, which serves as its secondary totem.[83] Since descent was at first reckoned in the maternal line, there was a time when each individual had no totem other than its mother's; thus, quite probably, the term "altjira" designated the totem, period. Now it obviously enters into the composition of the word that means "great ancestor," altjirangamitjina.[84]

The ideas of totem and ancestor are so close, indeed, that they apparently are sometimes interchangeable. In this way, after having told us about the mother's totem or altjira, Strehlow adds: "This altjira appears to the blacks in dreams and utters warnings, just as it takes news of them to their sleeping friends."[85] This altjira that speaks, that is personally attached to each individual, is obviously an ancestor, and yet it is also an incarnation of the totem. A text by Roth that discusses invocations addressed to the totem must no doubt be interpreted in this way.[86] It seems, then, that the totem is sometimes imagined as a collection of ideal beings, mythic personages that are more or less distinct from the ancestors. In other words, the ancestors are the totem divided into parts.[87]

But if the ancestor is merged with the totemic being to this extent, it cannot be otherwise for the individual soul that is so closely related to the ancestral soul. Moreover, this also emerges from the close bonds that join each man to his churinga. We know that the churinga expresses the personality of the individual who is thought to have been born of it;[88] but it also expresses

[81]Ibid., vol. I, pp. 3–4.

[82]Ibid., vol. II, p. 61.

[83]See above, p. 185.

[84]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 57, and vol. I, p. 2.

[85]Ibid., vol. II, p. 57.

[86]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §74.

[87]In other words, the totemic species is constituted more by the group of ancestors and by the mythic species than by the animal or plant species themselves.

[88]See above, p. 256.

the totemic animal. When the civilizing hero Mangakunjerkunja gave a personal churinga to each member of the Kangaroo clan, he spoke these words: "Here is the body of a kangaroo."[89] In this way, the churinga is the body of the ancestor, the actual individual, and the totemic animal, all at once: The three beings form, in the strong and apt phrase of Strehlow, "an indissoluble unity."[90] These terms are partially equivalent and interchangeable. That is, they are conceived of as different aspects of one and the same reality, which is also defined by the distinctive attributes of the totem. Their shared essence is the totemic principle. Language itself expresses this identification. The words *ratapa* and, in the language of the Loritja, *aratapi* designate the mythical embryo that detaches itself from the ancestor and becomes the child. But the same words also designate the totem of this same child, as determined by the place where the mother thinks she conceived.[91]

III

In the preceding, the doctrine of reincarnation was studied only in the tribes of central Australia; the bases on which my inference rests might therefore be judged too narrow. But in the first place, for the reasons already given, the scope of the experiment extends beyond the societies we have studied directly. Furthermore, abundant facts establish that the same or similar ideas are to be found in the most disparate parts of Australia or, at least, have left visible traces there. They are also to be found in America.

In southern Australia, Howitt reports them among the Dieri.[92] The word *Mura-mura*, which Gason translated as Good-Spirit (and in which he thought he saw belief in a creator god expressed[93]), is in reality a collective name that denotes the multitude of ancestors placed at the origin of the tribe. They continue to exist today, as in the past. "It is believed that they inhabit trees, which are sacred for this reason." Certain features of the ground, rocks,

[89]Strehlow [*Aranda*], vol. II, p. 76.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid., pp. 57, 60, 61. Strehlow calls the list of the totems the list of the ratapas.

[92]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 475ff.

[93][Gason], "The Manners and Customs of the Dieyerie Tribe of Australian Aborigines," in [Edward M.] Curr [*The Australian Race, Its Origin, Languages, Customs, Place of Landing in Australia, and the Routes by Which It Spread Itself over That Continent*, Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1886–1887], vol. II, p. 47.

and springs are identified with these Mura-mura,[94] which, consequently, are remarkably like the Altjirangamitjina of the Arunta. Even though only vestiges of totemism still exist among them, the Kurnai of Gippsland also believe in the existence of ancestors called *Muk-Kurnai*, conceived of as beings midway between men and animals.[95] Among the Nimbaldi, Taplin has found a theory of conception like the one Strehlow ascribes to the Arunta.[96] In the state of Victoria, among the Wotjobaluk, we find in full the belief in reincarnation. According to Mathews: "The spirits of the dead gather in the *miyur*[97] of their respective clans; they come out in order to be born again in human form, when a favorable opportunity presents itself."[98] Mathews even states that "the belief in reincarnation or in the transmigration of souls is deeply rooted in all the Australian tribes."[99]

If we move on to the northern regions, we find in the northwest, among the Niol-Niol, the pure doctrine of the Arunta: Every birth is attributed to the incarnation of a preexisting soul that is introduced into the body of the woman.[100] In North Queensland, myths that differ from the preceding only in form translate exactly the same ideas. In the tribes of the Pennefather River, each man is believed to have two souls: one, called *ngai*, resides in the heart; the other, *choi*, remains in the placenta. Right after birth, the placenta is buried in a consecrated place. A personal genie named Anje-a, which is in charge of the phenomenon of procreation, comes to collect this choi, and to keep it until, having reached adulthood, the child marries. When the time has come to give him a son, Anje-a gathers a bit of that man's choi and inserts it into the embryo, which Anje-a makes and puts in the womb of the mother. Thus the child is made with the soul of its father. It is true that the child does not receive its full paternal soul right away, for the ngai remains in the father's heart for as long as he lives. But when he dies, the freed ngai also

[94]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 482.

[95]Ibid., p. 487.

[96][George] Taplin, *Folklore, Customs, Manners, etc.* [*Customs and Languages*] *of South Australian Aborigines*, Adelaide, E. Spiller, 1879], p. 88.

[97]Each clan of ancestors has its special camp under the ground; the *miyur* is this camp.

[98]Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes" in *RSNSW*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 293. Mathews reports the same belief in other tribes of Victoria (ibid., p. 197).

[99]Ibid., p. 349.

[100][P. Jos.] Bischofs, "Die Niol-Niol, [ein Eingeborenenstamm in Nordwest Australien"] in *Anthropos*, vol. III [1908], p. 35.

goes to incarnate itself in the bodies of children; if there are several, it divides itself equally among them. So there is perfect spiritual continuity between the generations: The same soul is transmitted from father to children and from them to their children; and this single soul, always identical to itself despite its successive divisions and subdivisions, is the one that animated the first ancestor, at the beginning of things.[101] There is only one difference of any importance between this theory and that of the central tribes: that reincarnation is not the work of the ancestors themselves but of a special genie, professionally assigned to that function. But it seems, actually, that this genie is the product of a syncretism that caused the multiple figures of the first ancestors to merge into one and the same figure. The fact that the words "Anje-a" and "Anjir" are apparently related quite closely makes this hypothesis at least plausible; now, "Anjir" designates the first man, the original ancestor from whom all men are descended.[102]

The same ideas recur among the Indian tribes of America. According to Krause, it is believed among the Tlingit that the souls of the departed return to earth to enter the bodies of the pregnant women who belong to their families. "So, when a woman dreams of such and such a deceased relative, during pregnancy, she believes that relative's soul has entered her." If the newborn displays some characteristic mark that the deceased had, it is thought to be the deceased himself, returned to earth, and is given the deceased's name.[103] This belief is also common among the Haida. It is the shaman who reveals which relative has reincarnated himself in the child and, consequently, what name the child should have.[104] It is believed among the Kwakiutl that the last to die returns to life in the person of the first child born in the family.[105] The same is true among the Huron, the Iroquois, the Tinneh, and many other tribes of the United States.[106]

[101]Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §68; cf. §69a, the similar case of the natives of the Proserpine River. To simplify the exposition, I have left aside the complication that arises from sex difference. Girls' souls are made with the choi of their mothers, whereas they share with their brothers the ngai of their father. However this peculiarity, which perhaps arises from the fact that the two systems of descent have been in use one after the other, does not affect the principle of the soul's perpetuity.

[102]Ibid., p. 16.

[103][Aurel Krause], *Die Tlinkit-Indianer* [Jena, H. Constable, 1885], p. 282.

[104][John] Swanton, *Contributions to the Ethnology of the Haida* [Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1905], pp. 117ff.

[105]Boas, *Sixth Report of the Committee on the North-Western Tribes of Canada,* p. 59.

[106][Joseph François] Lafitau, *Moeurs des sauvages américains [comparées aux moeurs des premiers temps]*, vol. II [Paris, Saugrain l'ainé; Charles Estienne Hochereau, 1724], p. 434; [Emile Fortune Stanislas Joseph] Petitot, *Monographie des Dénè-Dindjié* [Paris, E. Leroux, 1876], p. 59.

The scope of these ideas extends naturally to the conclusion I have deduced from it: my proposed explanation for the idea of soul. Its general applicability is additionally confirmed by the following facts.

We know[107] that each individual harbors within himself something of the anonymous force that pervades the entire sacred species, for he himself is a member of that species—not, however, insofar as he is an empirical and visible being. In spite of the designs and symbolic signs with which he decorates his body, nothing about him brings to mind the form of an animal or plant. Hence, there is another being in him; and while not ceasing to recognize himself in that being, he imagines it in the form of an animal or plant. Is it not obvious that this double can only be the soul, since the soul, on its own, is already a double of the subject it animates? As final proof of this identification, the organs that most preeminently incarnate the totemic principle in each individual are the same as those in which the soul resides. This is true of the blood. The blood contains some part of the totemic essence, as is demonstrated by the role blood plays in totemic ceremonies.[108] But at the same time, the blood is one of the soul's residences; or, rather, it is the soul itself seen from outside. When it flows, life slips away, and the soul escapes then and there. Hence, it is identified with the sacred principle that is immanent in the blood.

To turn the matter around: If in fact my explanation is well founded, the totemic principle that enters (as I assume) into the individual must retain a certain autonomy there, for it is specifically distinct from the subject in which it is incarnated. Now, this is precisely what Howitt says he observed among the Yuin. He says, "The fact that the totem is conceived among these tribes as being in some way part of the man is clearly proved by the case of one Umbara, already mentioned. Umbara told the story of how, a few years ago, an individual of the Lace-Lizard clan sent him his totem as Umbara himself slept. It went down the throat of the sleeper and nearly ate his totem, which resided in his chest, and this nearly caused death."[109] So it is quite true that the totem divides as it becomes individualized and that each of the pieces that is thereby detached plays the role of a spirit, of a soul that resides in the body.[110]

[107]See above, pp. 133ff.

[108]See above, p. 136.

[109]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 147. Cf. ibid., p. 769.

[110]Strehlow [*Aranda*] (vol. I, p. 15 n. 2), Schulze ("Aborigines of . . . Finke River," p. 246) portray the soul to us, as Howitt here portrays the totem, as coming out of the body to go and eat another being. Similarly, we earlier saw the altjira or maternal totem manifest itself in a dream, just as a soul or a spirit does.

Here are more directly telling facts. If the soul is but the totemic principle individualized, then in certain cases, at least, it must maintain more or less close relations with the animal or plant species whose form the totem reproduces. And, in fact, "The Gewwe-Gal (a tribe of New South Wales) believe that each person has within himself an affinity for the spirit of some bird, beast, or reptile. It is not that the individual is thought to be descended from that animal, but that a kinship is thought to exist between the spirit that animates the man and the spirit of the animal."[111]

Indeed, there are cases in which the soul is thought to emanate directly from the totemic plant or animal. Among the Arunta, according to Strehlow, it is believed that when a woman has eaten abundantly of a fruit, she will bear a child whose totem is that fruit. If she was looking at a kangaroo when she felt the first movements of the child, a kangaroo ratapa is believed to have entered her body and impregnated her.[112] H. Basedow has reported the same belief among the Wogait.[113] We know, on the other hand, that the ratapa and the soul are nearly indistinguishable. Now, it would not have been possible to ascribe such an origin to the soul if it was not thought to be made of the same substance as the animals and plants of the totemic species.

Thus the soul is often depicted as an animal. In the lower societies, as is well known, death is never considered a natural event, with purely physical causes, but is widely imputed to the machinations of some sorcerer. In many Australian tribes, to determine who is responsible for a murder, people start from the principle that, giving in to a sort of compulsion, the soul of the murderer inevitably comes to visit his victim. For this reason, the body is placed on a scaffold, and the ground under and all around the corpse is carefully smoothed, so that the slightest mark on it is easily seen. The people return the next day. If an animal has passed that way in the meantime, its tracks are easily recognized. Their shape reveals the species to which he belongs,

[111][Lorimer] Fison and [Alfred William] Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai: [Group Marriage and Relationship by Elopement, Drawn Chiefly from the Usage of the Australian Aborigines. Also the Kurnai Tribe, Their Customs in Peace and War,* Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], p. 280.

[112]*Globus,* vol. CXI, p. 289. Despite the objections of Leonhardi, Strehlow has stood behind his statements on this point. Leonhardi deems that there is a certain contradiction between this assertion and the theory that the ratapas emanate from trees, rocks, and churingas. But since the totemic animal incarnates the totem, just as does the nanja tree or rock, it can play the same role. These different things are mythologically equivalent.

[113][H. Basedow], "Notes on the West Coastal Tribes of the Northern Territory of S. Australia," in *RSSA,* vol. XXXI (1907), p. 4. Cf. regarding the tribes of the Cairns district (North Queensland), *Man* [vol. IX] (1909), p. 86.

and in that way, the social group to which the murder belongs is inferred. He is said to be a man of such and such class or clan,[114] if the animal is a totem of this or that class or clan. This is because the soul is thought to have come in the form of the totemic animal.

In other societies, where totemism has weakened or disappeared, the soul still continues to be thought of in animal form. The natives of Cape Bedford (North Queensland) believe that at the moment the child enters the body of its mother, it is a curlew if a girl and a snake if a boy. Only later does it take a human form.[115] According to the Prince of Wied, many Indians of North America say they have an animal in their body.[116] The Bororo of Brazil draw their souls in the form of a bird and for that reason believe they are birds of the same kind.[117] Elsewhere the soul is conceived of as a snake, a lizard, a fly, a bee, and so on.[118]

But it is above all after death that the animal nature of the soul manifests itself. During life, this feature is partially veiled, so to speak, by the very form of the human body. Once death has set the soul free, it becomes itself again. Among the Omaha, in at least two of the buffalo clans, the souls of the dead are believed to rejoin the buffalo, their ancestors.[119] The Hopi are divided into a certain number of clans, whose ancestors were animals or beings in animal form. As Schoolcraft reports, they say that at death they regain their original form. Each of them becomes a bear again, or a hart, according to the clan to which he belongs.[120] Often the soul is thought to reincarnate itself in

[114]Among the Wakelbura where, according to Curr and Howitt, each marriage class has its own totems, the animal determines the class (see Curr, vol. III, p. 28); among the Buandik, it determines the clan (Mrs. James S. Smith, *The Booandik Tribes of S. Australian Aborigines* [Adelaide, E. Spiller,1880], p.128). Cf. [Alfred William] Howitt, "On Some Australian Beliefs," in *JAI,* vol. XIII [1884], p. 191; XIV (1884), p. 362; [Northcote Whitridge] Thomas, "An American View of Totemism," in *Man* [vol. II] (1902), 85; [R. H.] Mathews, *RSNSW,* vol. XXXVIII, pp. 347–348; [Robert] Brough Smyth [*The Aborigines of Victoria,* Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1878], vol. I, p. 110; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 513.

[115]Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §83. This is probably a form of sexual totemism.

[116]Prinz [von Maximillian] Wied, *Reise in das innere Nord-Amerika in der Jahren 1832 bis 1834,* II [Koblenz, 1839], p. 190.

[117]K. von den Steinen, *Unter den Naturvölkern Zentral-Bräsiliens* [Berlin, D. Reimer, 1894], pp. 511, 512.

[118]See Frazer, *Golden Bough,* 2d. ed., vol. 1, London, Macmillan, 1894, pp. 250, 253, 256, 257, 258.

[119][James Owen Dorsey, "Omaha Sociology,"] *Third [Annual] Report,* [*BAE,* Washington, Government Printing Office, 1884], pp. 229, 233.

[120][Schoolcraft], *Indian Tribes,* vol. IV, p. 86.

the body of an animal.[121] This, quite probably, is the source of the doctrine of metempsychosis, which is so widely held. We have seen how much trouble Tylor has accounting for it.[122] If the soul is fundamentally a human principle, what could be stranger than the marked predilection for animal form that it manifests in so many societies? On the other hand, all is explained if, in its very constitution, the soul is closely akin to the animal, for then, by returning after life to the animal world, it is only returning to its true nature. Thus, the quasi-universality of belief in metempsychosis is additional proof that the constitutive elements in the idea of the soul have been taken chiefly from the animal realm, as is presupposed by the theory just set forth.

IV

The idea of the soul is a particular application of the beliefs relative to sacred things. In this way may be explained the religious character this idea has displayed ever since it appeared in history and that it still has today. The soul has always been considered a sacred thing; in this respect it is opposed to the body, which in itself is profane. The soul is not merely distinct from its physical envelope, as the inside is from the outside, and it is not merely imagined as being made of a more subtle and fluid material than the body; more than that, it elicits in some degree those feelings that are everywhere reserved for that which is divine. If it is not made into a god, it is seen at least as a spark of the divinity. This fundamental characteristic would be inexplicable if the idea of the soul was no more than a prescientific solution to the problem of dreams. Since there is nothing in dreaming that can awaken religious emotion, the same must be true of the cause that accounts for dreaming. However, if the soul is a bit of divine substance, it represents something within

[121]For example, among the Batta of Sumatra (See *Golden Bough*, 2d. ed., vol. III, p. 420), in Melanesia (Codrington, *The Melanesians*, p. 178), in the Malay Archipelago (Tylor, "Remarks on Totemism," in *JAI*, new series, vol. I [1907], p. 147). It will be noticed that the cases in which the soul clearly presents itself after death as an animal are taken from societies in which totemism has been more or less breached. This is so because, where totemic beliefs are relatively pure, the idea of soul is necessarily ambiguous, for totemism implies that the soul participates in both realms at once. It cannot direct itself in either direction exclusively but sometimes takes one aspect and sometimes the other, depending on the circumstances. The more totemism recedes, the less necessary this ambiguity becomes, while, at the same time, the spirits feel a stronger need for differentiation. Then the quite marked affinities of the soul for the animal realm make themselves felt, especially so after it is liberated from the human body.

[122]See above, p. 172. On the universality of belief in metempsychosis, see Tylor, vol. II, pp. 8ff.

us that is other than ourselves, and if it is made of the same mental material as the sacred beings, it would naturally be the object of the same feelings.

Nor is the character man thus ascribes to himself the result of mere illusion. Like the ideas of religious force and divinity, the idea of the soul is not without reality. It is quite true that we are made of two distinct parts that are opposed to one another as the sacred is to the profane, and we can say that in a sense there is divinity in us. For society, that unique source of all that is sacred, is not satisfied to move us from outside and to affect us transitorily; it organizes itself lastingly within us. It arouses in us a whole world of ideas and feelings that express it but at the same time are an integral and permanent part of ourselves. When the Australian comes away from a religious ceremony, the representations that common life has awakened or reawakened in him do not instantly dissolve. The grand ancestral figures, the heroic exploits that the rites commemorate, the great things of all kinds that worship has made him participate in—in sum, the various ideals that he has elaborated with others—all these go on living in his consciousness. And by the emotions that are attached to them in his consciousness, by the very special influence they have, they clearly distinguish themselves from the ordinary impressions that his daily dealings with external things make upon him.

Moral ideas are of the same nature. It is society that has engraved them upon us, and since the respect society inspires is naturally passed on to all that comes from it, the imperative norms of conduct, because of their origin, become invested with an authority and a stature that our other inward states do not have. Therefore, we assign them a special place within the totality of our psychic life. Although our moral conscience is part of our consciousness, we do not feel on an equal footing with it. We cannot recognize our own voice in that voice that makes itself heard only to order us to do some things and not to do others. The very tone in which it speaks announces that it is expressing something in us that is other than us. This is what is objective about the idea of the soul. The representations that are the warp and woof of our inner life are of two different species, irreducible to one another. Some relate to the outward and physical world, some to an ideal world that we consider to be morally above the physical one. Thus, we are really made of two beings that are oriented in two divergent and virtually opposite directions, one of which exercises supremacy over the other. Such is the profound meaning of the antithesis that all peoples have more or less clearly conceived: between the body and the soul, between the physical being and the spiritual being that coexist in us. Moralists and preachers have often held that we cannot deny the reality and sacredness of duty without falling into materialism. And in-

deed, if we did not have the idea of moral and religious imperatives,[123] our psychic life would be flattened out, all our states of consciousness would be on the same plane, and all sense of duality would disappear. To make this duality intelligible, it is by no means necessary to imagine a mysterious and unrepresentable substance opposed to the body, under the name "soul." But in this case, too, as in that of the sacred, the error is in the literal character of the symbol used, not in the reality of the fact symbolized. It is true that our nature is double; there truly is a parcel of divinity in us, because there is in us a parcel of the grand ideals that are the soul of collectivity.

The individual soul is thus only a portion of the group's collective soul. It is the anonymous force on which the cult is based but incarnated in an individual whose personality it cleaves to: It is mana individualized. Dreaming may well have had a role in producing certain secondary characteristics of the idea. Perhaps the fluidity and instability of the images that occupy our minds during sleep, and their remarkable capacity to be transformed into one another, furnished the model of that subtle, diaphanous, and protean material of which the soul is thought to be made. Moreover, the phenomena of fainting, catalepsy, and so forth may have suggested the idea that the soul was mobile and, beginning in this life, temporarily left the body; this, in turn, has been used to explain certain dreams. But all these experiences and observations could only have had incidental, complementary influence, and indeed the existence of that influence is hard to establish. What is truly fundamental to the idea comes from elsewhere.

Does not this origin of the idea of soul misconceive its fundamental nature? If soul is but a special form of the impersonal principle that pervades the group, the totemic species, and all kinds of things that are attached to them, then it too is at bottom impersonal. And so, with only a few differences, it must therefore have the same properties as the force of which it is only a specialized form—in particular, the same diffuseness, the same capacity to spread contagiously, and the same ubiquity. Now, quite the contrary, it is easily imagined as a definite, concrete being, wholly self-contained and incommunicable to others; it is made the basis of our personality.

[123]If the religious and moral representations constitute the essential elements in the idea of soul, as I believe they do, I nonetheless do not mean to say that these are the only ones. Other states of conscience having this same quality, though to a lesser degree, come to group themselves around this central nucleus. This is true of all the higher forms of intellectual life, by reason of the quite special value and status that society attributes to them. When we live the life of science or art, we feel we are in contact with a circle of things above sensation (this, by the way, I will have occasion to show with greater precision in the Conclusion). This is why the higher functions of the intellect have always been regarded as specific manifestations of the soul's activity. But they probably could not have been enough to form the idea of soul.

But this way of thinking about soul is the product of recent and philosophical development. The popular conception, such as it has emerged spontaneously from ordinary experience, is very different, especially at the beginning. For the Australian, the soul is a very vague entity, indeterminate and fluid in form, pervading the entire body. Although it is especially manifest in certain parts, there are probably none from which it is absent altogether, so it has a diffuseness, a contagiousness, and an omnipresence comparable to that of mana. Like mana, it can subdivide and replicate itself infinitely, all the while remaining whole in each of those parts (the plurality of souls resulting from those replications and divisions). In addition, the doctrine of reincarnation, whose widespread acceptance we have established, shows what impersonal elements there are in the idea of soul and how fundamental they are. For the same soul to be able to take on a new personality in each generation, the individual forms in which it is successively clothed must also be external to it and unattached to its true nature. This is a kind of generic substance that becomes individualized only secondarily and superficially. Moreover, this idea of soul is far from having totally disappeared. The cult of relics shows that, for ordinary believers even today, the soul of a saint continues to adhere to his various bones, and with all its essential powers—which implies that it is imagined to be capable of diffusing and subdividing, and of incorporating itself into all sorts of different things at the same time.

Just as we find in soul the characteristic attributes of mana, so too do secondary and superficial changes suffice for mana to become individualized as soul. One moves on from the first idea to the second without any radical jump. Every religious force that is regularly attached to a definite being participates in the characteristics of that being, takes its form, and becomes its spirit duplicate. Tregear, in his Maori-Polynesian dictionary, believed he could connect the word *mana* to a whole group of other words, like *manawa, manamana*, and others, which seem to be of the same family and mean "heart," "life," "consciousness." Is this not to say that some kinship between the corresponding ideas must also exist, that is, between the ideas of impersonal power and those of inward life and mental force—in a word, of soul?[124] This is why the question whether the churinga is sacred because it serves as residence for a soul, as Spencer and Gillen believe, or because it has impersonal virtues, as Strehlow believes, is of little interest to me and with no sociological import. Whether the efficacy of a sacred object is imagined in abstract form or ascribed to some personal agent is not the heart of the question. The psychological roots of both beliefs are identical. A thing is sacred

[124]E. Tregear, *The Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*, pp. 203–205.

because, in some way, it inspires a collective feeling of respect that removes it from profane contact. To understand this feeling, men sometimes relate it to a vague and imprecise cause and sometimes to a definite spiritual being with a name and a history. But these varying interpretations are added to a fundamental process that is the same in both cases.

This is what explains those extraordinary mixtures, examples of which we have encountered along the way. I said that the individual, the soul of the ancestor he reincarnates or of whom his own soul is an emanation, his churinga, and the animals of the totemic species are partially equivalent and interchangeable things. This is because, in certain respects, they all act upon the collective consciousness in the same way. If the churinga is sacred, it is sacred because the totemic emblem engraved on its surface provokes collective feelings of respect. The same feeling is attached to the animals or plants whose outward form the totem copies, to the soul of the individual (since it is itself thought of in the form of the totemic being), and finally to the ancestral soul of which the preceding is only a particular aspect. In this way, all these disparate objects, whether real or ideal, have a common element by which they arouse the same affective state in consciousness and consequently merge. To the extent that they are expressed by one and the same representation, they are indistinguishable. This is why the Arunta could be led to see the churinga as the body common to the individual, the ancestor, and even the totemic being. It is a way of saying to himself that the feelings of which those different things are the object are identical.

However, from the fact that the idea of soul derives from the idea of mana, it in no way follows either that the idea of soul was a relatively late development or that there was a historical time in which men knew the religious forces only in their impersonal forms. If by the word "preanimism" we mean to designate a historical period during which animism is thought to have been unknown, we set up an arbitrary hypothesis,[125] for there is no people among whom the idea of soul and the idea of mana do not coexist. We thus have no basis for supposing that they were formed in two distinct periods; all the evidence suggests instead that they are more or less contemporaneous. Just as there is no society without individuals, so the impersonal forces that arise from collectivity cannot take form without incarnating themselves in individual consciousnesses, in which they become individualized. These are not two different processes but two different aspects

[125]This is the thesis of [Konrad Theodor] Preuss in the *Globus* articles I have cited several times. Mr. Lévy-Bruhl also seems inclined toward the same idea (See *Fonctions mentales, etc.*, pp. 92–93).

of one and the same process. True, they are not of equal importance, since one is more fundamental than the other. If mana is to be able to individualize and fragment into particular souls, it must first exist, and what it is in itself does not depend on the forms it takes as it individualizes. Hence the idea of mana does not presuppose that of soul. Quite the contrary, the idea of soul cannot be understood except in relation to the idea of mana. In this regard, one can indeed say that it is due to a "secondary" formation—but a secondary formation in the logical, not the chronological, sense of the word.

V

But how did men come to believe that the soul survives the body and can even survive it indefinitely?

What emerges from the analysis I have conducted is that belief in immortality was not at all formed under the influence of ideas about morality. Man did not imagine extending his existence beyond the tomb so that a just retribution of moral acts could be provided in another life, if not in this one. We have seen that all considerations of this sort were foreign to the primitive idea of the beyond.

Nor are we any better off accepting the hypothesis that the other life was invented as a means of escape from the anguishing prospect of annihilation. First of all, the need for personal survival is far from having been very strong at the beginning. The primitive generally accepts the idea of death with a sort of indifference. Brought up to take little account of his individuality and accustomed to endangering his life continually, he easily lets go of it.[126] Second, the immortality that is promised to him by the religions he practices is not at all personal. In many cases, the soul does not continue the personality of the deceased, or does not continue it for long, since, forgetting its previous existence, it goes forth after a certain time to animate other bodies and becomes thereby the life-giving principle of new personalities. Even among more advanced peoples, it was not the colorless and sad existence led by the shades in Sheol or Erebus that could ease the sorrow left by the memory of the life lost.

The notion that connects the idea of a posthumous life to dream experiences is a more satisfactory explanation. Our dead relatives and friends

[126]On this point, see my [*Le*] *Suicide* [*étude de sociologie,* Paris, F. Alcan, 1897], pp. 233ff.

reappear to us in dreams. We see them acting and hear them speaking; it is natural to draw the conclusion that they still exist. But if those observations could have served as confirmation of the idea, once born, they do not seem capable of having called it forth from nothing. The dreams in which we see deceased persons alive again are too rare and too short, and the memories they leave are in themselves too vague, for dreams alone to have suggested such an important system of beliefs to men. There is a marked disproportion between the effect and the cause to which it is ascribed.

What makes the question troublesome is that, by itself, the idea of the soul did not entail the idea of survival but seemed to preclude it. Indeed, we have seen that the soul, while distinct from the body, is nevertheless thought to be closely linked with it. Since the soul grows old with the body and reacts to all the body's illnesses, it must have seemed natural for the soul to die with the body. The belief must at least have been that it ceased to exist the moment it irrevocably lost its original form, when nothing of what it had been remained. Yet it is at just this moment that a new life opens out before it.

The myths I have previously reported furnish us with the only possible explanation of that belief. We have seen that the souls of newborns were either emanations of ancestral souls or those same souls reincarnated. But to have been able either to reincarnate themselves or to give off new emanations periodically, they had to have outlived their first possessors, so it seems that the idea of the survival of the dead was accepted in order to make the birth of the living explicable. The primitive does not have the idea of an all-powerful god that pulls souls out of nothingness. It seems to him that one can only make souls with other souls. Those that are born in this way can only be new forms of those that existed in the past. Consequently, they must go on existing so that others can be formed. In sum, belief in the immortality of souls is the only way man is able to comprehend a fact that cannot fail to attract his attention: the perpetuity of the group's life. The individuals die, but the clan survives, so the forces that constitute his life must have the same perpetuity. These forces are the souls that animate the individual bodies, because it is in and by them that the group realizes itself. For that reason, they must endure. Indeed, while enduring, they also must remain the same. Since the clan always keeps its characteristic form, the spiritual substance of which it is made must be conceived of as qualitatively invariable. Since it is always the same clan with the same totemic principle, it must also be the same souls, the souls being nothing other than the totemic principle fragmented and particularized. Thus, there is a mystical sort of germinative plasma that is transmitted from generation to generation and that creates, or at least is held to

create, the spiritual unity of the clan over time. And despite its symbolic nature, this belief is not without objective truth, for although the group is not immortal in the absolute sense of the word, yet it is true that the group lasts above and beyond the individuals and that it is reborn and reincarnated in each new generation.

One fact confirms this interpretation. We have seen that, according to Strehlow's account, the Arunta distinguish two sorts of souls: those of the Alcheringa ancestors and those of the individuals who at any moment in history constitute the body of the tribe. The souls of individuals outlive the body for only a rather short time and are soon nullified completely. Only those of the Alcheringa ancestors are immortal: Just as they are uncreated, so they do not perish. Now, it is to be noticed that these are also the only ones whose immortality is needed in order to explain the permanence of the group, for the function of ensuring the perpetuity of the clan falls to them and them alone: Every conception is their doing. In this regard, the others have no role to play. Thus the souls are said to be immortal only to the extent that this immortality is useful in making the continuity of collective life intelligible.

The causes of the first beliefs about another life were thus unrelated to the functions that institutions beyond the grave would later have to fulfill. But, once born, they were soon put to use for ends different from those that were their initial *raison d'être*. From the Australian societies on, we see those causes beginning to organize themselves to this end. To do so, furthermore, they had no need to undergo fundamental transformations. How true it is that the same social institution can fulfill different functions successively, without changing its nature!

VI

The idea of soul long was and in part still is the most widely held form of the idea of personality.[127] By examining how the idea of soul originated, therefore, we should come to understand how the idea of personality was formed.

[127]It might be objected that unity is the characteristic of personalities, while the soul has always been conceived as multiple and as capable of dividing and subdividing almost infinitely. But we know today that the unity of the person is also made up of parts, that it is itself also capable of dividing and subdividing itself. Still, the idea of personality does not disappear merely because we have ceased to think of it as an indivisible, metaphysical atom. The same is true of those commonsense ideas of personality that have found expression in the idea of soul. They show that all peoples have always felt that the human person did not have the absolute unity certain metaphysicians have imputed to it.

It is a consequence of the preceding that two sorts of elements produced the idea of person. One is essentially impersonal: It is the spiritual principle that serves as the soul of the collectivity. That principle is the very substance of which individual souls are made. It is not the property of anyone in particular but part of the collective patrimony; in and through that principle, all the consciousnesses commune. From a different point of view, if there are to be separate personalities, some factor must intervene to fragment and differentiate this principle; in other words, an element of individuation is necessary. The body plays this role. Since bodies are distinct from one another, since they occupy different positions in time and space, each is a special milieu in which the collective representations are gradually refracted and colored differently. Hence, even if all the consciousnesses situated in those bodies view the same world—namely, the world of ideas and feelings that morally unify the group—they do not all view it from the same viewpoint; each expresses it in his own fashion.

Of those two equally indispensable factors, the impersonal element is certainly not the less important, since it is the one that furnishes the raw material for the idea of soul. It will be surprising, perhaps, to see such an important role attributed to the impersonal element in the origin of the idea of personality. But the philosophical analysis of that idea, which stole a march on sociological analysis, and by a lot, arrived at similar results on this point. Of all the philosophers, Leibniz is one of those who had the most vivid sense of what the personality is, for the monad is, first of all, a personal and autonomous being. And yet, for Leibniz, the content of all the monads is identical. All in fact are consciousnesses that express one and the same object: the world. And since the world itself is but a system of representations, each individual consciousness is in the end only a reflection of the universal consciousness. However, each expresses it from its own point of view and in its own manner. We know how this difference of perspectives arises from the fact that the monads are differently placed with respect to one another and with respect to the whole system they comprise.

Kant expresses this same awareness differently. For him, the cornerstone of personality is will. Will is the capacity to act in accordance with reason, and reason is that which is most impersonal in us. Reason is not my reason; it is human reason in general. It is the power of the mind to rise above the particular, the contingent, and the individual and to think in universal terms. From this point of view, one can say that what makes a man a person is that by which he is indistinguishable from other men; it is that which makes him man, rather than such and such a man. The senses, the body, in short everything that individualizes, is, to the contrary, regarded by Kant as antagonistic to personhood.

This is because individuation is not the essential characteristic of the person. A person is not only a singular subject that is distinguished from all the others. It is, in addition and most of all, a being to which a relative autonomy is imputed in relation to the milieu with which it interacts most directly. A person is conceived of as being capable, in a certain measure, of moving on its own. This is what Leibniz expressed in an extreme fashion, saying that the monad is entirely closed to the outside. My analysis enables us to imagine how this conception was formed and to what it corresponds.

The nature of the soul, which is in fact a symbolic expression of the personality, is the same. Although in close union with the body, it is presumed to be profoundly distinct from and broadly independent of the body. During life, it can leave the body temporarily, and at death it retires therefrom for good. Far from being subordinated to the body, it dominates the body given its higher status. It may very well borrow from the body the outward form in which it becomes individualized, but it owes the body nothing essential. This autonomy that all peoples have ascribed to the soul is not mere illusion, and we now know its objective basis. Granted, the elements that constitute the idea of the soul, and those that enter into the idea [*représentation*] of the body, come from two sources different from and independent of one another. The first are made of impressions and images that come from every part of the body; the others consist of ideas and feelings that come from the society and express it. Hence, the first are not derived from the second.

In this way, there really is a part of us that is not directly subordinate to the organic factor: That part is everything that represents society in us. The general ideas that religion or science impresses upon our minds, the mental operations that these ideas presuppose, the beliefs and feelings on which our moral life is based—all the higher forms of psychic activity that society stimulates and develops in us—are not, like our sensations and bodily states, towed along by the body. This is so because, as I have shown, the world of representations in which social life unfolds is added to its material substrate, far indeed from originating there. The determinism that reigns in that world of representations is thus far more supple than the determinism that is rooted in our flesh-and-blood constitution, and it leaves the agent with a justified impression of greater liberty. The milieu in which we move in this way is somehow less opaque and resistant. In it we feel, and are, more at ease. In other words, the only means we have of liberating ourselves from physical forces is to oppose them with collective forces.

What we have from society we have in common with our fellow men, so it is far from true that the more individualized we are, the more personal we are. The two terms are by no means synonymous. In a sense, they oppose

more than they imply one another. Passion individualizes and yet enslaves. Our sensations are in their essence individual. But the more emancipated we are from the senses, and the more capable we are of thinking and acting conceptually, the more we are persons. Those who emphasize all that is social in the individual do not mean by that to deny or denigrate personhood. They simply refuse to confound it with the fact of individuation.[128]

[128]For all that, I do not deny the importance of the individual factor, which is explained from my standpoint just as easily as its contrary. Even if the essential element of personality is that which is social in us, from another standpoint, there can be no social life unless distinct individuals are associated within it; and the more numerous and different from one another they are, the richer it is. Thus the individual factor is a condition of the personal factor. The reciprocal is no less true, for society itself is an important source of individual differentiation (See *De la Division du travail social*, 3d ed. [Paris, F. Alcan (1893), 1902], pp. 627ff.).

CHAPTER NINE

THE NOTION OF SPIRITS AND GODS

With the notion of soul, we left the domain of impersonal forces. But even the Australian religions recognize higher-order mythical entities, above and beyond the soul: spirits, civilizing heroes, and even gods, properly so-called. Without entering into the mythologies in detail, we must try to discover what form these three categories of spiritual beings take in Australia and how they fit into the religious system as a whole.

I

A soul is not a spirit. A soul is shut up in a definite body, and although it can come out at certain times, normally it is the body's prisoner. It escapes for good only at death, and even so we have seen with what difficulty that separation is made final. On the other hand, although a spirit is often closely tied to a particular object as its preferred residence—a spring, a rock, a tree, a star, and so forth—it can leave at will to lead an independent life in space. As a result, its influence has a wider radius. It can act upon all individuals who approach it or are approached by it. By contrast, the soul has almost no influence over anything other than the body it animates; only in very rare instances during its earthly life does it affect anything else.

But if the soul lacks those features that define the spirit, it acquires them through death, at least in part. Once disincarnated, and so long as it has not come down again into a body, it has the same freedom of movement as a spirit. To be sure, it is thought to leave for the land of souls when the rites of mourning are completed, but before that, it remains in the vicinity of the tomb for a rather long time. Furthermore, even when it has left there for good, it is thought to continue prowling around the camp.[1] It is generally

[1][Walter Edmund] Roth, *Superstition, Magic, etc.* [*and Medicine*, in *North Queensland Ethnography*, Bulletin no. 5, Brisbane, G. A. Vaughn, 1903], §65, 68; [Sir Baldwin] Spencer and [Francis James] Gillen [*The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, London, Macmillan, 1899], pp. 514, 516.

imagined as rather a kindly being, especially by the surviving members of its family. We have seen, in fact, that the soul of the father comes to nurture the growth of his children and grandchildren. Sometimes, however, depending entirely on its mood and its treatment by the living, it displays true cruelty.[2] Thus, especially for women and children, it is advisable not to venture outside the camp at night, so as to avoid the risk of dangerous encounters.[3]

A ghost, however, is not a true spirit. First, its power is usually limited; second, it does not have definite functions. It is a vagabond being with no clear-cut responsibility, since the effect of death was to set it outside all the regular structures. In relation to the living, it is demoted, as it were. On the other hand, a spirit always has some sort of power, and indeed it is defined by that power. It has authority over some range of cosmic or social phenomena; it has a more or less precise function to perform in the world scheme.

But some souls meet this dual condition and thus are spirits proper. These are the souls of mythical personages that are placed by popular imagination at the beginning of time: the Alcheringa or Altjirangamitjina people of the Arunta, the Mura-muras of the Lake Eyre tribes, the Muk-Kurnais of the Kurnai, and others. In a sense, these actually are still souls, since they are thought to have animated bodies in the past but to have separated from them at some point. However, as we have seen, even while they were living earthly lives, they already had exceptional powers. They had mana superior to that of ordinary men, and they kept it thereafter. Besides, they have definite functions.

To begin with, whether we accept Spencer and Gillen's account or Strehlow's, the responsibility for ensuring the periodic recruitment of the clan falls squarely on their shoulders. Matters of conception are their domain.

Once conception has taken place, the ancestor's task is not finished. It is up to him to watch over the newborn. Later, when the child has become a man, the ancestor accompanies him on the hunt and drives game toward him, warns him in dreams of dangers he may encounter, protects him from his enemies, and so forth. On this point, Strehlow is in entire agreement with Spencer and Gillen.[4] Granted, one may wonder how, on their account, the ancestor can perform this function. It would seem that because he reincarnates himself at the moment of conception, he would have to be assimi-

[2]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 515, 521; [James] Dawson [*Australian Aborigines: The Languages, and Customs of Several Tribes of Aborigines in the Western District of Victoria, Australia,* Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1881], p. 58; Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §67.

[3]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 517.

[4][Carl] Strehlow [*Die Aranda- und Loritja-Stämme in Zentral Australien,* Frankfurt, J. Baer, 1907], vol. II, p. 76 and n. 1; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* pp. 514, 516.

lated with the child's soul and thus could not possibly protect it from outside. But he can because he does not reincarnate himself whole, but instead produces his double. One part enters the body of the woman and impregnates her; another continues to exist outside and, with the special name of Arumburinga, performs the function of tutelary genie.[5]

We can see how closely akin that ancestral spirit is to the *genius* of the Latins and the δαίμων of the Greeks.[6] Their functions are completely identical. Indeed the *genius* is, above all, the one who engenders—*qui gignit*. The *genius* expresses and personifies the generative force.[7] At the same time, it is the protector and guide of the particular individual to whose person it is attached.[8] Finally, it merges with that individual's very personality, representing the set of characteristic inclinations and tendencies that give him distinctiveness among other men.[9] Hence the well-known saying *indulgere genio, defraudare genium,** in the sense of "follow one's natural temperament." Fundamentally, the *genius* is another form of, and a double of, the individual's soul itself. The partial synonymy of *genius* and *manes* proves this.[10] The *manes* are the *genius* after death, but they are also the part of the deceased that survives—in other words, the soul of the deceased. In the same way, the Arunta's soul and the ancestral spirit that serve as his *genius* are but two different aspects of the same being.

The ancestor has a defined position, however, not only in relation to persons but also in relation to things. Though his true residence is presumed to be underground, the ancestor is thought to keep haunting the site of his nanja tree or rock, or of the water hole that was spontaneously formed at the exact moment he disappeared into the ground, after ending his first existence. Since that tree or rock is thought to represent the body of the hero, his soul itself is imagined to return there continually and to reside there more or less permanently. The presence of that soul accounts for the religious respect

*To indulge one's genius is to cheat one's genius. That is, to cater to one's genius, rather than letting it assert itself, is to frustrate it. Trans.

[5][Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*], p. 513.

[6]See [Augusto] Negrioli on this question, *Dei Genii presso i Romani*, [Bologna, Ditta Nicola Zanichelli, 1900]; the articles "Daimon" and "Genius" in *Dictionnaire des antiquités [Grècques et Romaines*, Paris, Hachette, 1877–1919]; [Ludwig] Preller, *Roemische Mythologie* [Berlin, Weidmann, 1858], vol. II, pp. 195ff.

[7]Negrioli, *Dei Genii presso i Romani*, p. 4.

[8]Ibid., p. 8.

[9]Ibid., p. 7.

[10]Ibid., p. 11. Cf. Samter, "Der Ursprung des Larencultus," in *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 1907, pp. 368–393.

evoked by those places. No one may snap a branch of the nanja tree without risk of falling ill.[11] "At one time, the act of felling or damaging it was punished with death. Killing an animal or bird that takes refuge there is forbidden. Even the surrounding bush has to be respected—the grass must not be burned. The rocks, too, must be treated with respect. To move or break them is forbidden."[12] Since this quality of sacredness is ascribed to the ancestor, he seems to be the spirit of that tree, rock, water hole, or spring[13]—let the spring be considered as having to do with the rain,[14] and he becomes a spirit of the rain. Thus, these same souls that, in one of their aspects, serve men as protective genies also perform cosmic functions. One of Roth's texts is probably to be understood in this way: In North Queensland, the nature spirits are said to be souls of the dead that have chosen to reside in the forests or in caves.[15]

Now we have spirit beings that are something other than wandering souls without specific powers. Strehlow calls them gods,[16] but this term is inappropriate, at least in the vast majority of cases. And in a society such as that of the Arunta, where each individual has a protecting ancestor, there would be as many gods as individuals, or more. To apply the noun "god" to a sacred being that has only one adherent would promote terminological confusion. It is true that an ancestor figure can sometimes become enlarged to the point that it resembles a deity proper. Among the Warramunga, as I have pointed out,[17] the entire clan is thought to be descended from a single ancestor. How, under certain conditions, this collective ancestor could have become the object of collective devotion is easily comprehended. This happened to the

[11][Rev. Louis] Schulze, "Aborigines of the Upper and Middle Finke River," *RSSA*, vol. XIV [1891], p. 237.

[12]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 5. Cf. Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, p. 133; S. Gason, in [Edward Micklethwaite] Curr, [*The Australian Race: Its Origin, Languages, Customs, Place of Landing in Australia and the Routes by Which It Spread Itself over That Continent*, Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1886–1887], vol. II, p. 69.

[13]See, in [Alfred William] Howitt [*The Native Tribes of South East Australia*, London, Macmillan, 1904], p. 482), the case of a Mura-mura who is regarded as the spirit of certain hot springs.

[14][Baldwin Spencer and Francis James Gillen], *Northern Tribes* [*of Central Australia* London, Macmillan, 1904], pp. 313–314; [Robert Hamilton] Mathews, "[Ethnological Notes on the] Aboriginal Tribes of New South Wales and Victoria," *RSNSW*, vol. XXXVIII [1904], p. 351. Similarly, among the Dieri, there is a Mura-mura whose function is to produce rain (Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 798–799).

[15]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §67. Cf. Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 58.

[16]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 2ff.

[17]See above, p. 252, n. 53.

snake Wollunqua, to take one example.[18] According to belief, this mythical animal (from which the clan of the same name is thought to originate) continues to live in a water hole that is held in religious veneration. Moreover, it is the object of a cult that the clan celebrates collectively. They try to please it and gain its favor by means of particular rites, making prayers of a sort to it, and so forth. Thus, one can say this mythical animal is like the god of the clan. But this is a very unusual case even, according to Spencer and Gillen, a unique one. Normally, "spirit" is the only word that is suitable for designating these ancestral personages.

As to the manner in which that idea was formed, we may say that it is obvious from all that has been said up to now.

As I have shown, once the existence of souls was accepted, it could not be comprehended without imagining, at the beginning of things, an original fund of fundamental souls from which all the others derived. These archetypical souls must necessarily have been imagined as containing in themselves the source of all religious efficacy, for, since the imagination goes back no further, all the sacred things are held to come from them: the instruments of the cult, the members of the clan, the animals of the totemic species. They incarnate all the religiousness that is diffused throughout the tribe and the world. This is why powers are attributed to them that are markedly superior to those enjoyed by the mere souls of men. Moreover, time itself increases and reinforces the sacredness of the things. A very old churinga elicits far greater respect than a modern one and is thought to have more virtues.[19] It is as though the feelings of veneration it has received through successive generations' handling are accumulated in it. For the same reason, the personages that have been the subjects of myths transmitted respectfully for centuries from mouth to mouth, and that are periodically enacted by rites, were bound to take an altogether special place in popular imagination.

But how does it happen that instead of remaining outside the framework of society, they have become regular members of it? The reason is that each individual is the double of an ancestor. Now, when two beings are so closely akin, they are naturally thought of as unified; since they share the same nature, what affects one seems necessarily to affect the other. In this way, the troop of the mythical ancestors became attached to the society of the living by a moral bond; the same interests and passions were imputed to both; and

[18]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* chap. VII.

[19]Ibid., p. 277.

they were seen as associates. But since the ancestors had higher status than the living, this association entered the public mind as a relationship between superiors and subordinates, patrons and clients, helpers and helped. Thus was born the curious notion of the tutelary genie attached to each individual.

How the ancestor was placed in contact not only with men but also with things might appear a more troublesome question. At first glance, it is not obvious what relationship could exist between a personage of this kind and a tree or rock. But a piece of information that we owe to Strehlow provides us with at least a plausible solution to this problem.

Those trees and rocks are not situated just anywhere in the tribal territory but are massed for the most part around certain sanctuaries (called ertnatulunga by Spencer and Gillen and arknanaua by Strehlow), where the churingas of the clan are kept.[20] How deeply these places are respected we know from the very fact that the most precious cult instruments are kept there. In addition, each of them radiates sanctity. This is why the nearby trees and rocks seem sacred, why it is forbidden to destroy or damage them, and why any violence against them is sacrilege. This sacredness stems from the phenomenon of psychic contagion. To account for it, the native is obliged to grant that these different objects are in relations with the beings that he sees as the source of all religious power—that is, with the Alcheringa ancestors. Therein originates the system of myths I have recounted. Each ertnatulunga was imagined to mark the place where a group of ancestors were swallowed up by the earth. The mounds and trees that then covered the ground were thought to represent their bodies. But because the soul generally retains a certain affinity for the body in which it once lived, people naturally came to believe that these ancestral souls preferred to keep frequenting the places where their physical envelope remained. Hence they were localized in trees, rocks, and water holes. In this way, each of them, while remaining attached to the guardianship of a definite individual, found itself transformed into a sort of *genius loci** and performed the function of one.[21]

* A spirit attached to a place. Standard Roman belief was that every place had one.

[20]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 5.

[21]It is true that some nanja trees and rocks are not situated around the ertnatulunga but are scattered across various parts of the territory. They are said to correspond to places where a lone ancestor disappeared into the ground, lost an appendage, spilled some blood, or forgot a churinga that was transformed into either a tree or a rock. But these totemic sites have only secondary importance; Strehlow calls them *kleinere Totemplätze* (*Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 4–5). So we can imagine that they took on this character only by analogy with the principal totemic centers. The trees and rocks that in some way resembled those found in the neighborhood of the ertnatulunga stirred similar feelings, so as a result the myth that formed à propos of the place extended to the things.

Thus elucidated, these ideas put us in a position to understand a form of totemism that until now had to be left unexplained: individual totemism.

An individual totem is defined by essentially the two following characteristics: (1) it is a being in the form of an animal or plant whose function is to protect an individual; (2) the fate of the individual and that of its patron are closely interdependent. Everything that affects the patron is passed on sympathetically to the individual. The ancestral spirits just discussed fit the same definition. They also belong, at least in part, to the realm of animals or of plants. They too are tutelary genies. Finally, a sympathetic bond attaches each individual to his protecting ancestor. The nanja tree, the mystical body of that ancestor, cannot be destroyed without the man's feeling threatened. True, this belief is losing some of its force now, but Spencer and Gillen found it still in existence, and they judge it to have been widespread in the past.[22]

That these two ideas are identical can be seen even in the details. The ancestral souls live in trees or rocks that are considered sacred. Similarly, among the Euahlayi, the spirit of the animal that serves as an individual totem is held to live in a tree or stone.[23] This tree or stone is sacred: No one may touch it, except the one whose totem it is; and, when it is a stone or a rock, the prohibition is absolute.[24] The result is that these are true places of refuge.

Finally, we have seen that the individual soul is but a different aspect of the ancestral spirit; in a way, this spirit serves, to use Strehlow's phrase, as a second self.[25] Similarly, to use Mrs. Parker's phrase, the individual totem of the Euahlayi, called Yunbeai, is an alter ego of the individual: "The soul of the man is in his Yunbeai, and the soul of his Yunbeai is in him."[26] In essence, then, it is one soul in two bodies. The kinship of these two ideas is so great that they are sometimes expressed with one and the same word. This is true in Melanesia and Polynesia: *atai* on the island of Mota, *tamaniu* on the island of Aurora, and *talegia* at Motlaw designate both the soul of an individual and his personal totem.[27] The same is true of *aitu* in Samoa.[28] This is because the

[22][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 139.

[23][K. Langloh] Parker, [Catherine Sommerville Field Parker], *The Euahlayi* [*Tribe*, London, A. Constable, 1905], p. 21. The tree that serves this purpose is generally one of those that figure among the individual's subtotems. The reason given for this choice is that, being of the same family, they are probably more inclined to help him.

[24]Ibid., p. 36.

[25]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. II, p. 81.

[26]Parker, *Euahlayi Tribe* , p. 21.

[27][Robert Henry] Codrington, *The Melanesians* [Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1891], pp. 249–253.

[28][George] Turner, *Samoa,* London, Macmillan, 1884, p. 17.

individual totem is the outward and visible form of the self, the personality, and the soul is its inward and invisible form.[29]

Thus, the individual totem has all the essential characteristics of the protecting ancestor and plays the same role. All this is so because its origin is the same, and it arises from the same idea.

In fact, both involve a duplication of the soul. Like the ancestor, the totem is the individual's soul, but the soul externalized and invested with greater powers than those it is believed to have while inside the body. This duplication arises from a psychological need, for all it does is explain the nature of the soul which, as we have seen, is double. It is ours in a sense, it expresses our personality. But it is outside us at the same time, since it is the extension inside us of a religious force that is outside us. We cannot become fully merged with it because we ascribe to it a stature and a respect that lift it above us and our empirical individuality. There is a part of us, then, that we tend to project outside ourselves. This way of conceiving ourselves is so well established in our nature that even when we try to conceive of ourselves without using any religious symbol, we cannot escape it. Our moral consciousness is like the nucleus around which the idea of soul took form, and yet when it speaks to us, it seems to be a power outside of and greater than us, laying down the law to and judging us, but also helping and supporting us. When we have it on our side, we feel stronger amid the trials of life and more certain of overcoming, just as the Australian who has confidence in his ancestor or his personal totem feels more valiant against his enemies.[30] Thus there is something objective at the basis of these different ideas—be they the Roman *genius,* the individual totem, or the Alcheringa ancestor—and that is the reason they have survived in various forms until today. Everything works out as if we really did have two souls: one that is in us—or, rather, is us; another that is above us, and whose function is to oversee and assist the first. Frazer had an inkling that there was an external soul in the individual totem,

[29]These are the very words used by Codrington, *The Melanesians* (p. 251).

[30]This close relationship among the soul, the protective genie, and the moral consciousness of the individual is especially apparent among certain peoples of Indonesia: "One of the seven souls of the Toba-batak is buried with the placenta; while it prefers to reside there, it can leave to give warnings to the individual or to show approval when he conducts himself well. Thus, in a certain sense, it plays the role of moral conscience. However, its warnings do not extend only to the domain of moral affairs. It is called the younger brother of the soul, just as the placenta is called the younger brother of the child. . . . In war, it inspires the man with the courage to march against the enemy" ([Johannes Gustav] Warneck, *Der batáksche Ahnen und Geisterkult,* in *Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift,* Berlin, 1904, p. 10. Cf. [Albertus Christiaan] Kruijt, *Het Animisme in den indischen Archipel* ['s Gravenhage, M. Nijhoff, 1906], p. 25).

but he believed that externality was the result of an artifice or a magician's trick. In reality, it is implicit in the very constitution of the idea of soul.[31]

II

In the main, the spirits just discussed are kind. No doubt, they sometimes punish the man who does not treat them properly,[32] but doing harm is not their function.

In itself, however, the spirit can be used for evil as well as for good. This is why a class of clever genies naturally came into being opposite the auxiliary and tutelary spirits, which allowed men to explain the enduring evils they had to suffer—nightmares,[33] illnesses,[34] tornadoes, storms,[35] and so forth. Doubtless, this is not because all human miseries appeared to be too abnormal to be explained otherwise than by supernatural forces, but because, back then, all those forces were thought of in religious form. A religious principle is regarded as the source of life; hence it was logical for all the events that disturb or destroy life to be brought back to a principle of the same kind.

These harmful spirits seem to have been conceived according to the same model as the beneficent genies just discussed. They are conceived in the

[31]Still to be discovered is how it happens that, from some point in evolution on, this doubling of the soul was done in the form of the individual totem rather than that of the protecting ancestor. The question has perhaps more ethnographic than sociological interest. Still, here is how the origin of this substitution might be imagined.

The individual totem must have played a purely complementary role at first. The individuals who wished to acquire powers above the ordinary were not content, and could not be content, with only the protection of the ancestor. Hence they sought to fit themselves out with another auxiliary of the same kind. And so it is that, among the Euahlayi, the magicians are the only ones who have, or could have, procured individual totems. Since each of them also has a collective totem, they end up with several souls. There is nothing surprising about that multiplicity of souls; It is the condition of superior efficacy.

Once collective totemism lost ground and, in consequence, the notion of the protecting ancestor began to efface that of spirits, it became necessary to imagine the nature of the soul, which was still felt, differently. The idea remained that outside each individual soul there was another, responsible for watching over the first. In order to uncover that protective power, since it was not designated by the fact of birth itself, it seemed natural to use means similar to those magicians use to enter into dealings with the forces whose help those means ensure.

[32]See, for example, Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. II, p. 82.

[33][J. P.] Wyatt, "Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes," in [James Dominick] Woods, [*The Native Tribes of South Australia*, Adelaide, E. S. Wigg, 1879], p. 168.

[34][Rev. George] Taplin, "The Narrinyeri" [in Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia*], pp. 62–63; Roth, *Superstition, Magic,* §116; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 356, 358; Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 11–12.

[35]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 13–14; Dawson, *Australian Aborigines,* p. 49.

form of an animal, or as part animal and part human,[36] but people tend naturally to ascribe enormous dimensions and repulsive appearance to them.[37] Like the souls of ancestors, they are thought to live in trees, rocks, water holes, and underground caverns.[38] Many are presented to us as the souls of persons who have lived earthly lives.[39] Spencer and Gillen say explicitly, so far as the Arunta in particular are concerned, that these bad genies, known by the name Oruncha, are Alcheringa beings.[40] Among the personages of mythical times, there were different temperaments. Certain of them had and still have cruel and mean instincts,[41] while others were of innately poor constitution—thin and haggard. Therefore, when they went down into the ground, the nanja rocks to which they gave birth were considered to be centers of dangerous influences.[42]

Certain characteristics distinguish them from their brethren, the Alcheringa heroes. They do not reincarnate themselves; they are never represented among the living; and they are without human progeny.[43] So when, according to certain signs, a child is believed to be the product of their labors, it is put to death as soon as it is born.[44] In addition, these harmful spirits do not belong to any definite totemic center and are outside the social organization.[45] Through all these traits, we see that such powers are far more magic

[36]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 11–14; [Richard] Eylmann [*Die Eingeborenen der Kolonie Sud Australien, Berlin, D. Reumer*], pp. 182, 185, Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 211; [Rev. C. W.] Schürmann, *The Aboriginal Tribes of Port Lincoln*, in Woods [*The Native Tribes of South Australia*], p. 239.

[37]Eylmann, *Eingeborenen*, p. 182.

[38]Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 345; [Lorimer] Fison and [Alfred William] Howitt, *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* [Melbourne, G. Robertson, 1880], p. 467; Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 11.

[39]Roth, *Superstition, Magic*, §115; Eylmann, *Eingeborenen*, p. 190.

[40]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 390–391. Strehlow calls the bad spirits *Erintja*, but this word and *Oruncha* are obviously equivalents. Yet they are presented in different ways. The Oruncha, according to Spencer and Gillen, are more malicious than evil; indeed, according to these observers (p. 328), totally evil beings are unknown to the Arunta. By contrast, Strehlow's Erintja have the routine function of doing evil. Furthermore, according to certain myths that Spencer and Gillen themselves report (*Native Tribes*, p. 390), it seems that they have embellished the Oruncha figures somewhat. Originally, they were more like ogres (ibid., p. 331).

[41]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, pp. 390–391.

[42]Ibid., p. 551.

[43]Ibid., pp. 326–327.

[44]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 14. When there are twins, the firstborn is thought to have been conceived in that way.

[45]Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes*, p. 327.

than they are religious. And indeed, they are above all in contact with the magician, who often obtains his powers from them.[46] I thus arrive at the point where the world of religion ends and that of magic begins; and since magic is beyond the scope of my research, I need push that study no further.[47]

III

The appearance of the idea of spirit marks an important advance in the individuation of religious forces. Nevertheless, the spirit beings discussed up to now continue to be only secondary personages. Either they are evil genies that belong more to magic than to religion, or else, attached to a definite individual and place, they can make their influence felt only within a very limited radius. Therefore they can be the objects of only private and local rites. But once the idea of spirit took form, it naturally extended into the higher spheres of religious life. And in this way, higher-order mythical personalities were born.

Although the ceremonies proper to each clan differ from one another, they belong to the same religion nonetheless, and so there are basic similarities. Since every clan is but a part of one and the same tribe, the unity of the tribe cannot fail to show through the diversity of particular cults. And as it turns out, there is indeed no totemic group that does not have churingas and bull roarers, which are used everywhere in a similar way. The organization of the tribe into phratries, marriage classes, and clans, and the exogamic prohibitions attached thereto, are also genuinely tribal institutions. All the festivals of initiation involve certain basic practices—tooth extraction, circumcision, subincision, and others—that do not vary by totem within a single tribe. Uniformity in this matter is the more easily established since initiation always takes place in the presence of the tribe, or at least before an assembly to which different clans have been summoned. The reason is that the aim of initiation is to introduce the novice into the religious life of the tribe as a whole, not merely that of the clan into which he was born. Therefore the varied aspects of the tribal religion must be enacted before him and, in a sense, pass before his eyes. This is the occasion on which the moral and religious unity of the tribe is best demonstrated.

[46]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 358, 381, 385; Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes,* p. 334; *Northern Tribes,* p. 327.

[47]Nevertheless, the spirit beings discussed up to now continue to be spirits whose only function is to do ill; the others' role is to prevent or neutralize the evil influence of the first. Cases of this kind are to be found in *Northern Tribes,* pp. 501–502. What brings out clearly that both are magical is that, among the Arunta, both have the same name. Hence, these are different aspects of the same magical power.

Hence there are in each society a certain number of rites that are distinguished from all the others by their homogeneity and their universality. Because such a remarkable concordance did not seem explainable except by common origin, it was imagined that each group of similar rites had been instituted by one and the same ancestor, who had come to reveal them to the tribe as a whole. Thus, among the Arunta, an ancestor of the Wildcat clan, named Putiaputia,[48] is held to have taught men how to make churingas and use them ritually; among the Warramunga, it is Murtu-murtu;[49] among the Urabunna, it is Witurna;[50] Atnatu among the Kaitish[51] and Tundun among the Kurnai.[52] Similarly, the practices of circumcision are ascribed by the eastern Dieri and several other tribes[53] to two specific Mura-muras, and by the Arunta to an Alcheringa hero of the Lizard totem, named Mangarkunjerkunja.[54] To the same personage are ascribed the institution of marriage prohibitions and the social organization they entail, the discovery of fire, the invention of the spear, the shield, the boomerang, and so forth. Incidentally, the inventor of the bull roarer is often considered to be the founder of the initiation rites, as well.[55]

These special ancestors could not be placed on a par with the others. For one thing, the feelings of veneration they inspired were not limited to one clan but were common to the whole tribe. For another, all that was valued most in the tribal civilization was attributed to them. For this twofold reason, they became the object of special veneration. For example, it is said that

[48]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 9. Moreover, Putiaputia is not the only personage of this kind that is mentioned in the Arunta myths. Certain parts of the tribe give a different name to the hero to whom they attribute the same invention. It should be borne in mind that the breadth of the territory occupied by the Arunta does not permit the mythology to be perfectly homogeneous.

[49]Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 493.

[50]Ibid., p. 498.

[51]Ibid., pp. 498–499.

[52]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 135.

[53]Ibid., pp. 476ff.

[54]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, pp. 6–8. Later, the work of Mangarkunjerkunja had to be taken in hand again by other heroes; according to a belief that is not peculiar to the Arunta, a moment came when men forgot the teachings of their first initiators and compromised themselves. [Here, Durkheim may well have been thinking of the biblical prophets. Notice that this point is unrelated to the one made in the text. Trans.]

[55]This is the case, for example, of Atnatu (Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes*, p. 153), and of Witurna (ibid., p. 498). If Tundun did not initiate the rites, it is he who is charged with directing their celebration (Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 670).

Atnatu was born in the sky, even before Alcheringa times, and that he made and named himself. The stars are his wives or his daughters. Beyond the sky where he lives, there is another with another sun.* His name is sacred and must never be said before women or the uninitiated.[56]

Still, no matter how great the stature of these personages, there was never any reason to establish special rites in their honor, for they are themselves no more than the rite personified. The only reason they exist is to explain the practices that exist. They are but a different aspect of those practices. The churinga is inseparable from the ancestor who invented it; they sometimes have the same name.[57] When the bull roarer is sounded, the voice of the ancestor is said to be making itself heard.[58] But because each of these heroes is merged with the cult he is said to have instituted, he is thought to oversee the manner in which it is celebrated. Not satisfied unless the faithful perform their duties exactly, he punishes those who are neglectful.[59] Thus he is considered the guardian of the rite as well as its founder, and for that reason he becomes invested with an authentically moral role.[60]

IV

Yet even this mythological formation is not the most advanced that is to be found among the Australians. Several tribes have achieved the conception of a god who, if not the only one, is at the least the supreme one, and one to whom a preeminent position among all the other religious entities is ascribed.

The existence of that belief was long ago reported by various observers,[61] but Howitt has contributed most to establishing that it is relatively wide-

*In the first edition, "sun" and "moon" are not capitalized, but in the second they are. The rationale for capitalizing them probably was that they sometimes serve as proper names. In both editions, "Kangaroo," "Emu," and other nouns are capitalized when they refer to clans. Trans.

[56][Spencer and Gillen], *Northern Tribes,* p. 499.

[57]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 493; [Fison and Howitt], *Kamilaroi and Kurnai,* pp. 197, 267; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes,* p. 492.

[58]See, for example, *Northern Tribes,* p. 499.

[59]Ibid., pp. 338, 347, 499.

[60]Spencer and Gillen contend that these mythical beings play no moral role (*Northern Tribes,* p. 493), true enough; but this is because they give the word too narrow a sense. Religious duties are duties; hence the fact of watching over the manner in which they are performed concerns morality—all the more because, at that moment, all morality is religious in character.

[61]This fact had been documented as far back as 1845 by [Edward John] Eyre, *Journals [of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia,* London, T. and W. Boone, 1845], vol. II, p. 362, and before Eyre, by Henderson, in his *Observations on the Colonies of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* [Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1832], p. 147.

spread. Indeed, he has documented it for a very wide geographic area comprising Victoria State and New South Wales, and extending as far as Queensland.[62] Throughout that entire region, a large number of tribes believe in the existence of a genuinely tribal deity that has different names in different regions. The most frequently employed are Bunjil or Punjil,[63] Daramulun,[64] and Baiame.[65] But we also find the names Nuralie or Nurelle,[66] Kohin,[67] and Mungan-ngaua.[68] The same idea is found farther west, among the Narrinyeri, where the high god is called Nurunderi or Ngurrunderi.[69] Among the Dieri, it is quite probable that, above the Mura-muras or ordinary ancestors, there is one that enjoys a kind of supremacy.[70] Finally, in contrast to Spencer and Gillen, who claim not to have observed any belief in a god proper among the Arunta,[71] Strehlow assures us this people, as well as the Loritja, recognize a true "good god," with the name Altjira.[72]

The characteristics of this personage are fundamentally the same everywhere. It is an immortal and indeed an eternal being, since it is derived from

[62][Howitt], *Native Tribes,* pp. 488–508.

[63]Among the Kulin, the Wotjobaluk, and the Woëworung (Victoria).

[64]Among the Yuin, the Ngarrigo, and the Wolgal (New South Wales).

[65]Among the Kamilaroi and the Euahlayi (the northern part of New South Wales); and more toward the center of the same province, among the Wonghibon and the Wiradjuri.

[66]Among the Wiimbaio and the tribes of Lower Murry, [William] Ridley, *Kamilaroi, [and Other Australian Languages,* Sydney, T. Richards, 1875], p. 137; [Robert] Brough Smyth, [*The Aborigines of Victoria,* Melbourne, J. Ferres, 1878], vol. I, p. 423 n. 431).

[67]Among the tribes of the Herbert River (Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 498).

[68]Among the Kurnai.

[69]Taplin, "Narrinyeri," p. 55; Eylmann, *Eingeborenen,* p. 182.

[70]It is probably to this supreme Mura-mura that Gason alludes in the passage already cited ([Edward M.] Curr, [*The Australian Race*], vol. II, p. 55).

[71][Spencer and Gillen], *Native Tribes,* p. 246.

[72]The difference between Baiame, Bunjil, and Daramulun, on the one hand, and Altjira, on the other, would be that the last named is totally indifferent to everything that concerns humanity. It is not he who made men, and he does not concern himself with what they do. The Arunta neither love nor fear him. But even if that idea was accurately observed and analyzed, it is quite difficult to accept as original, for if Altjira plays no role, explains nothing, and serves no purpose, what would have made the Arunta imagine him? Perhaps he must be seen as a sort of Baiame who lost his former prestige, a former god whose memory gradually faded. Perhaps, as well, Strehlow wrongly interpreted the accounts he collected. According to Eylmann (who, granted, is neither a competent nor a very reliable observer), Altjira made men (*Eingeborenen,* p. 184). In addition, among the Loritja, the personage that, with the name Tukura, corresponds to the Altjira of the Arunta is believed to conduct the ceremonies of initiation himself.

no other. After having lived on earth for a time, he lifted himself, or was carried, to the sky.[73] He continues to live there surrounded by his family—one or several wives being widely attributed to him, as well as children and brothers[74] who sometimes assist him in his functions. Because of a stay in the sky (together with the family attributed to him), he is often identified with particular stars.[75] Moreover, he is said to have power over the stars. It is he who set up the movement of the sun and the moon;[76] he orders them about.[77] It is he who causes lightning to leap forth from the clouds and who hurls the thunder.[78] Because he is the thunder, he is associated with the rain as well,[79] and it is he who must be addressed when there is want of water or too much.[80]

He is spoken of as a sort of creator. He is called the father of men and is said to have made them. According to a legend once current near Melbourne, Bunjil is said to have made the first man in the following manner: He made a statuette out of clay;* then he danced all around it several times, breathed into its nostrils, and the statuette came alive and began to walk.[81] According to another myth, he lit the sun, whereupon the earth warmed up and men came out of it.[82] At the same time as he made men,[83] this divine

*Curiously, despite the Australian context, Swain (p. 324) wrote "*white* clay," although Durkheim merely said *argile*.

[73]For Bunjil, see Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, p. 417; for Baiame, Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 136; for Daramulun, Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 495.

[74]On the composition of Bunjil's family, for example, see Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 128, 129, 489, 491; Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 417, 423; for that of Baiame, Parker, *The Euahlayi*, pp. 7, 66, 103; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 407, 502, 585; for that of Nurunderi, Taplin, "The Narrinyeri" [in Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia*] pp. 57–58. Besides, the manner in which the families of the high gods are conceived has all sorts of variations. Such and such a personage is here the brother and elsewhere called the son. The number of wives and their names vary according to region.

[75]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 128.

[76]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 430, 431.

[77]Ibid., vol. I, p. 432 n.

[78]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 498, 538; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," *RSNSW*, vol. XXXVIII, p. 343; Ridley, *Kamilorai* p. 136.

[79]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 538; Taplin, *The Narrinyeri*, pp. 57–58.

[80]Parker, *The Euahlayi*, p. 8

[81]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, p. 424.

[82]Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 492.

[83]According to certain myths, he made men and not women; this is what is said of Bunjil. But the origin of women is attributed to his son-brother, Pallyan (Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 417, 423).

personage made the animals and the trees,[84] and all the arts of life—weapons, language, tribal rites[85]—are thanks to him. He is the benefactor of humanity. Even today, he plays the role of a kind of Providence for humanity. It is he who provides his own with all that is needful in their existence.[86] He communicates with them directly or through intermediaries.[87] And being at the same time the guardian of tribal morality, he punishes when that morality is violated.[88] Furthermore, if we can rely on the word of certain observers, he performs the function of judge after death, distinguishing between the good and the bad and not treating both the same.[89] In any event, he is often presented as gatekeeper for the land of the dead,[90] welcoming the souls when they arrive in the beyond.[91]

Since initiation is the principal form of the tribal cult, the rites of initiation are associated especially with him, and he is central to them. He is often represented in those rites by an image carved in tree bark or modeled out of earth. People dance around it, sing in its honor, and indeed actually pray to it.[92] They explain to the young men who the personage is that the image represents, telling them the secret name that women and the uninitiated must not know, recounting to them his history and his role in the life of the tribe according to tradition. At other moments, they raise their hands toward the sky, where he is thought to reside, or point the weapons or the ritual instruments they have in hand in the same direction[93]—means of entering into communication with him. They feel his presence everywhere. He watches over the novice while he is secluded in the forest.[94] He is vigilant about the manner in which the rites are conducted. Since initiation is his cult, he

[84]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 489, 492; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 340.

[85]Parker, *The Euahlayi,* p. 7; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 630.

[86]Ridley, *Kamilaroi,* p. 136; L. Parker, *The Euahlayi,* p. 114.

[87][K. Langloh], Parker, *More Australian Legendary Tales* [London, D. Nutt, 1898], pp. 84–99, 90–91.

[88]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 495, 498, 543, 563, 564; Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, p. 429; L. Parker, *The Euahlayi,* p. 79.

[89]Ridley, *Kamilaroi,* p. 137.

[90]Parker, *The Euahlayi,* pp. 90–91.

[91]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 495; Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in Woods, *The Native Tribes of South Australia,* p. 58.

[92]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 538, 543, 553, 555, 556; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 318; Parker, *The Euahlayi,* pp. 6, 79, 80.

[93]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* pp. 498, 528.

[94]Ibid., p. 493; Parker, *The Euahlayi,* p. 76.

makes sure that these rites, in particular, are correctly observed. When there are mistakes or negligence, he punishes those in a terrible way.[95]

The authority each of these high gods has is not restricted to a single tribe but is recognized as well by a number of neighboring tribes. Bunjil is worshipped in nearly the whole state of Victoria, Baiame in a sizable part of New South Wales, and so forth—facts that explain why there are so few gods for a relatively large geographic area. The cults of which they are objects therefore have an international character. Sometimes, in fact, the diverse mythologies blend into, combine with, and borrow from one another. Thus, the majority of the tribes that believe in Baiame also accept the existence of Daramulun, although they accord him lower standing. They take him to be a son or a brother of Baiame, and subordinate to him.[96] Thus in various forms, faith in Daramulun is general throughout New South Wales. Hence religious internationalism is far from being the exclusive province of the most modern and advanced regions. From the beginning of history, religious beliefs show a tendency not to confine themselves within a narrowly delimited political society. They naturally go beyond boundaries, spreading and becoming international. There certainly have been peoples and times in which that spontaneous aptitude was held in check by various social necessities. Nevertheless, it is real and, as we see, very primitive.

To Tylor this idea seemed to be of such advanced theology that he refused to see it as anything but a European importation, a somewhat distorted Christian idea.[97] By contrast, A. Lang[98] considers it to be indigenous. But at the same time he accepts the notion that it is in contrast with Australian beliefs as a whole and rests upon wholly different principles. And he concludes that the religions of Australia are made up of two heterogeneous systems, one superimposed on the other, and thus have a double origin. First come the ideas relative to totems and spirits, suggested to men by the spectacle of certain natural phenomena. At the same time, however, by a sort of intuition (the nature of which he refuses to explain[99]), the human intellect suddenly

[95]Parker, *The Euahlayi*, p. 76; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 493, 612.

[96]Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 153; Parker, *The Euahlayi*, p. 67; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, p. 585; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 343. Daramulun is sometimes presented in opposition to Baiame as an inherently evil spirit (L. Parker, *The Euahlayi*; [William] Ridley, in Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. II, p. 285).

[97][Edward Burnett Tylor, "On the Limits of Savage Religion,"] *JAI*, vol. XXI [1892], pp. 292ff.

[98][Andrew] Lang, *The Making of Religion* [London, Longmans, 1898], pp. 187–293.

[99]Ibid., p. 331. Mr. Lang says only that the hypothesis of St. Paul seems to him the least defective ([not] the most unsatisfactory). [The reference is probably to St. Paul on the road to Damascus, when he "saw a great light," after which "the scales fell" from his eyes and he became a believer in Jesus Christ. Trans.]

manages to conceive of one god, creator of the world, legislator of the moral order. Lang even judges that at the beginning, in Australia especially, this idea is purer of all foreign elements than in the civilizations immediately following. Over time, it supposedly is little by little overgrown and obscured by the constantly growing mass of animist and totemist superstitions. In this way, it undergoes a sort of progressive degeneration until the day when, under the influence of a privileged culture, it manages to recover and reaffirm itself, with a brilliance and clarity that it did not originally have.[100]

But the facts do not support either the skeptical hypothesis of Tylor or the theological interpretation of Lang. In the first place, we know today for certain that the ideas relative to the tribal high god are indigenous. They were reported when the influence of the missionaries had not yet had time to make itself felt.[101] But that they must be attributed to a mysterious revelation does not follow. It is far from true that they originated elsewhere. Quite the contrary, they flow logically from the sources of totemism and are its most advanced form.

We have seen that the very principles on which totemism rests imply the idea of mythical ancestors, since each of those ancestors is a totemic being. Although the high gods are surely superior to them, the differences are only of degree; one passes from the first to the second without a radical break. In fact, a high god is himself an ancestor of special importance. He is spoken of as a man, one gifted with more than human powers, of course, but one who

[100]Father [Wilhelm] Schmidt has taken up the thesis of A. Lang in *Anthropos* ["L'Origine de l'idée de dieu," vol. III (1908), pp. 125–162, 336–368, 559–611, 801–836, vol. IV (1909), pp. 207–250, 505–524, 1075–1091]. Against Sidney Hartland, who had criticized Lang's theory in an article of *Folk-Lore* (vol. IX [1898], pp. 290ff., pp. 290ff.), titled "The 'High Gods' of Australia," Father Schmidt set out to demonstrate that Baiame, Bunjil, and the others are eternal gods, creators, omnipotent and omniscient, and guardians of the moral order. I will not enter into that discussion, which seems to me without interest and import. If those different adjectives are understood in a relative sense, in harmony with the Australian turn of mind, I am quite prepared to take them up on my own account and have even used them. From this point of view, "all-powerful" means one who has more power than the other sacred beings; "omniscient," one who sees things that escape the ordinary person and even the greatest magicians; and "guardian of the moral order," one who sees to it that the rules of Australian morality are respected, however different that morality may be from our own. But if one wants to give those words a meaning that only a Christian spiritualist can give them, it seems to me pointless to discuss an opinion so at odds with the principles of historical method.

[101]On that question, see N[orthcote] W[hitridge] Thomas, "Baiame and Bell-bird: A Note on Australian Religion," in *Man*, vol. V (1905), 28. Cf. Lang, *Magic and Religion*, p. 25. [Theodor] Waitz had already argued for the original character of this idea in *Anthropologie der Naturvölker* [Leipzig, F. Fleischer, 1877], pp. 796–798.

has lived a fully human life on earth.[102] He is depicted as a great hunter,[103] a powerful magician,[104] and the founder of the tribe.[105] He is the first of men.[106] He is even presented in one legend as a tired old man who can barely move.[107] If, among the Dieri, there was a high god called Mura-mura, that word is significant, since it is used to designate ancestors as a class. In the same way, Nuralie, the name of the high god among the tribes of the Murray River, is sometimes used as a collective phrase, collectively applied to the group of mythical beings that tradition places at the beginning of things.[108] They are entirely comparable to the Alcheringa personages.[109] We have already encountered in Queensland a god Anje-a or Anjir, who makes men and yet who seems only to be the first of them.[110]

What has helped the thought of the Australians to advance from the plurality of ancestral genies to the idea of the tribal god is that a middle term found its place between the two extremes and served as a transition: the civilizing heroes. The mythical beings called by this name are actually mere ancestors to whom mythology has ascribed a preeminent role in the history of the tribe and has therefore placed above the others. We have even seen that they were normally part of the totemic organization: Mangarkunjerkunja is of the Lizard totem and Putiaputia, of the Wildcat totem. But from another point of view, the functions they are said to perform, or to have performed, resemble those assigned to the high god very closely. He too is believed to have initiated men into the arts of civilization, to have been the founder of the principal social institutions, and to be the one who revealed the great religious ceremonies, which are still under his control. If he is the father of men, it is for having made rather than engendered them; but Mangarkun-

[102]Dawson, *Australian Aborigines*, p. 49; [Rev. A.] Meyer, "Encounter Bay Tribe," in Woods [*The Native Tribes of South Australia*], pp. 205, 206; Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 481, 491, 492, 494; Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 136.

[103]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in Woods, pp. 55–56.

[104]L. Parker, *More Australian Legendary Tales*, p. 94.

[105]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in Woods, p. 61.

[106]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 425–427.

[107]Taplin, "The Narrinyeri," in Woods, p. 60.

[108]"The world was created by beings called the Nuralie; some of these beings, which have existed for a long time, had the form of the crow and others, that of the eaglehawk" (Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 423–424).

[109]"Byamee," says Mrs. L. Parker, "is for the Euahlayi what the Alcheringa is for the Arunta" (*The Euahlayi*, p. 6).

[110]See above, p. 261.

jerkunja did as much. Before him, there were no men, but only masses of formless flesh in which the different body parts and even the different individuals were not separated from one another. It is he who sculpted this raw material and who drew properly human beings out of it.[111] There are only slight shadings of difference between this method of fabrication and the one ascribed to Bunjil by the myth I cited. Moreover, the fact that a kin relation is sometimes set up between these two kinds of figure brings out the connection between them. Among the Kurnai and the Tundun, the hero of the bull roarer is the son of the high god Munganngaua.[112] Among the Euahlayi, in a similar way, Daramulun, the son or brother of Baiame, is identical to Gayandi, who is the equivalent of Tundun among the Kurnai.[113]

We certainly must not conclude from all these facts that the high god is no more than a civilizing hero. There are cases in which these two personages are clearly differentiated. But while they cannot be assimilated, they are at least akin. Sometimes, therefore, it is rather hard to differentiate between them, and some of them can be classified equally well in either category. Thus, we have spoken of Atnatu as a civilizing hero, but he is very close to being a high god.

Indeed, the notion of high god is so closely dependent upon the ensemble of totemic beliefs that it still bears their mark. Tundun is a divine hero who is very close to the tribal deity, as we have just seen. Now, among the Kurnai, the same word means "totem."[114] Similarly, "Altjira" is the name of the high god among the Arunta and also the name of the maternal totem.[115] Additionally, a number of high gods have an obviously totemic form. Daramulun is an eaglehawk;[116] his mother is an emu.[117] Baiame himself is portrayed with the characteristics of an emu.[118] The Altjira of the Arunta has the legs of an

[111]In another myth reported by Spencer and Gillen, an entirely similar role is performed by two personages who live in the sky and are called Ungambikula (*Native Tribes,* pp. 388ff.).

[112]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 493.

[113]L. Parker, *The Euahlayi,* pp. 67, 62–66. Because the high god is in close relationship with the bull roarer, it is identified with the thunder, the rumbling that ritual instrument makes being assimilated to that of thunder.

[114]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 135. The word that means "totem" is spelled by Howitt as *thundung.*

[115]Strehlow, *Aranda,* vol. I, pp. 1–2, and vol. II, p. 59. It will be recalled that, quite probably, among the Arunta the maternal totem was originally the totem, period.

[116]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 555.

[117]Ibid., pp. 546, 560.

[118]Ridley, *Kamilaroi,* pp. 136, 156. He is depicted in that form during the initiation rites of the Kamilaroi. According to another legend, he is a black swan (Parker, *More Australian Legendary Tales,* p. 94).

emu.[119] As we saw, before being the name of a high god, Nuralie referred to the founding ancestors of the tribe; some of those ancestors were crows and others, hawks.[120] According to Howitt,[121] Bunjil is always represented in human form; however, the same word is used to denote the totem of a phratry, the eaglehawk. At least one son of his is one of the totems that comprise the phratry to which he gave or lent his name.[122] His brother is Pallyan, the bat; the bat serves as a men's sexual totem in many tribes of Victoria.[123]

We can go even further and specify the relationship that the high gods have with the totemic system. Daramulun, like Bunjil, is an eaglehawk, and we know that this animal is a phratry totem in many of the southeastern tribes.[124] As I have said, Nuralie seems to have been at first a collective term that designated the eaglehawks or the crows, interchangeably. In the tribes where this myth has been found, the crow serves as the totem of one of the two phratries, the eaglehawk of the other.[125] In addition, the legendary history of the high gods closely resembles that of the phratry totems. The myths, and sometimes the rites, commemorate the battles that each of these deities had to wage against a carnivorous bird that they did not easily defeat. Bunjil, or the first man, having made Karween, the second man, came into conflict with him and, in a kind of duel, gravely wounded him and changed him into a crow.[126] The two forms of Nuralie are depicted as two enemy groups that, at the beginning, were constantly at war.[127] For his part, Baiame fought against Mullian, the cannibal eaglehawk (who, moreover, is identical to Daramulun).[128] Now, as we have seen, there is also a sort of innate hostility between the phratry totems. This parallelism fully demonstrates that the mythology of the high gods and that of the totems are closely related. This

[119]Strehlow, *Aranda*, vol. I, p. 1.

[120]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 423–424.

[121]Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 492.

[122]Ibid., p. 128.

[123]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 417–423.

[124]See above, p. 106.

[125]These are the tribes whose phratries bear the names Kilpara (crow) and Mukwara. This explains even the myth reported by Brough Smyth ([*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, pp. 423–424).

[126]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Australia*], vol. I, pp. 425–427; cf. Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 486; in this latter case, Karween is identified with the blue heron.

[127]Brough Smyth [*Aborigines of Victoria*], vol. I, p. 423.

[128]Ridley, *Kamilaroi*, p. 136; Howitt, *Native Tribes,* p. 585; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," p. 111.

kinship will stand out even more clearly if we notice that the rival of the god is usually either the crow or the eaglehawk and that these are very common phratry totems.[129]

So Baiame, Daramulun, Nuralie, and Bunjil seem to be phratry totems that have been deified—and here is how we can envision this apotheosis as having come about. Clearly, it is in the assemblies held for initiation that this idea was developed; for, being strangers to the other religious ceremonies, only in these rites do the high gods play a role of any importance. Moreover, since initiation is the principal form of the tribal cult, a tribal mythology could have been born only on this occasion. We have already seen that the rituals of circumcision and subincision tended toward spontaneous personification as civilizing heroes. But these heroes had no supremacy; they were on the same footing as the other legendary benefactors of the society. On the other hand, where the tribe took on a more vivid awareness of itself, this awareness was embodied quite naturally in a personage that became its symbol. To comprehend the ties that bound them to one another, no matter what clan they belonged to, men imagined that they were of the same stock, that they were children of the same father, to whom they owed their existence even though he owed his own existence to no one. The god of initiation was perfectly suited for this role. According to a phrase that often recurs on the lips of the natives, the specific purpose of initiation is to make, to fabricate, men. Thus, a creative power was imputed to this god, and for all these reasons, he came to be endowed with a prestige that set him well above the other heroes of mythology. The others became his subordinates and helpers; they were made into his sons or his younger brothers, like Tundun, Gayandi, Karween, Pallyan, and so on. But there already were other sacred beings that held an equally prominent place in the religious system of the tribe; these were the phratry totems. Wherever these have endured, they are thought to have dominion over the clan totems. In this way, they had all they needed to become tribal divinities themselves. Naturally, these two sorts of mythical figures partially merged, and so it was that one of the two basic totems of the tribe lent his traits to the high god. But since it was necessary to explain why only one of them was called to this status, and the other excluded, the latter was presumed to have lost out during a fight against his rival, the exclusion being the consequence of his defeat. This idea was the more easily accepted because it accorded with the mythology as a whole, in which the phratry totems are generally viewed as enemies of one another.

[129]See above, p. 146; cf. P. Schmidt, "L'Origine de l'idée de Dieu," in *Anthropos*, 1909.

A myth among the Euahlayi studied by Mrs. Parker[130] can serve to corroborate this explanation, for it translates that explanation figuratively. As the story goes, the totems in this tribe were at first only the names given to different parts of Baiame's body. In that sense, the clans are like fragments of the divine body. Is this not another way of saying that the high god is the synthesis of all the totems and hence the personification of the tribe as a whole?

At the same time, however, Baiame took on an international character. In fact, the members of the tribe to which the young initiates belong are not the only ones who attend the initiation ceremonies. Representatives of the neighboring tribes are specifically invited to these festivals, which are rather like international fairs and are both religious and secular.[131] Beliefs that are fashioned in such social milieux cannot remain the exclusive patrimony of any one nationality. The foreigner to whom they have been revealed takes them back into his native tribe. And since, sooner or later, he must in turn invite his hosts of yesterday, continual exchanges of ideas between one society and another are created. In this way, an international mythology was formed. Since the mythology had its origin in the rites of initiation, which the god serves to personify, the high god was quite naturally the basic element in it. His name thus passed from one language to another, along with the symbols attached to it. The fact that the names of the phratries are usually common to very different tribes could only facilitate that diffusion. The internationalism of the phratry totems blazed a trail for the internationalism of the high god.

V

Thus we arrive at the most advanced idea that totemism achieved. This is the point at which it resembles and prepares the way for the religions that are to follow and helps us to understand them. At the same time, we can see that this culminating idea is continuous with the more rudimentary beliefs that we analyzed at the outset.

[130]Parker, *The Euahlayi Tribe*, p. 7. Among the same people, the principal wife of Baiame is also depicted as the mother of all the totems, without belonging to any totem herself (ibid., pp. 7, 78).

[131]See Howitt, *Native Tribes*, pp. 511–512, 513, 602ff.; Mathews, "Aboriginal Tribes," *RSNSW*, vol. XXXVIII (1904), p. 270. Invited to the feasts of initiation are not only the tribes with which a regular *connubium* is established but also those with which there are quarrels to settle. Vendettas that are half-ceremonial and half-serious take place on these occasions.

The tribal high god is actually none other than an ancestral spirit that eventually won a prominent place. The ancestral spirits are none other than entities forged in the image of the individual souls, the origin of which they are meant to account for. The souls, in turn, are none other than the form taken by the impersonal forces that we found at the basis of totemism, as these become individualized in particular bodies. The unity of the system is as great as its complexity.

The idea of soul has undoubtedly played an important part in this work of elaboration. Through it, the idea of personality was introduced into the domain of religion. But what the theorists of animism claim is far from true—that it contains the seed of the whole religion. For one thing, this idea presupposes that of mana or of totemic principle, of which it is only a particular form. For another, if the spirits and gods could not be conceived of before the soul was, still they are something other than mere human souls freed by death. Otherwise, where would they get their superhuman powers? The idea of soul has served only to orient the mythological imagination in a new direction and to suggest to it constructions of a new sort. The basic material for those constructions was not taken from the idea of soul but was instead drawn from that reservoir of anonymous and diffuse forces which is the original fount of religions. The creation of mythical personalities was only another way of conceiving these fundamental forces.

Turning to the high god, that notion is wholly attributable to an awareness whose influence we have already observed in the origin of the more specifically totemic beliefs: the awareness of tribe. We have seen that totemism was not the isolated work of the clans but that it was always elaborated in the midst of a tribe that was to some extent conscious of its unity. It is for this reason that the various cults peculiar to each clan come together and complement one another in such a way as to form a unified whole.[132] It is this same feeling of tribal unity that is expressed in the idea of a high god common to the whole tribe. From the bottom to the top of this religious system, then, the same causes are at work.

Up to now, we have considered these religious representations as if they were sufficient unto themselves and could be explained only in terms of themselves. In fact, they are inseparable from the rites, not only because the representations appear in the rites but also because the rites influence them. The cult not only rests on but also reacts on the beliefs. To understand those better, it is important to understand the cult better. The time has come to take up that study.

[132]See above, pp. 155–156.