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MAURICE HALBWACHS
ON
COLLECTIVE
MEMORY

Edited, Translated, and with an Introduction by
LEWIS A. COSERU

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Maurice Halbwachs, born in Reims in 1877, became one of the most important proponents of the Durkheimian tradition in the interwar period and, working in France and Germany, wrote many influential sociological texts, including *The Causes of Suicide*, *Population and Society*, and *The Psychology of Social Classes*. He died in Buchenwald shortly before the end of World War II.

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With the helpful assistance of Thomas May

Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs

1877–1945

Maurice Halbwachs was arguably the most important figure of the second generation of Durkheimians in the interwar years. He not only contributed important papers and books in an amazing variety of sociological research but continued the Durkheimian tradition in a creative manner.

Although Halbwachs was a fairly orthodox Durkheimian, his admiration for Durkheim stimulated him nevertheless to develop his own creativity rather than be stifled by it, as was the case with some other members of the Durkheimian school. He was one of the first French sociologists to perceive the importance of such foreign scholars as Weber, Pareto, Veblen, and Schumpeter, to whom he devoted long scholarly essays, thus helping his French colleagues to overcome their parochial concentration on homegrown intellectual products. As I shall show in some detail later, he was an accomplished statistician, coauthoring among other things an introduction to probability theory. He did statistical studies on such topics as the trend of wages in various national settings and comparative urban and rural suicide rates. He did studies of stratification, human ecology, and urban sociology, to mention but a few topics that attracted his ever curious mind. Large samples of these writings were translated into English and are accessible to American readers.

Halbwachs's work in the sociology of knowledge, however—in my estimation his most important contribution to sociological thought—mostly has not been available in English. I am encouraged in my high opinion of his work in this field by the fact that it coincides with Halbwachs's own view of himself. In an 1934 interview with the American sociologist Earle E. Eubank, Halbwachs reportedly called *The Social Frameworks of Memory* “so far my most important work.”¹

Halbwachs wrote two other contributions to the sociology of

1. Dirk Kaesler, *Soziologische Abenteuer* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1985), p. 131.

knowledge. One is *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte*,² a brilliant study of the spatial infrastructure of the New Testament, in which he examines the part played by pilgrims, crusaders, and others in establishing and changing the topography of the Holy Land. A translation of the conclusions of this work is included in this volume (as is the major part of the book on *The Social Frameworks of Memory*). The other is *The Collective Memory*.³ Unfortunately, this posthumous work, in which Halbwachs attempted to deal with some of the objections of critics of his earlier work on the subject, is akin to a skeleton. One may doubt that the author himself would have been willing to publish it in what seems to be an unfinished state. The book nevertheless contains many further developments of Halbwachs's thought in regard to such matters as the relation of space and time to collective memory as well as fruitful definitions and applications of the differences between individual, collective, and historical memory.

One must ask what may account for the curious fact that what in my judgment are the less important works of Halbwachs have been translated, whereas the work that he himself considered his best has remained mostly inaccessible to American scholars. One reason seems to be that various sociologists who had an interest in some subfield translated, or caused to be translated, those parts of his work that seemed pertinent to their own. Ecologists or demographers translated the *Morphologie sociale* under the English title *Population and Society*,⁴ and stratification researchers introduced their colleagues to Halbwachs's pertinent writings in *Esquisse d'une psychologie des classes sociales*,⁵ and other work on stratification, but were not interested in his sociology of knowledge. Historians of sociology, of course, have not neglected Halbwachs, but they have not provided a major study of the whole work in any way comparable to Steven Lukes's monumental study of Emile Durkheim.

In addition, the sociology of knowledge has been a kind of stepchild of American sociology until recently. Moreover, the Mannheimian tradition in the sociology of knowledge has preempted the attention of most American scholars while the Durkheimian tradition has been neglected until very recently. Halbwachs believed that the past was mainly known through symbol and ritualism as well as historiography

2. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971).

3. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, with an introduction by Mary Douglas (New York: Harper-Colophon Books, 1950).

4. Maurice Halbwachs, *Population and Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).

5. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Psychology of Social Classes* (London: Heineman, 1958).

and biography, whereas Mannheim's concerns were limited to the latter elements. This book attempts, in some small way, to begin righting the wrong to Halbwachs's reception in the Anglo-Saxon world by providing translations of the major part of his hitherto untranslated work in the sociology of knowledge and on the roots of collective memory. I shall give a short biography of Halbwachs and a description of his work, including the intellectual context and the social context.

The Man

Halbwachs was born in Reims in 1877. His family was of Catholic-Alsatian origin, but his father, a teacher of German, had left Alsace after its annexation by Germany as a result of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871. Halbwachs was brought up in a cultivated milieu, liberal in its overall philosophy, devoted to the newly founded Third Republic and, at a later date, ardent in its defense of Captain Dreyfus. The young Halbwachs seems to have been fairly free from generational tendencies to revolt even though he was to become a member of Jean Jaurès's reformist Socialist party. Two years after Halbwachs's birth, the family moved to Paris, so that he grew up in the stimulating and exciting world of Parisian intellectuals. The young man was clearly gifted, so that there was no difficulty enrolling him in the prestigious Lycée Henri IV. It so happened that the great philosopher Henri Bergson taught there at the beginning of his illustrious career. This accidental and unplanned encounter determined to no small degree Halbwachs's subsequent development. Under the spell of Bergson, he decided to embark on a career in philosophy. Even though he later changed from philosophy to the study of sociology, his encounter with Bergson was to mark him throughout his life, even though after he came under the influence of Emile Durkheim and his school, he rejected most of Bergson's highly individualistic philosophy. There are many passages in much of Halbwachs's work that show that Bergson was often present in his thought. This preserved him from some of the excesses of a number of Durkheimians who, for example, wanted to replace rather than supplement the study of individual psychology by the new Durkheimian collective psychology. His study of memory, for example, while doggedly holding up the banner of collective or social psychology, left some trace to individual psychology. His study of suicide, to give another example, while conceived as a vindication of Durkheim's views by means of data unavailable to Durkheim, nevertheless examined not only collective but also individual aspects. In addition to his early immersion in the world of Bergson's individualistic *élan vital*,

one has the impression that Halbwachs was generally a more conciliatory figure than was Durkheim. The latter saw himself as the embattled prophet of a new dawn in the social sciences and valued nothing more dearly than a polemical battle with his individualistic contemporaries. Halbwachs, being a member of a second generation, entered into an arena that had already been smoothed out, after sociology was accorded a grudging acceptance by at least some of the major figures in history and social philosophy. Halbwachs was not a fighter temperamentally and was destined to work in a milieu that provided a premium to conciliators rather than to unarmed prophets.

Upon graduation from the lycée, Halbwachs had no difficulty passing the rigorous entrance exams of the Ecole normale supérieure, the elitist and extremely competitive crown of the French educational system, which had also been the alma mater of Durkheim. The sympathies of most students and professors at the school were decidedly on the Left. The school was, for example, one of the first strongholds of the Dreyfusard cause. Here the young Halbwachs became a lifelong reformist socialist in the tradition of Jean Jaurès.

After graduating from the school in philosophy, Halbwachs taught for a number of years, as was the custom, in a number of provincial lycées. Perhaps more important for his later intellectual development was that in 1904 he obtained a position as lecturer at the University of Göttingen, one of the stars of the German intellectual firmament, to work on hitherto unpublished manuscripts of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. He was part of the Franco-German team to prepare a new international collected works of the great German philosopher. His first book, a study of Leibniz, published in 1907, was still written under the spell of Bergson.

As we have seen, Halbwachs became a socialist at an early age but he was not a radical militant follower of the socialist movement. Rather, he was attracted by the reformist zeal of Eduard Bernstein. Yet it is worthwhile to record an incident of Halbwachs's life in Germany that showed that the mild-mannered Halbwachs would not always limit himself to the spirit of academe. In Berlin in 1911, after about three months of his fellowship term for gathering material for his thesis, and acting in his capacity as a foreign correspondent for the socialist journal *Humanité*, he published an article describing the brutality of the Berlin police at a socialist demonstration. The Prussian authorities got hold of the article and gave the imprudent lecturer one week to leave Prussia. He had to complete his fellowship work in Vienna. *Humanité* published a bitter piece by the German left-socialist leader Karl Liebknecht about Halbwachs's expulsion. Halbwachs wrote a long

memorandum about this affair many years later, in fact shortly before his death, indicating that the affair had had a major impact on his subsequent life.

When his love affair with the work of Bergson came to an end, Halbwachs not only decided to switch from an individualistic Bergsonian stance to a Durkheimian collectivist view, but also left philosophy altogether to devote himself to the newly emergent field of sociology. He went to school once more in Paris and acquired a doctoral degree in law, as well as a *doctorat ès lettres*, which required two theses in the French academic system. All three theses were published. One, in 1911, dealt with expropriations and real-estate prices in Paris in the last part of the nineteenth century. In 1912 and 1913 respectively there appeared his law thesis on the working class and its living standards, and an essay on the theory of *homme moyen* by the great Belgian statistician François Quételet. Most of the work in these three books is empirical and statistical. It was considered a radical innovation, especially by those among the examiners who had been brought up in the traditional French philosophical spirit. Even among the Durkheimians there were few who, having been trained in philosophy, were proficient in matters statistical. Only Halbwachs's former teacher and later close friend François Simiand was a statistician of a high order.

After his return from Germany and Austria, Halbwachs resumed teaching in the provinces. He was not drafted during the first world war because of his pronounced myopia, but served under the socialist Albert Thomas in the Ministry of Defense, to work on the organization of wartime industry.

It was only at the end of the war—such are the penalties of academic innovation—that Halbwachs finally received a university appointment. After a brief stay at the University of Caen he was called to the chair of sociology and pedagogy at the University of Strasbourg. Just as his encounters with Bergson and Durkheim were fateful, so was the appointment at Strasbourg. The university, which had been German until the end of the war, was just being reorganized on a French pattern when Halbwachs joined it. There was no deadwood among the staff, no revered and stultifying tradition, and a feeling among the faculty members that they were about to plow virgin soil.

Perhaps of greatest importance for Halbwachs was that the newly established academic departments were staffed by younger professors who were much more open than their teachers had been to cross-fertilization between the disciplines and collaboration across departmental lines. Here Halbwachs started close intellectual exchanges with the young Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, who a few years later were

to become France's preeminent guides in social and intellectual history. Here also he formed a close friendship with the psychologist Charles Blondel, who was to become one of the most astute commentators on Halbwachs's work. I have the strong feeling—there is, of course, no way of proving this—that Halbwachs's productivity in the Strasbourg years owed a good deal to the environment of the renewed and experimental university. This is, of course, very much to the point of Halbwachs's writing on the impact of social milieus on individual creativity.

Halbwachs had great influence among teachers and students at Strasbourg and elsewhere despite the fact that he was not a flashy lecturer but rather quiet and somewhat timid. For example, Robert E. L. Faris, a student in sociology at the University of Chicago when Halbwachs was a visiting professor there in 1930, reports that Halbwachs's initially large audience in his class on suicide dwindled rapidly, so that in the end only four students remained.⁶ Part of this may be explained by Halbwachs's imperfect command of the English language, but part was surely due to the lecturer's general lack of eloquence and appeal.

Halbwachs's modesty and quite demeanor may also account for the fact that, despite his productivity and originality, he was fifty-eight years old when he was finally called to a chair at the Sorbonne. In the last ten years of his life Halbwachs was showered with honors. He was elected to the conservative Académie des sciences morales et politiques, which had never so honored Durkheim, and he became vice-president of the French Psychological Society—an honor Durkheim would surely have declined. Finally, shortly before his death, Halbwachs was appointed to the chair of collective psychology at the Collège de France. His last years in war-torn and then occupied France were marked by tragedy. Beginning in 1940 he lost his brother-in-law, Dr. Georges Basch, who committed suicide because he did not wish to survive the shame of the defeat of France. During the Vichy regime his Jewish father-in-law and mother-in-law, Victor Basch and his wife, were killed by the Vichy militia or the German Gestapo. Both were eighty years old, and Victor Basch had for many years been a major figure in aesthetics at the Sorbonne. (I had the great pleasure of listen-

6. See Suzanne Vromen, "The Sociology of Maurice Halbwachs" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1975), p. 7. I have learned a good deal from this fine dissertation. John E. Craig, "Sociology and Related Disciplines between the Wars: Maurice Halbwachs and the Imperialism of The Durkheimians," in *The Sociological Domain: the Durkheimians, and the Founding of French Sociology*, ed. Philippe Besnard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also John E. Craig, "Maurice Halbwachs à Strasbourg," *Revue française de sociologie* 20 (1979): 273-92. This is an indispensable source.

ing to his lectures in the thirties.) Basch was also the head of France's major civil-rights association, La ligue des droits de l'homme, in the interwar years.

Halbwachs was so outraged by the barbaric murders that he went personally to Lyon to inquire about the circumstances and to demand justice. He was immediately arrested and transported to the Buchenwald concentration camp. He died there shortly before the end of the war.

The Intellectual and Social Context

A full study of the intellectual context of Halbwachs's work has no place in an introduction. I shall limit myself to two major intellectual currents that had a formative influence on Halbwachs's thought: the philosophy of Henri Bergson and the intellectual interchanges with the historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, the founders of what has come to be known as the *Annales* school of social and intellectual history.

As has already been mentioned, the philosophy of the great turn-of-the-century philosopher Henri Bergson had a deep influence on Halbwachs in his formative years. Bergson taught at the Lycée Henri IV, as it was the custom for beginning academics to teach in a lycée. Had Halbwachs encountered Bergson later in his career at the university he would probably not have profited from interchanges with his as much as was the case in the lycée. French universities hardly facilitate personal contact between teachers and students, while lycée instruction thrives on it.

Bergson had resolved fairly early in his career that he would revolutionize French philosophy and liberate it from its Cartesian and Kantian emphasis. For Bergson the notion of time was at the very core of philosophical reflection. For him, intuitive and subjective perception of inner time is the source of knowledge about the self. Compared to the richness and variety of inner subjective time, objective time, as it is measured by scientists and positivistic philosophers, is a poor and pitifully limited notion. The major source of philosophical reflection is immediate experience. Mechanistic, objective clock time cannot cope with human creativity and spontaneity. Only "duration," the intuitive perception of inner time, provides access to philosophical and spiritual knowledge. Bergson contended that European thought had for several centuries followed the wrong path of static materialism. Only intuition and contemplation, thought Bergson, rather than science or reason, can unravel the riddles of human existence.

The Bergsonian revolt against the rationalism and scientism of the age captured Halbwachs's thought and held it in thrall for a number of years. It was only after having written his book on Leibniz during his first study period in Germany that Halbwachs abandoned it almost completely. We can only speculate what led to this major intellectual transformation. It seems fairly obvious that his adherence to reform and socialism, which had developed at the Ecole normale, was an important factor. Bergson's message attracted contemplative, reflective, and fairly passive thinkers, and it appealed especially to those philosophers who were content to cultivate their own gardens. It hardly suited a young man imbued with reformist zeal and the wish to contribute to human betterment. In addition, a young social researcher who had come to appreciate empirical data and to whom measurement and statistical inquiry seemed to promise large rewards was almost forced in the long run to renounce Bergsonian allegiances.

After his first trip to Germany, Halbwachs called upon Emile Durkheim for advice on how to switch from philosophy to sociology and from Bergsonian individualism to scientific objectivism. (It is not known whether these first contacts came through a visit of Halbwachs or through correspondence.) I do not claim that Halbwachs's subsequent shift in concern and allegiances was inevitable; thinkers such as Charles Péguy and Georges Sorel managed to combine social activism with Bergsonian antiintellectualism. (At best Halbwachs was predisposed for this shift by his interest and passion for social reform.)

There is another reason that probably motivated Halbwachs to consult Durkheim. The latter shared with Bergson preoccupations with the problem of time but had arrived at a totally contrary position. To Durkheim and to his nephew and intimate collaborator Marcel Mauss, it was not inner time or duration that was of the essence but rather time as a social construction. As Halbwachs was later to formulate it: "Time is real only insofar as it has content, insofar as it offers events as material for thought."⁷ Or, as Durkheim was later to put it, "Observation proves that [the] indispensable guide lines, in relation to which all things are temporally located, are taken from social life."⁸

In some of Halbwachs's later work on memory one can find here and there passages that owe something to the spur of Bergsonian thought, but overall Halbwachs's dialogue with Bergson ceased at

7. Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, p. 127.

8. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1947), p. 10.

about the same time that his lifetime dialogue with Durkheim took over. He had close relations with the beleaguered little band of Durkheim's followers ever since what may be called with some exaggeration his conversion experience. But most other Durkheimians had research interests fairly far from his own. François Simiand, the major economist of the Durkheim school, became however his teacher, advisor, and friend. The two of them were close to each other in part because they worked in adjacent areas of sociology, among others the study of wages and salaries, but also because they shared a methodological stance in favor of statistics and measurement which most other members of the group rejected, or at least misunderstood.

Next to Bergson, Durkheim, and Simiand, Halbwachs was probably most influenced by his colleagues in psychology and history at the University of Strasbourg, where he had been appointed to the first chair in sociology ever in the whole French academic system. He served there from the spring of 1922 until he was called to the Sorbonne in 1935. As I have already mentioned, Strasbourg proved an ideal place for a young innovator in the social sciences. It had just recently been taken over from the Germans, who had forced the French to cede it to them in 1871. Hence, everyone was animated by the spirit of adventure. They saw themselves as a band of pioneers about to create a new innovative center of modern thought. In addition to the newness of the university there was also the fact that it had inherited from the Germans physical facilities and resources that excelled by far the resources of all other French universities. The new university inherited an excellent library, beautiful buildings, and a number of laboratories and research institutes. In addition, most of the professors appointed in the early years of the university were relatively young, many of them army veterans, who infused it with a daring innovative spirit. They did not like the narrow specialization and departmental discipline that prevailed in older universities. They wished to stress a grater emphasis on research than was to be found there. "There was a commitment to collaboration among the disciplines and a consciousness of belonging to a team . . . without counterpart at other universities."⁹ Halbwachs, who, as we have seen, was far from being an academic entrepreneur, was never among the faculties' dominant figures, but he was a determined team player and advocate of cross-disciplinary collaboration. He was a main figure in the collaborative *réunions du samedi*, which brought together members of the faculty from different disciplines to discuss recent scholarly contribu-

9. Craig in Besnard, *Sociological Domain*, pp. 265f.

tions. Here he found such discussion partners as the historians Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre, and Georges Lefèvre, jurists like Gabriel Le Bras, psychologists such as Charles Blondel, and philosophers such as Maurice Pradines. There is no doubt that Halbwachs was greatly stimulated by exchanges with such a variety of colleagues. I do not believe that it is an accident that he wrote most of his important books, among others *The Social Frameworks of Memory*, in Strasbourg. Halbwachs learned much from his colleagues, and the many exchanges with them led him to shed a too doctrinaire stance. But it is also true that almost from the beginning of their association he had to combat accusations of the alleged imperialism of Durkheimian sociology. The bulk of his Strasbourg colleagues were willing to learn from the novel approaches of the upstart field of sociology, but they could not tolerate a tendency, from which Durkheim was by no means free, to consider sociology the queen of the social sciences, which had a natural right to exercise dominion over the other social sciences, especially psychology and history.

Halbwachs's major discussion partner concerning the relations between individual and social psychology was Charles Blondel. By no means doctrinaire, Blondel was perfectly willing to recognize Durkheimian social psychology as a legitimate discipline with a distinctive approach, but he was not ready to commit intellectual suicide by ceding the whole domain of psychology to the Durkheimian claimants. Halbwachs, to be sure, was not as dogmatic in these matters as his intellectual master, and Blondel was a conciliatory man, who was glad to learn from Halbwachs and his friends. He wrote a very friendly review of *The Social Frameworks of Memory* in which he stated that the book was "a new and important demonstration of the services that sociology can offer psychology." But he wrote elsewhere, "It would be in their interest for *homo sociologicus* to rejoin *homo psychologicus* in the gallery of abstractions."¹⁰ Halbwachs likewise praised his colleague's work but still remained adamant in rejecting too close a collaboration between sociology and psychology. The present volume provides a good sample of Halbwachs's mature thought in the matter.

I have already alluded to Halbwachs's debates about social morphology with demographers and historians such as Febvre. He defended the Durkheimian morphological approach against what he saw as the determinism of human geographers while at the same time arguing against some historians and their mechanistic geographic fellow

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-69.

travelers, that environment does not determine human behavior, but only limits the range of possibilities.

The third major bone of contention between Halbwachs and his Strasbourg colleagues concerned the relations between history and sociology. I believe that it is not my own personal predilection that makes me feel that this was the most important discussion of them all. In 1929 two young Strasbourg historians, Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, established a journal entitled *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, which was to revolutionize French historiography. One of their aims was to reestablish intellectual relations between history and other disciplines and to borrow from them so as to enrich the writing of history. In particular it was their aim, to quote John Craig, "to reclaim for history the territory expropriated by sociologists."¹¹ Even though the editors of the new venture were willing to reestablish the contact with sociology that had been lost, they were not willing to let sociologists call all the shots. They resolved to have a Durkheimian sociologist on their editorial board "as an informant and, to a certain extent, as a critic." They offered this position to Halbwachs, who became a loyal and devoted member of the editorial board. He contributed three articles and a great number of short notices and book reviews to the *Annales* during the first ten years of the journals' life. His colleagues especially valued his contribution to the newly developing statistical analysis in historiography. Halbwachs had high regard for the contributions of the main editors but he continued to criticize historians for emphasizing description rather than explanation and for being unable to cope with problems of historic causation. But while these historians appreciated the present and future contributions of sociologists to historiography, they nevertheless rejected the Durkheimian claims to dominance. In addition, as it turned out, while close personal relations in Strasbourg favored collaboration, this was by no means the case in other universities. While some other Durkheimians, such as my former teacher Célestin Bouglé and the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, were friendly to historical approaches throughout the interwar years, they nevertheless regarded most historical writings with condescension. By and large, the union between sociology and history that the bright young men of Strasbourg had dreamed of in the twenties and early thirties was never consummated.

As to the wider intellectual and social context of Halbwachs's thought, it is well to remember that Halbwachs came, so to speak,

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 273f.

afterward. The great period of flourishing of Durkheimian thought came in the years before the outbreak of World War I. The Durkheimians, led by their conquering hero, at that time had assaulted the prevailing verities of the social sciences and had succeeded in a relatively short time, and despite a great deal of resistance, in recasting both the theory and the methodology of sociology and related fields. When reading today old issues of the Durkheimian house organ, the *Année sociologique*, one cannot help but feel the enthusiastic, even triumphant spirit that animated the Durkheimians. There was a great deal of arrogance here, to be sure, but it was also clearly sustained by a solid core of achievements. The participants in the Durkheimian adventure at that time must have felt as the *conquistadores* felt when they hacked their path through the South American jungle in quest of El Dorado. Things looked very different after the war. Durkheim was dead, and a number of promising young men, among them Durkheim's son, had died on the battlefield. The saving remnant was overwhelmed by the many tasks of reconstruction that lay before them. Not only did they have to reestablish organizational continuity between the prewar and postwar intellectual activities of the group, they also had to attract a talented succession. This became difficult, since the Durkheimians were no longer well represented in the major Parisian teaching institutions. Halbwachs taught at Strasbourg until 1935; Mauss, who had no doctorate, lectured on ethnology at the Collège de France; Marcel Granet and Henri Hubert taught in fairly esoteric fields at the Ecole des hautes études, where they attracted few students. Simiand, also without a doctorate, had no regular teaching position. Two of the old faithful taught at the Sorbonne, but, as I learned from direct experience, neither Paul Fauconnet nor Célestin Bouglé had fresh thoughts and inspirations. They mainly celebrated the good old days when Durkheim was still among them. The previous influence of the Durkheimians in primary and secondary school instruction and in various teacher preparation écoles normales declined drastically after the war. There were some indications in the thirties that bright young men were again attracted to sociology, but recruitment was nipped in the bud with the outbreak of World War II.

The prewar political atmosphere, which had been so favorable to the Durkheimians, also changed drastically. The radical socialists who were the backbone of most governments after the turn of the century and who favored a stance decisively adverse to the influence of the Church on the system of education, lost their almost monopolistic position in the various coalition governments after the war and often had to share power with the Right. Anticlericalism was no longer a live

issue on the political agenda. Terry N. Clark has shown that even the *Ecole normale*, the bastion of the Left, had begun to lose its distinctive character.¹² In 1905 three or four students were practicing Catholics; seven years later there were about forty, or one-third of the school.

By and large it is the case, the modest post-World War II advances notwithstanding, that the Durkheimian school experienced a sharp reduction in its standing and influence in the world of academe. Whatever charisma still radiated from the departed founder of the school came to be progressively routinized. A hardening of the collective arteries was apparent. Whereas before the first world war the age of the collaborators to the *Année sociologique* had ranged from twenty-nine to thirty-six, by 1925 the average age was fifty. As the Durkheimians considerably lost influence, the social and intellectual historians of the *Annales* school entered into their most fertile period of growth.¹³

As Barry Schwartz has suggested to me, heroic ages of creation inevitably evolve into post-heroic ages of consolidation and "normal science." A new paradigm, like Durkheim's, is preserved by scholars who are willing to modify its claims, to be less dogmatic and to make compromises. On the other hand, as was the case of the intimate Durkheim-Halbwachs connection, the disciple's achievements became stronger as the orthodox Durkheim canon lost its initial vigor. Most of Halbwachs's really important work was published after Durkheim had died. In a sense, Halbwachs profited from the postwar decline of Durkheimian sociology.

We can only speculate about the impact all this had on Halbwachs's career. He was showered with honors after he was called to the Sorbonne in 1935, and also was somewhat overwhelmed by administrative demands. His productivity seems to have suffered as a consequence. We do not know how he felt about the decline in the standing of sociology in the interwar years, but it seems likely that he became somewhat less sanguine, all the while planning for a revival of the field after the end of the war.

The Work

I will limit my comments to those of Halbwachs's publications that I deem to be of greatest weight. For example, I will not discuss his

12. Terry N. Clark, *Prophets and Patrons: The French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973). I have greatly profited from this superb study. For example, Clark is the only commentator who has written in some detail on the experiences of Halbwachs in Berlin (p. 189).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

Sources of Religious Sentiment,¹⁴ since this was clearly meant to propagandize for Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* rather than stand as an independent contribution. His work *The Causes of Suicide*,¹⁵ by contrast, even though it was perhaps begun with a similar intent of apologia for Durkheim, turned out to be of considerable originality.

The Causes of Suicide

When embarking on research for this book, Halbwachs seems to have thought that it would simply sustain Durkheim's thesis with new data. Instead, this volume contains some of Halbwachs's major independent findings. As Marcel Mauss, Durkheim's intimate collaborator and nephew, says in his introduction to the work, "Il fait oeuvre positive et neuve."¹⁶ The difference between rural and urban ways of life—a concept that Durkheim had hardly pursued—assumed central importance for Halbwachs.

Halbwachs had long been interested in the study of social morphology, that is, the material substratum of societal developments. Durkheim had introduced this study in his early work, especially in *The Division of Labor in Society* and in the *Rules of Sociological Method*, but had tended to neglect this dimension when he concentrated attention on the societal powers of religion in his later work. Central to this stress on morphology or ecology is a distinction, which of course stems from Durkheim, between societies or subsocieties in terms of density and frequency of human interactions. In rural civilization, Halbwachs argued, life goes on at a slow rhythm and along habitual pathways; in the urban environment, in contrast, life is mobile, nervous, innovative, and of quicker rhythms. Even though Durkheim had stressed social and moral density in his earlier work, he had not used these concepts in his work on suicide and had hence missed, so Halbwachs argued, the crucial distinctions between town and country in the rates of suicide. Introducing this variable, Halbwachs was able to demonstrate that at least some of the variations in suicide rates that Durkheim discussed might largely be explained by the fact that placid rural milieus tend to be more religiously inclined, and hence have lower suicide rates than densely populated urban agglomerations.

Halbwachs is similarly innovative in his treatment of suicide in the

14. Maurice Halbwachs, *Sources of Religious Sentiment* (New York: Free Press, 1962).

15. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Causes of Suicide* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

16. Vromen, *Sociology of Maurice Halbwachs*, p. 14.

family. Durkheim had argued that married life conferred a degree of immunity on the married, and that this was especially the case in regard to married men in France. Halbwachs supplements Durkheim's conceptualization by stressing not only that children increase the immunity and protective functions of families, but also that the number of children (a factor not studied by Durkheim) is crucial in this respect since it correlates with the frequency of interaction in domestic arrangements. Halbwachs introduces a number of other new factors that Durkheim had not discussed. He goes into much more detail in regard to religious background factors, such as the differential impact on suicide of religiously mixed families as compared to religiously homogeneous ones.

Halbwachs was also more willing than Durkheim to introduce the study of individual variations in the causes of suicide. In summary, while Halbwachs followed the major guidelines of the Durkheimian treatment of the causes of suicide in terms of degrees of social differentiation, density, and frequency of social interaction, he refined the study of suicide by adding a number of new dimensions and also by showing in instructive detail how difficult it is in concrete research to decide which of the various background factors are genuine rather than spurious in their impact on suicide rates.

Social Morphology

In his earlier works, until roughly the publication of *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim had argued that social morphology, i.e., the study of the spatial distribution of human populations and the material setting of societies, had to play a major part in sociological explanation. He stated, for example, that "the facts of social morphology . . . play a preponderant role in collective life and in consequence in sociological explanations."¹⁷ But after the *Rules* Durkheim's focus of attention shifted from material to ideational factors. Religion and other kinds of collective representation now had primacy in Durkheim's explanatory schemes. Not that after 1895 he retracted his earlier stress on social morphology, but he certainly seems to have put it on the back burner.

Much of Halbwachs's work followed closely the guidelines of the earlier Durkheimian conceptualization in that it accorded primacy to material factors such as the relations between populations and their structural environment. He chose his research objects in the material

17. Quoted in Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His life and Work* (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 228.

rather than the ideational sphere. His earliest sociological book, one of his dissertations published in 1909, it will be remembered, dealt with real-estate prices in nineteenth-century Paris, and his next book, also a dissertation, dealt with the hierarchy of needs among some classes in contemporary industrial societies. It was only after Durkheim's death that Halbwachs moved over to investigations in the field of collective representation and other ideational factors. (About this, later.) His penultimate book came in a study of Parisian populations and the network of roads in the nineteenth century, a major contribution to social morphology. Finally, he summed up the results of all his previous work in this field in his *Morphologie sociale* (translated into English under the title of *Population and Society*).

Following Durkheim's early lead in *The Division of Labor* and elsewhere, Halbwachs gave populations movement and the human environment a primary role in sociological research. (This explains why Halbwachs's work found an echo among American students of ecology.) In addition, Halbwachs may also have been moved in this intellectual direction by his need to come to terms with the Marxist stress on the primacy of the material world of production over the ideational superstructure.

Concern for the importance of the human environment was stimulated around the turn of the century by the school of human geography in both its German and its French versions. The school had attracted interest among both sociologists and historians. The German Friedrich Ratzel had advanced a rigorous environmental determinism. This had called forth a sharp polemical response by Durkheim, who saw in the work of Ratzel an attempt to bypass sociological explanations by insisting on geographical environmental determinism rather than on social facts. Durkheim argued that it was a question of studying not the forms of the land but rather the forms that affect societies as they establish themselves on the land. He proposed the new term "social morphology" to distinguish social determinism from the geographic fallacy. Halbwachs became vitally interested in this train of thought, and it was to him that Durkheim entrusted the editing of the section on social morphology in the *Année sociologique*.

Halbwachs had attracted to social morphology early in his sociological career. Two of his three dissertations were clearly meant to be contributions in this area. But his interest was further stimulated after his move to Strasbourg, where his colleagues in history were debating the relationships between geographical settings and human historical events. They were attracted not so much by the geographical determinism of Ratzel as by the less ambitious notions of his French counter-

part Vidal de la Blache. The latter rejected the one-sided deterministic orientation of his German colleague and asserted only that the environment, though it does not fully determine human behavior, limits the possibilities of alternatives. Eskimos can hardly develop a political culture of citizens arguing for days in the agora, nor can agricultural societies flourish at high altitudes.

Lucien Febvre, the prominent Strasbourg historian, was perhaps more attracted to the human geography of Vidal de la Blache than were Febvre's other colleagues, and this led to a number of oral and written exchanges between him and Halbwachs. The latter, while stressing that Durkheimian sociology was vitally interested in the geographic environment, insisted that after all, "the facts of social morphology are essentially social facts." Febvre, on his part, stuck to his guns and asserted that in the last analysis sociologists, though not often admitting this, base their work on human geography. Febvre was not persuaded by Halbwachs. He largely continued to maintain the view Vidal de la Blache first advanced in de la Blache's book *La terre et l'évolution humaine* (with L. Bataillon, Paris, 1922). The intellectual duel between the Strasbourg social historians and Halbwachs never came to any final conclusion, but the adversaries after a time put some water into their heavy wine so that coexistence sometimes led to collaboration.¹⁸

It is my impression that American sociologists have not been much influenced by Halbwachs's work in social morphology. They have preferred the homegrown products: Chicago-style urban sociology, ecology, or American-style population studies.

Mathematical Statistics and Probability Theory

My knowledge of mathematics and statistics being limited indeed, I have relied in great part for what follows on a very instructive paper by the sociologist Anthony Oberschall which appeared some time ago in *The Probabilistic Revolution*, edited by Lorenz Krueger.¹⁹

Halbwachs was among the first social scientists on the continent to become familiar with the British mathematical statisticians and to ponder the application of probability theory and mathematical statistics to sociological investigations. In 1912, a long time before he moved to Strasbourg, he had written a book, *La théorie de l'homme*

18. Much of the above is based in Craig's important work, "Sociology and Related Disciplines."

19. Anthony Oberschall, "The Two Empirical Roots of Social Theory and the Probability Revolution," in *The Probabilistic Revolution*, vol. 2, ed. Lorenz Krueger et al. (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1987).

moyen, on the Belgian statistician François Quételet, a key figure in the nineteenth-century field of moral statistics. A few years after moving to Strasbourg, Halbwachs collaborated with the mathematician Maurice Frechet on a popular introduction to probability theory, *Le calcul des probabilités à la portée de tous*,²⁰ in which the authors dealt, among other topics, with the application of probability theory to sociology, and the statistical analysis of multiple variables.

In these and later works, Halbwachs held fast to one major objection, namely that probability theory becomes applicable only when one deals with two or more independent events, as for example, in a series of rolls of dice. Since human beings influence one another and are influenced by shared norms and beliefs, as well as by a common past, probability explanations do not apply to them. There are no chance elements in the social world, so that social events have nothing in common with successive rolls of dice. Durkheimian sociology, Halbwachs argued, does not start with individual decisions or behavior; its basic analytical elements are groups, institutions, or systems of beliefs.

Halbwachs rejected the applicability of probability theory to human affairs, but he was very favorably disposed toward other statistical types of inquiry. He used statistical methods much more frequently than most other Durkheimians. Empirical generalizations in sociology, he taught, can be arrived at only by statistical procedures. He even went so far as to call such generalizations "statistical laws."

As we have seen, Halbwachs was a fairly isolated scholar even within the Durkheimian ranks, not an academic entrepreneur such as Paul Lazarsfeld somewhat later. Hence he did not manage to create a French school or institute in statistical inquiry. Furthermore, statistics is more like a natural science with a cumulative pattern of growth than is sociology, so that current practitioners can well afford to forget their ancestors. Moreover, it turned out that subsequent to Halbwachs's writings statistical inquiry managed to deal with chance elements in terms of stochastic processes, so that Halbwachs's warnings about the inability of sociological inquiries to establish probabilistic statements are no longer pertinent today.

Social Class Analysis

In contradistinction to Marx's notion of class, which by and large locates class structures in the positions people occupy in the sphere of

20. Maurice Frechet and Maurice Halbwachs, *Le calcul des probabilités à la portée de tous* (Paris, Duno, 1924).

production, Halbwachs's social class, in accord with the Durkheimian theory of collective representations, is centered in class consciousness, i.e., the ways in which people classify themselves. There is a hierarchy of class positions in any society, or at least any modern society, and at each rank in the hierarchy people look at the world through different lenses, have different patterns of consumption, and follow other distinctive behavioral patterns.

Before the industrial revolution, classes were legally defined, but in capitalist societies social positions and consumption patterns rather than legal arrangements shape the various classes and their special characteristics. By stressing the sphere of consumption as the most salient aspect of class formation, Halbwachs's definition and treatment of classes is somewhat closer to Weber's notion of status group than to either Marx's or Weber's notion of class. Halbwachs's general orientation in regard to class structures led him to concentrate his treatment of class relations on occupations and their behavioral correlates as well as on income, which is usually highly correlated with occupation. Occupations, in their turn, are socially ranked in terms of their consumption patterns as well as their social relations with other classes and their participation in social life. The distinctive focus of Halbwachs's attention when he analyzes class relations is the *genre de vie*, that is, the life style. What distinguishes workers from peasants is their differing working and living conditions. For example, while the peasant lives according to a life-style that confounds the sphere of cultivation and family life, these two spheres are sharply differentiated among urban workers. As Suzanne Vromen puts it: "While the worker can forget his work when he leaves the factory, the peasant can never forget his farmwork."²¹

While there are a number of differences between, for example, tenants and farm owners, the cleavages between workers and employers are more pronounced. In fact, the working class can largely be defined as the class that is excluded from the core of a society and lacks the possessions and benefits of the members of other social classes, especially the exploiting bourgeoisie. Halbwachs's most elaborate empirical study of the working class can be found in his *L'évolution des besoins dans les classes ouvrières*²² published in 1933 and largely based on German, French, and American data. This work shows that what was previously known as Engels's Law, according to which low-

21. Vromen, *Sociology of Maurice Halbwachs*, p. 120.

22. Maurice Halbwachs, *L'évolution des besoins dans les classes ouvrières* (Paris: Alcan, 1933).

wage groups spend a larger proportion of their income on food than do other strata, applies more widely. Most of Halbwachs's predecessors had argued that physical needs of survival forced workers to spend a larger proportion of their income on food. Halbwachs, in accord with his general Durkheimian orientation, argued, to the contrary, that physiological theories of needs do not influence patterns of consumption except in extraordinary circumstances, since the perception of needs is determined by class position.

In other classes, consumption patterns may respond to the desire to symbolize keeping up with the Joneses, or they may be related to the participatory life-styles of, say, the middle class. But workers, by reason of their isolated and dependent condition in society, feel no need to pretend to the fruits of affluence when it comes to housing, clothes, or attendance at theatrical events. Display is not an activity that attracts workers.

Halbwachs's theory of consumption patterns has, alas, not withstood the progress of knowledge. As Mary Douglas put it, "Halbwachs remained uncritically faithful to an inflexible model of working class collective representations."²³ Even his stay at the University of Chicago in the early days of the New Deal did not lead him to ask whether changes in consumption patterns emerged when workers were no longer isolated and unresponsive to social change. The men and women who occupied factories and participated in mass demonstrations and in the organization of the CIO and of politically powerful electoral blocks were likely to have changed life styles to a very considerable degree. But Halbwachs failed to note this and, as a result, this theorizing in this area has little attraction for contemporary students of living standards and life styles.

Upon occasion Halbwachs allowed himself a cautious glance into the future and suggested that with a decreasing work day workers might in the future be able to devote more of their time to activities of a political and cultural nature which were previously monopolized by the upper and middle classes, but he had even less to say on this than the classics of Marxist thought.

I shall not comment on Halbwachs's work on the nobility, the traditional bourgeois wealthy, and the new rich, since these matters are amply discussed in this volume. Interested readers may also profit from consulting his *Psychology of Social Classes*.

23. Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, introduction, p. 11.

Collective Memory

After almost half a century it is easier to assess Halbwachs's contribution to the study of collective memory than it was for his contemporaries. With the advantage of hindsight one may now assert with some confidence that his work on collective memory is pathbreaking and will have continued impact while his other contributions are not likely to endure. Halbwachs's work is terribly uneven. Even though one may discern in his earlier work traces or anticipations of his genius, only the work on collective memory makes him a major figure in the history of sociology.

Permit me to start this section on a personal note. I came to this country as an immigrant shortly before Pearl Harbor. It did not take me long to establish friendships, or at least contacts, with young people of roughly my own age. But I felt for a long time that there was something in my relations with native Americans that blocked full communication, and that there was a kind of impassible barrier between us. It was only after I remembered Halbwachs's work on memory, which I had read at the Sorbonne, that I was able to put a finger on the reason for this mild estrangement between us. I then realized that they and I did not share enough collective memories.

The memory of major sports events shared by my friends was not part of my memory. I had not worshiped particular famous baseball players with them. I was confused when I noticed that American football was something very different from the European variety, so that I had no way of participating in their football lore. They talked about common experiences in high school that made little sense to me. They often gossiped about early girlfriends and their amorous conquests in high-school days. They were not particularly history-minded, yet I often found it hard to follow when some historical reference cropped up in conversation. In summary, much of what I had experienced until my twenties made but little sense to my new friends, and, reciprocally, I could not make much sense, lacking points of repair, when talking to American age-mates, and later classmates at Columbia. I was excluded from their collective memory and they from mine.

Let me give another example. Talking with Soviet colleagues in the last few years, I was struck again and again by a degree of hesitancy on their part when we discussed recent events in the Soviet Union. It dawned on me after a while that these people had been forced in the last few years to shed their own collective memory like a skin, and to reconstruct a largely different set of collective memories. All the major

historical figures of the past who had been killed, slandered, vilified under Stalin's bloody reign were now shown to have been good Bolsheviks and major revolutionary heroes. The whole Soviet history of the last seventy years had to be rewritten. Needless to say, the new history books often had their own biases, but they were at one in demolishing the old.

The great Hungarian writer György Konrad summed up the dilemmas, trials, and tribulations of contemporary Eastern European intellectuals in three pregnant sentences: "Today only the dissidents conserve the sentiment of continuity. The others must eliminate remembrances; they cannot permit themselves to keep the memory. . . . Most people have an interest in losing memory."²⁴

I would surmise that for many Soviet persons, be they high or low in the social hierarchy, this state of affairs has caused deep personal crises. It is perhaps a similar experience to that when two married persons suddenly discover that both of them have a hitherto unknown disreputable past. How they manage to deal with this sudden revelation will largely determine the future of their relationships.

Collective memory, Halbwachs shows, is not a given but rather a socially constructed notion. Nor is it some mystical group mind. As Halbwachs specifies in *The Collective Memory*: "While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember."²⁵ It follows that there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society. Social classes, families, associations, corporations, armies, and trade unions all have distinctive memories that their members have constructed, often over long periods of time. It is, of course individuals who remember, not groups or institutions, but these individuals, being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember or recreate the past. Most of us will remember our wedding day even though we might have forgotten the specific date. For most Americans Independence Day evokes affectively toned memories, and for Frenchmen, Bastille Day, which happens to come ten days after Independence Day, has crucial historical weight. "Every collective memory," says Halbwachs, "requires the support of a group delimited in space and time."²⁶ (Let us remark in passing that almost everywhere that Durkheim speaks of "Society" with a capital S, Halbwachs speaks of "groups"—a more cautious usage.)

24. "Europe Centrale," ed. Cécile Wagsbrot and Sébastien Reichmann, in *Autrement*, Série Monde (Paris), HS 51 (Feb. 1991): 84.

25. *Collective Memory*, p. 48.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Determined to demolish Bergson's stress on subjective time and individualistic consciousness, Halbwachs, at the very beginning of the sociological study of memory, leads his reader to accompany him on a survey of the principal locations of memory from the religious to the domestic sphere, from memory in the area of stratification to various other group memories. He shows at the end of his voyage that there seems to exist only one area in human experience that is not rooted in a social context and structure: the sphere of dreams. In a brilliantly developed analytical sweep he shows that dreams possess characteristics that separate them from all other human experiences: they lack structure, continuity, orderly progression, and regularity. The dream, Halbwachs argues, differs fundamentally from all other human memories because, in contradistinction to them, it lacks organization. This is the result of the absence of other human actors, who characterize all other aspects of waking life. "We are never alone."²⁷ Dreamers struggle in a chaotic and fluctuating world, and, as a consequence, are not in a position to recall the past in a coherent manner. Dreams show unstable fragments and images that cannot provide the group support that makes waking life and memory cohesive and structured.

This discussion of dreams shows Halbwachs's analytical mastery. Yes indeed, he argues, there is an area of experience that exhibits the spontaneity, the freedom, the lack of restraint and censorship that, according to Bergson, characterize the life of the mind, but this is the case only in that area of human experience that is least human, least rational, least organized. The life of reason, of consciousness and self-consciousness, can be rooted only in a waking existence which is in all cases firmly anchored in the collaboration of other human beings in group life. Human dignity, human stature, and human distinctiveness can emerge only in the presence of other human beings.

Having explicated in some detail the fundamental distinction between waking experience and dream, Halbwachs then follows by discussing other fundamental distinction in the realm of memory. He develops a sharp distinction between historical and autobiographical memory. The first reaches the social actor only through written records and other types of records, such as photography. But it can be kept alive through commemorations, festive enactment, and the like. Each celebration of, say, July 4, serves to reinforce the memory of the events that led to American independence. If individual participants in such festivities and memorial celebration had not been able to use such records, it is likely that they would be led to relax the social bonds that

27. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

link them to their fellows. Periodic celebrations serve as focal points in the drama of reenacted citizen participation.

Autobiographical memory, on the other hand, is memory of events that we have personally experienced in the past. It may also serve to reinforce the bonds between participants, as when a husband and wife celebrate their wedding anniversary or when people go to college reunions where they can reconstruct and reinforce past college experience in the midst of others who had similar experiences. It stands to reason, however, that autobiographical memory tends to fade with time unless it is periodically reinforced through contact with persons with whom one shared the experiences in the past. If there is a long span of time during which we have not had any contact with a specific set of once significant others, the memory of them tends to fade. In such cases, given long time intervals, memory may be lost altogether unless it is brought to awareness again through contact with otherwise almost forgotten associations. In any case, autobiographical memory is always rooted in other people. Only group members remember, and this memory nears extinction if they do not get together over long periods of time.

When it comes to historical memory, the person does not remember events directly; it can only be stimulated in indirect ways through reading or listening or in commemoration and festive occasions when people gather together to remember in common the deeds and accomplishments of long-departed members of the group. In this case, the past is stored and interpreted by social institutions.

Halbwachs believed that the present generation becomes conscious of itself in counterposing its present to its own constructed past. "How can currents of collective thought whose impetus lies in the past," he asked, "be recreated, when we can grasp only the present?"²⁸ His answer is that through participation in commemorative meetings with group members of the current generation we can recreate through imaginatively reenacting a past that would otherwise slowly disappear in the haze of time.

That Halbwachs was not a simple faithful disciple of Durkheim but an imaginative thinker of the first order becomes apparent when one looks at what he added to Durkheim's insights. Among Durkheim's most inspired pages are those devoted to "collective effervescence" as the seedbed of human cultural creativity. When tribal members gather together for a period of ceremonies, dances, and festive meals, or when the great scholars of medieval Europe gathered together in the twelfth

28. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

and thirteenth centuries in Paris, giving birth to scholasticism and the Renaissance, those gatherings allowed currents of renovation and creation to take a hold. In these pages Durkheim was able to show that, contrary to the currently fashionable thought that sees creation as the privileged sphere of individual accomplishment, creation is largely, perhaps wholly, rooted in collective phenomena.

Yet there is a difficulty with Durkheim's thought which, among others, Mary Douglas has pointed out.²⁹ Granted that societies or groups exhibit creativity and renewal during periods of effervescence, the question remains what binds people together in periods of calm, when routine behavior is the order of the day. Durkheim mentioned the physical props, be they works of art or totemic figures, that can, as it were, assure continuity between the active and passive phases of collective life. Yet in many instances such physical objects of reference seem to be absent.

It is this difficulty in Durkheim's thinking that Halbwachs has overcome, at least in part, with his theory of collective memory. The apparent void between periods of effervescence and ordinary life are, in fact, filled and fed by collective memory, he argues, in the form of a variety of ritual and ceremonial acts of heroic actors, and commemorated in bardic and epic poetry that keep alive the memory during otherwise dull routines of everyday life. It is not only that ceremonies help the recall of great events of the past that holds the community together, as Durkheim argues. It is the collective memory, as an intermediate variable so to speak, that both commemorates the events through calendar celebrations and is strengthened by them. There are no empty spots in the lives of groups and societies; an apparent vacuum between creative periods is filled by collective memory in symbolic display, or simply kept alive through transmission by parents and other elders to children and or ordinary men and women.

While Halbwachs further developed Durkheim's thought and applied it to the question of historical continuity, he at the same time introduced a paradox that makes his idea seem somewhat less penetrating than Durkheim's. For Halbwachs, the past is a social construction mainly, if not wholly, shaped by the concerns of the present. It is this *presentist* approach, as it is called, that Halbwachs uses in *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land*, as he does in some other works. He argues that the beliefs, interests, and aspirations of the present shape the various views of the past as they are manifested respectively in every historical epoch. So, the pilgrims of a par-

29. *Ibid.*, introduction, p. 8.

ticular period constructed the images of the Holy Land in very different ways than did the pilgrims of another time. But with this conceptualization the question arises whether it is indeed the case that the interpretations of the past are always rigorously presentist. The contemporary American sociologist Barry Schwartz has shown in several brilliant essays that the construction of the past can also be explained in another way.³⁰ For he calls attention to the fact that if the presentist approach were pushed to its ultimate consequences, it would suggest that there is no continuity in history altogether. It would make history a series of snapshots taken at various times and expressing various perspectives. A picture of the Holy Land from the point of view of the crusaders must then be completely different from that, say, of a modern Israeli archaeologist.

Barry Schwartz argues instead that the past is always a compound of persistence and change, of continuity and newness. We may indeed never step into the same river, but it still has persistent characteristics, qualities that are not shared by any other river.

Collective memory cannot serve as a distinct prop to the prevailing historical period if the past is seen as totally alien. Durkheim was aware of the need for historical continuity. His stress on the crucial signification of periodic commemorations, communal feasts, and public festivals is rooted in his search for those societal events that assure continuity over time and at least some cohesion across the ages. Granted, as I have shown earlier, that Durkheim, lacking as he did the notion of collective memory, found it difficult to specify the continuity between successive moments of collective effervescence, but he was more perspicacious than Halbwachs in realizing that history does not consist of a series of discrete snapshots, but rather of a continuous film in which, even though other images usually appear, the shots hang together and form a continuous stream of images. To be sure, to give another example provided in Schwartz's work, the Lincoln who appears to us in contemporary biographies differs from the image held by those who experienced the shock of his assassination. But it would be appalling nihilism to maintain that these two images do not have at least some family resemblance. To sum up, and again following Schwartz, collective historical memory has both cumulative and presentist aspects. It shows at least partial continuity as well as new readings of the past in terms of the present. A society's current perceived needs may impel it to refashion the past, but successive epochs are

30. See, e.g., Barry Schwartz, "The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory," *Social Forces* 61, no. 2 (Dec. 1982): 374-97.

being kept alive through a common code and a common symbolic canon even amidst contemporary revisions.

There is hardly a better example of this twofold process than the two thousand years of history of the Catholic Church. The Church has preserved the image of its past, but it has done so selectively, and thus has achieved continuity through selection.

I shall not detail the findings of Halbwachs in his study of *The Legendary Topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land*, since all his major findings are documented in the conclusions of this work, translated here in their entirety. Let me only say that this is a very careful empirical-historical study, which shows clearly that Halbwachs, who was often seen by some of his antagonists as a dry-as-dust number cruncher, was in fact highly sensitive to the subtleties of historical interpretation. Granted that he followed the great biblical scholar Ernest Renan in many particulars, his is nevertheless a work of great originality. Renan visited the Holy Land in order to identify the holy places of the Christian tradition and reported that while he had found some, others no longer existed, some were duplicated (i.e., specific events were said to have happened in several distinct locations), and some were clearly just wrong. Renan had, of course, made lengthy visits to the Holy Land several times, whereas Halbwachs had made only two short trips there. Going through the accounts of Judeo-Christians, of crusaders, and of foreign Christian believers, Halbwachs shows in splendid detail that these observers, on their visits to the Holy Land, imposed what was in their own eyes on the land they thought they were only describing. Whereas Renan mainly took note of the discrepancies in the various accounts, Halbwachs attempted to explain them. He noticed, for example, that those commentators who were committed to stressing the interconnections between the Old and the New Testaments "discovered" many Christian holy places in the vicinity of Old Testament sites. Just as the apostles' accounts of the Gospels differ in many respects—some emphasize Jesus's life and suffering in his last days, and others stress his earlier life among the fishermen, whereas still others are wholly imaginary, like the accounts of the nativity in Bethlehem—so later generations of pilgrims and visitors found in the Holy Land what they had wished to find. For example, each part of the story of Christianity in the Gospels centers on events in the life of Christ. But present interest in the different parts of the Gospels and of the patterns of Jesus's life is connected with differing sites on the landscape of the Holy Land. The believer is convinced that what can be found in the Gospels are eternal truths, but Halbwachs delights in showing that the truth of the Gospels was in fact continuously as-

saulted by the test of time. Each historical period dealt selectively with its own views of the life, the passion, and the trial of Jesus.

As I have shown earlier, Halbwachs was but too often inclined to see the present views of particular observers as isolated from others in a series of different pictures collected in an album. I have followed Barry Schwartz in pointing out that such views cannot account for historical continuity. Such difficulties were apparent to Halbwachs, and so he chose as his major empirical study a site that was, indeed, largely characterized by the lack of continuity. The Jerusalem, say, of the Persians, the Romans, the Jews, and the Christian crusaders described a landscape that shifted rapidly in character depending on the various nation-states that dominated the Holy Land over a long span of time. One is hence inclined to conclude that Halbwachs defended his approach successfully in the study of the Holy Land, but did not indicate in what ways his method and explanatory scheme could do justice to more pronouncedly continuous societies like France or Germany. When successive generations consist frequently in fundamentally different societies, as was the case in the Holy Land, then a present-centered theory of the past makes eminent sense. When, on the other hand, one deals with societies that have retained major societal similarities over long periods of time, a purely presentist approach can do no justice to the intricate complexities that arise from the intertwined workings of past and present.

The Halbwachs Legacy

I have long been annoyed by introductions that are largely devoted to succinct summaries of arguments and ideas presented in the bulk of a book. They usually serve only the purposes of lazy readers who desire to be knowledgeable about books without actually reading them. Therefore the reader will not be provided here with shortcuts to the ideas developed in this book. I would like to see Halbwachs's work being tackled in depth rather than becoming the ephemeral topic of academic cocktail parties.

What I want to convey to the reader is at least a sample of what subsequent generations of sociologists have done with the heritage that Halbwachs has left them. Reasons of space limit me to a few examples of the spell that Halbwachs's work has exercised over some contemporary sociologists half a century after his death.

My first example comes from a study entitled "Generations and Collective Memory" by Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott which

appeared in the *American Sociological Review* in June 1989.³¹ The study is based on a national sample of adult Americans who were asked to report "the national or world events or changes over the past 50 years" that seemed to them especially important and to give reasons for their choices. The study was meant to elucidate the relations between generational effects, life course, and collective memory. A related hypothesis tested was "that the events and changes that have maximum impact in terms of memorableness occur during a cohort's adolescence and young adulthood." The study uses the findings of Karl Mannheim on generational effects, which I shall bypass in this account, but also, perhaps mainly, uses ideas from the work of Halbwachs, especially his crucial distinction between autobiographical and historic memory. The former, it will be recalled, is seen as more consequential, richer, and personally more meaningful than the latter. The authors refer to a number of psychological studies that posit that memories of adolescence and early adulthood have stronger and more pervasive effects than memories referring to later experiences. They ask whether such later memories cannot best be understood by reference to adolescence and early adult experience. They further ask whether, in accord with Halbwachs's contentions, autobiographical memories of directly experienced events do indeed have deeper impact than events of which people have merely read or heard.

The results strongly support the hypotheses and are largely in accord with what one would infer from Halbwachs's work. The majority of the twelve major national or world events that are evoked in the responses of the subjects "refer back disproportionately to a time when the respondents were in their teens or early 20s." Memories of important political and social events are structured by age, in particular younger age. The Vietnamese war, for example, left a deep imprint on the minds of people who were then in adolescence and early adulthood, whereas for later cohorts it was but a historic memory with comparatively little potency. There were two exceptions to the age structuring of collective memory, both referring to scientific developments: the exploration of space and the invention of the computer. It may be that the nonpolitical nature of these events accounts for their lack of age structuring, as the authors suggest, or it may be that different educational levels confound the effect of age. By and large, however, the study gives considerable support to the notion that the collec-

31. Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott, "Generations and Collective Memory," *American Sociological Review* 54 (June 1989): 359-81.

tive memory of each generation is largely influenced by their life experiences at a relatively young age.

The study strongly support Karl Mannheim's set of ideas on generations and generational units. But it supports even more strongly the Halbwachsian notion that crucial public events leave deep imprints in the minds of direct participants, especially when they are young people in the early stages of forging an adult identity.

I have already discussed Barry Schwartz's important theoretical point that a too pronounced presentism may lead researchers to neglect the functions of collective memory for insuring cultural continuity. Schwartz illustrates his general thesis of the double character of collective memory in his paper entitled "The Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln."³² Schwartz shows in instructive detail the drastic changes the figure of Lincoln has undergone among Americans over the ages. He makes the important observation that the remembering of Lincoln, and presumably of other American heroes, must be regarded "as a constructive process as opposed to a retrieval process." Each generation of Americans has had its own Lincoln who differed in major or minor ways from the Lincoln of earlier generations. This is essentially Halbwachs's position. But Schwartz counters that there are limits to the transformations of the image of Lincoln. Though the America of today is very different indeed from, say, that of the Civil War, it also has to be remembered that these are by no means totally different countries. This is, of course, why we can still read Tocqueville's picture of America in the days of Jackson and feel that much of what he had to say still provides pertinent clues to the character of contemporary America. Even though the picture of the past changes all the time, basic American traits and values have been maintained. The collective memory of Lincoln has changed drastically, to be sure, but it has also endured. The early portrait of Lincoln in the immediate period after his assassination stressed his earthy qualities, his simplicity, his humanness. The later image has in effect distanced the figure of Lincoln, and has stressed remoteness and dignity as against the earlier folksiness of the revered figure. All in all, Schwartz concludes, "the collective memory comes into view as both a cumulative and an episodic construction of the past."

A fine study in the sociology of the arts, Gladys and Kurt Lang's

32. Barry Schwartz, "The Reconstruction of Abraham Lincoln," in *Collective Remembering*, ed. David Middleton and Derek Edwards (Newbury Park: Sage, 1990), pp. 81-107.

"Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation"³³ is a creative inquiry into one aspect of collective memory: the differential survival of reputation in the art world. The artists discussed were part of a revival of the art of etching in Britain beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century. The depression of 1929 and its aftermath put a halt to the sales of etchings, and public enthusiasm came to an end. After World War II only a few reputations were preserved in collective memory. The Langs attempt to explain the differential survival value of the reputations of etchers. Their intent is not to show how collective memory retrieves earlier reputations, but rather to trace the social process in which recognition in the present is being preserved or revived in the collective consciousness of later generations. The Langs reason that the quality of the work had of course a major impact on survival value, but they find that small disparities of top performers seem to result in differential survival value. It is this factor, they argue, that requires a sociological explanation. They focus on what they call differential conditions of remembering. These conditions affect retention or elimination in subsequent periods. Or, more precisely, sociological factors make for differential preservation for posterity of artists who during their lifetimes were considered top performers. This is a study of selective cultural preservation.

The reputation of an artist who has died is, of course, in the hands of others, such as spouses, children, and other relatives and friends. Reputation may also be influenced by demographic factors. Artists who have long lives have more chances to enhance their reputations. On the other hand, artists who die young and may not have had a chance to produce much top work, may nevertheless appeal to posterity in terms of the sentimental appeal of those who died too young. In general it seems to hold that the longer the survival of the artist the higher the chance of continued reputation.

Proximity to some elite circles, either through family connections or through individual achievement, provides cultural capital that can assure renown after death. Women etchers, whom the Langs studied in a separate publication, have typically lower survival value because they lack many of the positive traits that enhance the reputations of their male colleagues.³⁴

33. Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, "Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (1988): 79-109. The Langs will soon publish an extended version in book form.

34. Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, "Artistic Reputations: The Case of the Forgotten Lady-Etchers in Britain," in *Contributions to the Sociology of the Arts*, Reports

Let me quote the Lang's summary of "Recognition and Renown." Differences in lifetime recognition can influence posthumous acclaim. "The etcher's achievement is reflected through initiatives taken in the artists' lifetime, through survivors, acting as links to posterity, through networks that convey works of art into archives and museums, and through the artist's availability as a symbolic focus for a variety of sentiments not directly tied to his work."³⁵

In concluding this section, yet another piece of research exemplifying the value of the notion of collective memory must be highlighted. This is a study of Barry Schwartz, Yael Zerubavel, and Bernice M. Barnett entitled: "The Recovery of Masada: A Study in Collective Memory."³⁶

The battle of Masada between Jewish defenders and Roman conquerors took place in 73 A.D. It was not considered worthy of much notice in almost two thousand years until it began to be commemorated in the mid-twenties by Palestinian Jews. Knowledge of the past is mainly preserved by the chronicling of events in written sources or by oral tradition. But these events are not all treated in the same manner. Many of them escape notice because potential carriers of the message remain indifferent, while others assume high saliency. How then does one explain that an event that was neglected for almost two thousand years suddenly moved into the forefront of Jewish Israeli consciousness in the twentieth century? The authors use the theories of George Herbert Mead and Maurice Halbwachs in order to throw light on this problem. To the point here is how Halbwachs's theory helps explain what appeared initially to be a curious and minor event in the long history of the Jewish people.

Two years after Titus's Roman army devastated Jerusalem and its temple, Titus's son Flavius Silva moved against the remnants of Jewish resistance entrenched in the mountain fortress, Masada. There was bitter fighting but the outcome was not in doubt. About nine hundred zealots finally resolved to save themselves from being captured by the Romans and decided on a suicide pact. They carried it out just after the last walls were breached by the Romans.

from the Tenth World Congress of Sociology, Research Committee 37 (Sofia, Research Institute for Culture, 1983), pp. 202-11.

35. Lang and Lang, "Recognition and Renown," p. 109.

36. Barry Schwartz, Yael Zerubavel, and Bernice Barnett, "The Recovery of Masada: A Study in Collective Memory," *Sociological Quarterly*, 27, no. 2 (1986): 147-64. For another extension of Halbwachs's thought see Peter L. Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1963), chap. 3. See also Michael Schudson, "The Present in the Past versus the Past in the Present," *Communication* 11(1989): 105-13.

The only source for this account is Josephus's *The Jewish War*. Written in Aramaic as well as Greek, this chronicle remained almost completely unknown outside some narrow circles in the Christian Church. The battle had no impact on the Jewish collective consciousness until very recently, and there is no mention of it in the Talmud or in other Jewish sacred texts. There were no commemorations of the event in Jewish history for nearly two thousand years.

Jewish interest in the story of Masada arose only with the rise of Zionism in this century. It was most effectively popularized by the publication in Palestine of a heroic poem called "Masada" by a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant, Yitzhak Lamdan, in 1927. Since then Masada has become a key symbol of Jewish resistance and resilience of immense popular appeal. It was even transformed into a state-sponsored cult of the heroic resistance fighters.

There seems to be no obvious reason why Masada should have had a place of honor in Jewish Israeli consciousness. Most national commemorations celebrate the origin, rise, and fall of a nation because these are seen as having had a major effect on its subsequent history. But the battle of Masada exhibits none of these features. It was only a mopping-up operation with no special impact on subsequent events in Jewish history.

In Halbwachs's eyes, a nation's or society's memory is a reconstruction of the past. As Schwartz et al. see the issue, Halbwachs seeks to show how the present situation affects the selective perception of past history.

While the defense of Masada had no particular reference in Jewish common consciousness before the birth of Zionism, it is pregnant with meaning for recent generations of Israeli Jews since it symbolizes military valor, resolute national commitment, and a heroic affirmation of national dignity against very high odds. Masada became an appropriate national symbol once major segments of the Jewish national community decided to take the path of resolve and resistance. As conditions of life in beleaguered Israel created a sense of permanent mobilization among the Jewish population, the affinity of this state of affairs with an event long neglected in Jewish history led to the reception and widespread dissemination of Lamdan's poem "Masada." His enthusiastic reception led in its turn to moving these two thousand-year-old events into the very core of Jewish Israel's national and social consciousness.

The authors perceptively remark that the poem moves between two opposite emotional sentiments, between defiant optimism and despairing pessimism, and creates a tension between those two moods that is

never resolved. The many enthusiastic readers of the poem evidently felt that it mirrored their own beleaguered mentality, their own sense of ambivalence about not only the present but also the future. This also seems to account for the fact that the poem has lost influence among the confident, optimistic generation of native-born Israelis.

The authors conclude by arguing that a society struggling for survival looks for examples in the heroic past that match present conditions. If and when a society has a solid sense of basic existential security, it no longer needs the sustenance that Masada conveys. One can only hope that Israel will not need the Masada imagery for long in the future.

Conclusion

Halbwachs was without doubt the first sociologist who stressed that our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present. Historians have, of course, struggled with this problem ever since the Greeks. Now that the long-neglected stepchild, historical sociology, gives evidence of renewed interest among American sociologists, one has reason to believe that the unhappy divorce between sociology and history is about to come to an end. When the two disciplines enter into a union in the future, it is desirable that we sociologists can show that we do not come to the wedding with empty hands, but that we can point to the work of Halbwachs and his successors when we are asked what indigent gift we can bring.

To sum up: Memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources and is sustained by social and moral props. Just like God needs us, so memory needs others. But those who are led to give an account of the past in terms of present guideposts will generally be also aware that history is made of continuity as well as change. Halbwachs could perhaps afford to neglect the first by way of overplaying the second, but a moment of reflection suggests that, especially in periods of history that are better documented than the events dealt with here, the present generation may rewrite history but it does not write it on a blank page.



THE SOCIAL FRAMEWORKS
OF MEMORY

Preface

Recently thumbing through an old volume of the *Magasin Pittoresque*, I came across an extraordinary story. It was the story of a young girl nine or ten years old who was found in the woods near Châlons in 1731. There was no way of finding out where she had been born or where she came from. She had kept no recollection of her childhood. In piecing together the details she provided concerning the various periods of her life, one came to suppose that she was born in the north of Europe, probably among the Eskimos, and that she had been transported first to the Antilles and then to France. She said that she had twice crossed large distances by sea, and she appeared moved when shown pictures of huts or boats from Eskimo country, seals, or sugar cane and other products of the Americas. She thought that she could recall rather clearly that she had belonged as a slave to a mistress who liked her very much, but that the master, who could not stand her, had her sent away.¹

I reproduce this tale, which I do not know to be authentic, and which I have learned only at second hand, because it allows us to understand in what sense one may say that memory depends on the social environment. A child nine or ten years old possesses many recollections, both recent and fairly old. What will this child be able to retain if he is abruptly separated from his family, transported to a country where his language is not spoken, where neither the appearance of people and places, nor their customs, resemble in any way that which was familiar to him up to this moment? The child has left one

The preface, chapters 5, 6, 7, and the conclusion of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* have been fully translated—with one very minor exception. The first four chapters, dealing respectively with (1) dreams and memory images, (2) language and memory, (3) the reconstruction of the past, and (4) the localization of memories, are largely preparatory for what is to come in the rest of the book. Only relatively brief central pages of these chapters have been translated here.

1. *Magasin pittoresque*, 1849, p. 18. As references, the author mentions: "There is an article written on this subject in the *Mercure de France*, September 173- [the last number is blank], and a little work from 1755 [of which he does not indicate the title] from which I have borrowed this tale."

society in order to pass into another. It seems that at the same time the child will have lost the ability to remember in the second society all that he did and all that impressed him, which he used to recall without difficulty, in the first. In order to retrieve some of these uncertain and incomplete memories it is necessary that the child, in the new society of which he is part, at least be shown images reconstructing for a moment the group and the milieu from which the child had been torn.

This example refers to an extreme case. But if we examine a little more closely how we recollect things, we will surely realize that the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parents, our friends, or other persons recall them to us. One is rather astonished when reading psychological treatises that deal with memory to find that people are considered there as isolated beings. These make it appear that to understand our mental operations, we need to stick to individuals and first of all, to divide all the bonds which attach individuals to the society of their fellows. Yet it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories. If we enumerate the number of recollections during one day that we have evoked upon the occasion of our direct and indirect relations with other people, we will see that, most frequently, we appeal to our memory only in order to answer questions which others have asked us, or that we suppose they could have asked us. We note, moreover, that in order to answer them, we place ourselves in their perspective and we consider ourselves as being part of the same group or groups as they. But why should what appears to be true in regard to a number of our recollections not also be the case for all of them? Most of the time, when I remember, it is others who spur me on; their memory comes to the aid of mine and mine relies on theirs. There is nothing mysterious about recall of memories in these cases at least. There is no point in seeking where they are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them, upon condition, to be sure, that I turn toward them and adopt, at least for the moment, their way of thinking. But why should this not be so in all cases?

It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection. It will be clear why this study

opens with one or even two chapters on dreams² if one realizes that the person who sleeps finds himself during a certain period of time in a state of isolation which resembles, at least partially, the state in which he would live if he were in contact with no society. It is at this moment that he is no longer capable—nor has need—of relying on frames of collective memory. It is then possible to measure the operation of these frameworks by observing what becomes of individual memory when this operation is no longer present.

But if we explain in this manner the memory of an individual by the memory of others, are we not in danger of talking in circles? It would in effect be necessary in this case to explain how others remember, and the same problem would seem to come back again in the same terms.

If the past recurs, it seems of little importance to know whether it does so in my consciousness or in the consciousness of others. Why does it recur? Would it recur if it was not preserved? It is apparently not at all illogical that the classic theory of memory, after a study of the acquisition of memories, studies their preservation before giving an account of their recall. Now, if one does not want to explain the preservation of memories by cerebral processes (an explanation, by the way, which is rather obscure and gives rise to serious objections), it would seem that there is no alternative to admitting that memories as psychic states subsist in the mind in an unconscious state and that they can become conscious again when recollected. In this way, the past falls into ruin and vanishes only in appearance. Each individual mind would in this manner drag behind itself the whole array of its memories. One can now concede, if one so desires, that various capacities for memory aid each other and are of mutual assistance to each other. But what we call the collective framework of memory would then be only the result, or sum, or combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society. This framework might then serve to better classify them after the fact, to situate the recollections of some in relation to those of others. But this would not explain memory itself, since this framework supposes the existence of memory.

The study of dreams has already provided us with serious arguments against the thesis of the subsistence of memories in an unconscious state. But it is necessary to show that, outside of dreams, in reality the past does not recur as such, that everything seems to indi-

2. The first chapter, which was the point of departure for my research, appeared as an article almost identical to this chapter in *Revue philosophique*, January-February 1923.

cate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present.³ It is necessary to show, besides, that the collective frameworks of memory are not constructed after the fact by the combination of individual recollections; nor are they empty forms where recollections coming from elsewhere would insert themselves. Collective frameworks are, to the contrary, precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society. The third and fourth chapters of this book, which deal with the reconstruction of the past and the localization of memories, are devoted to proof of this thesis.

After this study, largely critical in nature, where I nevertheless set out the bases for a sociological theory of memory, I turn to consider collective memory directly and in itself. It is not sufficient, in effect, to show that individuals always use social frameworks when they remember. It is necessary to place oneself in the perspective of the group or groups. The two problems, moreover, are not only related: they are in effect one. One may say that the individual remembers by placing himself in the perspective of the group, but one may also affirm that the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memories. That is why the last three chapters deal with collective memory as it manifests itself in the traditions of the family, of religious groups, and of social classes. There obviously exist other societies and other forms of social memory. But since I am obliged to limit myself, I focus on those social groups which appear most important to me, and which my previous research has allowed me to study in greater depth. This last reason explains why the chapter on social classes is longer than any of the others. I have used here some ideas expressed elsewhere and have attempted to extend this trend of thought in the present work.

3. Clearly, I do not in any way dispute that our impressions perdure for some time, in some cases for a long time, after they have been produced. But this "resonance" of impressions is not to be confused at all with the preservation of memories. This resonance varies from individual to individual, just as it undoubtedly does from type to type, completely aside from social influence. It relates to psycho-physiology, which has its domain, just as social psychology has its own.

Dreams and Memory Images

No real and complete memory every appears in our dreams as it appears in our waking state. Our dreams are composed of fragments of memory too mutilated and mixed up with others to allow us to recognize them. This is hardly an astonishing fact, any more than that in our dreams we do not find true sensations such as those which we experience when we are not asleep. Such sensations demand a certain degree of reflexive attention that is in tune with the order of natural relations that we and others experience. Likewise, if the series of images in our dreams does not contain true memories, this is because, in order to remember, one must be capable of reasoning and comparing and of feeling in contact with a human society that can guarantee the integrity of our memory. All these are conditions that are obviously not fulfilled when we dream. . . .

Let us summarize this analysis and the results to which it has led us. It is built entirely upon a fact which is opposed to a theory. This fact is that we are incapable of reliving our past while we dream,¹ and that if our dreams evoke images that have the appearance of memories, these images are introduced in a fragmented state. Only detached shreds of the scenes we have really experienced appear in dreams. There never appears in dreams an event accompanied by all its particularities, without a mixture of alien elements. There never appears in the eyes of sleeping consciousness a complete scene of events that occurred in the past. I have recorded examples that would seem to prove the contrary. Some were too inexactly and incompletely reported to allow one to make sense of them. In other cases one had grounds to suppose that between the events and the dream the mind had reflected upon its memories and, after having evoked them once or several times, had

This chapter's excerpts have been translated from pp. 28-29, 48-49, and 52-53 of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.—ED.

1. Lucretius has observed this fact. During a dream, he says: . . . *meminisse jacet, languetque sopore* (*De rerum natura* 4.746). Memory is so inert and drowsy that the dreamer sometimes does not remember that a person who appears alive in the dream has been dead for a long time. This passage has kindly been brought to my attention by Mr. Pradines.

transformed them into images. Now is it the image or the memory that preceded and occasioned it that reappears in the dream? One alternative appears as likely as the other. Finally, there is the example of memories of early childhood which are forgotten during the waking state but appear in certain dreams: yet these are representations surely too vaguely formed by the child to give rise to true memories. Furthermore, in all these cases and in all imaginable dreams, the actual personality—not the personality as it once was—is actively involved in a dream. If this is the case, it stands to reason that the general aspect of events and persons reproduced is altered thereby. . . .

It is not in memory but in the dream that the mind is most removed from society. If purely individual psychology looks for an area where consciousness is isolated and turned upon itself, it is in nocturnal life, and only there, that it will most be found. Far from being enlarged, free of the limitations of waking life, and far from gaining in extensiveness what it loses in coherence and precision, consciousness appears severely reduced and in a shrunken state in nocturnal life. Almost completely detached from the system of social representations, its images are nothing more than raw materials, capable of entering into all sorts of combinations. They establish only random relations among each other—relations based on the disordered play of corporal modifications. They surely develop in a chronological order. Yet between the dream's row of successive images and a series of recollections there is as much difference as that between a pile of rough-hewn materials with superimposed parts heaped one upon the other, only accidentally achieving an equilibrium, and the walls of an edifice maintained by a whole armature, supported and reinforced by neighboring edifices. The dream is based only upon itself, whereas our recollections depend on those of all our fellows, and on the great frameworks of the memory of society.

Language and Memory

No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections. This is the certain conclusion shown by the study of dreams and of aphasia—those states where the field of memory is most characteristically narrowed. In these two cases, the frameworks become deformed, changed, and partially destroyed, albeit in two very distinct ways. Indeed, the comparison of dreams and aphasia allows us to highlight two aspects of social frameworks, or two kinds of elements of which they are composed.

There are many different forms of aphasia, many degrees of reduction of memories that are its effects. But it is rare than an aphasiac forgets that he is a member of society. He knows well that the people who surround him and who speak to him are as human as he is himself. He pays intense attention to what they say: he manifests, in regard to them, sentiments of timidity and anxiety. He feels diminished and humiliated, is distressed and sometimes irritated because he cannot manage to keep or to recover his place in the social group. Moreover, he recognizes persons and gives them a definite identity. In general, he can recall the principal events of his own past (which is not the case with amnesiacs). He can to some extent relive this past, even when he does not succeed in conveying to others a sufficiently detailed idea of it. Hence a whole part of his memory—the part which retains events and remembers persons—keeps contact with the collective memory and is under its control. He tries to be understood by others and to understand them—like a man in a foreign country who does not speak the language but knows the history of this country and has not forgotten his own history. But he lacks a large number of current notions. More precisely, a certain number of conventions no longer make sense to him, even though he knows that they exist and tries in vain to conform to them. A word heard or read by him is not accompanied by the feeling that he understands its sense; images of objects pass before his eyes without his being able to attach a name to them—to recognize

their nature and role. Under certain circumstances he can no longer identify his thought with that of others or attain that form of social representation which is exemplified by a notion, a scheme, or a symbol of a gesture or of a thing. Contact between his thought and the collective memory becomes interrupted at a certain number of detailed points.

In the case of sleep, by contrast, the images that succeed each other in the dreamer's mind—each one taken separately—are "recognized": that is, the mind understands what they represent, understands their sense, and feels empowered to name them. As a consequence, even when they sleep people maintain the use of speech to the extent that speech is an instrument of comprehension. The dreamer distinguishes things from actions and puts himself in the perspective of society to distinguish them. One may imagine that a person who is awake and finds himself among dreamers who express clearly what they see in their dreams would understand these dreamers; there would exist a kind of embryonic social life. It is true that the person who is awake would not succeed in synchronizing the thought of one dreamer with that of another. He could not, as Pascal puts it, make the dream in company.¹ He could not create a dialogue out of two dreamers' monologues. For this to take place, it would be necessary that the mind of the dreamers not be content with operating upon notions borrowed from the mind's social milieu; their thoughts would have to flow according to the order which the thoughts of society follow in their course. In effect society thinks according to totalities; it attaches one notion to another and groups these into more complex representations of persons and events which in their turn are comprised in still more complex notions. The dreamer can well imagine people and facts that resemble those when he is awake. But in each particular case, he does not evoke all the characteristic details which constitute for him the personality of people and the reality of facts when he is awake. Those that he constructs to the inclination of his fantasy have no consistency, depth, coherence, or stability. In other words, the condition of the dream seems to be such that the dreamer, while observing the rules which determine the meaning of words as well as the meaning of objects and images considered in isolation, no longer remembers the conventions that establish the relative position in space and in the social milieu of places and events as well as of persons, and does not conform

1. "And who doubts that if we dreamed in company, and if the dreams by chance agreed, which is quite common, and if we were awake in solitude, we would believe that things were inverted." Pascal erased this point, which he had added to article 8, volume 1 of the Havet edition, p. 228, note.

to these conventions. The dreamer cannot escape from himself in that he is not capable of considering, from the collective point of view, these totalities—people and facts, regions and periods, groups of objects and general images—which are in the forefront of the memory of society.

Let me add immediately that this distinction is altogether relative. These two aspects of memory, which present themselves in such dissociated form in aphasia and in dreams, are nevertheless closely linked. In the case of very pronounced aphasia it is difficult to know whether there subsists a memory of events, and up to what point the patient recognizes persons. In less severe cases of aphasia the patients, because they cannot tell of their past owing to their lack of words, and because their relations with others are diminished, are likely to maintain only a vague sense of time, persons, and places. Moreover, if the dreamer more or less recognizes the images which succeed one another in dreams, he has nevertheless only a superficial and confused view. Our dreams are so full of contradictions; we free ourselves in dreams of physical laws and social rules to such an extent that there exists only a rather distant relation between the ideas we construct even of isolated objects, and the notions we have of them in a waking state. Finally, where is the boundary between a simple and a complex notion, between an isolated object and a totality? The same group of facts or of persons might well be considered under one aspect or the other depending on the point of view. It is nevertheless true that if one loses contact with collective memory in these two different ways, there must exist in collective memory two systems of conventions which ordinarily impose themselves on people and even reinforce each other through association, but which can also manifest themselves separately. I have shown that the dreamer is no longer able to reconstruct the memory of complex events which occur over time and have an appreciable spatial extension. This is the case because he has forgotten the conventions that allow a waking person to encompass in his thought such totalities. On the other hand, he is capable of evoking fragmentary images and of recognizing them—of understanding their significance—because he has retained the conventions that allow the waking person to give names to objects and to distinguish one from the other by means of their names. Hence verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable framework of collective memory. This framework is however rather slack, since it fails to encompass all memories that are even slightly complex and since it retains only isolated details and discontinuous elements of our representations.

The Reconstruction of the Past

When one of the books which were the joy of our childhood, which we have not opened since, falls into our hands, it is not without a certain curiosity, an anticipation of a recurrence of memories and a kind of interior rejuvenation that we begin to read it. Just by thinking about it we believe that we can recall the mental state in which we found ourselves at that time. From our impressions of that time, what remains within us before this moment and at the moment of discovery itself? The general notion of the subject, some more or less characteristic symbols, some particularly picturesque, moving, or funny episodes, sometimes the visual memory of an engraving, or even of a page or of some lines might remain. In reality we would feel incapable of mentally reproducing all the events in their detail, the diverse parts of the tale in proportion to the whole, and the whole series of traits, indications, descriptions, propositions, and reflections that progressively inscribe a figure or a landscape in the mind of the reader, which allow him to penetrate to the heart of the matter. This is so because we feel what a gap continues to exist between the vague recollection of today and the impression of our childhood which we know was vivid, precise, and strong. We therefore hope by reading the book again to complete the former vague memory and so to relive the memory of our childhood.

But what happens most frequently is that we actually seem to be reading a new book, or at least an altered version. The book seems to lack pages, developments, or details that were there when we first read it; at the same time, additions seem to have been made because our interest is now attracted to and our reflections focused on a number of aspects of the action and the characters which, we well know, we were incapable of noticing then. These stories moreover seem less extraordinary to us, more formulaic and less lively. These fictions have been stripped of a major part of their prestige: we no longer understand

This chapter's excerpts have been translated from pp. 113, 114, 121, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 148, 149, 150, 151, and 154 of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.—Ed.

why and how they once communicated to our imagination such an uplift. . . .

We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated. But precisely because these memories are repetitions, because they are successively engaged in very different systems of notions, at different periods of our lives, they have lost the form and the appearance they once had. They are not intact vertebra of fossil animals which would in themselves permit reconstruction of the entities of which they were once a part. One should rather compare them to those stones one finds fitted in certain Roman houses, which have been used as materials in very ancient buildings: their antiquity cannot be established by their form or their appearance but only by the fact that they still show the effaced vestiges of old characters. . . .

It seems fairly natural that adults, absorbed as they are with everyday preoccupations, are not interested in what from the past is now irrelevant to these preoccupations. Is it not the case that adults deform their memories of childhood precisely because they force them to enter into the framework of the present? But this is not the case with old people. These men and women are tired of action and hence turn away from the present so that they are in a most favorable position to evoke events of the past as they really appeared. But if these events recur is this not because they were always there? Is this not a striking proof of the preservation of memories that we believed to have been eradicated? . . .

If there are, in Bergson's sense, two kinds of memory—one made of habits and turned toward action, and another which involves a certain disinterest in present life—one would in effect be tempted to think that the elderly, as they turn from the practical aspect of objects and persons, and as they are liberated from the constraints imposed by profession, family, and active existence in society in general, develop the capacity to redescend into their past and to relive it in imagination. . . .

But in reality old people do not dream when they evoke their childhood past. One may rather say of the adult that when his mind, usually concentrated on present realities, is relaxed and allows itself to follow the slope leading back to his first days, he resembles a man who dreams, because there is in effect a lively contrast between his habitual preoccupations and these images with no relation to what animates his activities in the present. Neither the one nor the other dreams (in the sense in which I have defined this term): but this kind of dreamlike

activity, which is a distraction for the adult, comes to be a true occupation for the old. Old people ordinarily are not content to wait passively for memories to revive. They attempt to make them more precise, ask other old people, go through old papers, old letters; above all, they tell what they remember, when they do not try to write it down. In short, old people are much more interested in the past than are adults: but it does not follow from this that the old person can evoke more memories of this past than when he was an adult. Above all, it does not follow that old images, buried in the unconscious since childhood, "regain the power to cross the threshold of consciousness" only in the state of old age.

We can better understand what reasons awaken in the old person this new interest in a period of his life that had been long neglected if we put him back into the society of which he is no longer an active member, but in which he nevertheless continues to have an assigned role. In primitive tribes, the old are the guardians of traditions not just because they absorbed them at an earlier point than others, but also undoubtedly because they are the only ones to enjoy the necessary leisure to determine the details of these traditions in their exchanges with other old people and to teach them to the young during initiation. In our society an old person is also esteemed because, having lived for a long time, he has much experience and is full of memories. Why should old people not then be passionately interested in the past, in the common treasure of which they are the guardians? Why should they not try quite consciously to fulfill the function which gives them the only prestige to which they can now lay claim? . . .

Society, by giving old people the function of preserving the traces of its past, encourages them to devote whatever spiritual energy they may still possess to the act of recollection. If one sometimes makes fun of those who take this role too seriously and abuse the right of the old to tell of their past, this is only because every social function tends to have a tendency to become exaggerated. . . .

Not only the old, but all people (depending, of course on their age, temperament, etc.) instinctively adopt in regard to times past the attitude of the Greek philosophers who put the golden age not at the end of the world but at its beginning. Although there are periods of our existence that we might willingly cut off—although we might not be sure that we would like to relive our life in its totality—there is a kind of retrospective mirage by which a great number of us persuade ourselves that the world of today has less color and is less interesting than it was in the past, in particular regarding our childhood and youth. . . .

When it comes to the most somber aspects of our existence, on the

other hand, it seems they are enveloped by clouds that half cover them. That faraway world where we remember that we suffered nevertheless exercises an incomprehensible attraction on the person who has survived it and who seems to think he has left there the best part of himself, which he tries to recapture. This is why, given a few exceptions, it is the case that the great majority of people more or less frequently are given to what one might call nostalgia for the past.

Where does this illusory appearance of the past originate? Is it indeed an illusion? As Rousseau has said, while the child and the young man are weak absolutely, they are strong relatively: they are stronger than the adult so long as their powers surpass their needs. This plenitude of life brings in its wake a plenitude of impressions. When we grow older, even though we may feel sufficient organic resources within, we are animated in a variety of ways by the interests that are born of social life so that we are forced to limit ourselves. Constraints that originate externally are added to those which we impose on ourselves. Our impressions yield to the forms that social life imposes on them only at the price of losing a part of their substance. The yearning for nature amidst society is essentially the yearning for childhood among adults. . . .

We shall better understand the nature of this reshaping operation as it applies to the past, and perhaps also to dreamlike states, if we do not forget that even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu. In a way, contemplative memory or dreamlike memory helps us to escape society. It is one of the rare moments when we succeed in isolating ourselves completely, since our memories, especially the earliest ones, are indeed *our* memories: those who might read them in us as well as we read them ourselves have either vanished or been dispersed. Yet, if we flee in this way from the society of the people of today, this is in order to find ourselves among other human beings and in another human milieu, since our past is inhabited by the figures of those we used to know. In this sense, one can escape from a society only by opposing to it another society. . . .

So it is that when people think they are alone, face to face with themselves, other people appear and with them the groups of which they are members. Our modern societies impose many constraints on people. Without using the same authority and unilateral pressure that primitive tribes employ in regard to their members, modern societies nevertheless penetrate and insinuate themselves more deeply into their members because of the multiplicity and complexity of relations of all kinds with which they envelop their members. It is true that modern

societies pretend to respect the individual personality. Provided that individuals perform their essential duties, they are free to live and to think as it pleases them, to form their opinions as they wish. Society seems to stop at the threshold of interior life. But it well knows that even then it leaves them alone only in appearance—it is perhaps at the moment when the individual appears to care very little about society that he develops in himself to the fullest the qualities of a social being.

What are the principal traits that distinguish our present society from the society in which we immerse ourselves in thought? First of all, the latter does not impose itself on us and we are free to evoke it whenever we wish. We are free to choose from the past the period into which we wish to immerse ourselves. Since the kinds of people we have known at different times either were not the same or presented varying aspects of themselves, it is up to us to choose the society in the midst of which we wish to find ourselves. Whereas in our present society we occupy a definite position and are subject to the constraints that go with it, memory gives us the illusion of living in the midst of groups which do not imprison us, which impose themselves on us only so far and so long as we accept them. If certain memories are inconvenient or burden us, we can always oppose to them the sense of reality inseparable from our present life. But one can go still further. Not only can we roam freely within these groups, going from one to another, but within each of them—even when we have decided to linger with them in thought—we will not encounter this feeling of human constraint in the same degree that we so strongly experience today. This is because the people whom we remember no longer exist or, having moved more or less away from us, represent only a dead society in our eyes—or at least a society so different from the one in which we presently live that most of its commandments are superannuated.

There is incongruity in many respects between the constraints of yesterday and those of today, from which it follows that we can only imagine those of the past incompletely and imperfectly. We can evoke places and times different from those in which we find ourselves because we place both within a framework which encompasses them all. But how can we simultaneously experience various constraints of a social order when these constraints are incompatible? Here it is only one framework that counts—that which is constituted by the commandments of our present society and which necessarily excludes all the others. People form ties with each other and create bonds of friendship and solidarity; but they also compete with each other. This creates much suffering, fear, hostility, and hatred. Yet the competition we experience today has replaced that of yesterday and we are well aware

that the one and the other are incompatible. People of today concern us with the immediate or far away future. We may anticipate much good but also much bad from the future: both the good and the bad are undefined. People of the past, whose life and actions are now immobilized in a clearly defined framework, may have once expressed good or bad intentions in relation to us, but we now expect nothing from them: they evoke in us neither uncertainty, rivalry, nor envy. We cannot love them nor can we detest them. In short, the most painful aspects of yesterday's society are forgotten because constraints are felt only so long as they operate and because, by definition, a past constraint has ceased to be operative.

But I believe that the mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society. Is it not strange then that society causes the mind to transfigure the past to the point of yearning for it? Rousseau has said that of the Christian religion: "Far from binding the hearts of citizens to the state, it detaches them from it as from all the things of this earth. I know nothing that is more opposed to the social spirit." May I not paraphrase and say that the cult of the past, far from binding the hearts of people to society, in fact detaches them: there is nothing more opposed to the interest of society? But note that, whereas the Christian prefers to terrestrial life another which for him is at least as real and which he locates in the future, people well know that the past no longer exists, so that they are obliged to adjust to the only real world—the one in which they now live. They look back only intermittently at vanished time and they never linger there for long. Moreover, how can one fail to see that if people in society were always like a stretched spring, if their horizons were limited to the groups of their contemporaries (indeed of those contemporaries whom they find around them), if they were constantly forced to behave in conformity with their customs, tastes, beliefs, and interests, they might well bow before the social laws but they would endure them only as a harsh and continued necessity? Would they not consider society only as an instrument of constraint and not exhibit any generous and spontaneous enthusiasm for it? . . .

Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess.

The Localization of Memories

What makes recent memories hang together is not that they are contiguous in time: it is rather that they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people with whom we have a relation at this moment, or with whom we have had a relation on the preceding day or days. To recall them it is hence sufficient that we place ourselves in the perspective of this group, that we adopt its interests and follow the slant of its reflections. Exactly the same process occurs when we attempt to localize older memories. We have to place them within a totality of memories common to other groups, groups that are narrower and more lasting, such as our family. To call to mind this totality it is again sufficient that we adopt the attitude common to members of this group, that we pay attention to the memories which are always in the foreground of its way of thought. Based on such memories, the family group is accustomed to retrieving or reconstructing all its other memories following a logic of its own. In this respect there is no difference between older memories and more recent ones. There is no need here to speak of association effected by similarity, just as in the case of recent memories there is no need to speak of association effected by contiguity. To be sure, family memories resemble each other in that they refer to the same family. But these memories differ according to many other relationships. In the case of the family group the similarity of memories is merely a sign of a community of interests and thoughts. It is not because memories resemble each other that several can be called to mind at the same time. It is rather because the same group is interested in them and is able to call them to mind at the same time that they resemble each other.

The reason psychologists have imagined other theories to explain the localization of memories is that, just as people are members of many different groups at the same time, so the memory of the same fact can be placed within many frameworks, which result from distinct collective memories. Limiting themselves to the individual level, they

This chapter's excerpts have been translated from pp. 195–97 of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*.—ED.

have found that memories could become associated in the individual's thought in many different ways. They have then classified such associations in some very general groupings under the rubric of similarity and continuity—which is no explanation. Or they have accounted for the diversity of associations in terms of the diversity of individuals as to their natural or acquired physiological dispositions. This is a very complicated hypothesis which is difficult to verify and which leads us away from the psychological domain. It is in fact no more than a statement. It is correct that in reality memories occur in the form of systems. This is so because they become associated within the mind that calls them up, and because some memories allow the reconstruction of others. But these various modes by which memories become associated result from the various ways in which people can become associated. We can understand each memory as it occurs in individual thought only if we locate each within the thought of the corresponding group. We cannot properly understand their relative strength and the ways in which they combine within individual thought unless we connect the individual to the various groups of which he is simultaneously a member.

To be sure, everyone has a capacity for memory [*mémoire*] that is unlike that of anyone else, given the variety of temperaments and life circumstances. But individual memory is nevertheless a part or an aspect of group memory, since each impression and each fact, even if it apparently concerns a particular person exclusively, leaves a lasting memory only to the extent that one has thought it over—to the extent that it is connected with the thoughts that come to us from the social milieu. One cannot in fact think about the events of one's past without discoursing upon them. But to discourse upon something means to connect within a single system of ideas our opinions as well as those of our circle. It means to perceive in what happens to us a particular application of facts concerning which social thought reminds us at every moment of the meaning and impact these facts have for it. In this way, the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other. It is not necessary that the group be familiar with them. It suffices that we cannot consider them except from the outside—that is, by putting ourselves in the position of others—and that in order to retrieve these remembrances we must tread the same path that others would have followed had they been in our position.

The Collective Memory of the Family

The preceding pages have often raised the question of the collective memory and its framework without considering the matter from the point of view of the group or groups in which this memory performs a most important function. I have limited myself hitherto to observing and pointing out all that is social in individual recollections—those recollections in which every person retrieves his own past, and often thinks that this is all that he can retrieve. Now that we have understood to what point the individual is in this respect—as in so many others—dependent on society, it is only natural that we consider the group in itself as having the capacity to remember, and that we can attribute memory to the family, for example, as much as to any other collective group.

This is by no means a simple metaphor. Family recollections in fact develop as in so many different soils, in the consciousness of various members of the domestic group. Even when they live near each other, but all the more so when life keeps them distant, each family member recollects in his own manner the common familial past. Their individual consciousnesses remain in certain respects impenetrable in regard to one another—but in certain respects only. Despite the distances among them that are created by opposition of temperaments and the variety of circumstances, they all shared the same daily life. Constant exchanges of impressions and opinions among family members will have reinforced the bonds which they sometimes feel just as strongly when they try to break them. As a result, the members of a family will realize that the thoughts of the others have developed ramifications that can be followed, and the design of which can be understood, only on condition that one brings all these thoughts closer together and somehow rejoins them. A child in a classroom is like a complete human unit as long as we consider him only from the perspective of the school. If we think of his parents, or if, without leaving the milieu of the school, the child talks to his comrades or to his teacher about his

This chapter of *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* has been translated in its entirety, with only a few minor cuts.—ED.

family or home, this same child appears only as a part or fragment detached from the whole. This is because the child's gestures and school language are so well coordinated in the framework of the school—as long as the child exists there—that school and child create a unity. But the child is not identified with his family when he is away from the latter, for the thoughts which lead him back to his parents and which he can express find no echo in the school. Nobody understands or is able to complete these thoughts, which are certainly not self-sufficient.

If we were to consider only individual memory we would fail to understand in particular how family recollections reproduce nothing other than the circumstances in which we have established contact with this or that parent. Whether continual or intermittent, such relationships would create successive impressions, each of which can undoubtedly endure and last for longer or shorter periods; but these impressions would have no stability other than that provided by the individual consciousness that experiences them. Furthermore, the outlook of the whole would also constantly change with respect to each of its parts since, in a group composed of individuals, there will always be some who change. Family memories would be reduced to a series of successive pictures which would reflect above all the variations in feeling or thought of those who make up the domestic group. The family would obey the impulses of its members and would follow them in their movements. Its life would proceed just like theirs, in the same time frame as theirs. Family traditions would last no longer than would be suitable for its members.

But this is not the case. No matter how we enter a family—by birth, marriage, or some other way—we find ourselves to be part of a group where our position is determined not by personal feelings but by rules and customs independent of us that existed before us. We feel this to be so, and we do not confuse our impressions and emotional reactions toward members of our family with the thoughts and feelings they impose on us. "One must radically distinguish," says Durkheim, "the family from the relationship of beings united by a physiological bond, from which proceed individual psychological feelings that can also be found among animals."¹ Could we say that the feelings we experience in regard to our parents are explained by relations of consanguinity that have an individual character so that they themselves are individual feelings? But, at first sight, the child in whom these feelings develop and in whom they are expressed with so much intensity does not

1. Emile Durkheim, *Cours inédit sur la famille*.

understand the nature of such relationships. Besides, there are many societies in which kinship does not imply consanguinity. Familial feelings are however also not explained by the care of the mother, by the physical ascendancy of the father, or by habitual cohabitation with brothers and sisters. Beyond and dominating all this there operates a feeling, both obscure and precise, of kinship, which can arise only within the family and which can be explained only by the family. That our feelings and attitudes in this respect have been inculcated or taught by individuals is unimportant: these individuals are themselves animated by a general conception of the family. The same pertains to familial relations that are established between married people. In antiquity marriage was never just a simple consecration of a union built on mutual feeling. The young Greek or Roman woman entered a new family whose cult and traditions she had to accept. In our own societies neither the man nor woman really knows before marriage in what kind of relationship they will find themselves, what order of ideas and feelings will be imposed on them because they have founded a new family. Nothing in their individual past allows them to predict such new ideas and feelings. Neither of them, ever after marriage, could teach the other what they themselves do not know. But both obey traditional rules that they have subconsciously learned in their own family, just as their children will learn these rules from them. This is how we know without hesitation all that we have to carry out in whatever familial situation circumstances may place us.

This being so, we must acknowledge that the expressions and experiences of individuals who are united by relations of kinship are given their form and a large part of their meaning from those conceptions which we understand and by which we are impressed because of the simple fact that we enter into a domestic group and take part in it. Quite early on the child adopts toward its father, mother, and all of its family an attitude that cannot be fully explained by the intimacy of this way of life, by age differences, by habitual feelings of affection toward those around us, by respect concerning those who are stronger than us and on whom we depend, or by gratitude toward those who have rendered us service. Such feelings, no matter how spontaneous they are, follow paths laid out in advance and completely independent of us, which society has been careful to point in the right direction. There is indeed nothing less natural than this kind of emotional manifestation, nothing that conforms more strictly to precepts and results from a kind of training. Feelings—even moderate ones—are subject to many fluctuations and they are transferred, or would be often transferred, from one person to another if they were not to find resistance.

It is already extraordinary that families generally succeed in motivating their members to love each other all the time despite separations and distances, that its members spend the major part of their emotional resources within its bosom. Undoubtedly, feelings within the family itself are not always regulated in terms of kinship. We can love our grandparents, uncles, and aunts as well as or even more strongly than our father or mother, or we can prefer a cousin to a brother. But it is hard to admit to ourselves that this is the case. The expression of feelings is nevertheless regulated through the structure of the family. It is this structure that is really important, if not for the individual, then at least for the group to retain its authority and cohesion. Of course, we have friends outside the family, and we can love others besides our kin. But if this is so, the family succeeds in absorbing such relations and bonds either because these friends—given the privileges they have earned through the length of their relations with us or since we have admitted them to the intimacy of our home—become quasi-parents, or because marriage transforms into kin what had earlier been only a bond between two individuals. Another possibility is that the family proclaims its lack of interest in such friends as if there were nothing in common between this kind of capricious, unregulated, and imaginative affectivity and the clearly defined and permanent feelings on which the family is based. Finally, the family can deal with the fact that one of its members has joined another group and separated himself from the original group either by waiting for the return of the prodigal son or by attempting to forget him. In this manner, either our feelings develop within the framework of our family and conform to its organization, or they cannot be shared by the other members of the family who refuse, no doubt rightfully, to become moved by or interested in these feelings.

It is above all when we compare different types of familial organization that we are surprised to find just how much is acquired and attributed when it comes to those feelings that might have appeared the most simple and universal. Depending on whether descent is established along paternal or maternal lines, the son already does or does not receive the name of his father and is or is not a part of his family. In a matrilineal society the child, when he is small—and even increasingly so as he gradually becomes conscious of his position among other people—considers his mother and her parents as his nuclear family, at the same time neglecting his father, whose ancestors are not his own. In our societies, a brother believes that the ties between himself and his sister are as close as those with his brother. We consider our uncles and cousins on the paternal or maternal side as equally re-

lated to us. It was very different in Greece, where the family comprised only descendants on the male side. The Roman family was a vast body that aggregated new members by adoption; appended to it were a great number of slaves and clients.² In our societies, where the family tends increasingly to be reduced to the conjugal group, the feelings that unite the spouses as well as the feelings that unite them to their children almost suffice to constitute the emotional atmosphere of the family. These feelings must draw a part of their strength from the fact that they are almost the only cement holding the members of the group together. In the Roman family, by contrast, the conjugal union is only one of a number of relationships uniting the head of the family not just with those who are of the same blood but also with his clients, freedmen, slaves, and adopted children. In this case, conjugal feelings play but a secondary role. The wife considers her husband the *pater familias*, and the husband, for his part, sees in his wife not "one half" of the family but one among many of its elements—an element that could be eliminated without damaging the vitality of the family or reducing its substance. The instability of marriages and the frequency of divorces in Rome has been explained by the intervention of the parents of the husband or wife, who were said to have the power to dissolve a union established with their consent.³ But such an intervention would not have been tolerated if divorce had menaced the very existence of the family, as is the case in our societies. If it is true that "in Rome each person on average was married three or four times during his life span" and that these estimates are low rather than high, we are in the presence of a matrimonial regime that would correspond to "successive polygamy," and the feelings of spouses must have been very different from those attachments which accompany the idea of indissoluble marriage.

In addition to regulations that are common to a whole society, there exist customs and modes of thinking within each particular family that equally impose—and even more forcibly—their form on the opinions and feelings of their members. "In the Rome of antiquity," Fustel de Coulanges tells us:

there were no regulations, forms, nor common rituals for domestic religion. Each family had complete freedom in these matters. No exterior power had the right to regulate its cult or beliefs. There was no priest other than the

2. The slave and the client were members of the family and were buried in the common tomb. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 20th ed., 1908, p. 67, note; see also pp. 127f.

3. Paul Lacombe, *La famille dans la société romaine: étude de moralité comparée* 1889, pp. 208f.

father. As priest he knew no hierarchy. The Roman pontiff could see to it that the father of the family performed all the religious rites, but he had no right to demand of him any kind of modification. *Suo quisque ritu sacrificium faciat* was the absolute rule. Each family had its own ceremonies, its particular feast days, its forms of prayer and its hymns. The father was the sole interpreter and pontiff of its religion, which he alone could teach; and he could teach it only to his son. The rites, terms of prayer, and songs, which were all essential parts of this domestic religion, were a patrimony, a sacred possession which the family did not share with anybody, and which it was indeed forbidden to reveal to strangers.

Similarly, in the most traditional societies of today, each family has its proper mentality, its memories which it alone commemorates, and its secrets that are revealed only to its members. But these memories, as in the religious traditions of the family of antiquity, consist not only of a series of individual images of the past. They are at the same time models, examples, and elements of teaching. They express the general attitude of the group; they not only reproduce its history but also define its nature and its qualities and weaknesses. When we say, "In our family we have long life spans," or "we are proud," or "we do not strive to get rich," we speak of a physical or moral quality which is supposed to be inherent in the group, and which passes from the group to its members. Sometimes it is the place or the region from which the family originated or it is the characteristic of this or that family member that becomes the more or less mysterious symbol for the common ground from which the family members acquire their distinctive traits. In any case, the various elements of this type that are retained from the past provide a framework for family memory, which it tries to preserve intact, and which, so to speak, is the traditional armor of the family. Even though this framework is constituted by facts that can be dated—by images that last only for a certain span of time, as one finds in it judgments that the family and those surrounding it have expressed about themselves—it partakes of the nature of those collective notions that cannot be placed in a particular place or at a definitive moment, and that seem to dominate the course of time.

Let us now suppose that we recall an event of our family life, which, as the saying goes, is engraved in our memory. Let us then try to eliminate from it these ideas and traditional judgments which define the mind of the family. What remains then? Is it even possible to accomplish such a dissociation, to distinguish in the recollection of the event "the image of that which happened only once and is focused on a moment of time and a single event" from the notions that in general express our experience of the actions and life-styles of our parents?

When Chateaubriand in a famous page tells how evenings were spent at the manor of Combourg, is this an account of an event that happened only once? Was he particularly impressed, on one evening more than any other, by the silent comings and goings of his father, by the appearance of the hall, and by the details that he throws into relief in his depiction? No: he undoubtedly assembled in one single scene recollections of many evenings that were engraved in his memory and in that of his family. What he portrays is the summation of an entire period—the idea of a type of life. One gets a glimpse of the character of the actors not just as developed by the role they play in this scene, but also in terms of their habitual style and entire history. To be sure, what interests us above all is Chateaubriand himself and the feeling of oppression, sadness, and boredom that arises in him from his contact with people and things. But how can we fail to see that this feeling could not have arisen in another milieu and that it implies family customs which existed only in the lower provincial nobility of the old regime as well as in the Chateaubriand family's own traditions? If other origins for such a feeling seemed similar this would be only superficially so.

What we find is a reconstructed picture. In order to see it come to life in its bygone reality, it is through reflection rather than from its suspension that the author chooses this particular physical trait or that particular custom. So it is, for example, that he says of his father: "He wore a robe of white wool which I have seen only on him; his half-bald head was covered by a large cap which stood up straight . . . he inclined his dry and white cheek toward us, without responding." Regarding his mother he says that she "threw herself with a sigh onto one of the old daybeds in blazing Siamese style." He mentions "the great silver candlestick with its candle" and the clock which scanned this nightly walk, and the small tower to the west. All these details are intentionally collected to evoke effectively the characters of his parents and the monotony of this sequestered existence—which was, after all, shared by many provincial nobles of the period—and to reconstruct the habitual atmosphere of such strange family evenings. To be sure, this is a description created long afterward by a writer. The person who tells the story is obliged to translate his recollections so as to communicate them; what he writes may not correspond exactly to all he calls to mind. But the scene as it is represented nevertheless gives, in a gripping abbreviation, the idea of a family. Even though it is a summary of collective reflections and feelings, it still projects a singularly vivid image on the screen of an obscure and unclear past.

A given scene which took place in our home, in which our parents were the principal actors, and which has been fixed in our memory therefore does not reappear as the depiction of a day such as we experienced it in the past. We compose it anew and introduce elements borrowed from several periods which preceded or followed the scene in question. The notion we have at this moment of recreation of the moral nature of our parents and of the event itself—now judged from a distance—imposes itself on our mind with so much power that we cannot escape being inspired by it. The same is true regarding those events and figures that arise out of the totality of family life, which summarize it and which serve as landmarks for whoever wishes to localize details and circumstances of lesser importance. Although these have a date, we can actually move them along the line of time without modifying them. They have become pregnant with all that has preceded them just as they are already pregnant with all that will follow. As often as we return to these events and figures and reflect upon them, they attract to themselves more reality instead of becoming simplified. This is because they are at the point of intersection of an increasing number of reflections. So it is that within the framework of family memory many figures and facts do indeed serve as landmarks; but each figure expresses an entire character, as each fact recapitulates an entire period in the life of the group. They coexist as images and notions. When we reflect upon them, it seems indeed as if we had again taken up contact with the past. But this indicates simply that we feel capable, given this framework, of reconstructing the image of persons and facts.

* * *

It is true that all sorts of ideas can call to mind recollections of our family. In fact, from the moment that the family is the group within which we pass the major part of our life, family thoughts become ingredients of most of our thoughts. Our kin communicate to us our first notions about people and things. For a long time we knew nothing of the external world but the repercussions of outside events within the circle of our kin. If we think of a town, it might recall to us a trip we once undertook with our brother. If we think of a profession, we think of the relation who practices it; or if we think of wealth, we imagine members whose fortune we try to estimate. There is in short no object upon which we reflect that cannot serve as a point of departure, through an association of ideas, to retrieve some thought which immerses us again, in the distant or recent past, in the circle of our family.

This does not at all mean that what I have called the framework of family memory comprises all notions corresponding to objects quite apart from the family. Suppose that while reading I chance upon the name of a French town, Compiègne, and that, as I have already mentioned, I am reminded of a trip I once made in the company of my brother. Two possibilities are likely to follow. Perhaps my attention is not fixed particularly on my brother but rather on the town we visited and the forest through which we walked. In this case I recall the reflections we exchanged about everything that struck our eyes or that happened to arise in our conversations. It would seem that I could substitute for my brother a friend who is not a relative without seriously modifying my recollection. My brother is simply like one actor among others within a scene whose main interest lies not in the relation of kinship that unites us, since I am concentrating on the town above all and trying to reconstruct how it looked, or since I am recalling some idea we discussed during our walk. In this scenario, even though my brother comes to mind I nevertheless do not feel that I recall an event of my family life.

In the other possibility, it is indeed my brother as such who interests me on the occasion of this recollection. In this case, if I wish to see him more clearly, I realize that the mental image I have of him is no more related to this period than to any other. When I wish to call to mind his characteristics, I see him for example as he was a few days ago. However, I fix my attention not so much on his characteristics, as on the relations which existed and continue to exist between him, myself, and the various members of our family. The details of our excursion either recede little by little into the background, or they concern me only to the extent that they have allowed us to become aware of the bonds uniting us to one another and to our family. In other words, this everyday recollection becomes a family recollection only from the moment when the notion which caused it to reappear in my memory—the notion of a French town (in itself part of the notion I have of France)—is replaced by the notion of my family. The latter is both a general and specific notion; it serves to enframe, modify, and recast the image of this recollection. It would be inexact therefore to say that the idea of place calls a family recollection to mind. Rather, I must discard this idea if I wish to link the image called to mind to my family. Only when the idea of a group of my relations, not the idea of a particular place, illuminates the image called to mind does this image take the form of a family memory.

It is all the more important to distinguish these purely and specifically family notions, which form the framework of domestic memory,

from all others. This is because in many societies the family is not just a group of relations but can apparently be defined according to the position it occupies, the professions its members engage in, its social level, etc. Even if the domestic group sometimes coincides with a local group and the life and thought of the family are invaded by economic, religious, and other preoccupations, there nevertheless exists a difference in nature between kinship on the one hand and religion, profession, wealth, etc., on the other. This is why the family has its own peculiar memory, just as do other kinds of communities. Foremost in this memory are relations of kinship. If events that seem at first glance to be related to ideas of another order occur within the family, that is because in a certain respect they also can be considered as family events.

It has been observed that, within certain ancient and modern societies, on the one hand the family was not distinguished from the religious group, and on the other hand, being rooted in the soil, it was fused with house and land. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not distinguish the family from the hearth where the cult of the household gods was celebrated. The hearth "is the symbol of sedentary life. . . . It should be anchored in the land. Once anchored, one must not change its place. . . . And the family is anchored in the soil like the altar itself. . . . The idea of a domestic abode naturally arises. The family is attached to the hearth and the hearth is attached to the soil. Hence there arises a close relation between the soil and the family. This must be its permanent abode which it could not dream of leaving."⁴ But various hearths must be clearly separated from each other, just like the cults of different families. "There must be an enclosure around the hearth, at a certain distance. It does not matter whether it is formed by a hedge, by a wooden fence, or by a stone wall: whatever it consists of, it marks the limit separating one hearth from another. This border is accounted sacred." The same is the case in regard to tombs. "Just as houses could not be contiguous, tombs were not supposed to touch upon each other. . . . The dead are gods who belong to their own families, and the family alone has the right to invoke them. These dead have taken possession of the soil. They live under this small knoll and nobody who is not of the family can think of contacting them. No one moreover has the right to dislodge them from the soil they occupy. Among the ancients, a tomb could never be destroyed or displaced."⁵

4. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, pp. 64f.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 68. "Roman law demands that, if a family sells the field where its tomb is located, the family retains ownership at least of this tomb and preserves in perpetuity the

Each field was surrounded, just like the house, by an enclosure. This was not a stone wall, but "a strip of land several feet wide which had to remain uncultivated, and which the plow was never supposed to touch. This space was sacred; Roman law declared it indefensible. It belonged to religion. . . . On this line, at various distances, people placed heavy stones or tree stumps, which were called *termes* (boundary stones) . . . the boundary stone fixed in the earth became, so to speak, the domestic religion rooted in the soil which announced that this soil was forever the property of the family. . . . Once it was fixed according to the ritual, there was no power on earth that could displace it." There was a time when the house and the land were so "incorporated in the family that it could neither lose them nor part with them."⁶ Looking at the house and the land naturally renewed the memory of all events, be they profane or religious, that had taken place there.

There was undoubtedly a period in which the family constituted the essential social unity, religion was practiced within its framework, and religious beliefs were perhaps formed within the organization of the family and fashioned in its image. But everything seems to indicate that these beliefs already existed before the family or, in any case, that they penetrated into it from the outside. Usener has shown that, in addition to the cult of ancestors, and perhaps before the great Olympian divinities achieved their definitive form, the imagination of Roman and Greek peasants peopled the countryside with a number of mysterious and powerful beings, gods and spirits in charge of the major incidents of life and the various phases of agricultural labor,⁷ which had no domestic character whatever. Whatever the origin of the cult of the dead might be, there can be no doubt that between the household gods, the shades of the dead, and those gods that Usener calls *Sonder* or *Augenblicksgötter*, there existed a close relationship; it may well be that the former were conceived in imitation of the latter. In any case—despite the differences in these cults, in the places where they were celebrated, and in the types of their priests—they were nevertheless understood to belong to the same group of religious representations.⁸

right of crossing the field so as to perform the ceremonies of its cult. The ancient custom was to bury the dead, not in cemeteries or along the sides of a road, but in the field of each family."

6. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

7. H. Usener, *Götternamen: Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung*, Bonn, 1896, p. 75.

8. Usener, following Babrios, cites the story of a farmer who goes to the city in order to implore the great gods, since they are more powerful than those of the countryside.

These ways of religious thinking are distinct from family traditions. In other words, the cult practiced within the family, even among these peoples, corresponded quite well to two kinds of spiritual attitudes. On the one hand, the cult of the dead allowed the family the chance to reaffirm its bonds, to commune periodically with the memory of departed kin, and to reaffirm its sense of unity and continuity. On the other hand, when, on the same day of the year all the families, following roughly uniform rites, evoked the dead or invited them to partake of the food of the living, when attention was turned toward the nature and the kind of existence of defunct souls, they participated in a totality of beliefs common to all in their community and even shared by many others. When participating in the cult of the dead they focused their concern upon a whole world of supernatural powers of which the shades/ghosts of their parents represented only a very small part. Only the first of these two attitudes represented an act of familial commemoration: it coincided with a religious attitude without being confounded with that attitude.

In our societies, the peasant style of life is distinguished from all others in that work is done within the domestic framework: the farm, the stable, and the barn remain in the forefront of the family's attention, even when one is not actually working in them. It is therefore quite natural that the family and the soil remain closely linked to each other in common thought. Moreover, since the peasantry is fixed in the soil, the representation of a limited piece of land and of the village is etched very early in the mind of its members, with all its particularities, divisions, and the relative positions of its houses and the interpenetration of its pieces of land. When a town dweller talks to a peasant he is astonished to find that the peasant distinguishes between houses and pieces of land according to the family who owns them. The peasant is likely to say: "This is the enclosure of one, that is the farm of another." In his eyes the walls, hedges, paths, and ditches denote the borders that separate domestic groups. When he passes by a particular field he thinks of those who sow it and use a plow in an orchard, or those who will collect the fruits.

But if the peasant community lodged in its village in some way assigns according to its thought a part of the soil to each of the families of which it is composed and determines the place that each one occu-

ibid., p. 247. Fustel de Coulanges, in his explanation of how the plebes "formerly oppressed with the lack of a cult, have from this time on their own religious ceremonies and feasts," says that "sometimes a plebeian family made itself a hearth . . . sometimes the plebeian, having no domestic cult, had access to the temples of the city." *La cité antique*, p. 328.

pies in its midst according to the place where each family resides and where its possessions are to be found, there is no proof that a similar notion is also in the forefront of the consciousness of each family and that the closeness in space of its members is confounded with the cohesion that holds them in association. Let us imagine the case where these two sorts of relationships appear to coincide very closely. In his study of the agnatic family (i.e., the family which comprises the descendants of a male along male lines) as it still exists among the Slavs of the South and as it once existed in Greece, Durkheim notes that this family is based on the principle that the patrimony cannot leave the family. In this case it is preferable to lose individuals (married daughters for example) rather than to lose land. "The bonds that attach things to domestic society are stronger than those that attach the individual to society. . . . Things are the soul of the family; it cannot get rid of them without destroying itself."⁹ Does it follow that even in these circumstances the unity of the family can be reduced to the unity of possessions? Do the family members consider kinship links and the links resulting from the possession and the common cultivation of a shared piece of land to be identical? No. Here again one should not confuse two tendencies of peasant thought under the pretext that the members of the same kinship live close together and work the same soil in common. One tendency is directed toward agricultural labors and their material basis in the soil, and the other is directed toward the interior of the home and the family group. To be sure, work on the soil is very different from industrial types of labor insofar as it brings the members of one family or families with links of kinship together for the same tasks carried on in the same place instead of dispersing them. The peasant who sees members of his family or his home while working and who can say to himself, "This field is mine, these animals are ours," seems to blend agricultural and familial ideas. One might indeed believe that, because his work is done within the family framework, work and the family are not distinguished in his mind; yet this is not at all the case. Whether he pushes his plow all by himself, mows at the same time as his parents, threshes his wheat with them, or keeps busy in the chicken coop, he is in reality linked—and cannot help being linked in his thought—to the peasant collectivity of the village and the region, which engages in the same gestures and performs the same operations as he himself does. The members of that collectivity, even if they were not related, could help him or replace him. It matters little when it comes to the results of his work whether it is done by

9. Durkheim, *Cours inédit*.

associated kin or by peasants who are not kinsmen. The fact is that work, as well as the soil, is not associated with a specific family, but with peasant activity in general. The reasons that attract kin to work are very different from those that attract them to the homestead. Relationships of physical force rather than of kinship explain how cousins, often quite tenuously related, work together while old grandparents or children too young to work stay at home. When different families living on neighboring fields make use of a good day to sow or harvest, when they consult the sky to determine whether a dry spell will continue or whether hail will destroy tender buds, a communal life awakens among them, and similar preoccupations pertain to both families. Peasant thought and memory comes into play among them. It provides access to the treasury of their traditions, legends, and proverbs and enjoins them to regulate their lives according to the customary division of time on the calendar and on the feast days. By fixing the forms of their periodic enjoyments and allowing them to bring the bad old days into view, it teaches peasants resignation. Undoubtedly, the family is always there, but in such moments peasant thought is not directed to it. When attention is directed to the family agricultural preoccupations as such and all the purely peasant notions of which I just spoke disappear or at least become attenuated. Each member of these groups of workers looks to his nearest kin and thinks of those left at home; his horizons become limited to close kin who are now detached from the earth and the peasant community and become part of another totality that is defined by kinship ties alone. This is also the case in those communal festivities where members of the family, neighbors, and friends come together, where the spirit of the peasant community circulates from one hearth to another. But when friends leave and neighbors return to their own homes, the family turns inward and a new kind of spiritual current appears among them. A new mode of thought that cannot be communicated to other families and that can spread only among its members comes into being. How could this mode of thought be confused with the notion of the earth as it is understood by every peasant and maintained in every rural community?

It is often asserted that the evolution of the family has consisted of a progressive shedding of the religious, legal, and economic functions that it performed in earlier times. The father of the family is today no longer the priest, the judge, or even the political head of the domestic group. But it is probable that even at its origin these functions were already differentiated and not conflated with the function of the father as father, that kinship relationships were different from those resulting from other kinds of thought and activities. How could these functions

have become differentiated had there not been from the very beginning a difference in nature among them? They may certainly have contributed to the reinforcement and modification of the cohesion of the family; but such a result was not due to the unique nature of these functions. Parents may separate, a family may be divided, the family sense may weaken: this may be because the members of a family no longer share religious beliefs or because they have come to live in different places or belong to different social categories. Yet such differing causes can produce the same effect only because the family reacts in the same manner to this or that cause. This reaction can be explained essentially by familial representations. The community of religious beliefs, increased spatial proximity, and similar social representations are not enough to create the common spirit of a family. All these conditions have for the family only the importance it attributes to them. The family is capable of finding within itself sufficient strength to overcome the obstacles opposing it. What is more, it can happen that the family transforms obstacles into advantages, that it is fortified by the very resistances encountered externally. Relatives who are obliged to live far from each other may find in such temporary separations a reason to increase their love, because they think only about how to overcome separation and concentrate their efforts with this aim foremost in their minds. In order to overcome the gaps created by different religious beliefs or inequality of social level, they will try to reinforce the bonds of the domestic union. It is a fact that familial feelings have their own distinct nature, and that external forces can influence them only to the extent that the family consents to such influences.

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What then is the character of this mentality of the family and of its memory? Which events among the great number that develop in the family leave some marks on it? What notions have priority among all those that intersect in the thoughts of the members of this kind of group? If we seek a framework of notions that serve to recall memories of domestic life, we immediately think of kinship relations as they are defined in each society. In fact we think of them all the time because the daily contacts we have with those close to us as well as with the members of other families constantly oblige us to follow their guidelines. They appear to us in the form of a well-articulated system that provides grounds for reflection. There is a certain logic in familial genealogies; that is why the histories of dynasties, successions, and alliances within royal families provide a convenient way to retain the events of a reign. In the same way, when we read a drama in which

many things happen, we would be puzzled and soon lost if we didn't know the characters beforehand and if we didn't have prior knowledge of their respective positions.

If we limited ourselves to family relations in themselves, the relations that define the modern family would, it is true, appear much too simple to serve as a prop for the recollections of all that has impressed us in the life-style of our relations, in their words and actions, as well as for the recollection of our own actions, thoughts, and words when we ourselves assume the parental role. It would surely not suffice to know that I have a father, a mother, children, and a wife if I wish my memory to reconstruct a true picture of each of them and of our common past. Yet even though this may appear quite simple, the framework soon becomes more complicated if we substitute for the general scheme of any family in our society the more finished and detailed design of the essential aspects of our family. In this case it is a matter of envisaging not only the various types and degrees of kinship, but persons who are related to us in this degree or in that manner, along with the physiognomy that we customarily attribute to them in the family. There is in effect something very curious in our attitude toward each and every one of our kin: we manage to unite in a single thought the idea of their position in our family simply in terms of degrees of kinship together with the image of an individual person with clearly defined traits.

There is nothing more abstractly imperative, nothing of which the rigidity seems more to suggest the necessity of natural laws, than the rules governing relations between father and children, husband and wife. Such bonds can of course be dissolved in exceptional cases. Roman fathers had the right to repudiate their children; courts of law have the necessary authority to decree the loss of parental rights or divorce. But even in these cases, kinship or alliance leaves traces in the memory of the group and in society. Whoever has left the family in these ways is considered by it a little like a person under a curse to be treated like an outcast. This would not be understandable if the outcast were indeed experienced as a total stranger, indifferent to the family. In any case, as long as we do not leave the family, we continue to have the same kin relationships with its members. This is not the case with other groups, whose members may change and sometimes alter their position in relation to others. Men may change their occupations or nationality, they may rise or fall on the ladder of social positions: subjects may become masters, and masters may become subjects, a layman may become a priest, and a priest can return to the laity. But a son does not become a father unless he builds another family—and

even then he will always remain the son of his father. There is in this case an irreversible relationship. In a similar manner, brothers cannot stop being brothers, for this is a kind of indissoluble union. Nowhere else does the position of the individual seem so predetermined, without taking into account what the individual desires or indeed is.

Yet there is also no other milieu in which the personality of each individual stands out so clearly. There is no other institution, moreover, in which each member of the group is considered as a being that is "unique in its kind," and for whom one could not substitute another. One cannot even think of such a possibility. From this point of view a family is not so much a group with specialized functions as a group of differentiated persons. To be sure, we have not chosen our father, mother, brothers and sisters, and in many cases we have chosen our spouses only in appearance. But in the relatively intimate milieu of our family we examine each other for long periods and in all of our aspects because of the daily contacts that we establish with each other. This in turn creates in the memory of each a singularly precise and rich image of all the other members of the family. Is this then not the region of our social life in which we are least dominated and guided, in our judgment of those close to us, by the rules and beliefs of society? Here people are considered according to their individual nature and not as members of religious, political, or economic groups. What counts in the family above all are almost exclusively personal qualities, instead of what individuals are or could be for those other groups that surround the family without pervading it.

Thus when we think of our relatives we simultaneously have in mind the idea of kinship relationships and the image of a person. Because these two elements are closely linked, we adopt at the same time vis-à-vis each one of our relatives a double attitude, and our feelings regarding them can be both indifferent as to their object (since our father and our brother are imposed on us) and yet spontaneous, free, and built upon well-thought-out preferences. This is so because we perceive in their very nature, and quite apart from their kinship position, all sorts of reasons for loving them.

From the moment that a family is augmented by a new member it reserves a place for him or her in its thought. Whether this new member enters by birth, marriage, or adoption, the family marks this event with a date and notes the circumstances under which it has happened. This gives rise to an initial memory that will not disappear. Later, when we think of this relation, by now fully assimilated in the group, we will recall how he or she happened to enter the group and which reflections or impressions the particular circumstances of this event

might have caused among the group's members. What is more, this recollection will be revived each time the attention of the family members is drawn to this relative's actions, words, or even face. They will never forget what he was like when he entered the family circle; this recollection or notion will define henceforth the direction dominating all the impressions that he will be able to awaken in them. In short, any event or figure remembered by the family partakes of these two characteristics: on the one hand it recreates a singularly rich picture, which is deeply penetrating since it allows us to retrieve realities we have come to know personally through intimate experience; on the other hand it obliges us to view the person from the perspective of our group, that is, to recall the kinship relationships that explain why this person is important for all of us.

What is true of persons and events in the family is also true of many others. It seems that we recall them in two ways. First, we recall particular images, each of which corresponds to a single fact or circumstance: this would entail the entire set of impressions we retain of those close to us, which explain why we attribute to them an original physiognomy that cannot be confused with any other. Second, by pronouncing their names we experience a sense of familiarity as in the presence of an individual whose place in the wider context is well known, as is his relative position in regard to proximate individuals and objects. Here we are concerned with the notion of degrees of kinship when we try to describe it in words. But domestic memory cannot be reduced, as we have seen, to the pure and simple reproduction of a series of individual impressions similar to those that can be discerned in our consciousness on other occasions. Moreover, family memory does not consist simply in repeating words or sketching actions. Finally, it does not result from a simple association of these two kinds of data. When the family recalls something, it clearly uses words and refers to events or images that are unique in kind: but neither these words, which are only material impulses, nor these events and bygone images, which are but virtual objects of sensation or thought, constitute the totality of memory. A family recollection must be something else: it must however orient us toward these images and events while it anchors itself in these names.

Nothing serves us better than first names to indicate this kind of recollection, which is based neither on general notions nor on individual images, but which nevertheless refers to a kinship link and to a specific person simultaneously. First names are like words that are used to represent objects insofar as they are based on an agreement between the members of the domestic group. For example, when I

think of the first name of my brother, I use a material sign that is not without significance in itself. It has been chosen not only from the repertory of names fixed by society, each one of which recalls in common thought certain memories (saints of the calendar, historical personages who had this name); but also by virtue of its length, the sounds of which it is composed, the frequency or rarity of its usage, this name gives birth to characteristic impressions. For this reason, first names, even though they have been chosen without taking the subject to which they are applied into consideration, seem to be part of their subject's nature. A first name, given that it is applied to my brother, has a changed significance for me; but my brother, because he has this first name, would also seem different to me had he another name. This would not be the case if the first name were just a material label attached to the image of an individual or to a series of images that recall this person to me. When it comes to first names, we must think of something that they symbolize beyond the material sign, something to which they are moreover inseparably attached. If first names help to differentiate the members of a family, it is because they correspond to the group's need to distinguish them for itself and also to agree on the principle and means of that distinction. The principle in question is the kinship structure, according to which each member of the family occupies a fixed and irreducible position. The means used is the habit of designating the person occupying this position by a first name. The material sign in itself plays only a completely accessory role. What is essential is that my thought is in accord with that which, in the mind of my kin, represents my brother. The first name is but a symbol of this agreement, which I can experience at each instant or which I have experienced for a long time. It is this agreement much more than the word itself that I call to mind, even though the word is embedded in this agreement. That is to say that my thought is amazingly rich and complex, since it is the thought of a group with dimensions that, at least for a moment, enlarge my consciousness. I feel then that to pronounce this name in the presence of the other members of the kin group would suffice for all of them to know of whom I speak and to be prepared to communicate all that they know about this person. It matters little whether I really conduct such an inquiry. The essential thing is that I know it is possible to do so, that I remain in contact with the members of my family. Most of the ideas that cross my mind can, after all, be reduced to the more or less precise feeling that one could analyze their contents if one desired to do so. But it is only rarely that one conducts such an inquiry to its conclusion, or even up to its midpoint. If I now propose to pursue this inquiry until the end, I know

quite well that it would permit me to substitute for the first name all the many particular and concrete impressions that my kin and I myself have had of this brother during successive periods, insofar as we can reconstruct such impressions. Thus, given certain conditions, there are behind first names many images which it is possible to evoke. Yet this very possibility is the result of the existence of our group, of its persistence and integrity. Although at different periods the first name designates for us the same man who is linked to us by the same kinship relations, as the group changes, its experience in regard to this same kinsman acquires many new impressions even as it loses some of its content—by the disappearance of certain witnesses or by the lacunae that grow in the memory of those who survive. This is why the recollection of a kinsman does not represent, at successive moments, the same totality of personal characteristics.

What would happen if all the members of my family disappeared? I would maintain for some time the habit of attributing a meaning to their first names. In fact, if a group has affected us with its influence for a period of time we become so saturated that if we find ourselves alone, we act and think as if we were still living under the pressure of the group. This is a natural feeling, for a recent disappearance produces its effects only in the long run. Finally, even if my family became extinct, how do I know that I would not find unknown kin or persons who knew my kin, and for whom these first names would still preserve a meaning?

On the contrary, to the extent that the dead retreat into the past, this is not because the material measure of time that separates them from us lengthens; it is because nothing remains of the group in which they passed their lives, and which needed to name them, that their names slowly become obliterated. The only ancestors transmitted and retained are those whose memory has become the object of a cult by men who remain at least fictitiously in contact with them. The others become part of an anonymous mass. It seems that in some primitive or ancient societies each family has at its command a store of a limited number of names among which it must choose the names of its members. This perhaps explains why the Greeks had a tendency to give to grandsons the name of their grandfathers. What is expressed here is the fact that limits are imposed upon the interest and attention of a group, which gives names to living members while eliminating in thought and memory the dead from whom the names are taken. The individual who does not want to forget vanished kin and who obstinately repeats their names will soon experience universal indifference. Walled in by his memories, he tries unsuccessfully to intermingle the

preoccupations of present society with those of bygone groups; what he lacks is support precisely from the groups that have disappeared. A person who alone remembers what others do not resembles someone who sees what others do not see. He is in certain respects like a person suffering from hallucinations who leaves the disagreeable impression among those around him. As his society becomes impatient he keeps quiet, and because he cannot express himself freely, he forgets the names that are no longer used by those around him. Society is like the woman from Ephesus who hangs the dead in order to save the living. It is true that certain persons who are dying manage to prolong their agonies, and there are societies that preserve for a greater time span than others the remembrance of their dead. But the differences among these societies are of degree only.

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I have said that, if in every society there exists a type of organization which is imposed upon all families, in every family there develops in addition a particular mentality, since a family possesses traditions that are peculiar to it. How could it be otherwise if family memory preserves recollections not just of the relations of kin uniting its members, but also of events and persons that highlight its history? Families are like many species of the same genus: since each of them is distinguishable from other families it can happen that, whether they are unaware of each other, whether they oppose or influence each other, a portion of the recollections of one family pervade the memory of one or several other families. Furthermore, since the general beliefs of a society reach family members through the mediation of those among them who are most directly involved in the collective life of the outside world, it can happen that these beliefs are either adapted to the family's traditions or, inversely, that they transform these traditions. Whether the one or the other occurs depends in part upon the tendencies that characterize the wider society of which all the families are a part. A society can be more or less disinterested in regard to what is going on in the families, or (as in primitive societies) it can unceasingly regulate and control all domestic life. The impact of society will also depend on the power of the traditions belonging to each family, which, in their turn, are not without relation to the personal qualities of those who create and maintain them.

It may be that we do not leave our family to establish a new household, that our relations have strong personalities or especially original characteristics. They may have succeeded in giving our group a strongly marked physiognomy amidst other families, or their moral

nature and their attitude toward the social world around them may not have changed significantly during all the time that we lived in close contact with them. In this case the various incidents of their existence, their acts and judgments, will always be in the forefront of our memory. But even if a family is only feebly influenced by other groups, inevitable transformations will still be produced within: deaths, births, sickness, aging, slackening or increase of the individual organic activity of its members. These will bring about changes in the families' internal structure from one period to another. It is conceivable that its members, or at least the great majority of them, will not perceive these changes. This is so if, for example, they age together or progressively isolate themselves from others and cultivate the illusion that they have not changed, or if they speak of remembrances of the distant past as they would speak of them when they were recent. In this case the frame in which they place these events is hardly modified or enriched. More often those among them who do not isolate themselves completely from other domestic societies or from the surrounding society in general will find that their kin are no longer today what they used to be in the past. They will then reorder and bring up to date the totality of family memories by comparing what old people have to say, which may be unreliable, with the testimony of members of other families. They will also look for analogies, current notions, and the whole bundle of ideas prevalent in their period outside their group but displayed around it. It is in this way that history does not limit itself to reproducing a tale told by people contemporary with events of the past, but rather refashions it from period to period not only because of other testimony that has become available, but also to adapt it to the mental habits and the type of representation of the past common among contemporaries.

When a marriage separates one of the family's members, the domestic group from which he departs has the tendency not to forget him. But within the group which he has now joined he thinks less frequently of those of his kin who are no longer around him, whereas the new figures and events move to the forefront of his consciousness. This is what happened especially in antiquity, for example in Greek and Roman societies. No new family was created through marriage; rather, a new member entered into an established family through marriage. This new member first had to detach himself from another established family. This radical separation resembled the retrenchment imposed upon a group by the death of a member. In Rome, the young woman who gets married dies as to the family of her parents and is reborn into the family of her husband. That is why marriage—at least in the early

years of the Roman Republic, during which the family remained the essential social unit—was a religious act and took the form of a rite as in all other occasions in which the composition of the group was modified. "The married woman," says Fustel de Coulanges,

still participates in the rituals of death. But it is no longer to her own ancestors that she carries her funeral offerings. She no longer has this right. Marriage has completely detached her from the family of her father and it has broken all the religious bonds with that family as well. She now brings her offerings to the family of her husband; she is now part of his family and his ancestors have become hers. The marriage is treated like a second birth. She is henceforth the daughter of her husband, *filiae loco* in the parlance of the lawyers. One cannot belong to two families or to two domestic religions. The wife is entirely a part of the family and the religion of her husband.¹⁰

The wife does not, of course, forget all her anterior memories when she enters the family of her husband. The memories of her childhood are strongly engraved in her mind and they are renewed in the relations she continues to have with her parents, her brothers, and her sisters. But she is enjoined to synchronize them with the ideas and traditions which have now been imposed on her by her present family. Inversely, a Roman family could not assimilate a woman who had joined it through marriage without somehow disturbing the equilibrium of its way of thought. It is impossible to conceive a case where a part of the mentality of the family from which she came did not pervade the new family into which she had entered.¹¹ The continuity of the family was often but a fiction. Marriages provided the occasion for young women to make contact with an extended social milieu in which they tended to isolate themselves. It allowed them to open themselves to new currents of thought—this was the way through which these women transformed their traditions.

"Today the family is discontinuous. Two spouses create a new family, and they base it so to speak on a *tabula rasa*."¹² To be sure, when through marriage we enter a higher social sphere it happens that we forget our family of origin and narrowly identify with the domestic

10. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, p. 47.

11. During China's feudal times, alliances between noble families corresponded to diplomatic preoccupations; it was a matter of each family's assuring itself of the support of this or that family. How is it that since that time women, simultaneously the security and the instrument of such alliances, would become established within the family of their husbands to the point of forgetting that of their parents? Marcel Granet, *La religion des Chinois*, 1922, p. 42.

12. Durkheim, *Cours inédit*.

group which provides access to a world of higher distinction. In the example of the two daughters of Père Goriot, when one marries a count and the other a rich banker, they keep their father at a distance and efface from their memory the whole period of their life that took place in a milieu lacking distinction. Here it can also be said that marriage does not create new families, but merely allows established families to increase through new members. But when two persons of the same social level unite, familial traditions of comparable strength confront each other. Neither of the two anterior families can claim that its role is to absorb within itself the spouse who is the offspring of the other family. It should follow under these circumstances, and indeed it does follow most of the time in our societies when the family is reduced to a couple, that the families of the parents seem to end at the point where the family founded by their children begins. This is the root of a rather pronounced difference in attitude between the parental family and that of their offspring. It is natural that a family which no longer grows, which has reached its term, does not forget those of its members who have left it and, though it may not retain them, it at least tries to fortify, as much as is possible for it, the bonds by which they remain attached to the family of origin. The memories that such a family invokes under these circumstances and that it tries to maintain among the departed members undoubtedly derive their strength from their seniority. The new family turns from the start toward the future. It senses behind itself a kind of moral void: for if each of the spouses were to continue to wallow in former family memories, they could not think of them in common, since the spouses have different memories. To avoid inevitable conflict which cannot be adjudicated through norms accepted by both, they tacitly agree that the past is to be treated as if it were abolished when they cannot find in it any traditional element that could reinforce their union. In actuality they do not forget this past completely. Soon, when they already have behind them a fairly long span of life in common, when the events in which their preoccupations become entwined so as to construct a memory unique to them, they will be able to find a place for the older memories. This is all the more likely to be the case if their parents were not strangers to that phase of their existence in which they laid the foundations of a new family. But these older memories will take a position within a new framework. To the extent that the grandparents take part in the life of the recently constructed household, they play a complementary role. They communicate to their grandchildren their own memories and invoke the echo of almost vanished traditions. But they can do this only in fragmentary ways and, so to speak, within the interstices of the

present family. They cannot revive for the new family a totality of ideas and a depiction of events, since this totality as such would no longer have a place within the framework in which the thoughts of their descendants now operate.¹³

This rupture between two generations cannot be achieved without effort nor at times without suffering and an interior turmoil that no later reconciliation can repair. If it were a matter here only of the presence of individual consciousnesses, this whole process could be reduced to a conflict of images, in which some would engage us through the attraction of the past, through all our childhood memories, and through the feelings that our parents call forth in us, whereas other would bind us to the present, that is, to people who have recently appeared within the circle of our experience. From that point, if the sensations and affective states in the present were strong enough to lead individuals to sacrifice the past to the present and to detach themselves from their kind, without being completely aware of the pain they cause, we would not understand why they feel themselves internally torn nor why their regrets sometimes take the form of remorse. Moreover, if remembrances were to impose themselves on them with a poignant vivacity, if, as it happens, they were only moderately in love, and if the future were not painted in their eyes in alluring colors, we would not understand how they were capable of this sacrifice.

But it is not a matter here of two sets of images, one from the past and the other from the present, but rather of two conceptions, or ways of thinking of life and of people, that confront each other. If a man were not able to oppose the family logic that obliges him to consider himself above all as a son with another logic that authorizes him to consider himself a husband or a father, he would remain indefinitely in his first family; or, should he leave it, he would suffer those material or moral damages that overwhelm isolated people. His thought and memories would no longer find a place within a framework that would prevent them from scattering. To put it differently, these would subsist only as long as his passion or desire, or the circumstances that favor

13. "It is otherwise with the patriarchal family, where the *pater familias*, so long as he is alive, remains the center of the extended family. This family is composed of two elements. There is first the *pater familias*: this is the oldest male ancestor in the agnatic order (which has descent along masculine lines). Then come all the descendants issuing either from this *pater familias* or from his male descendants. When the *pater familias* dies (and only then), the two brothers (if there are two) who are his offspring separate and form two distinct families and become in turn *pater familias*. The family comprises—and it only comprises—all those who are born of the same living ancestor." Durkheim, *ibid.*

them; they would not be supported by any collective belief or conception. In a society that does not permit a Montague to marry a Capulet, the story of Romeo and Juliet can preserve no reality other than that of a dream image. The situation is wholly different when one leaves a family only in order to found another following the rules and beliefs of the society surrounding all the families, or, more generally, in order to enter into another group.

When a member of a family separates from it in order to embrace another group that is not a family, for example when one decides to enter a convent, the person finds the power to do so through a religious belief that is opposed to the spirit of the family. In this case, events judged from the point of view of another group will also be perceived as guided by other principles and inspired by another logic. When Mother Angelica, at the time that the spirit of her family still fought within her against the feeling of a new set of duties, remembered the days of Port-Royal, she no doubt saw in them the strongest trial she had to endure. But this memory must have little by little become inserted quite naturally into the story of the stages of her conversion, and, at the same time, into the totality of her religious thoughts; it soon became for her, as for the members of her community, at once a tradition, an example, and as it were an aspect of truth. Here it can indeed be said that two conceptions of life were opposed to each other. But the case is not exactly the same, it would seem, when a member of a family leaves in order to found another. In fact, whereas a young woman who becomes a nun hardly finds in the convent the thoughts, albeit expressed differently and attached to other objects, that inspired her when she was within the circle of the family, the contrary occurs when a son or a daughter marries. In the latter case one might think that they basically make use of the same logic or of the logic that they learned in the bosom of their family, and in the milieu of their parents. After all, cannot one reduce the family to a set of functions that people of successive generations are called to fulfill one after the other? The parent who was a father in the past is no longer a father or is hardly one today either because he has disappeared or because his children need him less and less. How could the memory of him not grow faint from the moment he becomes a name, a face, or simply a person who experiences and toward whom one experiences feelings which are explained less by their function than by the person, which issue from and are directed to the man as such rather than the father? How could all the strength of the idea of father not focus on the person who now consciously exists as father and is treated as such in the full sense of the term?

However, the family is not at all like a form that, from one moment to the next, can quickly change material content. When a son marries he does not substitute himself for his father like a king who succeeds another king. A family that is created defines itself first of all as a new establishment in the face of the families from which its two heads have come. It is only gradually and later on that the new father and the new mother identify their function with the one their parents exercised before them; this identity never appears to them but as a more or less faithful resemblance.

Samuel Butler has observed that if one posits that recollections pass from parents to their children through heredity, their hereditary experiences cannot spread in the course of time beyond the moment when they had been conceived, since from this moment on there is no longer an organic continuity between their parents and themselves. That is why, in contrast to biological processes that would continue with great certainty up to an adult age because they would be guided by ancestral experiences, human beings would be subject to the contingencies of their own experiences from the moment they are of an age to procreate. From that moment on the body would no longer be as easily adaptable to the conditions under which it must live.¹⁴ We might say inversely that, of the life of our parents, we know from direct experience only the part that begins several years after our birth. What precedes hardly interests us. In turn, when we ourselves become husbands and fathers, we pass through a series of states through which we have seen them also pass, and it seems that we can then identify ourselves with what they were at that time. But this still does not say enough. There is a whole period, which corresponds to the beginnings of the new household, when the new family opposes the former family precisely because it is new and because it seems that it must create an original memory outside the traditional framework. This is why it is only relatively late, when this memory has to some degree lost a part of its primitive impetus, and when the moment approaches at which one will also, through one's offspring, give birth to other domestic groups that will detach themselves, that a family becomes conscious that it is only a continuation, as it were a new edition, of the family from which it has originally come. When a father and a mother approach old age they think most about their own parents, particularly about what the latter had been like at their age; since any reason to distinguish themselves from their parents tends to disappear at this

14. Samuel Butler, *La vie et l'habitude* (1877; French translation, 1922), pp. 143 and 183.

point, it seems to them that their parents live again in themselves and that they follow the trail their parents have traced. But during the whole period of its active life and expansion, the family is turned toward the future or absorbed by the present and tries to justify and reinforce its independence in relation to family traditions by finding support in the larger society of other contemporary families. There is hence indeed a logic and a conception of the new life, larger and for that reason at least in appearance more rational: a logic that exists in this society and that is opposed to the modes of thought and recollections of one or several source families.

During our entire life we are engaged at the same time both in our family and also in other groups. We extend our family memory in such a way as to encompass recollections of our worldly life, for example. Or we place our family recollections in the frameworks where our society retrieves its past. This amounts to considering our family from the point of view of other groups, or, inversely, to combining, along with recollections, modes of thinking belonging to the former and the latter. At times one or the other of these frameworks prevails. We change memories along with our points of view, our principles, and our judgments, when we pass from one group to the other. As soon as a child goes to school, his life runs, so to speak, in two currents, and his thoughts are associated according to two directions. If the child sees the members of his family only at rare intervals, the family needs all the energy acquired earlier—and also the energy that comes from the fact that the family exists beyond elementary and high school, that it accompanies and envelops us until death—in order to preserve its share of influence. But the same is the case, to a lesser or greater degree, when the young man or adult becomes attached to other environments that wean him away from the family. Before we enter the social world, and after we have left it, we find it sufficient to be interested above all in those with whom we have established intimate links. Life, so to speak, becomes interiorized, and memory follows suit and becomes enclosed within the limits of the family. But after we are called by the outside world, on the contrary, we leave the intimate sphere, and memory is deployed outside. From then on our life is made of our relations; our history becomes their history. Our proceedings and distractions do not become detached from those of others. We cannot recount the one or the other in isolation. When it is said that worldly life leads to our dispersion, we must understand this in a rigorous sense. It is no doubt possible to become only partially engaged in the world or only in appearance. But we then play two personal roles, and to the extent that we become mingled in society, we accept remember-

ing in the way society remembers. This is undoubtedly the evolution of most people who mingle or lose themselves in the social group that is the center of their activities only during the short and busy period when their professional and worldly life is at its high point. Then, in contrast to the child who does not yet know how to loose itself, and in contrast to the old person who has withdrawn himself from the world, these deeply engaged people no longer belong to themselves. Look through the written memoirs of administrators, businessmen, or statesmen who have candidly acquitted themselves of their functions, and note how they relate the facts that have caused them years of labor and agitation; these accounts entail, rather than their own history, the history of a social group, whether professional or mundane. It is less the content than the tone and some remarks (where one often finds the reactions of a circle and the sense of a clique), and perhaps the choice of events that distinguish a particular individual tale or an autobiography from a historical study that aims at telling the facts as lived by a group of men and the significant of these facts in regard to them. When one says of a writer that his life story is mixed into that of his works, this means that he has scarcely left the interior world that he has created; but if one says of a soldier, doctor, or priest that his life story is mixed with that of his activities, his cures, or his conversions, it is understood, on the contrary, that he hardly had the time to reenter his self, and that the common preoccupations with which he had to deal because of his particular function were enough to fill his thoughts.

In many circumstances where people and families of all kinds participate in common in the same distractions, in the same work, or in the same ceremonies, an event impacts them less by what happens within the life of the family because of it than by what remains external to them on account of the event; they retain it as an impersonal fact. But the same is the case when, in a group of neighboring families, the relations between them multiply. We may see this in the peasant village where families become closer to each other by virtue of the place they inhabit, or, as in the higher classes, where families draw on the appreciation of others because they need to maintain or renew through contact with other families the feeling of their preeminence. In this case, the members of each family incessantly introduce within the thought of their group relations of facts, interpretations, and appreciations borrowed from neighboring families. What then becomes of the memory of the family? It must embrace within its sphere not just one but several groups; the importance, as well as the mutual relationships of these groups change at each moment. From the time when the family considers from the point of view of others, as well as from its

own point of view, events that are remarkable enough to be retained and often to be reproduced, the family translates these events into general terms. The framework of events that allows the family to retrieve memories peculiar to itself might easily be distinguished from the frameworks that pertain to other families if one considers its figures and images. One thereby delimits in space the domain of each family, and one attributes to it only the course of events that have taken place there as so many distinct cases. But, as I have said already, the framework of family memory is made of notions—*notions of persons and of facts*—that are singular and historic in this sense but that otherwise have all the characteristics of thoughts common to a whole group and even to several groups. The traditions pertaining to each family become disengaged into a background of general and impersonal notions; it is moreover not easy to indicate the border that separates the former from the latter. It is understandable that a family that has just been born and that feels above all the need to adapt itself to the social milieu in which it must live turns its back on the traditions of the parental groups from which it has just become emancipated, and hence is especially inspired by this general logic determining the relations families have with each other. Yet just as every family quickly acquires a history, and just as its memory becomes enriched from day to day, since the family's recollections become more precise and fixed in their personal form, the family progressively tends to interpret in its own manner the conceptions it borrows from society. Each family ends up with its own logic and traditions, which resemble those of the general society in that they derive from it and continue to regulate the family's relations with general society. But this logic and these traditions are nevertheless distinct because they are little by little pervaded by the family's particular experiences and because their role is increasingly to insure the family's cohesion and to guarantee its continuity.

Religious Collective Memory

The ancient history of peoples, as it is lived in their traditions, is entirely permeated with religious ideas. But we can also say of every religion that it reproduces in more or less symbolic forms the history of migrations and fusions of races and tribes, of great events, wars, establishments, discoveries, and reforms that we can find at the origin of the societies that practice them.

This is not a point of view that those who study the religions of antiquity have accepted without resistance. But already Fustel de Coulanges was astonished to find in the city of antiquity two religions, one of which was connected with the household and perpetuated the remembrance of its ancestors, whereas the second religion, the cult of the Olympians, was public and national and seemed to him addressed to the powers of nature. The figures of these natural powers, which were so often reproduced in sculpture and poetry, were only symbolic in character.¹ Coulanges at the same time demonstrated how cities came into being through a fusion of tribes and brotherhoods, to the degree that primitive families gave up their isolation. These tribes in turn, so he believed, originated from the fusion of families in new cults. To him the eponymous divinities were but the commemoration of these origins and transformations. He insisted on the persistence of memories linked to the foundation of cities and on the cult surrounding their founder, who was most often a more or less mythical figure, the local divinity of a tribe who had been promoted to the dignity of protector of the city.

Another idea has slowly gained attention: namely, that still in classical Greece, if we take a closer look at the physiognomy and the attributes of the Olympian gods, and especially if we focus on ceremonies and feasts, beliefs, superstitions—which may have attracted little attention in aristocratic and cultivated circles but which had a tenacious hold among common people, especially peasants—we will see that in

1. Fustel de Coulanges, *La cité antique*, 20th ed. 1908, pp. 136f.

the world of antiquity there are in effect two superimposed religions which are moreover deeply engaged with each other.²

If society preserves elements of ancient rites and beliefs in its religious organization, this is not just to satisfy its most undeveloped groups. But to appreciate a religious movement or religious progress exactly, people must recall, at least in rough outline, the point from which they took their departure long ago. In addition, a great number of new ideas become formulated only in opposition to old ideas. This is why the light shed by the Olympian cults on the universe and within the innermost aspects of the human soul appeared more splendid to the extent that nature offered certain places of shadow and mystery still haunted by monstrous animals or evil spirits born of the earth and that there existed in the soul terrors through which the civilized men of that time were still allied to primitive tribes. The Homeric world, so detached and enlightened, still leaves some room for those ancient superstitions. We still find traces of the cult of the dead. Even though Homer seems convinced that after death the shadow disappears and no longer bothers mortals, the shadow of Patroclus appears to Achilles in a dream, and Achilles consecrates a sacrifice to him that recalls the ancient immolations of human victims. The "Nekuya," or descent of Ulysses into hell, provides a background against which we can more clearly discern both Olympus with its misty lights and a society of men who are above all lovers of life. In order to depict the superiority of the Olympian powers it becomes necessary to evoke however vaguely the ancient assault of the giants and the crushing or enslaving of the old gods.

In the same manner, to show the originality of Christian doctrine, the founders of Christianity (especially St. Paul) oppose it to traditional Judaism. Through terms borrowed from the Old Testament, and through an interpretation of the prophecies that the Jews understood only in the literal sense but that the new religion permeates with its spirit, Christianity is defined. Paul holds that the rule of the Law had to precede the rule of Grace and that humans first had to learn what it meant to sin so that faith in the Holy Spirit and in mercy could liberate us (Epistle to the Romans 7:7). Paul does not believe that the Law is annulled by belief but instead that Christianity strengthens it. In the fundamental texts of Christianity—the Gospels and the Epistles—the opposition between the Pharisees and the Christians, be-

2. The French text contains roughly five pages on the interpretation of Greek religion in fairly technical language. These have not been translated.—ED.

tween orthodox Judaism and the religion of the Son of man, is incessantly repeated. It is taken to be history, and we can say that in its articles of belief, its dogmas, and its rites, Christianity is in effect above all the expression of a moral revolution which was a historical event, the triumph of a religion with spiritual content over a formalistic cult, and, at the same time, of a universalist religion with no reference to races and nations over a narrowly nationalist religion. But it would be hard to understand the impact of this history and this religion itself unless we see it as emerging against the background of Judaism.

Above all when a society transforms its religion, it advances somewhat into unknown territory. At the beginning it does not foresee the consequences of the new principles that it asserts. Social forces, among others, prevail and displace the group's center of gravity. But in order for this center to remain in equilibrium, readaptation is required so that the various tendencies of all the institutions constituting the common way of life are adjusted to each other. Society is aware that the new religion is not an absolute beginning. The society wishes to adopt these larger and deeper beliefs without entirely rupturing the framework of notions in which it has matured up until this point. That is why at the same time that society projects into its past conceptions that were recently elaborated, it is also intent on incorporating into the new religion elements of old cults that are assimilable into a new framework. Society must persuade its members that they already carry these beliefs within themselves at least partially, or even that they will recover beliefs which had been rejected some time ago. But this is possible only if society does not confront all of the past, if it at least preserves the forms of the past. Even at the moment that it is evolving, society returns to its past. It enframes the new elements that it pushes to the forefront in a totality of remembrances, traditions, and familiar ideas.

Homeric mythology, for example, stands midway between religious representations and literary fictions. Now let us conjecture that the members of the aristocratic and cultivated classes of Greece fully accepted the rationalist drive that eliminated all belief in the survival of souls in the form of phantoms in Hades; this rationalism imagined no way for men, be it in their life or after their death, to enter into relations with the gods. In this case all the religious ceremonies would suddenly lose their prestige, and poetic imagination would feel more and more at ease with Olympus and its inhabitants. If Homeric polytheism wished to remain a religion, it had to take seriously a certain number of beliefs that it had tried to supplant. What prevented the Greeks of this time from treating legends and the figures of the gods as

lightly as they were later treated by Lucian was that they still felt themselves close to an era when religion had not yet been humanized, and that the ancient prophetic places within the ancient sanctuaries needed real gods to shelter the heritage of ancient monsters, of local divinities, and of the powers of vegetation. Their appearance becomes transformed, but it was necessary to preserve their nature as gods, at least for some time.

In the same way, if Christianity had not been presented as a continuation in a sense of Hebraic religion, it remains open to doubt whether it could have established itself as a religion. When Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and more important commandment. The second commandment resembles the first: Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39), we realize that he presents a doctrine that could be taken in an exclusively moral sense. What is more, the founders of Christianity took care to multiply the parallelisms between the prophecies of the Old Testament and the details or words of the life of Christ that are presented as validations of these prophecies. It is on the basis of the promise of Abraham that Paul considers the Gentiles to be the true descendants of Isaac, the children "not of the servant but of the free woman" (Epistle to the Galatians 4:22-31), and as a consequence the legitimate inheritors. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob has not been eliminated by the "Son of man," or, if he has changed in outward appearance, he nevertheless at least retains his nature as God. To the extent that Christianity grows, attention is deflected from this aspect that represents it as a branch grafted on a foreign plant, but the fundamental theological ideas that it borrowed from Judaism continue to be alive. It was in effect necessary that Christian morality be guarded and defended by a dogmatic and ritualistic armature entirely fashioned of ideas and traditional institutions. Only in this way could it maintain the prestige of a religion.

* *

But religion reproduces the past in still another way. Let us shift attention away from origins or the profound meaning of myths. Instead of looking beyond these traditions to general events—the migrations and fusions of peoples, of which they are perhaps the echo—let us consider them as they appear in the eyes of the believers. All of them offer us a depiction of the life, activities, and figure of divine or sacred entities. Whether in terms of human, animal, or other traits, in every case the imagination lends them a sensible form of existence. These entities exist in or have appeared at certain places, at certain eras. They were

manifested on earth.³ It is from this moment that people have preserved the remembrance of gods or heroes, telling their story and commemorating them in the form of a cult.

If we survey the different components of the Christian cult, we realize that each one of them is essentially the commemoration of a period or an event of the life of Christ.⁴ The Christian year is centered around the Paschal period, which is devoted to reproducing through the very order of its ceremonies and the contents of its sermons and prayers the various phases of the Passion. From another point of view, since every day is consecrated to a saint, the liturgical year is the commemoration of all those who contributed to founding, spreading, or illustrating Christian doctrine. Through a larger periodicity, on Sunday of each week, the Mass, which every believer must attend, commemorates the Lord's Supper. But the whole of Christian doctrine is based on a story and is almost conflated with that story. If the ancient pagans could not be saved, this is because the events of Christian history had not yet taken place; in contrast to the Jews, the pagans could not know the prophecies that announced the events before they had taken place. The Jews foresaw the coming of the Messiah; the disciples of Jesus were the witnesses of his life, his death, and his resurrection; all Christian generations which have succeeded each other since are familiar with the tradition of these events. Thus the entire substance of Christianity, since Christ has not reappeared on earth, consists in the remembrance of his life and teachings.

But how can we explain that the Christian religion—entirely oriented toward the past as is the case with all religion—can still present itself as a permanent institution, that it claims to be positioned outside of time, and that the Christian truths can be both historical and eternal?

If we consider religious systems where what is essential is the moral teaching established by their founder, we can see that the truths on which they are built are atemporal in nature, and that the figure and

3. When we closely examine the rites of primitive peoples believed by them to have an influence on things, we see that these often consist of reproducing some mythological drama, that is, of staging a legendary hero or ancestor to whom is attributed the intervention of a new magical or technical process. Regarding the commemorative rites of these societies, see in particular, Yrjö Hirn, *The Origins of Art: A Psychological and Sociological Inquiry*, London, 1900, chap. 16.

4. "Theologians and historians have always acknowledged that one of the goals of liturgy is to recall the religious past and to make it present by means of a sort of dramatic representation. There is no liturgy which escapes this rule. The liturgical year is a memorial. The cycle of annual rites has become the commemoration of a national or religious history." Delacroix, *La religion et la foi*, pp. 15–16.

the remembrance of the individual who has discovered them passes into the background. This is undoubtedly what has happened in Buddhism. "Buddhism in effect consists above all in the notion of salvation, and salvation supposes only that one knows the good doctrine and practices it. To be sure, this doctrine could not have become known had the Buddha not revealed it, but once such a revelation had been made, the work of the Buddha was accomplished. From this moment on he ceases to be a necessary factor of religious life." And this is why the Buddha cannot be a god. "For a god is above all a living being with whom humans must reckon and on whom they must rely; but the Buddha is dead, he has entered Nirvana; he can no longer affect human events."⁵ "The idea that the divine leader of the community . . . remains in reality among his own people . . . so that the cult is nothing but an expression of the perpetuation of this common life is entirely alien to Buddhists. Their master is in Nirvana: even if his believers raised their voices he could not hear them."⁶ No doubt, "the ineffaceable remembrance of the terrestrial life of the Buddha, faith in the words of the Buddha as the word of truth, submission to the law of the Buddha as the law of holiness: all these features have had, it goes without saying, the greatest influence on the shape that life and religious feeling have taken within the Buddhist community."⁷ But the Buddha is neither a mediator nor a savior. "Belief in the old gods had disappeared in the face of the pantheism of the doctrine of the Atman; . . . the empire of this world sighing for deliverance no longer belonged to a god; it had passed on to the natural law of the linkage of cause and effect." Hence, Buddha must have been merely (without any metaphysical superiority) the great "knower" and the propagator of knowledge.⁸ A historical personage, Buddha is not the only member of this species, since one came to acknowledge that there had been and would be an unlimited number of Buddhas. Yet he is a person whose existence is circumscribed by the dates of his birth and death. Since, moreover, "Buddhism . . . above all consists of the notion of salvation," and since "salvation supposes only that one knows the good doctrine and practices it," Buddhism has religious elements (without which it would perhaps be no religion at all) in addition to a morality, but the religious element is entirely reducible to remembrances. Morality is atemporal;

5. Emile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, p. 44.

6. H. Oldenberg, *Le Bouddha, sa vie, sa doctrine, sa communauté*, French translation, p. 368.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 320f.

by contrast, that which is mixed with religious elements refers to a series of well-defined historical years that came to a close a long time ago.

Things look very different with Christianity. Here Christ is not only a "knower" or a saint; he is a god. He does not limit himself to indicating the road to salvation to us; yet no Christian can attain salvation without the intervention and the efficacious action of this God. After his death and resurrection Christ did not lose contact with mankind, but rather remains perpetually within the bosom of his Church. There is no ceremony of the cult from which he is absent; there is no prayer and act of adoration which does not reach up to him. The sacrifice through which he has given us his body and his blood did not take place a single time. It is integrally renewed every time believers are assembled to receive the Eucharist.⁹ What is more, the successive sacrifices—celebrated at distinct moments and in distinct places—are but one and the same sacrifice.¹⁰

At the same time, the Christian truths have not been revealed to humans by Christ in such a condition that it is enough ever after to meditate on them in order to grasp their meaning. On the contrary, revelation is incessantly renewed; or rather it continues, since humans need to be enlightened by God in order to understand them. The study of the Gospel texts and of the scriptures might serve just as much to

9. For this see the entire polemic between Luther on the one side and Carlostadt [*sic*], Zwingle [*sic*] and Ecolampade on the other, between 1523 and 1530, in particular the writings of Luther: *Dass diese Worte: das ist mein Leib, etc. noch feststehen. Wider die Schwarmgeister, 1527: Luthers Werke*, 1905, Berlin, 2d ed., *Reformatiorische and polemische Schriften* 2: 371, 373, 415–16, 421–22. Luther stresses "that the eating of which Jesus Christ spoke was not a mystical eating, but an eating through the mouth; . . . so that we could clearly see that his intention was to assure these gifts to us by giving us his person, and that the memory of his death that he counseled us to commemorate did not exclude his presence." Jacques Bossuet, *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes*, Paris, 1688, 1:90. Zwingle himself, who inclined toward a figurative meaning, nevertheless said "that it was not a simple spectacle, nor altogether naked signs; that the memory of and the faith in the immolated body and the blood that was shed sustain our soul, but that nevertheless the Holy Spirit confirmed in our hearts the remission of sins, and that this was the whole mystery" (*ibid.*, p. 85).

10. "The Roman Church attached much importance to the fact that the rites of communion contained a very clear and lively expression of the unity of the Church. To this is connected the use of *fermentum*, of the consecrated bread sent from the Mass of the Bishop to the priests charged to celebrate in the *tituli*; it is this signification again that is found in the rite of the *sancta*, of the fragment consecrated in the preceding Mass, which is offered in the beginning of the Mass and placed in the chalice of *Pax Domini*. It is everywhere, in all the churches of Rome, and always in all the liturgical assemblies—that of today just as that of yesterday—the same sacrifice, the same Eucharist, the same Communion." L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, 1:196.

alienate us from God as to bring us nearer to him, when no supernatural illumination is available, if we note the obscurities and contradictions of these texts: *tot paginarum opaca secreta*.¹¹ How could eternal truth be expressed in its entirety in human words understood in a limited time span? Is it not already too limiting when we consider only the reaching of the Church, which has chosen these texts and through so many centuries interpreted them, if we want to know this truth? The dogma, just as the cult, is ageless; within the duration or passage of time of the changing world, it imitates the eternity and the immutability of God, to the extent that gestures, words, and human thought can do so.

It is nevertheless true that the essential aspects of dogmas and rites were established during the first centuries of the Christian era. This provided the initial framework in which all the rest has been located. Every time that the Church was called upon to judge new theses, new cults or new details of the cult, new modes of life and religious thought, it asked itself first of all whether these conformed with the body of usages and beliefs of this first period. The essentials of the dogma and cult may be stated or tend to be stated in terms of what they had been in the early period. The Church repeats itself indefinitely, or at least it claims to repeat itself. The Church gives a privileged status to the early years of Christianity and to the acts and words that had the most impact at that time. What the Church now sees as outside of time in the form of eternal truths took place during a very strictly determined historical period, even though this period was very remote if we take into consideration the successive forms that all other social institutions have assumed since. If then the object of religion seems exempt from the law of change, if religious representations are fixed—while all the other notions and traditions that form the content of social thought evolve and become transformed—this is not because they are outside of time but rather because the time to which they refer is detached, if not from all that preceded it, at least from all that follows. In other words, the totality of religious remembrances subsists in a state of isolation and is all the more separated from other social remembrances to the degree that the epoch in which they were formed is more remote, so that there is a more marked contrast between the type of life and social thought that they reproduce and the ideas and modes of human action of today.

What is peculiar to the memory of religious groups is that, while the memories of other groups permeate each other mutually and tend to

11. Saint Augustine, *Confessions* 11.2.

correspond, the memory of religious groups claims to be fixed once and for all. It either obliges others to adapt themselves to its dominant representations, or it systematically ignores them; contrasting its own permanence with the instability of others, it relegates them to an inferior rank. Between what has been given once and for all and what is only transitory there is henceforth a difference not in degree but in nature. We can understand how this difference is translated within religious consciousness into radical opposition. Since all the rest of social life is developed within the passage of time or duration, it stands to reason that religion withdraws itself from this. This is the source of the idea that religion transports us into another world, that its object is eternal and immutable, and that the religious acts by which this idea is manifested—even though they occur in a specific place and at a specific date—imitate or at least symbolize this eternity and this fixity through their infinite repetition and their uniform aspect. There is perhaps only one order of phenomena in social life that presents the same characteristics and that can call to mind the same idea: namely, the representations that are aroused in groups by the spectacle of great and periodic natural events: the laws of nature. It is remarkable that a great number of religions should have in effect cast themselves in the mold of seasonal variations, and that the alternation of their ceremonies and feasts should reproduce that of the successive appearances of the earth and sky. Even in the most modern religions—those that are more evolved and intellectualized—the notion of God and his will singularly approximates the idea of natural order, and many theological developments take their inspiration from such a comparison. Yet, in Catholicism in particular, it is in an entirely spiritualist sense that the fixity of religion comes to be interpreted. This religion has adapted itself to seasonal variations; it has unfolded the drama of Christian life within the framework of the profane year; yet it has felt compelled at the same time to join the collective representations of the flow and divisions of time to the current of its own thought and to organize these according to its own rhythm. Moreover, Christian religion has never considered the order of material nature except as the symbol of a hidden order and of another nature. Human knowledge and all its notions as far as Christianity is concerned are essentially not distinguished from other proceedings of profane thought. In the eyes of Christianity human knowledge remains uncertain and changing; it submits to the law of time; the necessity that it uncovers for us in things is always relative to our imperfect knowledge. Religious truths alone are definitive and immutable. In sum, there is no intermediary, no mean term, between that which is given once and for all and that

which exists or is true only for a certain period. It is only the social thought of a privileged period—and of the group that limits itself to preserving and reproducing that thought—that is able to be opposed, through its fixed character, to the ephemeral social thoughts of all other periods and groups.

If this is indeed the object of religion, and if religion aims at preserving unchanged through the course of time the remembrance of an ancient period without any admixture of subsequent remembrances, we can only expect dogma as well as ritual to assume more retrograde forms from century to century, so as to resist more effectively the influences emanating from the outside. These influences appear more dangerous to the extent that the difference between the religious group and all others increases. In addition, even though the moral and social revolution that is in this way commemorated may have deserved to move to the forefront because of its profundity and scope, other events have taken place since. These either accelerated evolution in the same direction or opened up new approaches to the activities and thought of people. Why should religious memory not enrich itself with so many experiences, which were perhaps as decisive as those that preceded them? I shall not examine to what point religious memory remained effectively impervious to all this. In any case, it has claimed to be closed, and we can see how it turned itself inward as much as possible in order to endure. In the beginning religious memory found within the social milieu surrounding it testimony, recollections, and even new facts that could nourish and reinforce it without destroying or seriously changing it, since society was still very close to the events that this memory wished to establish. However, to the degree that religious memory grew distant from these events, the sum of other events that had no connection with the earlier period increased, and to these there corresponded remembrances having no connection with their own. The memory of the religious group, in order to defend itself, succeeded for some time in preventing other memories from forming and developing in its midst. It triumphed with ease over the old religions, whose memory was so far removed from its own object, and which already for a long time had lived only on their own substance. The new religious memory assimilated all that it could incorporate because of its content, that is, all that was most recent in the older religions and that was imprinted by the same period in which Christianity was born—that which was most exterior in the old religions. These were fragments of religions in the process of decomposition that had entered the collective consciousness of the first centuries of the Christian era and of which current Christian history itself still preserved traces. It assim-

ilated in the same way philosophical, legal, political, and moral ideas as well as fragments of ancient systems or scattered elements not yet attached to a whole system. In this period Christianity was in effect still very close to its origins; it wasn't yet easy to distinguish what was remembrance from what was consciousness of the present. Past and present were confused because the evangelical drama did not yet seem to be at its end. The last act was still awaited. The hope for the return of Christ and the appearance of the heavenly Jerusalem had not yet been turned aside.¹² In this cult, besides the Eucharist, charisms—or extraordinary effusions of the Holy Spirit—held an essential place. Cures or other miraculous acts, visions, prophecy, and glossolalia were essential likewise.¹³ Christianity did not yet oppose its message to contemporary collective thought as a relation of a past to a present that was not linked to it; but it could legitimately aspire (being itself engaged in the present) to impose its form on all beliefs and all institutions. What is more, in the spiritual domain its major adversaries based themselves on the same tradition as Christianity; these were different memories, but they always dealt with the same series of events and with the same teaching. What distinguishes heresies from more or less orthodox doctrines is not that the first are inspired by the present or the recent past while the others draw on an ancient past; rather it is the way in which each recalls and understands the same period of the past which is still close enough for there to exist a great variety of remembrances and of witnesses. Undoubtedly certain components of the tradition must have been established before others. But these were nevertheless too implicated within each other and immersed in a past that was still too recent for any one component to be able to become isolated. The Christian consciousness confronted them each day in their entirety. This is the formative period when the collective memory is still dispersed among a multitude of spatially separated small communities. These communities were neither astonished, anxious, nor scandalized that the beliefs of one community differed from those of another and that the community of today was not exactly the same as that of yesterday. They were much too busy converting unbelievers. They attempted above all to propagate their faith rather than to arrive at agreement with other Christian communities. But is this not true of

12. "The gospel of Saint John, given the strength of its recent popularity, inspired the preoccupation with the Holy Spirit. The Apocalypse offered imposing descriptions of the heavenly Jerusalem and of the rule of the millennium. . . . The right of the prophets to talk to the Christian people in the name of God was consecrated by tradition and usage." Duchesne, *Origines*, 1:272. See also the entire chapter on montanism.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

all collective thought when it is preoccupied with surviving rather than remembering?

We are so habituated to the present forms of liturgy and dogma, of hierarchy and discipline, that we find it hard to understand to what extent the Christian Church, which is now so clearly distinguished from temporal society, was then engaged with, or rather had not yet disengaged itself from, temporal society, how many ideas circulated from the one to the other, and how little rigor and formalism were applied to the practice of the religion and the various functions of the Church. Certainly "the adhesion of Christianity was a step with a very serious consequence. At a number of points it was necessary to withdraw from ordinary life. The theaters, for example, and the public games and the schools of immorality in general were in the forefront of the displays of Satan that had to be renounced. The same applied to fornication. One naturally broke with idolatry, but it was not always easy to avoid contact with it. The private life of the ancients was to such an extent permeated with religion."¹⁴ But, within the framework of Christian ideas, all the abuses that the believers renounced and the pagan ceremonies from which they abstained had their place. One could hardly think of religion without calling to mind all the circumstances of life in which it imposed a particular attitude on the Christian. The whole society of the time was in the main fairly close to the one in which Christ and the first apostles had lived and which was present at each instant in the stories of the life of Christ and in the teachings of the apostles. Christian memory retrieved in its midst, even outside the religious group, a quantity of objects that incessantly aroused and enlivened its remembrances. How should it have become entirely isolated from them; what good would that have accomplished? In certain respects a Catholic living ten or fifteen centuries later will understand the Gospels less well than a pagan, a Jew, an Oriental, or a Roman of the first two centuries. What vestiges will have remained, what truly living memories will have been retained, when it comes to the kind of social life the Gospels assume and in which they arose, or to the men and the customs that they condemned? In a sense Christianity was the coronation and the result of an entire civilization. It responded to the preoccupations, anxieties, and aspirations that are undoubtedly part of human nature in every epoch but that could become manifest at the time only through this form and with this much intensity. That is why Christianity could dare to expand and swarm without fear within an undoubtedly hostile milieu which was nevertheless never entirely foreign to it.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Moreover, how could Christians from the beginning have had the feeling that they must henceforth fix their practices and beliefs in rigid forms so as to resist the assault of societies that came and went in the world around them? After all, they hoped to impose their faith on these societies and to model them in their image. In this period, far from representing the past in the face of the present, they opposed the future—already visible in the present—to the past. To be sure, Christianity also relied on a tradition. It wholly adopted the Old Testament. "The Bible gave them a history, and what a history! With the Bible one could go back beyond the Greek traditions. . . . The most ancient regions of Greek and Chaldean archeology were attained. One went back—and this was infinitely more important—to the very origin of things. . . . One was present at the first propagation of the human race and the foundation of its first establishments."¹⁵ But "the tradition of Israel also oriented Christian thought toward the future. In this respect we ought not overestimate the differences between the books of the Old Testament and those of the New, between what is canonical and apocryphal. They all testify to the same preoccupation; we are approaching the end of things; God will have his vengeance; his Messiah will appear or reappear."¹⁶ There is no doubt that it was this element in Jewish thought that the Christians retained above all. They stressed this point through which Jewish thought concentrated on the future. They took the most living components of the Jewish tradition—those that best corresponded to their own preoccupations.

Undoubtedly, Christian institutions were established in more or less the same manner as the Jewish synagogues, and there were a good many resemblances between the cults of both religions. One prays, reads, and explains the Bible in the synagogue just as in church. But Christianity also eliminates from the Jewish cult all the purely Jewish parts—circumcision and the many ritual interdictions: dead memories that have no more relation to the present. Christianity moreover juxtaposes and in reality superimposes the Eucharist and the spiritual exercises—specifically Christian elements—onto the Jewish cult which has been unburdened in this manner. Nothing in the ancient Judaic practices corresponds to them, but they are by contrast certainly connected with the aspirations that can be observed in the same period in various parts of the empire. Their strength comes from the way in which they respond to new moral and religious needs. This is also why for some time, they freely develop within the mobile framework of

15. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

contemporary popular life. Later there will be abuses, even in the celebration of the Eucharist. "One was obliged to simplify as much as possible the meal (*agape*) which was like the first act. Later on it became separated from the liturgy, and finally was more or less completely suppressed." As for the visions, prophecies, and miraculous cures, "since they were hardly compatible with the regularities of the liturgical service, they soon ceased to appear therein."¹⁷ This was the first step with a view to avoiding all contamination from the religious practices followed in non-Christian milieus.

It is nevertheless true that in its beginning the cult was immersed in the present and was in part conflated with the thought and spontaneous life of contemporary groups. Christianity could at that time intermingle with the life of the century without fear. To be sure, it opposed this life, insofar as Christianity represented a form of moral life that seemed imported from the outside and conceived for a type of society which contrasted sharply with Roman society. And yet Christianity, in order to become diffused in the great cities of the epoch, had to engage in many contacts and compromises. Far from enclosing itself in a liturgical armature, Christianity instead found it necessary to distinguish itself from the ancient cults, given its aversion to formalism. The fluid character of its proselytism obliged it to put itself on the level of a number of thoughts and consciousnesses formed in the century, at least in places where it enjoyed open access. "Few situations were considered incompatible with Christianity, even with the quality of a priest or a bishop. Saint Cyprian knew a great number of bishops who accepted managerial positions in the administration of domains, frequented fairs, practiced usury, evicted tenants. . . . The imperial house from Nero to Diocletian always had many Christian members. In the long run one came to accept not just financial managements, but municipal or even provincial magistracies. One even came to see Christian believers become pagan priests. . . . Finally, there were people of the theater, gladiators, even prostitutes among the Christians."¹⁸

Similarly, the distinction—later to become fundamental—between priests and lay persons does not yet carry all its weight in the first centuries.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, "the clergy formed a clear-cut category in the community at large. . . . Yet confessors and those who remained voluntarily celibate soon acquired a special position. . . . Because they were celebrated by others and celebrated themselves, the confessors

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 521.

19. See Charles Guignebert, *Le Christianisme antique*, 1921, pp. 178–79.

and the virgins had the tendency to constitute within Christian society an aristocracy that could attempt to contest the hierarchy's rights to the government of the Church.²⁰ This was because the religious tradition was still so recent, the rites so simple, and the dogma so little stressed that the need could still be felt—weakly, to be sure—to create within Christian society a specialized organ to preserve them. Priests administered the community, but they were not yet a kind of caste whose sacred character separated them from other believers. Ecclesiastical celibacy appeared only at the end of the third century.

In the fourth century the distinction between the laity and clerics had already deeply entered into custom. Not only within the cult but also within temporal administration, the clergy alone counted. . . . The laity has nothing to say to the Church; its attitude is uniformly passive; it must listen to readings and homilies and participate through short acclamations in the prayers formulated by the clergy, receive the sacraments from the clergy and see in them the depositors and organizers of the faith.²¹

But up to this moment religious memory lives and functions within the entire group of believers. It is conflated in the law with the collective memory of the entire society. It does not seem necessary for those who maintain this religious memory to leave their anchorage in time, to detach and isolate themselves from all thoughts and memories circulating within temporal groups. The Church itself for a long time testifies to a real defiance and open hostility in regard to the monkish movement and the monasteries where the ascetic ideal is elaborated. Why should one turn one's back to the world when the world is permeated with Christian thought? Why should religious memory not operate under the same conditions as a collective memory that is nourished and renewed, fortified and enriched, without losing any of its fidelity as long as the society that supports it develops a continuous existence? But soon religious society begins to realize that the groups that it progressively attracts preserve their own interests and their own memory, and that a mass of new remembrances bearing no relation to its own refuses to be located within the frameworks of its thought. It is at this point that religious society retreats and establishes its tradition, that it determines its doctrine and imposes on the laity the authority of a hierarchy of clerics who are no longer simply functionaries and administrators of the Christian community but who constitute instead a closed group separated from the world and entirely turned toward the past, which they are solely occupied with commemorating.

20. Duchesne, *Origines* 1:531.

21. *Ibid.* 3:22.

Among most of the believers who are connected to the Catholic creed in our societies, religious acts and thoughts are intermingled with many others and occupy attention only in fairly widely spread intervals. When believers participate in the Sunday Mass, go to church and participate in the rites on holy days, recite prayers every day, or fast, they undoubtedly do not think above all of past events of which these practices reproduce certain traits, like an echo resounding across the centuries. Preoccupied with attaining salvation according to the customary forms and with complying with the rules observed by the same members of their religious group, they indeed know that these institutions existed before them. But these institutions appear so well adapted to what these believers expect of them and the idea they have of them is so closely linked to all their other thoughts that these institutions' historical color becomes effaced in their eyes and they are able to believe that these institutions could be no other than they are. This is why a child does not imagine that what is done for him by either parent, or that the way in which it is accomplished, can be explained by the individual nature of each parent, that it began on a certain day, that it could have been very different, or that the play of familial affections could have been modified. The child does not distinguish *his* father from *a* father in general. As long as the child has not left his family and cannot compare it with the families of others, above all as long as the child does not demand of his parents more or other than what ordinarily satisfies a child, he does not call to mind the particular circumstances of their life; nor does he attempt to recall all that they have been for the child since he came to know them, and he does not figure out what they could have been before his consciousness was alerted. To be sure, the believer preserves in his memory certain chief facts that religious instruction has taught him. His attention has often been directed to them through the practice of his religion. But from the fact that he has often rethought them, and that others have rethought them with him, these notions of facts have become notions of things. An entire set of other ideas concerning present-day society and its members enters into the idea he has about the Mass, the sacraments, and festivities. The celebration of Sunday coincides in fact with the cessation of work and all distractions of a secular character. When he confesses or takes part in Communion, if he is focused on the sacrament, it is the sacred character and the act of purification and renewal of his inner being that occupies him; his thought is then turned toward the present, much more than toward the past. The very words of the priest, to be sure, call to his mind the remembrance of the Lord's Supper, but this image more than half disappears behind more contempo-

rary representations, the location and the ceremony of the cult, the officiating priests, the holy table, and those who approach this table with them.

Let us now no longer consider the mass of the believers but instead that small core of believers (whether clerics or laymen) for whom religion is the substance of their lives and who center all their thoughts on religion—those of whom we can say that they truly live in God. To them, there is an essential difference between religion and other customs. The latter, in effect, are valued only in passing as a means of organizing temporal society more or less successfully, whereas religion has its roots in the far removed past and is transformed only in appearance. The believer removes himself from temporal affairs and is assured of approaching the object of his cult only if he pays incessant attention to the time in which his religion was born and in which there was not yet any contact between religion and profane things. He must relive with full understanding the initial drama on which all subsequent developments depend as well as the other religious events whose remembrance has been assimilated into the body of the history of the Church. To be sure, there have always been two religious currents, one dogmatic, the other mystic. But if sometimes the former and sometimes the latter have prevailed, and if, finally, religion results from a compromise between the two, this is because both mystics and dogmatics make an effort to go back to the origins and because both at the same time risk losing contact with their origins. This entails a constant conflict that is worth stressing, for in it we can clearly see the contradictory conditions under which collective memory is sometimes obliged to operate.

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Dogmatics claim to possess and to preserve the meaning and understanding of Christian doctrine because they know how controversial terms, propositions, or symbols have been defined in the past, and also because they possess a general method for defining these today. This is in contrast to mystics, who try by means of an interior light to recover the meaning of texts and ceremonies. The dogmatics look for this meaning primarily on the outside, in the decisions or interpretations of the Fathers, popes, and councils. This is based on a fundamental distinction—which is found moreover in every religion²²—between

22. Jules Martha in his classic book *Les sacerdoce athéniens*, 1882, indeed remarks that, among the Athenian priests (a great number of whom exercised their functions only for one year and then became simple citizens again) "there is nothing here that gives the impression of a clergy." Even lifetime priests are priests only on certain hours where

two clearly demarcated groups: clerics and laymen. Why do laymen not have a voice at the chapter house? This is because, as they take part in society or societies other than the religious group (since they are engaged in profane life), they do not participate in the same collective life and are not really initiated either into the same traditions or the same knowledge. The authority of theological tradition comes to it because it is like the memory of the clerical group, which—with the help of a concatenation of notions solidly established and conveniently systematized—manages to reconstruct those aspects of the life and early teaching of the Christian Church that it finds important to retain.

It is true that these notions have been established and elucidated in very different periods—sometimes in periods far removed from the origins. The preoccupation with going back to the texts and testifying as to their authenticity is of recent origin, as is the preoccupation with distinguishing in the holy books as well as in the ceremonies what is pristine and what has been added on, and with dating each piece of writing and the origin of each institution. It was not in the councils or religious assemblies but rather in the nonecclesiastical milieu that historical criticism originated; it became imposed on the theologians only at a later date. Moreover, when we speak of the first generation of Christians and of the first texts of Christianity, we designate a period in which (in a relatively short interval of time) the essentials of the Christian tradition were established through alterations and by a labor of adaptation. We can more or less understand the nature of these adaptations today, but religious tradition has preserved few traces of them.²³ Collective remembrances preserved in the texts or established

certain ceremonies have to be performed (p. 141). This is because the priesthood is actually a magistracy of the city. The priest, who has to follow laws and decrees, has no other powers than those conferred by sovereign authority. Nothing separates the state from religion, the civil principle from the religious principle. The distinction between clerics and laymen seems to disappear in certain Protestant sects, in particular among the Quakers. But since the religious community is in this case exclusively composed, like the early Christian community, of men inspired by God, and since the elect moreover separate themselves rigorously from the world and renounce all unnecessary relationships with those who live in it, the group of the Quakers in this respect resembles a monkish order. In addition, they resemble mystics insofar as they believe in continuous revelation: God speaks directly in particular to whoever wishes to listen.

23. On the role played by Paul in the establishment of the doctrine, see Guignebert, *Le Christianisme antique*. "When he who has chosen me . . . decided to reveal his son to me . . . I did not go to anyone for advice nor did I go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead I went at once to Arabia and then I turned to Damascus. It was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to obtain information from Peter and I stayed with him for two weeks. I did not see any other apostle, except James, the Lord's brother." Epistles to the Galatians 1:15f.

in the ceremonies hence do not directly reproduce the life and teaching of Jesus, but rather the picture of this life and teaching that the first generations of Christians outlined. Beginning with that period the earliest ideas of the Christian faith had to be extended and generalized if they were to penetrate into the consciousness of groups that up to this time were dominated by other traditions. They became part of ancient frameworks, which in part erased their original colors. This can certainly be explained by the necessity of propaganda, and also by the transformation of the Christian community into one Church. When the image of Jesus as Jewish prophet and Galilean was replaced by that of Christ as savior of all mankind, the properly Jewish traits of Jesus—which must have been familiar to those around him—had either to fall into oblivion or be transposed. From the first centuries, the remembrance of Jesus came to be replaced with an idea based on some elements of remembrances, the content of which however seems to be explained by the religious tendencies and exigencies of these first communities, at least in large part. It is probable that the Christian traditions—those that relate to Christ as much as to his disciples, to the saints, miracles, persecutions, and conversions—for a time were still maintained in a sporadic state. It must have been decided only relatively late (at a moment when all witnesses were gone, so that direct verification was no longer possible) to gather together the dispersed members of the Christian tradition and to construct from these a body of doctrinal and legendary accounts. It is hardly astonishing to find at each particular spot in these the modes of thinking, dialectic, passions, and grudges of the social and intellectual milieu in which traditional Christianity was constructed. But in all subsequent periods, the theologians examined corruptions behind the words of Christ and the Fathers of which the early church itself was unaware, or to which it did not attribute the same importance, just as the painters of the Renaissance rigged out the personalities of the Christian era with costumes of their own time or with conventional Roman costumes. Thus everything happened as in those cases where an event passes from an individual consciousness or from the narrow circle of a family into the thought of a more extended group and is defined in relation to the dominant representations of that group. The extended group is much more interested in its traditions and ideas than in the event and in what it may have meant for the family or individual who was its witness. Details of time and place, no matter how concrete and animated they may have been for contemporaries, become later translated into general characteristics. Jerusalem becomes a symbolic place, a heavenly allegory; when the Crusaders left for the Holy Land, they hastened to

reach a sanctuary suspended between heaven and earth rather than the picturesque framework where certain scenes of the life and death of Christ took place. The date of the birth of Christ—since it was placed in the period of the renewal of the year and of a very ancient feast—likewise acquired a symbolic significance. All his acts and words were not only the realization of the prophesies but examples and promises of a new life. They were so often reproduced that they came to play in Christian consciousness the same role ideas play in our habitual thought. In this way, from the first centuries on, a Christian theology, morality, and philosophy singularly transformed the appearance of Christ and his teaching.

It is true in the final analysis that dogmatics are not preoccupied with "reliving" the past but rather with conforming to its teaching—to whatever of the past can be preserved, reconstructed, and understood today. The past cannot be reborn, but we can fathom what it was like, and we are most successful if we have at our command well-established landmarks. Our success in this is also greater if the element of the past in question has occasioned a large number of reflections and if a series of thoughts has intersected with it: these will help us to restore certain aspects of the past. The thought of the first-century Christians is known to us only through texts that we but imperfectly understand today. But it is a form of theological thought that had a profound impact on the thinking of laymen and that was developed within the frameworks established at the beginning of the Church. These frameworks are so stable that a position can be given to some notion of a fact or of an ancient teaching within these frameworks, with the certainty at least that such landmarks have not changed. There has been in effect a continuous existence of the group of clerics who in each period have taken up these same frameworks and then applied their reflections anew to them, conforming to what tradition taught them in this respect. Even if theological thought did not in every period assimilate to the same degree all the contents of the religious consciousness of the preceding period, there are nevertheless so many relations between all these notions that the ones that are stable are most frequently able to determine those that are not. The best method to accomplish this consists of the clerics, or at least those who have the best command of tradition, getting together and thinking in common, or, better, remembering in common.

In this way dogmatics plays the same role in the operations of religious memory that these collective ideas or remembrances—which remain present in consciousness or at its immediate disposition—play in general within memory, where they give witness to an agreement ar-

rived at once or several times among a group's members regarding the date and nature as well as the reality of a past fact. Undoubtedly, aside from those facts and teachings that have resulted in a declaration of the group, there are others that the Church, to the degree that it discarded them, increasingly left to obscurity, consequently transmitting no tradition regarding them. But these forgotten facts and teachings most often interested only the contemporaries of the early life of the Church; the later Church had no occasion to consider them because they departed from the horizon of people in the periods that followed.

Mysticism, in whatever form it is manifested, responds to the desire for more intimate contact with the divine source than is possible within the group of believers. The mystics have often described the ladder by which one ascends from sensible life to life in God, and many of them have gone so far in forgetting the familiar images that permeate the teachings of the Church that nothing could distinguish their state of mind at the moment they claim to lose themselves in God from any other analogous state in which elevation can be achieved in a religion such as Buddhism, or through an effort at meditation or philosophical abstraction. How could we speak here of traditions and remembrances, since the mind empties itself of images that it might contain and no longer tries to distinguish either facts and sensible representations or ideas from each other but rather tends to lose itself in the transcendent substance? Is not the preoccupation of the mystic precisely to become united immediately and in the present with God? When the mystic imagines and sees Christ, when he speaks with him, he almost always has the feeling of the presence of the Savior. This Savior comes into the mystic's life, is interested in his ideas, and inspires and directs his behavior. It is very rare that in these moments he believes himself transported into the past, to the period in which Christ becoming man taught and suffered. In any case, most often the image of Christ as present or past is only a means to elevate oneself for the present to God. In this sense, mystical piety can be distinguished from ordinary piety insofar as attention can be detached from the exterior forms of the cult, from the common thought of other believers, in order to be fixed—or allow itself to become fixed—on what occurs within ourselves. In so insulating itself, the religious thought of the individual is likely to lose contact with the thought of the Church, and in particular with those collective memories that nourish the Church.

Yet mysticism does not oppose official religion in the way individual thought opposes tradition. To begin with, the Church does not allow that there is a form of religious life from which the distinct idea of

essential dogmas, that is the fundamental memories of Christianity, is excluded. "In truth," says Bossuet regarding quietism, "is this a question among Christians? And can one seek a state among them in which they do not speak of Jesus Christ?" To become anchored in God alone, and even in the vague and indistinct nature of the sole essence, means to forget the Trinity and the divine attributes. "Is this anything other than, without exaggeration, an artifice of the enemy to make us forget the mysteries of Christianity, under the pretext of refinement through contemplation?"²⁴ During his transports and his ecstasies the mystic hence maintains the continuous feeling that his particular experiences take place within a framework of notions that he has not invented, that have not been revealed to him alone, but that the Church preserves and has taught him. Once he recognizes this, a great light is illuminated within him which brightens these very notions and helps him to fathom the mysteries of Christian religion. There is a continuity between his meditation or his interior vision and the thought of the Church. He may consider himself capable, by special favor, of calling to mind more vividly than the other members of the same group the traditions that they hold in common. It is then of no importance that he enters or believes himself to enter into direct connection with God or Christ believed to be present? He knows Christ through tradition; whenever he thinks about Christ, he remembers. When he tries to get nearer to God so that he merges with him, he tries to imitate Christ or those who have best succeeded in imitating him in the past. All mystic life is an imitation of Jesus Christ, whether through feelings and behavior one reproduces within oneself the feelings and behavior that the Gospels attribute to Christ, or whether one reproduces in thought his characteristics, the events of his life on earth, and his glorious transfiguration. We deal here with an effort of evocation, in which the memory of the mystic completes and partly supplements the memory of the church.

There have been mystical reactions in the history of religion, and mystics never ceased to play a role in the evolution of Christianity, because believers or groups of believers became aware of the insufficiencies, the rigidity, and the barrenness of official theological thought. On the one hand, as the early of Christianity receded, the memory of the Church had to be organized so as to continue to exist intact in a social milieu that was constantly changing. Religious truths had to be adjusted to each other, and also to the ideas and beliefs of all kinds

24. Quoted by Delacroix, *Etudes d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme*, p. 289.

circulating outside the Church that could not fail to make their influence felt within it. Dogma slowly became a system. Political and philosophical preoccupations influenced the prelates who assembled in councils. A religious truth, as I have said, is at the same time a traditional remembrance and a general notion. The value of dogmas as notions was reinforced in the dogmatism of the theologians, but it sometimes became increasingly difficult to retrieve their reference point in the story of Christ and in the teachings of the early apostles. Many mystics reproached the Church for allowing itself to be excessively permeated by the spirit of the age, and they accused it of infidelity to the spirit of Christ. On the other hand, it is of the nature of remembrances, when they cannot be renewed by resuming contact with the realities from which they arose, to become impoverished and congealed. Once dogmas and rituals have been formulated, they are used up and lose their luster from generation to generation to the extent that they are rethought and reproduced. The variations permitted them within the framework established by the Church remain limited. If in the early period of discovery and formation they appealed, because of their very novelty, to the imagination and sensibility of people, in the long run they become immobilized into literary formulas and monotonous gestures whose efficacy declines. This is the danger that faces dogmatic theology. The role of the mystics was very often first of all to modify the picture of the early times of Christianity by enlarging it, and to attract the attention of believers to certain facts and persons in the Gospels that were initially neglected, poorly known, or little noticed. Their role was also to try in some way to repaint particular details of the body and physiognomy of Christ with more lively colors. This resulted in many forms of devotion which however corresponded, in the mind of their initiators as in that of the Church that adopted them, to a new direction of religious memory fashioned to recover such aspects of evangelical history that until now had been neglected. Saint Bernard (in the twelfth century) recommends "devotion to the mysteries of the mortal life of the Savior, and to the persons who were involved with him, such as the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph" and meditates on "the humanity of Jesus." In his sermons he speaks with predilection of the night of Christmas and the nativity of Christ and of the circumcision, and he evokes the scene of the drama of Cavalry; he moreover celebrates the virginity and humility of Mary and the virtues of Saint Joseph. All the aspects of evangelical history that he brings to the forefront in these examples are novel in the sense that they either do not appear, or scarcely appear, and in

any case are not so vigorously stressed in the homilies of the Fathers of the Church.²⁵ Yet he does not proceed as Ludolphe le Chartreux does later. The latter, "having retained the words of Saint John that all Christ has done or said has not been written down . . . supplements the accounts of the Gospels with the accounts of the apocrypha, and also with imaginary suppositions which conformed to the truths of the belief and to verisimilitudes."²⁶ Saint Bernard goes back to the canonical texts, and especially to the third Gospel. He explores the treasury of the Church's memory so as to discover recollections which were preserved therein from the beginning, but which had not yet or only incompletely been reproduced. We know moreover that other mystics such as Saint Augustine or Saint Francis have told us that they felt an awakening of their vocation and came to see aspects of Christianity anew after having read—sometimes by chance—this or that text of the scriptures on which all their attention became focused. Hence what distinguishes them from dogmatists is not that they oppose a kind of personal inspiration to the doctrine of the Church, but rather that they value and give preference to those portions of early Christian history that the official tradition has eclipsed for one reason or another.

If the mystics claim in this way—without relying on the contemporary dogmatic system—to resume direct contact with early Christianity, it is not in the texts they cite, in the parts of the scriptures in which they are interested, that we are likely to find an explanation of the new point of view with which they consider religion. On the contrary, such poorly known or neglected aspects of the sacred writings attract their attention, because these aspects respond to the more or less conscious religious aspirations that existed within the mystics even before they focused their thought on these texts. We can, if we so desire, contrast mysticism with dogmatism as lived remembrance versus tradition more or less reduced to formulas. It is by no means through a dialectical method, and in taking inspiration from intellectual processes such

25. "I have extensively cited the sermon of Saint Bernard on the mysteries of the life of Christ because they provided a new orientation for piety. . . . A new literary genre, that of the lives of Christ, is now born. The preachings of the Abbot of Clairvaux as a whole form a kind of mystical biography of the Savior." He was also "the one who perhaps contributed the most to the development of the cult of Mary in the Middle Ages." It was he who "interested Christian piety in guardian angels" and who "was the first to stress the greatness of the virtues of Saint Joseph." Pierre Pourrat (superior of the great seminary of Lyon), *La spiritualité chrétienne*, vol. 2, *Le moyen âge*, 1921, pp. 76, 89, and 93.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 472, "Secundum quasdam imaginarias repraesentationes quas animus diversimode perspicit . . ." *Vita Christi*, prol., pp. 4–5.

as are found among the members of the contemporary Church, that the mystic constructs his vision and interprets the texts in such a way as to discover in them a new sense. Because he approaches religion freely in the simplicity of his heart, he believes that he is in a better position to understand it, as if there were a secret correspondence between his intimate nature and these truths. But it seems that, deprived of the support that the dogmatists get from official tradition, and trying all by himself to revive the Christian past, the mystic risks being drawn further away than the theologians whom he wishes to leave behind him. For, once he has set tradition aside (at least in those aspects in which he is innovative), what testimonies to the past remain for him if not the texts? Undoubtedly, a new light seems to him to burst out from the scriptures. But whence does it come? From the texts themselves or from himself? If it comes from himself, it is indeed because he himself interprets the past in terms of the present, and by a part of the present which is considerably more limited than the contemporary thought of the Church. In point of fact, the mystic is a person who, though he may escape the pressures of the official Church in certain respects, is nevertheless subject to the influence of the age and of the social milieu in which he lives. When we moderns read the mystics of the Middle Ages, or even of periods nearer to us, we may attain through the words of that time a state of consciousness: but this is a modern state of consciousness. As to the particular intuitions that the language of these medieval writers expresses, if we are to retrieve them, we would first of all have to relocate ourselves in the society of that time, which no longer exists and which can be reconstructed only with difficulty. But this was also true of the mystics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when they read the Gospels. They resembled people who, having no memories that they wish to revive, deprive themselves of the help that traditional thought might be able to provide them. Therefore they had to project into the past their feelings or personal ways of seeing, or those of groups that influenced them in a more or less unconscious manner. But nothing proves that these points of view more accurately approached the actual past than did the tradition of the Church. When Saint Francis consecrates himself to poverty, he stands in opposition to the Church of his time which does not despise wealth; he believes he is returning to the truth of the Gospels. But poverty does not have the same meaning, nor perhaps the same moral efficacy, in the Italian society of the eleventh century as in the time of Jesus. Saint Francis's "Lady Poverty" is a kind of medieval and romanesque entity: is she really the correct image of evangelical poverty? Do these mendicant friars perhaps come nearer in many aspects

to Buddhist monks than to members of the early Church? The type of asceticism that they practice may be more removed from the Christianity of the first centuries than is the simple Christian charity recommended by the Church of the time to believers anchored in their own century. When Catherine of Siena declared that the life of Christ, from beginning to end, was only a prolonged passion, and that, if he begged God at Gethsemane to "take away this chalice," this was because the chalice was empty and because he asked for another, full of still more bitter sufferings, she believed that we must above all get rid of the flesh and clothe ourselves anew in the Crucified One.²⁷ This confusion, which caused her to see in suffering a taste of Christ, undoubtedly arose from the religious examples and precepts that had been propounded to her early in her life. But it also arose because, through her nervousness and the exhaustion of her body, she followed a line of mystics who became hypnotized by their pain and the pain of Christ to the point that they saw in all Christianity nothing more than suffering. In the same way, the devotion to the Holy Sacrament and the adoration of the Sacred Heart presuppose a rather particular cast of mind among their founders: a liking of allegories, a rather insipid sentimentality, a corruption of taste, a sickly curiosity and imagination. This is a mixture of genres (in which one desires to see the wounds and the blood of Christ and attributes the language of profane love to divine love) that, although not wholly absent from early Christianity, nevertheless occupied only a very limited position therein, so far as we can judge. In all these new forms of the cult, as well as in the inspirations which are at their source, we find the kind of imagination of these devout groups wherein they appear, rather than the original thought of the Gospels. The early Christians had not attained the psychological refinement that is found in Saint Teresa. When the apostles and the faithful of the first centuries called Jesus to mind, they depended on memories and accounts of witnesses that were still recent; they were not inspired by the pious imagery of the Jesuits from whom Saint Teresa derived the figures of her visions.

The Church has always had fairly complex reactions to mystics. At first the dogmatists were distrustful of these illuminated believers, who claimed to see further than traditional religious thought. Their reaction was like that of any extended and ancient collectivity, which has come to trust the value and solidity of its beliefs and fears the innova-

27. J. Voergensen, *Sainte Catherine de Sienna*, 4th ed., 1919, pp. 144-45. The Dominicans have always had a predilection for corporal penitence. The life of a man like Henri Suso, from his eighth to fortieth year, is but a succession of self-inflicted tortures.

tions of the individual or smaller groups that it comprises. They nevertheless could not deny attention to the mystics, or treat them like strangers or adversaries from the outside, for the mystical movements most often found their source not only in the bosom of the Church but also among those most permeated by its spirit. The majority of these mystics were monks, nuns, and, in any case, were educated in contact with priests or friars. They elevated themselves above tradition—or placed themselves outside it—only after having assimilated tradition more deeply than other clerics. They were more open than the average priest and his flock to the trends that agitate and traverse the religious world, more sensible to the nuances of theological thought, and somehow saturated by the dogmas and practices; therefore they were the contrary of aliens. Even when they did not possess this knowledge of religion, it was enough that they were in frequent contact, as they in fact were, with priests and theologians—who had themselves felt the aridity of the cult and of contemporary teaching and whose orientation encouraged them to look for new interpretations and experiment with new exercises—for it to be said of them that they had penetrated to the heart of theological thought and participated in the most intense life of the Church.

We are quite wrong if we imagine that mystical thought is predicated on isolation and a certain degree of ignorance or simplicity. It most often requires, on the contrary, the spur of an exacting and surfeited piety and the support of a spiritual family, a kind of vanguard of the Church which is so filled with its spirit that it overflows into mystical thought. It is in this sense that mystical thought is collective, and it is moreover for this reason that the Church cannot afford to neglect it. We have seen that the Church has its own memory. That any of its members claims to rectify or complete it is of concern to the Church only if he is not alone, if he speaks in the name of a group, and, above all, if this group is one of those most permeated with its doctrine. This is to say that the Church will first of all insist that all devotion and every new form of belief or cult depend on certain elements of its own tradition and present itself as an aspect of collective Christian thought. In fact there are not one but several mystical traditions. Each of the great innovators can refer to a series of predecessors and to currents of piety which, even though unperceived until this moment, have nevertheless since the times of origin had their own direction and believers.²⁸

28. Undoubtedly "they possess an animated feeling of the spontaneity and originality of their experience." But "they aspire to go beyond ordinary Christianity, without abandoning it; Christianity is their point of departure and provides the milieu in which they

Each mystic may have the feeling, when he reveals in ecstasy or discovers hidden aspects of divinity, that he is favored with a personal grace, and that he passes through religious states without precedent. When he however describes what he has seen and experienced, when he is concerned with edifying and teaching, and when he makes a theory of his visions, he presents them as a confirmation of this or that aspect of what he believes always to have been, and what has continued to be, the tradition of the Church and Christian doctrine.

After all, just as the mystic has not all by himself kindled the new light that he casts on dogma and the Church, he needs the aid of disciples to nourish this new light; he teaches others and educates them in his own image. He becomes separated always within the context of a group. Nothing proves that he has always been in himself alone the center around which disciples have gathered. Tradition and legend love to attribute exceptional merits and brilliant actions that have impinged on a society to a single person. For a religious mind-set that interprets the history of religion in terms of divine intervention, what can be more natural than to allow that the action of God has been manifested in certain chosen men, and through their mediation? To be sure, we can no more demonstrate that such a mind-set is in error than it can demonstrate that it is correct. Who would have told us the intimate details and the circumstances in the life of a saint if not those who followed him, prayed with him, and expounded his ideas during his life and after his death, or rather made his figure, activities, tribulations, and glory known? We cannot imagine that they were guided in their accounts by a concern for historical truth. Preoccupied instead with action, they unconsciously had to arrange the facts of the past in a manner most conducive to inspiring believers and unbelievers alike with feelings of religious wonder, of edification and admiration, and of adoration for the person whom God had singled out among all humans enough to manifest himself through him. But there were certain advantages from this point of view in having such a religious movement linked to a single founder and in having the others appear in reality as disciples who, each taken alone—and even taken together—

develop; their mystical life is enveloped by Christian life." Each mystic discovers a mystic tradition. Saint Teresa read Osuna "and other good books." Madame Guyot read Saint Francis of Sales. Suso's master was Eckehart. In his *Instructions sur les états d'oraison*, Bossuet says, "For four centuries we see the beginning of refinements of devotion concerning union with God and conformity with his will which have prepared the way for modern quietism." Madame Guyon states, "I beg you to examine thoroughly if what I wrote is not also offered by the mystical authors and saints who have been accepted for a long time." Delacroix, *Etudes d'histoire*, pp. 258, 285, 355-58.

would have been nothing without him. Two or three founders would have been mutually detrimental. There would have been doubts concerning their divine inspiration, since it would be rather unlikely for God thus to manifest himself to the same degree to three men whom accidental circumstances had brought together.

Since their characteristics and teachings, despite narrow analogies, would not be exactly identical, it would be impossible to avoid comparing them or preferring one to another. In any case, multiple founders would be reduced to the situation of people who know only one aspect of the truth: they would all diminish each other and delimit the one by the other. Finally, this would not attribute a prodigious richness of graces and supernatural virtues to a single person, so that it would not be possible to inspire people sufficiently with the idea of a being infinitely superior to common humanity. Everything hence disposed the members of a sect or of an order to attribute to the founder—and to him alone—the religious and moral renewal that undoubtedly could actually succeed only because it opposed to a collective practice or belief a belief or practice equally collective.

Be that as it may, beginning with the moment in which a personal experience is presented as the source of a current of religious thought that inspires a whole group of clerics and believers of proven devotion, the Church realizes what it would gain by blessing it and the risks entailed in condemning it. A single cause retains this new religious thought: the fear that the purported testimony would prove to be incompatible with other testimonies that are the Church's pillars of faith and indeed the central truths of Christianity. When the Church realizes that this new testimony, far from clashing with the latter, fortifies it, and that this new view of doctrine sheds more light on all its components, the Church accepts it. But the Church then tries to link it to its system: this is possible only when the Church slowly puts aside a great number of the new view's original traits. The mystic is then canonized and takes his place on the list of official saints. The story of his life takes the form of legend, his disciples must submit themselves to the rules of monastic life, and his teachings become reduced to the level of the common religious understanding.

But for the Church to be able to assimilate these elements it is necessary that its tradition not become weakened, for, though these elements are elaborated within its body, they nevertheless represent in reality so many successive additions to this tradition. I have said that religious doctrine is the collective memory of the Church. The early Church lived on recent evangelical remembrances that were still immersed in the social milieu in which the events that it commemorated

took place. To the degree that people became distanced from this milieu, Christian society had to establish its dogmas and cult and contrast these to the beliefs and practices of secular society, which represented another time and obeyed impulses different from Christian society. The latter found within its traditional spirit the force necessary to maintain the primacy of its fundamental memories and to preserve its own originality in the midst of other groups. There was at that time such energy and organic vitality in the Church that it did not hesitate to impose its own memory on the societies that until then had remained foreign to its thought and life; their memories and traditions soon became effaced or fused within the Christian tradition. In this way, although the Church was distinguished from the temporal world, both participated in a shared collective memory. Undoubtedly the fidelity, wealth, and intensity of religious remembrances varied, as one passed from the body of the clerics to the totality of the assembled laity gathering in the churches, and from the assemblies of believers to the groups that responded to profane needs: families, professional bodies, tribunals, armies, etc. Too many secular interests in these last cases became mingled with Christian ideas, which distorted and partially extinguished them. Nevertheless religious tradition, in the whole period in which its ascendancy over the peoples of Europe was incontestable, depended not only on the authority of the heads of the Church (which was natural) but also on the assent of believers and of the entire Christian world. Despite its claim to be self-sufficient, because religious memory extended its sway over lay and profane groups and wished to strengthen this sway, it had to take the form of a doctrine that responded to the concerns of the time. The dogma and the cult did not change in law. In fact, Christianity was able throughout the Middle Ages to take the place of philosophy and science only because the intellectual movements of the time found shelter and encouragement in the Church. The Church could at this point present itself in a welcoming and generous light. Wasn't the entire society Christian? If thoughts born within secular circles flowed into a Christian mold, it was hardly astonishing that their place was in some way marked in advance within Christian doctrine. As long as the Church was able to impose its tradition on the world, the entire life and history of the world had to conform to the tradition of the Church. All the remembrances that corresponded to that life and history had to be so many confirmations of the teaching of the Church, which could enrich its memory with all these new testimonies without deviating from the line of its past.

One is sometimes astonished by the fact that Christian doctrine

subsisted in this way—unchanged as to essentials—and that social thought, which changed from century to century, continued to remain within this channel. This was so because Christianity had a hold on groups strong enough that their entire life was controlled by it; nothing could appear which was not marked by it from the start. Intellectual, moral, and political activities undoubtedly have their own preconditions. Those who exercise them follow tendencies that, basically, do not emanate from religion. But as long as these activities are not developed to the point that one becomes aware of what is in fact not reducible to religion in each of them, they will not demand their independence. Since such activities have grown up in the shade of the Christian tree, they seem to be organically connected with Christianity and to derive their sap from the same roots. Science, philosophy, and indeed all fields of thought were based on traditions that were undifferentiated at that time from the Christian tradition. Early on one had become accustomed to clothing them in new forms and expressing them in a language which was that of the Church. Moreover, the clerics were the ones who, from the beginning and for a long time afterward, applied themselves to these fields of thought; all the works to which they devoted themselves reflect the beliefs of their authors. Besides, the scholars, philosophers, and statesmen of this period did not imagine that one could acquire knowledge of the laws of the natural world and the laws of societies through observation of things. The source of all knowledge, so they were taught, could be reached only through reflection on ideas, that is, through an operation the object and nature of which was purely spiritual. The mind was amenable to religion, which was its exclusive domain. The distinction between sacred and profane things assumes with increasing clarity the meaning of an opposition between the mind and things. Since the domain of things is shut off, where would the mind find nourishment if not in tradition? It is not toward the present but rather the past that the reflections of all those who attempt to think is directed. But the only past that is known is the Christian past. Despite all this, it is nevertheless true that thought cannot completely escape things, temporal life, and the necessities of the present. These obliged the Church to obscure a part of its tradition: namely all those aspects of its doctrine that clashed too violently with the ideas of lay circles and that were not at all consonant with the experience—even if it is reduced and distorted—of societies very different from the first Christian communities. But what happens then resembles the case of a memory that no longer calls up certain of its store of remembrances because the thought of contemporary people no longer has an interest in them. The

Church can divert its attention from certain of its traditions if its doctrine remains intact as to its essentials, and if it does not lose too much force or substance while it gains greater freedom of movement.

However, if the Church is obliged to modify its dogma in this way so that it can continue to be the common thought of lay society, it must also take notice of the various religious needs that arise among the clerics in the form of mystical thrusts. From these, other difficulties and dangers spring up. Indeed in the general tradition of the Church—shared by all clerics, throughout history—we see an entire series of particular traditions, which seem to disappear in certain periods but reappear in others. There are orders which become particularly connected to some aspect of cult and doctrine; there are also currents of devotion that carry along some believers, clerics and ordinary faithful, who are more zealous than the priests themselves. In the core of Christian collective memory there are as many collective memories, each of which claims to reproduce more faithfully than any other that which is their common object: the life and teachings of Christ. The Church has known many such conflicts since its beginning. In attenuated forms, the mystical schools reproduce ancient heresies or affiliate with recent heresies. We do not yet fully understand, but we can get a glimpse of the paths through which the Albigensian heresy could be propagated even to Saint Francis of Assisi.²⁹ The German mystical school of the fourteenth century emanated from Master Eckehart, whose works were condemned as heretical.³⁰ “Luther referred to the Middle Ages to justify his own mysticism, which was totally freed from the authority of the church.” We know that the mysticism of the Jansenists is not unconnected to Protestantism. Bossuet denounced in quietism a doctrine akin to “Spanish illuminati, Flemish or German beghards.”³¹ What distinguishes mystics and heretics alike is that they oppose to the common religion not the zeitgeist and rationalism of lay thought, but stricter religious demands and a feeling of what is specific and irrational in Christianity. In other words, they wish to return religion to its sources and its origins, either through trying to reproduce the life of the early Christian community, or through claiming to abolish the passage of time and to enter as directly into contact with Christ as the apostles who had seen and touched him and to whom he appeared after his death. They are in a way the “extremists” of Catholicism. They lack exact knowledge of the order of time and the meaning

29. Paul Sabatier, *Vie de saint François d'Assise*, 1920 ed., pp. 7, 42–45, 51–54.

30. Pourrat, *Le spiritualité* 2:323f.

31. Delacroix, *Etudes d'Histoire*, p. 268.

of its realities. Instead they follow a profound religious instinct when they accuse the Church of reducing worship to increasingly formal rites and of rationalizing dogma, thereby forgetting that Christianity is above all the direct imitation of the life of Christ. This is why the Church is obliged to give them some credit. But during the periods in which the Christian dialectic flourished, so long as the thought of the Church felt strong enough, by virtue of the wealth of its doctrine and the vigor of its traditions, to preserve its independence and originality within temporal society, it used the mystics but gave their interpretations only a subordinate position in its teaching. The Church never gave the mystics prominent rank, either in the cult or in dogma. If mystics had become dominant in the Church, this would indicate that the great Christian tradition of the Gospels, the Fathers, and the councils was slowly drying up and going to waste.

* *

To summarize, within Christianity—as within every religion—we must distinguish between rites and beliefs. Rites consist of a body of gestures, words, and liturgical objects established in a material form. From this point of view, the sacred texts have a ritual character. They have not changed since the beginning. They are literally repeated during the ceremonies, and they are closely linked to the cult. The recitations of the Gospels, the Epistles, and prayers have the same value as a genuflection, an oblation, a gesture of benediction. The rite may be the most stable element of religion, since it is largely based on material operations which are constantly reproduced and which are assured uniformity in time and in space by rituals and the priestly body. In the beginning, rites undoubtedly corresponded to the need to commemorate a religious memory, as, for example, the Passover feast among the Jews, and, among the Christians, the Communion. The believers of the early days still understood the primitive meaning of the rites when they celebrated them; that is, they maintained the direct remembrance of the event they reproduced. At this moment, rites and beliefs were fused and, in any case, corresponded to each other closely. To the degree that the times of origin recede, we may acknowledge that the essentials of the rite subsist as they had been early on. Undoubtedly when Christian society dispersed into various local communities and grew by incorporating groups that preserved and introduced part of their customs, there were even in this domain many contaminations and alterations in the beginning. Nevertheless, once the rite was unified and established for the entire Church, one resolved to modify it no longer. The same thing happened with the texts. After a period of irresolution and

incertitude, the ecclesiastic authority established the list of canonic texts to which nothing could be added and from which nothing could be eliminated. But it was otherwise when it came to the beliefs that interpreted these rites. Many remembrances of religious history were effaced and came to be lost. Those that remained undoubtedly became linked to the rites and texts, but they no longer sufficed to explicate them. As the meaning of forms and formulas became partially forgotten, they had to be interpreted—and this marks the birth of dogma. Undoubtedly the Church harbored, at least in the beginning, a tradition that ensured continuity between its thought of yesterday and today. But, just as the religious group, while opposed to profane society, nevertheless remains implicated with it, so the theology of each period is inspired by a dialectic which is partially that of the time.³² Reflection on dogma could not be isolated from other modes of reflection. Lay thought evolved along with lay institutions; religious dogmatism evolved at a slower pace and in a less apparent manner, but it could not help following the entire direction in which, despite everything, it was placed. Dogma hence resulted from the superposition and fusion of a series of successive layers like so many slices of collective thought. Dogma is rational, but in the sense that the reason of each period has left its trace on it. Theological thought thus projects into the past, into the origin of rites and texts, the views of that past that it has taken in succession. It reconstructs on various levels, which it tries to adjust to each other, the edifice of religious truths, as if it had only worked on a single plan—the same plan that it attributes to the founders of the cult and to the authors of the fundamental writings.

However, the rites and texts do not raise problems just of rational interpretation. What is more, as the original meaning grows distant, each one of these interpretations loses contact with the early memories such as they could have existed in the consciousness of the time. In reality a system of notions based solely on the authority of the Church replaced a religious feeling that resulted from direct contact with

32. "The conceptions that the Church presents as revealed dogmas are not truths fallen from the sky and maintained by religious tradition in the precise form in which they first appeared. The historian sees in them the interpretation of religious facts acquired through a laborious effort of theological thought. . . . Reason does not cease to ask questions of faith, and the traditional formulas are subject to a perpetual task of interpretation." Alfred Loisy, *L'évangile et l'église*, pp. 158–59. "As a durable society, a Church can alone maintain the equilibrium between the tradition which preserves the inheritance of acquired truth and the incessant work of human reason to adapt the old truth to new stages of thought and knowledge." *Ibid.*, p. 173. "Theology resembles an adaptation of revealed doctrine to the different cultural stages that humanity goes through." Loisy, *Etudes bibliques*.

Christ and his apostles and from the direct contemplation of their characters and lives. The Church undoubtedly does not oblige its clerics and believers to adhere to the explications it presents to them when they read the texts or participate in the rites. On the contrary, it encourages them to approach God by bursts of faith and piety.³³ But it hardly gives them, in the form of general prescriptions, rules and advice that are efficacious in this respect. Because it is a collectivity, the Church is oriented toward what is properly collective in human thought, that is, toward ideas and concepts. This is why in Christianity, as in every religion, in almost every period and in more restricted groups there arose a need to become initiated into more intense forms of religious life, in which a larger place was reserved for feeling. The mystics seek the meaning of a sacrament not exclusively in what the Church teaches, but above all in the feelings that participation in the sacrament evokes in them, as if it were then possible directly to reach the event or the sacred personage that the sacrament commemorates. It surely is given to few believers to see God and to become united with him. The Church is suspicious of "the manifestation of dream states of private revelation. . . . Illusion is easy in mysticism; it can easily allow what is but a human or diabolical counterfeit to be taken for supernatural and divine states."³⁴ Yet when these states are attested to by important groups—when their collective nature is recognized—Christian memory, along with the history of the Gospels and of the early life of the Church, retains these revelations, illuminations, and visions as a type of witness which, if not of the same value as that history, deserves at least to be considered.

Should we say that the dogmatic tradition alone possesses the attributes of a collective memory, and that a religious tradition that gathers together and deals with the revelations of mystics as testimony resembles a memory that is encumbered with residues of paramnesia? But in the main the Church does not concede that God has revealed himself once and for all during the times of the Gospels, so that its role would be reduced only to preserving as faithfully as possible the remembrance of this period. To be sure, there is in Christianity such a

33. "The Church does not require belief in its formulas as an adequate expression of absolute truth . . . the ecclesiastic formulation is ancillary to faith, the direct line of religious thought. It cannot be the integral object of this thought, since this object is God himself, Christ and his work; each one appropriates this object as well as he can with the help of the formulation. Just as every soul and every intelligence differs from others, the nuances of faith are also of an infinite variety under the unique direction of the Church and within the unity of its symbols." Loisy, *L'évangile et l'église*, p. 175.

34. Pourrat, *Le spiritualité* 2:508.

considerable share of original historical data that one cannot imagine that it would have been possible to construct Christian dogma through a simple effort of thought and reflection. But these data have been elaborated dialectically and transposed into intellectual notions to such an extent that next to revealed theology place has always been made for a rational theology, and that during the entire scholastic period it was believed to be possible to demonstrate religion rationally. What is more, below and outside the succession of events, the sacred beings of religion are conceived as supernatural substances that remain identical and escape the law of time. From then on, the religion of today is not only the commemoration of the past for believers; since his resurrection Christ is present in the Church at every moment and in all places. The Church can hence allow without apparent contradiction that new revelations occur. But it tries nevertheless to link these new data to the ancient data and to place them within the body of its doctrine, that is, of its tradition. In other words, the Church does not acknowledge that these data are really new; it prefers to conjecture that the full content of the early revelation was not immediately perceived. In this sense the Church completes and illuminates its earlier remembrances through representations which, even though they have only recently attracted its attention, are themselves also remembrances. In this way, although religious memory attempts to isolate itself from temporal society, it obeys the same laws as every collective memory: it does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present.

Social Classes and Their Traditions

In every era, there are projects that society can accomplish better than in any other. At an earlier date society may not have felt the need for these projects or was unable to undertake them. Later, when the attention of society becomes focused on other objects, it is no longer able to concentrate upon these projects. Nietzsche remarks somewhere that religious life above all presupposes a good deal of leisure, and that, in our busy societies, in which work absorbs all other activities so that over the generations it has slowly destroyed the religious instinct, the bulk of people do not know of what use religion is and are content to note its existence with a profound astonishment: "Preoccupied with their affairs and their pleasures, they no longer have the time to devote themselves to it, especially because they hardly know whether it is a business or a pleasure."¹ This is undoubtedly because we still feel that religion has a function in our society just as in any other, and because we question whether preoccupied as we are with other objects, we could simply invent it, if it were not present. For we respect religion and hesitate to modify its forms. But it is the same in regard to most elements of the past that we preserve and of the entire system of traditional values that—as we know—no longer corresponds to contemporary conditions of law, politics, or morality. We are nevertheless not certain that traditional values do not still have a role to play; we fear (perhaps mistakenly so) that if we were to eliminate them, we no longer would possess the necessary faith and creative power to find an equivalent. That is why we remain attached to formulas, symbols, and conventions, as well as to rites that must be repeated and reproduced, if we wish to preserve the beliefs which gave them birth. Through this attachment to traditional values, the society of yesterday and the successive periods of social evolution are perpetuated today. We emphasize their antiquity and avoid effacing all that which no longer has present-day utility or which serves only to distinguish traditional values from what is recent, so that these traditional values become in effect distinguished. What is at issue is to free society from the weight of

1. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, chap. 3, para. 58.

a part of its past. It is because we expect this service from traditional values that we respect and remain attached to them.

It may indeed be useful that certain institutions and even fundamental aspects of a society's structure remain unshaken for some time—or at least seem to survive just as they are—while society itself goes through a process of transformation. A society does not proceed from one organizational structure to another through the conscious effort of its members, as if they build new institutions in order to reap actual advantages from their efforts. How could they know such advantages before these institutions had begun to function precisely in their own group? To be sure, later they will cling to these institutions for motives that might be called "rational" and that at any rate appear so in their eyes. But this happens only after they have experienced and believe they understand the benefits entailed. Before a society's members have reached this point, new institutions can become imposed on them only if the same prestige adheres to them as to the old institutions; hence some time is needed before they become consolidated and before these new institutions are somehow masked by the old ones. It is only after this process has occurred that, through a series of imperceptible improvements, the true face of the new institutions becomes clear. In this way the democratic regime of modern England was slowly elaborated under the shelter of institutions of the previous century. Otherwise a revolution tears off the mask.

Sometimes the modern regime in Western Europe is contrasted with those that preceded it, with the assertion that a bureaucratic regime has been substituted for the feudal regime.² In other words, a centralized administration has increasingly been imposed on the nobility and its vassals. Sovereignty, which in the Middle Ages was dispersed and divided among many, has now become concentrated. But this evolution took place during several centuries, under the shelter of feudal forms. For a long time, before it was possible to justify the powers and the rank of bureaucrats in terms of the real usefulness of their functions, their authority had to be based on noble titles, privileges, and rights—which were themselves based on the bearer's personal qualities and valor (these were very distinct from the qualities that were necessary for the accomplishment of actual functions), or on the qualities of their ancestors whose merits were imagined to live on in them. Nothing shows more clearly the extent to which it was necessary during this period to appeal to the memory of society in order to obtain

2. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft*, "Grundriß der Sozialökonomik," pt. 2, Tübingen, 1922, pp. 650f.

an allegiance that was later legitimized by stressing the usefulness of the services rendered and the competence of the magistrate or the functionary. During the Middle Ages there arose a system of noble values based on the history of noble families. In it were found recorded the memories of all the notable circumstances of their life, their names, their coats of arms, valiant acts, alliances, the services they had rendered to their overlords in their capacity as vassals, the titles bestowed on them, etc. It is by no means easy for us to imagine precisely the origin and nature of these values and of the feelings to which they gave rise. In any case, these values were based on historical data, on more or less ancient traditions that were preserved within groups of noble families and that were closely linked to the general history of the kingdom.

We can elaborate a theory of these feudal relations; it seems that there is a hidden logic in them that revealed itself little by little and was used by the royal power itself in order to retrieve a portion of its rights.³ But it is not very likely that the lords and their vassals perceived this system as an abstract theory from its beginning. The relations uniting them resembled, as far as they could see, those links of friendship, mutual services, testimony, esteem, and consideration that bring neighboring or related families together in relatively stable societies. In their eyes and in those of others these relations expressed their rank within the entire system, the remembrance of which is transmitted from generation to generation. To be sure, behind these families there is a substantial reality on which their social situation is based: the wealth at the disposal of each, or the type of functions exercised by family members insuring the dependence of a certain number of other families of neighboring rank or establishing a relationship with families of higher rank. In the same way, the power of a noble lord is based on the number and the size of lands he has distributed in the form of feudal grants as well as on his place in the hierarchy at the top of which stands the king, that is to say, on the distance that separates a given noble from the king. It is nevertheless true that originally everything happened as if wealth and rank went to those who merited them because of their gifts and personal qualities. If an unfavorable prejudice has over a long period of time become attached to professions which are too overtly lucrative,⁴ this is because it seemed that there was only

3. Adhémar Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, 10th ed., pp. 313f.

4. "The practices injurious to the nobility are those of the attorney, the notary, the clerk, the merchant and artisan of all professions, aside from glass-making. . . . This is understood when all these practices are undertaken for profit; for it is low and sordid profit that is derogatory to the nobility, for which the proper thing is to live off one's

an external link between wealth so acquired and the person in possession of it. To base social rank on wealth would have been to substitute a hierarchy of things for one of persons. On the contrary, the noble quality of the lord or of his tenant was rooted in his land. Behind the fields, forests, and fertile lands the personal face of the lord is perceived. The voice of the laborers answering the question of to whom these lands belong with "This belongs to the Marquis de Carabas" is the voice of the land itself. Such an assemblage of lands, forests, hills, and prairies has a personal physiognomy arising from the fact that it reflects the figure and history of the noble family that hunts in its forests, walks through its lands, builds castles on its hills, supervises its roads—the noble family that brought together its lands acquired through conquest, royal gift, inheritance, or alliance. Things would be quite different and would not inspire the same feelings or memories if other persons or another family were in command instead of the present owners. Beginning with the day on which titles fall into the public domain, or can be purchased—when in effect a plebeian family can be substituted for a family of royal blood—although the attempt is made to conceal these changes in persons or in lines of descent through the fiction of the continuity of titles, society will nevertheless take notice, and the respect for noble property will decline. But as long as this respect survives, it depends on the idea that the owner of a title to a property cannot be replaced by anyone else: he exercises his right of possession by virtue of the qualities that are his alone or that belong solely to his family or blood.

It is hence a singularly concrete and particular physiognomy that dominates the social order of this period. Names and titles evoke the past of families, the geographical location of their belongings, their personal relations with other noble families, and their proximity to princes and to the court. This is the age of "particularities" and privileges. Every man and group that can do so tries in this way to create for themselves historical rights and to find their position within this

estate, or at least not to sell one's own effort and labor." Charles Loyseau (died 1627), *Traité des seigneuries, des ordres et simples dignités, des offices*. "And every time the judges, lawyers, doctors, and professors of the liberal sciences do no injury to the nobility that they otherwise possess, if they still earn their upkeep through the means of their estate: for that (besides the fact that it proceeds from work of the mind and not of the hands) is rather honorary than mercenary. . . . Husbandry does no harm to nobility, nor, as is generally thought, because of its utility; indeed no practice that the gentleman undertakes for himself without gaining money from it is derogatory." On the contrary, base are "those who have the vocation of being ordinary laborers for others, as for example farmers: this is a practice that is as forbidden to the nobility as is mercantilism." Quoted in *L'organisation du travail*, by Charles Benoist, 1914, 2:118f.

framework. Cities receive charters and date their freedom by reference to the accession of a king or the decision of some lord. When a noble family dies out a tradition dies along with it; part of history falls into oblivion. It cannot be replaced by another history, in the way that one bureaucrat is replaced by another. Since people always die, feudal society must restore itself continually through an incessant renewal of homages, through new merits and feats of valor. It is not enough to put new material into ancient frameworks. Since the persons themselves and their actions—and the memory of those actions—constitute the frameworks of this social life, these frameworks disappear when the persons and families in question vanish. It is hence necessary to reconstruct other frameworks in the same manner and following the same lines, which however will not have exactly the same form or appearance.

In the last centuries of the monarchy, when the evolution that was to culminate in the modern regime took place, people were not abruptly made to submit to the new bureaucracy when they had been used to bowing down before a title.⁵ This is why—especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the monarchy still seemed to maintain a feudal appearance, while centralization was being pushed further and further, and noble lords were slowly being deprived of all their powers.⁶ When the system of absolute and centralized monarchy

5. According to Littré, a title is a name expressing an honorable quality, a dignity. "He has the title of duke, or marquis." Undoubtedly, in fact, these dignities are connected to old functions. "These high manors (the great fiefs) carry all the special titles, the titles of dignity. There are first of all duchies and earldoms, and here the origin of the manor and of the title is easy to discern. These are the great administrative divisions of the Carolingian monarchy that gave rise to them, *through the appropriation of public functions for the profit of the dukes and counts*. Lower (in order of dignity) are the baronies: these are a new creation, a product of the age in which feudalism was formed. They in no way correspond to a public function of the Carolingian monarchy: . . . they were first a powerful fact and then became the principal form of the full feudal manor. The list of titled fiefs . . . comprises in addition . . . the vice-earldoms and the castellanies. Here we deal with two enfeoffed functions, with two deputies who have gained titles. In the Frankish monarchy, the viscount was the deputy of the count: the castle-ward was, originally, a delegate of the baron. . . ." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, 10th ed, p. 181. But the appropriation of public functions by titled lords is only one aspect of the dismembering of sovereignty. Functions, in other words, presuppose a title, and are not sufficient to create it. What proves this is that, like the lands, "they are always held in fief, either of a lord or of the king" (*ibid.*, p. 180).

6. Thus, when at the end of the seventeenth century, the administration of the provinces was given to the stewards, who were veritable bureaucrats, controllers of all the public services, the seneschals and bailiffs of the feudal monarchy and the governors of the *monarchie tempérée* were maintained. The governors, who were military commanders originally, were always part of the high nobility. Loyseau, at the end of the sixteenth

was being perfected, and when the theory that it was completely in control of its agents was fully elaborated, it seemed that the jurisdiction of the new regime could be only the feeling of the general interest:⁷ the king would find in the bourgeoisie, which was already rich and cultivated, and many of whose members performed judiciary and financial functions, the necessary elements to direct the government. In fact, the king used them and made a wide appeal for their services. He put their abilities to use,⁸ but thought it necessary first to impose on them a rank in the noble hierarchy. It has been noted that a great number of nobles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were of recent date. In this period, the nobility of race, blood, and the sword was only feebly represented among the totality of noble persons, since they had been decimated by the wars of the previous centuries or ruined because they had to sell their possessions to pay their debts and had not become adapted to the new economic conditions. The people of this period were still too deeply immersed in the past to understand immediately the logic of the new system. The monarchy had to rely upon the traditional prestige of the nobility so as to procure the considerable sums of money necessary to run so huge an administration and to maintain its subjects' obedience. When the rich and cultivated bourgeoisie wished to exercise the functions of authority—to sit in the king's counsel and in the courts of justice and finance—it had to live in the castles of the nobility, to acquire their coats of arms, and to purchase their titles. In this way the new structure was elaborated in the shadow of the old. We might say that the new ideas became salient only after having for a long time behaved as if they were the old ones. It is upon a foundation of remembrances that contemporary institutions were constructed. For many of them it was not enough to dem-

century, "saw in them the germ of a new political feudalism. In that he was mistaken." Their responsibility had become, by the eighteenth century, a veritable sinecure, moreover generously remunerated." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, pp. 589f.

7. We know that early on the legislators let it be understood that the power of the king was exercised "for the common good" (Philippe de Beaumanoir, from the thirteenth century).

8. "The Capetian monarchs early on had private and intimate advisors attached to their person and living in the palace, whom they chose by preference among the educated clerics and, when the study of law was restored to honor, among the jurisconsults." They enter into the *curia regii* (the first form of Parliament) and play a very important role there from Louis VII to Philippe Auguste. "Roman and canon law begin to infiltrate the procedures of the court, which become more subtle and difficult to understand for those who are not men of the trade." Thus the personnel of Parliament little by little took on a professional character, and the high nobility and the prelates (except the peers) found themselves eliminated from it. Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, pp. 371f.

onstrate that they were useful to make them acceptable. They were forced to fade into the background, so to speak, in order to make apparent the traditions behind them which they aspired to replace and with which they tried in the meantime to fuse.

We need not believe, after all, that this was just a play of illusions whereby one simply tried to deceive the mass of royal subjects and to maintain in them the belief that the higher classes represented a higher human category in that they could point to ancestors who had proved their mettle, who had perpetuated and renewed a set of physical and spiritual properties transmitted through inheritance that enhanced the personal value of their members. Beneath the fiction of noble blood titled gentlemen had sincere convictions. They really believed that their group was the most precious and irreplaceable—and also the most active and beneficent—part of the social body. In a sense, they believed that they embodied society's reason for being. We must analyze this belief, which is not simply a display of collective vanity but rather is based on a fairly exact evaluation of the nature and role of a noble class.

During the feudal regime, vassals had to assist their overlord. During war they put their persons and weapons at his disposal. They sat in his councils and helped the overlord render justice. Feudal society presents an image of a group whose members perform a variety of functions, especially those which safeguard the material integrity of the group and allow it to grow in greatness and power. These functions moreover maintain order and a certain degree of uniformity. From another perspective, through the exercise of these functions the members of the group become more conscious of the relations of subordination and homage that define their rank, testify to their greatness, and enhance their honor. Through these relations they find themselves in the rank of their equals, display ritual gestures, show their insignia and badges of honor, pronounced traditional words and formulas, and think in common within the framework of those who are familiar to them. As society becomes increasingly complicated, it is quite certain that this second aspect of a group's actions always moves to the forefront. Whenever it is possible to break a function down into what is ceremony, display, and representation and what is technique, the clerics, scribes, jurists, and engineers are left with all that which does not involve the play of qualities through which nobles are distinguished.⁹

9. In the medieval guilds "the duty of attending civic ceremonies caused a fairly considerable loss of time so that the poorest brothers were disposed to delegate to those who were richer the duty of representing their guilds with the magnificence required by such solemn occasions." W. J. Ashley, *Histoire et doctrines économiques de l'Angleterre*

This is comprehensible if we note that every function, when it is stripped of the conventional forms with which each society envelops it as if to find itself therein again, limits and distorts social life and represents a kind of centrifugal force that tends to remove people from the heart of the society. In order to exercise one function people must in effect refrain from others, at least temporarily. When they become specialized, people limit their horizons all the more so as to pursue their task. They must orient their thoughts and acts toward those aspects of social life in which the realm of material necessities seems to be most powerfully felt. In warfare, for example, one needs to observe a discipline which often consists of treating human beings as simple physical units: it is essential to transport and feed the troops, to estimate distances and the shape of the terrain, and to look to arms, munitions, and fortifications. The task of legislation requires defining in a uniform and abstract manner the entities and conditions to which the laws apply. The laws concerning inheritance, for example, establish degrees of kinship through reference to a general stereotype of family—a framework in which each individual family can be located—and they divide the total inheritance into a number of categories. All laws are based on a classification of people, actions, situations, and objects, according to various external characteristics. From a particular angle, the law is a very mundane practice which considers individuals and their relations from the outside and tends to be frozen into formulas and reduced to a mechanical application of rules. Simplified to the situation of defendant or plaintiff, people come before their judges like things that must be weighed, cataloged, and labeled. There was undoubtedly a time when penal law took the social situation of plaintiff and defendant into account. There were different customs and laws in each province and there were, in addition, ecclesiastical tribunals, etc. It is nevertheless true that, even in this period, any person who was judged to be guilty of some misdemeanor or crime appeared before a tribunal that judged his act rather than his person, or judged that his person had been modified because of his act so that he could then be placed in one of the categories of people judged to be delinquent or criminal. Financial evaluations and calculations, the collection of taxes, the remunerations of agents, officials, retired people, etc. depend even more inherently on measurements, on movements of ma-

(French translation), 1900, 2:166. See also what he says concerning livery in London, which, after having been the mark of a democratic movement, with increasing luxury in clothes, "became the emblem of a civil aristocracy." Thus the wealthiest members of the guild became specialized in the performance of ceremonial functions.

terial goods in which differences between people become abstracted to their incomes and debts or credit standing with the Treasury. It is apparent that those who exercise all these functions look upon the groups of people with whom they must deal in terms of their external characteristics rather than their personal nature. They treat people as units divided up into various categories that lack the flexibility of spontaneous human groups. The more a function is reduced to this, it is only natural for the nobility to be disinterested in it. Nobility is in fact based on a completely different order of values. What is important for this order of values is not the characteristics that would place a person in one of these frameworks and confuse his identity with that of many others, but rather those that distinguish a person from all those around him and that even among his equals confer a rank on him that he alone can occupy. The noble hierarchy has nothing to do with the technical rules that apply to the classification of military technicians, legislators, law enforcers, and agents entrusted with assessing and levying taxes. In principal, the nobility takes account only of honor, prestige, and titles—that is, purely social notions that are completely devoid of physical elements that can be measured, calculated, or labeled by an abstract definition.

In other words, each noble or noble family is so deeply immersed in the company of other families of the same class that they all know each other (or are assumed to know each other). Moreover, all the others know them, their origin, position, and the subdivisions of their group. Two nobles who meet each other for the first time should be able, after exchanging just a few remarks, to recognize themselves as two members of the same extended family that establishes their kinship link or alliance. This presupposes that, in the nobility, through the generations there continues a totality of well-linked traditions and remembrances. Since there is nothing similar in other groups, it must be said that the noble class has for a long time been the chief upholder of collective memory. To be sure, its history is not the complete history of the nation. But nowhere else is found such continuity of life and thought, nor is the rank of a family so clearly defined by what it and others know of its past. In the commercial and artisan classes, and in the top strata of the bourgeoisie, the person becomes indistinguishable from his task, profession, or function that defines him. A noble cannot be reduced to his function; he cannot become a simple instrument or a cog-wheel, but is rather an element or component of the very substance of the society.

A functionary is judged according to the actual services he provides. He should be well adapted to contemporary conditions and to his im-

mediate task; undoubtedly his previous services are taken into account, but only insofar as they guarantee his competence and abilities in the present. The rank of a noble, on the other hand, is based on the antiquity of his title. One must step back in order to evaluate it. His figure emerges, from a perspective of noble families, in a portrait in which past and present are as narrowly superimposed and fused as a text on which subsequent corrections are clearly visible. We deal here with relationships not only among individuals (which might be understood in a semiphysical and technical sense) but among groups and social values. A value of this kind consists in a series of judgments resulting from an association of thoughts that—like all other states of consciousness which are a little complex—need some time to become established and presented as remembrances no less than as present states. Every period undoubtedly has a way of thinking and an entire system of evaluations that is applicable to the present and to living people. It might be thought to be innate in the nobility, to the same extent as the ideas that nobles have in common with other people. And we must believe that such ideas still find in the present, in the nature and style of life of the nobility of the moment, at least a semblance of *raison d'être*. Whatever logic may be discovered in this system of ideas—even when the origin of this or that element is no longer remembered—is only a transposition of remembrances. When a noble looks at the portraits of his ancestors in a gallery of his castle or looks at the walls and towers built by them, he strongly feels that what he is today depends on events and persons of which these are only vestiges. He will moreover project into the past the splendor of his present situation. If he was the first of an illustrious noble line, an unimportant nobleman who was in his time overshadowed by others will appear transfigured to him and radiate posthumous glory.

And so it is the case that, while a society may be broken down into a number of groups of people serving a variety of functions, we can also find in it a narrower society whose role, it may be said, is to preserve and maintain the living force of tradition. Whether that society is directed toward the past or toward what is a continuation of the past in the present, it participates in present-day functions only to the extent that it is important to adapt these functions to traditions and to ensure the continuity of social life throughout their transformations.¹⁰

10. "The Parliament of Paris came . . . near the end to contain two closely linked elements: . . . a feudal court and a royal court of justice. The first element is represented by the peers of France, the second by the magistrates of the Parliament." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, p. 365. Saint-Simon notes that "the dignity of the duke and of the peer of France is, by its nature, singular and unique, a dignity mixed with fief and office.

The centrifugal force that drives people responsible for a task to become so absorbed by it that they forget all that is not their present business—whether an older business of the same nature, or present day business of another nature—must be opposed by other forces that attract them to that part of society in which the past is linked to the present, and in which various functions come together and establish a balance. Let us now go back and consider important specialized activities such as war, legislation, and justice from this perspective. I have said that, from the moment these activities become so complicated that each specialty and subspecialty is enough to absorb all the time and efforts of a group of people, these functionaries are kept in a zone of social life that is limited and diminished. This is so because technical rules introduce many mechanisms; although functionaries undoubtedly have relations with people, these relations become simplified and abstracted. But this is only one of their aspects—perhaps the most superficial. Order, discipline, or military instruction are not enough to conduct a war. Technical qualities cannot replace personal qualities. The general must not only show valor beyond comparison; he must also be capable of sudden inspirations, discoveries, and improvisations based on a knowledge of humanity, the handling of ideas, an active memory, and an ever eager imagination. These qualities can develop only in an environment of intense social life in which the ideas of past and present join together, and in which contemporary groups and those of yesterday come into contact in some way. The mind becomes sharpened so it can recognize the original traits of each person; the sense of honor and of duty to oneself and family elevates the individual above himself and makes him the recipient of the vast resources of the group that he represents. The same is true for the legislator, the councillor, and the judge. A law is not an instrument that can be constructed simply by knowing the dimensions it is supposed to have or the number of its pieces, its range, and the resistances which it must overcome. Nor does a law result from a simple technical deliberation requiring only the knowledge of the law and practical experience shared by its makers. A legislator must possess a sense of equity (as this is understood in the society of which he is a member) that can be acquired only in those groups whose members value such a norm.

The duke is a grand vassal; the peer is a grand officer." He adds: "to this office of peer is called not only the grantee, but, by this one vocation itself, all his masculine descendants following him to perpetuity, for as long as his race survives, whereas to all the other offices—whatever they may be—only one person is called, and no one else with him." *Mémoires* 21:236–39.

There is a kind of justice that inspires me to confer to each the honors that are due to him. This justice is based upon an exact evaluation of the prestige and merits of families; it allows for the making of just laws that are applicable to the entire social body. When the lord called his vassals to join him or to sit in his council, it was not because they were technicians; but within the body of nobles there was transmitted and sustained a common spirit of mutual esteem and a concern with granting each noble the honours that his noble qualities merited. These nobles alone were capable of introducing this spirit into the legal instruments that had been prepared by scribes and lawyers, for such feelings could be established only in the course of long and multiple collective experiences—that is, within a body of nobles. Similarly, no lower-rank practice or collection of regulations will suffice to form a judge. The great diversity of circumstances, and the fact that plaintiffs and defendants are so different from each other, make it impossible to rank all cases and all persons in a limited number of categories simple enough to allow the operation of justice to become a simple administrative routine. The judge—more than anyone else—must be able morally to evaluate lawsuits and acts. Where would he have learned these skills, if not outside the courtroom in which judges, lawyers, defendants, etc. make up a completely artificial environment? For in the courtroom persons and feelings disappear behind the conventional forms of the language of trials and lawsuits, and the tendency of the profession is to communicate to the mind a rigidity that is likely to be reflected in judicial pronouncements. Therefore, whenever a function requires, in addition to technical competence, the exercise of a reflective mind, it is not the function itself that can provide this. When left to itself, the function would be exercised without reflection. After all, a special environment that is foreign to the exclusive preoccupations of the profession is necessary in order to learn to discern and evaluate the nuances of human values. Where thought incessantly deals with persons and groups that have their own physiognomy and history this delicate sense finds its best seedbed. This is why a judiciary nobility [*noblesse de robe*] developed quite early.¹¹ Judges were called upon to

11. A ruling of Henry III on fashion in 1582 still recognized only two kinds of nobles, "those who are of a noble house and race, and those whose ancestors obtained letters of ennoblement. Since then, the maxim has been introduced that the kings confer nobility not only through letters, which is the ordinary and efficient way, but also through a silent method, that is, through the high offices of justice and through the services that the father and grandfather have continued to render to the public." De la Roquette, *Traité de la noblesse*, 1768, chap. 31, p. 22, quoted to Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, p. 679. Around 1613, Jean Rochette, in *Questions de droit et de pratique*, p. 23 (*ibid.*, p. 676), says:

decide questions that could not really be understood without an extensive knowledge of social situations, and that sometimes required retrieving examples from the course of history. It thus became clear relatively early that these judges had many links to the nobility as such and were almost on an equal footing with it.

Two currents flowing in an opposite direction crossed the noble class and slowly renewed its composition. On the one hand, nobles who represented exceedingly old traditions, who lived in the past without renewing and enriching it and were unable to distinguish themselves and their families through the acquisition of new titles—whether from the favor of the king of highest lords, or through alliances with other distinguished families—were no longer able to keep their rank. These nobles became isolated and were only weakly linked with other nobles; they slowly became forgotten and no longer performed the functions that fell into decay and were taken over by people of bourgeois origin. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an entire section of the old nobility of race, blood, and sword dissolved in this manner. Hence with it a portion of the collective memory of the nobility also dissolved. It was now riddled with holes, and whole stretches of it became detached. The recollections belonging to these families were now located outside the current of collective life and no longer had a place in the transformed memory frameworks of the nobility. In order for such recollections to survive, they would have had to become associated with more recent recollections and to multiply the relations between old and new. Common thought in its present-day course would have needed to have the opportunity to encounter frequently the traces of these memories. Instead, these displaced recollections resembled those individual remembrances that are so distant from the contemporary preoccupations of their subject and so divorced from his usual associations of ideas that they are never called to mind and no longer thought about. From that moment they disappear, since none of the elements remain in them or in their accompanying images that would be needed to reconstruct them. Of course it is never certain that this disappearance is definitive.¹² Unforeseen cir-

"Among the plebs, the feudal grants are divided equally; however, they are divided nobly among the children of the counselors of the sovereign courts, who become ennobled by their estates." In the *Mémoires du Cardinal de Retz* (1820 ed., 1:236) we read: "He (M. le Prince) swears to me that there was no longer any way to put up with the insolence and impertinence of these *bourgeois* (the Parliament) who were desirous of royal authority."

12. "The nobility became lost . . . through the act of *déroger*, that is, of leading a lifestyle that was incompatible with the quality of the noble. . . . This was however a question of knowing whether nobility was entirely lost through this practice, or whether

cumstances can put the mind into conditions that enable it to recall what seemed to have disappeared, just as we sometimes think again of neglected friends because we reencounter them. Similarly, noble families that were believed to be extinct become important again after a long period of obscure existence, revive their titles, and polish their coats of arms. In such moments the collective memory of the nobility recovers remembrances that had not been called to mind for a long time and were thought to be extinguished. These remembrances did not become extinguished as long as there was a possibility of reconstructing them. What allowed such a return of splendor and fortune after a long reverse trend was the fact that such families reentered the nobility through paths that did not exist earlier, which were only recently opened, and which these families followed along with many other families who had never been noble. These families became enriched, for example, through commerce; later they advanced into functions that approached the situation of nobles and finally attained nobility. The nobility, in recognizing one of its members whom it believed lost, could now assume that this nobleman had preserved his qualities despite an outward appearance of low birth, just as it is sometimes conjectured that forgotten remembrances survive in the obscurity of the unconscious. In fact, his nobility of today is only superficially identical to his nobility of yesterday. The frameworks of social memory have become modified from one period to another. In earlier times social memory retained valor in warfare, all that is entailed by the notion of chivalry, and all that focused the attention of men whose esteem was based on nontechnical and nonlucrative activities. Closer to the present (near the end of the *ancien régime*), social memory became drastically enlarged. To be sure, it does not yet reserve a place for those values consisting of an intellectual superiority, an exceptional competence, or an established talent, as long as these values are not in courtly attire and do not present a noble exterior, nor does it reserve a place for pure and simple wealth. But wealth, talent, and ability have increasingly become the preconditions for these new activities that modify and define ranks within the nobility in a period in which the nobility, to maintain its brilliance, must increase its luxury and at the same time absorb all the newly arising functions and all the old functions

it was only asleep during the act of derogation. . . . Even when nobility has been radically tainted, the king could restore it with letters of rehabilitation." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, p. 680. "But we must always stress this point, that the nobility is not absolutely tainted through such acts of derogation, but is only held in suspense, so that a gentleman is always ready to take up his nobility again when he wants to refrain from derogating himself." Loyseau, quoted in Benoist, *L'organisation du travail*, p. 118.

that have become differentiated, complicated, and specialized. The quality of nobility from now on presupposes the disposition of material goods, financial credit, and, at least in the form of relations, some access to the elevated regions of the administrative apparatus. A naked title without any of these elements no longer counts for much. It is not by its inherent virtues (or by virtue of qualities at the time of the family's founding) that a title is preserved. From now on it matters little whether the original family retrieves a title that it had lost, or another family obtains it. The essential thing is the fiction of the continuity of titles; what counts is the belief that titles are transmitted from generation to generation together with the personal qualities that they represent, so that those who possess them today can lay claim to the valor of those who attained them in the first place.

This belief prevented a plebeian from entering the nobility. In the case of one of them unduly appropriating a title and succeeding in passing for a noble, this belief nevertheless increased the confusion among nobles by prescription, the truly noble, and the recently ennobled.¹³ Indeed it happened with increasing frequency (this is the second current that I mentioned) that the descendants of plebeians—men without a past (those whose collective memory did not retain the past)—penetrated into the class of “nobles,” so-called because they and their line were distinguished and noted. By buying a castle and acquiring its function and title, the plebeian did not enter into a preexisting noble family; he was not grafted onto it, nor did he substitute himself for any of its members or boast of its ancestors. At a time when the renewal and the enlarged recruitment of the noble class was the order of the day, the whole society had to accommodate itself to these infringements and to find a way to legitimize those men who entered the nobility by breaking in, without title, without sponsors, without kin. It was therefore necessary for society to reorganize and to modify to some degree the frameworks of its memory.

Society could achieve this goal in two ways. First, it could deliberately distort the past. What in effect proves one's nobility is the fact that by going back to past generations, an ancestor or a deed generating nobility can be found. If it didn't exist one could wholly invent it.

13. We must distinguish this case from that of ennobling. The king could confer letters of nobility on a commoner. The nobility of letters was “legally perfectly equivalent to the nobility of race and transmitted to the descendants of the one who is ennobled.” Moreover, “the old manner of ennobling through collation and chivalry persisted, to the king's advantage; it was equivalent to the letters of ennoblement. But henceforth that was accomplished through nomination to one of the orders of chivalry subsequently established by the kings: the Order of the Star, of Saint Michael, of the Holy Spirit, and of Saint Louis.” Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, p. 678.

So audacious a distortion of actual facts of course clashed with the interests of authentic nobles, who did not hesitate to denounce such infringements. If one forged genealogies, they had to agree with those that were preserved in other families and with what was known of the family itself from other sources.¹⁴ But society could also avert its attention from whatever was not proximate in time and thereby limit the field of its memory entirely to the last generations. More and more this second strategy was adopted.¹⁵ This comes back finally to proving that it is more in tune with the recent remembrances of people to admit that a particular family is noble than the contrary, even though one might think that it is not so in reality. In this way people sometimes modify their individual remembrances so as to synchronize them with what they are thinking at the moment. It is how they succeed most often in holding on to recent remembrances, in supposing that it is not possible to reach directly the oldest remembrances, and in reconstructing the latter through the former. But to the extent that society renounces in this way its oldest remembrances, it weakens the value of titles and prerogatives that are based on the antiquity of rank and thereby attacks those categories of nobles who lay claim to them—the most authentic of the nobility. In this way, the most venerable traditions were eclipsed, together with the fundamental notions of noble thought; the results were hesitations, resistances, and retreats. This state of affairs makes us understand the conflicts reported at great length in the *Memoirs* of Saint-Simon. These were conflicts between bastards and princes of blood, between the sword-carrying nobility and the service nobility. The rigid defenders of titles and of ancient rights felt that it was not possible to limit in this way the territory of memory without deforming it, that events and men of a distant past

14. "The father of the first Pontchartrain, secretary of state, author of the *Mémoires*, was only a counselor at the presidial of this city. Before him one sees only simple bourgeois, and that is undoubtedly why the continuators of Father Anselme preferred to dispense with reconstructing filiation by ennobling and embellishing the generations prior to the end of the sixteenth century, as was done by the commissioners of proofs of the Order of Malta or others." Saint-Simon, *Mémoires* 21:380, note.

15. "The common rule in France was that it sufficed to prove the possession of nobility for three generations, including the generation in which the estate became contested; however, in certain provinces, this proof was extended to four generations. In principle the proof was to be made in writing, through authentic acts; but, lacking this, the testimony of four witnesses was allowed. From that arose the question whether nobility could not be acquired through prescription. . . . Some allowed this, but reigning opinion was the opposite. Possession for three generations presumed nobility and did away with a complete and adequate proof, but it was not the basis for nobility. If, in going back further, the adversary could establish ignoble birth in the family, this presumption would become inefficacious." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, p. 677.

would lose their importance, as would their descendants, to the degree that men and events of the present were foregrounded. They knew that, once embarked on this road, there was no stopping.

But what disturbed the old nobility most profoundly was the birth of a new nobility. New avenues in effect were opened up to human enterprise; new functions were created and old functions that heretofore had been subordinate gained in importance. If the old nobility had no interest in them, if its thought and memory remained closed to what was accomplished in these areas, there emerged nevertheless elite groups that devoted themselves to these functions. It was sufficient that some people gave their personal imprint to a function and thereby became distinguished along with all those who would follow them, from the mass of others, for society to reserve for them a special place in its memory. In each period society in fact foregrounds those activities that are of greatest interest and importance to it. In the past it was warfare; today it is the administration of justice and finance. Urban patriarchs emerge who constitute a new nobility *avant la lettre*. The bourgeoisie becomes conscious of itself and molds its memory within the framework of responsibilities in which its best members have distinguished themselves. The old nobility may have found itself slowly submerged by the new. But what difference is there really, apart from the title, between a lawyer, a public prosecutor, and a rich, active, and cultivated merchant, a member of Parliament, or the titular incumbent of one of these offices that confer a nobility of dignity?¹⁶ They are united by family relations and alliances, meet in the same salons, read the same books, and participate equally in the type of social life in which one is not concerned with a person's function. They participate in a society that is interested only in itself, in all that qualifies its members to gain admittance, and in what enables them alike to animate, sharpen, and renew the consciousness that it has of itself.

An irresistible evolution constrains the totality of functions to become an aristocracy in fact if not in law. The two edicts (of 1649 and 1650) confer-

16. "Most frequently, if his fortune permits him, the son of a lawyer prefers to purchase a position as master of accounts or to advise Parliament . . . so that the bar was, in effect, the immediate vestibule to the sovereign courts. . . . This group (of solicitors) was numerous and influential and participated with the lawyers, and even the more distinguished parliamentarians, in a confraternity born from the community of labors, and understood through this every-day contact. . . . This active and lucrative function . . . was a natural outlet for the commercial bourgeoisie that had the traditional feeling for business. The profession of solicitor therefore marks the essential social step of the *petit bourgeoisie* in its progression to the courts." Gaston Roupnel, *La ville et la campagne au XVIIe siècle: Etude sur les populations du pays dijonnais*, Paris, 1922, pp. 170f.

ring nobility for life to all the members of Parliament, and after twenty years, to the masters of the Office of Accounts . . . did not encounter the resistance of the nobles, that is, of the social body that suffered a lowering of its protective barriers. It was on the contrary those who were not called to benefit from it that made the reform founder. The Treasury and Office of Accounts, treasurers, correctors, and supervisors violently protested the privilege that they were not called upon to share, and that was limited to presidents, masters, and lawyers. These edicts traced a sharp boundary line in an otherwise homogeneous whole.¹⁷

It is true that this "functionary nobility" later on tried to close access to itself and in the seventeenth century became a caste. At that time, "all the seats in the sovereign courts were occupied by families established in their dignities as if in patrimonial fiefs that defended their ranks with jealous dispatch." But this effort to attach titles to offices was basically paradoxical and contradictory.¹⁸ The old nobility was based on an order of personal qualities which had been traditionally anchored in society's memory, but which could not be separated from the state of public opinion and belief reigning at the time when it had been born. Under the cover of artificially maintained traditions there took place an evolution that foregrounded not only those who held offices but the entire class form which they had come and with which they remained linked. It was only natural that the old nobility—which had in the past been open to newcomers—closed its ranks at the time when society no longer produced the qualities that had been its source. It was constrained to live on its ancient capital, which diminished daily. In this way the memory of a period clearly at an end no longer finds reinforcing elements in its midst. It guards itself against new remembrances by becoming isolated in the past. But the bourgeoisie at the time of its rapid rise on the contrary had to open access to itself and liberally allow the entry into its ranks of men possessing the qualities that present-day society made predominant. Thus the memory of recent and present events could not remain static. It was its

17. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

18. "The class that holds offices and the class that we will call the parliamentary nobility are not absolutely the same thing. . . . One is not perforce a noble because one fills a high judicial or financial position. . . . The majority of parliamentary families acquired this nobility of function without adding a single particle to their name. Their 'quality' came from elsewhere. . . . The office that brings with it administrative nobility did not succeed in and of itself in conferring this distinction, both private and public, that the language of the time called 'quality.' In fact the majority of families who infiltrated the sovereign courts had long ago acquired this special notoriety, through an elegance free of titles and of administrative details. Also the latter and the former are easily dispensed with." *Ibid.*, p. 182.

function to adapt its frameworks to new remembrances; its frameworks themselves were composed of such remembrances. The idea of a parliamentary nobility could play the role of a convenient fiction. People thus became accustomed to transferring the tribute of respect hitherto accorded the nobility to bourgeois qualities, when they were enhanced by the appearance of a title. But this was only a fiction. From the day on which this system of ideas, that is of bourgeois traditions, was established, this fiction was no longer necessary and became an obstacle. Society now deliberately had to forget the remote past, along with the entire order of values and the entire hierarchy of persons and deeds dependent on this order, and become attached to the recent past, which was continuous with the present.

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In contemporary society, in which titles no longer exist and, at least legally, the barriers separating classes have been significantly lowered, we can nevertheless find an analogy for the nobility, or at least for the spiritual and social kinds of activities that had developed in its ranks.

To be sure, today much more than in the past society appears to us as a well-adjusted totality of increasingly specialized functions. When we consider feudal society, we notice in the foreground the nobility, which is a form of life and thought rather than an organ or an instrument of the collective body. Strictly speaking, we might say that the function of this nobility is to maintain tradition, and even to create it. But can we really speak of a function when the nobility actually considers itself above all to be the crown, indeed the basis, of all social life? The various specific functions, properly speaking, of the social body are subordinated to the nobility, which enters into contact with them only to establish its superiority. But it is not the qualities of good bureaucratic functionaries that confer nobility; it is necessary at least that the person exercising his function proves merits that go beyond this function and that manifest his personality. The function must be used by the functionary as a means of showing distinction instead of being performed in and of itself. During warfare, a general who loses a battle but shows valor behaves more nobly than when he wins a victory while protecting himself. It is tempting to say that today the opposite judgment prevails. It is no longer the case that the function exists in the service of people, but rather that people exist so as to serve functions. Still, every function exists with a view to all the others. If the collective consciousness confers to certain categories a higher prestige than to others, it is to people whose activity contributes the most to the entire social body.

Nevertheless caution is in order. It is always possible to consider people under two aspects: either as an agent of society exercising a specific task, or as a member of groups—familial, of the everyday world, or any others—that are not subordinated to other groups and whose activity has as its sole object its members, their interests, and all that can enrich or intensify their spiritual life. From this perspective let us consider urban groups, leaving aside what still exists of a noble class in our society, as well as peasant aggregations that in some respects represent a life style that has today been surpassed. What is striking is that, to the degree the function absorbs the individual, the individual also feels the need to delimit in time the periods in which he devotes himself to his profession, and periods in which he takes part in other groups, whether he forgets or continues to have the preoccupations of his function in them. This is now the question I want to pose: do not these groups—the family, everyday life, etc.—play the same role when it comes to professions that the nobility played in the past regarding functionaries and functions? And since the nobility was the main supporter of traditions, and since the collective memory lived within it, is it not the case that in the extraprofessional social life, such as it is organized today, society preserves and elaborates its remembrances?

One might object that it is not necessary to look outside the function for what would undoubtedly be found within it. In every major administration there are traditions alongside technical matters. Each individual who enters a profession must, when he learns to apply certain practical rules, open himself to this sensibility that may be called the corporate spirit, and which resembles the collective memory of the professional group. Such a sensibility is formed and fortified from age to age because the function which supports it has itself been active for a long time, and because the people who exercise it are in frequent contact in that they accomplish the same operations or in any case are engaged in operations of the same nature so that they have the perennial feeling that their activities are combined with a view to a common undertaking. But, at the same time, what brings them nearer to each other is the fact that their function can be distinguished from other functions of the social body. It is important for them, and in the interest of their profession, to emphasize these differences and make them clearly visible. When in the exercise of their functions functionaries enter into relations with other people, the spirit of both is at that moment filled with the immediate and special object which is the occasion of their encounter; but they do not consider it from the same perspective. The functionary wishes to fulfill the obligations of his function,

which are imposed upon him as on all members of his profession. The administered, if they submit to the pressure of the social, familial, or class milieu of which they are a part, will not always voluntarily conform with the rules which each category of functionaries is responsible for executing. It is hence the case that the members of the group of functionaries confront members of the other groups. Given this situation, we may ask whether prolonged and often renewed contact with people dominated by other thoughts and feelings that differ from their own may not lead to the weakening and decline of the professional spirit among the people assigned to a function. In order to resist people who will most of the time oppose them in the name of collective beliefs and traditions, functionaries must rely on beliefs and traditions peculiar to their group.

In other words, the judiciary, for example, is obliged to erect all sorts of barriers between its members and those of the other groups to whom they render justice, so as to resist external influences and the passions and prejudices of the plaintiffs. This is why their costume, the place they occupy in the court of justice, and all the apparatus of the tribunals indicate visually the distance that separates the group of judges from all others. It is also why communication between judges and plaintiffs does not take place in the form of a conversation—as it does in other groups—but through interrogations or in writing, following certain forms, or through the mediation of notaries and lawyers. But this is not enough. The impression exercised by nonjudiciary group on the judiciary is so powerful that the latter must oppose it with a tradition that pervades all its members to a high degree. What is the source of such a tradition? Who could have created it, if not the judiciary body itself? The principles of the law and all jurisprudence represent the collective work of a line of jurists and eminent magistrates. The legal spirit and all the qualities that distinguish judges find their expression and model in certain great figures. Their memories are lodged in the minds of judges who must have recourse to the interpretations that have been offered so as to understand the meaning of a law. This means that they must appeal to their memory. These judges, even when they reason and argue, often without noticing it enclose their thought within forms that were introduced at a precise date, and that bear the imprint of a remote period. This indicates how deeply legal thought is pervaded by history. But all these traditions and precedents, all ritual that is involved in the formalities of justice, the authority that clings to certain names, the prestige of certain modes of argumentation—is not all this a product of the function itself? Is it not within the judiciary milieu that they have been manifested, that their

value has been established, that they have been composed into a sort of system, and that they have been specified, adapted, and transformed, to the extent that new legal initiatives arose? The same holds true for all functions. If we call collective memory that totality of traditions pertaining to a body of functionaries, we will conclude that there are at least as many collective memories as there are functions, and that each one of these memories is formed within each of these groups of functionaries, through the simple play of the professional activity.

This is the objection that could be made against the claim that it is outside the work sphere—in that part of society where people do not exercise their professional activity—that the most important collective remembrances arise and are maintained. But this objection could be sustained only if the separation between professional life and family or mundane life prevented the ideas of one from pervading the other. This is generally not the case. I have shown elsewhere that, in urban societies, what distinguishes the working class from other groups is that workers in industry are in contact with things rather than with people when they are at work. All the other professions are on the contrary performed within human contexts, and are the principal occasion for relationships between men. When members of these classes go to their place of work or return from it, they hence are limited to passing from one group to another; there is no reason why they should not maintain their nature as social beings in both. Inevitably during these movements from one group to another they will introduce into one group modes of thinking belonging to the other, and vice versa. But it is predictable that the concerns of the family and the world at large will more profoundly permeate the specialized contexts of the professions than the professional habits of mind will permeate the mundane and familial circles. In order for the latter to take an interest in what occurs in the frameworks of justice, politics, the army, etc., they would have to become divested of their technical and specialized aspects. When one speaks of a trial in a salon, it is rare that one argues about points of law, except when some moral or psychological problem is raised. Instead one talks about the skill of the lawyers, analyzes passions, describes characters, or stresses some dramatic scene as if a work of theater were the topic. In reality, the everyday world finds a new source of nourishment in facts of this type, provided that it transplants them so to speak in its own soil, blowing off the dust of the office and clearing away the rubbish of procedures. It must break open the technical armature in which these facts are imprisoned and invest them with the flexibility and elasticity of social things. But we forget

our profession when we return to our family and to the everyday world more often than we forget the latter when exercising our profession. In familial and mundane contexts, general preoccupations—those which are held in common by the greatest number of people—take precedence over all others. It is in these contexts that what is social is created in its purest forms and from these contexts that it circulates through all groups. It is only natural that people who dwell in these contexts are profoundly modified by them and that, when they gather together within professional frameworks, they bring with them ideas, points of view, and the entire order of values from their family or everyday world. During the very exercise of their function, they therefore remain attached to these groups which are so to speak social to the second power. The opposition between their specialized activities and this more general social activity is not one whereby the one excludes the other; indeed in certain respects they depend on each other. A judge may have to judge or an attorney may have to defend persons whom he may reencounter in everyday life, or who because of some particularity, because of their origin, age, mental habits, ways of speaking and dressing, or even physical appearance, evoke in him the image of his kin or friends. When a judge deliberates with other judges who are seated with him or listens to an attorney, behind the judicial language he is able to perceive the man, his social situation in the world, his family, his friends, his relations, and, more precisely, his past; the remembrance of all this past is preserved solely by this everyday world, this family, and these friends.

Let me stress this point. In the eyes of the worker the doors of the factory represent with a fair exactitude the line of separation between the two parts of his quotidian life. If it remains only half closed, this is after the day's work rather than before it. A part of the habits of thinking or not thinking that is induced by the exclusive contact with his work flows back into the zone of society in which the worker lives outside the factory. When he returns to the workplace he clearly feels that he leaves behind himself one world in order to enter into another, and that there is no communication between the two. But when a judge or attorney enters the court building, he does not feel himself excluded or separated from the groups in the midst of which he spends the rest of his day, even during his hearings and during all the hours singularly dedicated to his function. Their actual presence is in fact unnecessary to allow him to continue to think and to behave—even when he is at a distance from them—as a member of these groups. Without their presence he can still call to mind the judgments, values, persons, actions, and facts that are of interest to these groups. Consid-

ered thus—as a totality of technical activities and thoughts—the function is invisibly immersed in a context of activities and thoughts that are not technical but rather purely social.

It could be that the true role of the functionary was to cause all this social life external to the profession to permeate the technical organization. The rest represents only the least part of his activity, and also the least difficult, in which he could easily be replaced by underlings. The judge—like the attorney or all functionaries of the same order—is called upon to show his mettle only in exceptional circumstances, when he encounters a state of affairs that cannot easily be made to fit within the frameworks of current technique. Technique in fact supposes only general rules; it does not know “persons.” The functionary’s task is to move with versatility and assurance between these two kinds of notions: the one technical and general, the other personal and social. It is in fact within society (familial and mundane) that people group themselves, enter into relations with each other, and establish orders of rank according to their personal qualities, so that each occupies a unique place that no one else could occupy in his stead—according to the opinion of the members of the group. It is within society that we become accustomed to perceiving and valuing the personal qualities of actions, words, and characteristics. Within society we find rules of sufficient complexity to be able to classify these values and to reason about them. The role of these social contexts is precisely to retain such values, and to foster such a mind-set, by any means: those of education and tradition within the family, those of conversation, of intellectual relations and relations based on feeling, of the intersection of ideas and experiences borrowed from various historical periods and from various social regions and categories, in mundane reunions, and finally those of the theater and literature among cultivated groups who are inclined to read.

Clearly, we no longer find here—as in the noble society of the *ancien régime*—a hierarchy of titles which would at the same time be an abbreviated history of a class. But if today we no longer believe so firmly as before in transmission through blood of qualities that elevate certain families above others, current opinion still relies in part on this kind of evaluation. In towns of the provinces which have been sheltered from the great currents of economic life and in which (above all at the beginning of the nineteenth century) a rather restrained and well-situated bourgeois society has continued, the manners of bourgeois values copied and still copy the typical judgments of the nobility. The history of families is remembered; their prestige is determined by their antiquity, by their alliances, etc. In large modern cities, given the

number of persons of often diverse and distant origin who enter into relations there, it is increasingly difficult for "society" to retain in its memory so many familial lines. But nevertheless some groups are encountered there—vestiges of the ancient nobility—among whom respect for titles is maintained, as well as other groups, embryonic forms of a new nobility, that are based on the exclusivity of relations and alliances, on the exceptional importance of wealth, or on a name that some circumstance has made outstanding. But in general, precisely while the bourgeoisie has been growing through all types of marital alliances, it has thereby lost the power to establish a hierarchy in its ranks and to stop the continual transformation of the frameworks in which subsequent generations must find their place. The collective memory of the bourgeois class has lost in depth (i.e., the antiquity of remembrances) what it has gained in extent. Nevertheless its families are still considered in terms of their social front, that is in terms of their function and their wealth. They are judged to the extent that this function qualifies them to become closely established in the area in which social relations multiply while social consciousness is intensified, and also to the extent that they develop their wealth and allow it to satisfy those needs to which their group attaches the highest value. Since some time is needed for these situations to become established—that is, for them to be sanctioned by public opinion—there is a social hierarchy in our societies that has in its wake a certain passage of time. One has to learn how to know or recognize this, to perceive the mental habits and knowledge of facts (very recent traditions but traditions nevertheless) that this mode of evaluation implies. It might be said that in our societies certain families still enjoy a prestige that distinguishes them from all others; but this prestige generally only dates from a relatively recent epoch, with the result that they remember—as do others—their social obscurity. They know, along with others, that they might indeed fall again into obscurity.

I hope that I will not be accused of having a singularly poor idea of social thought in that I have reduced it to this hierarchy of values. The reader will soon see that I have no such reduction in mind. I am obliged to recognize that, as with the memory of titles within the old nobility, so the memory of functions and wealth in our contexts is based on the judgments that society makes of its members. But society is not concerned with the technical aspect of functions, nor with the material aspect of wealth.

The judge, the court official, the president of the court of appeals: these names evoke images and ideas that differ to a large degree depending on whether we hear them in a salon or in a courtroom. For

those involved in a trial and for the public they undoubtedly represent a social authority that is contemporary and impersonal; it is a question of an agent performing a function. More attention is given to his mode of dress than to his person. One does not ask whether he has a past or whether he has occupied his position for a long time. He is defined in relation to the other members of the courtroom: subordinates such as court reporters, the defendant, the lawyers, the public. He is a center of purely technical relations, part of an apparatus that might have been constructed on that day or the day before. All this overshadows the man, that is, the person and the background from which he came and in which he still lives. In the world of the salon, on the other hand, he is imbued with a social prestige that dates from long ago, or that reflects memories of all kinds, of which some are very old. Here it is a matter of the aura of the contexts from which most magistrates have come, of the people with whom they associate. These are definite persons whom we know, whose faces or behavior are familiar and who for us personify this profession. This is the way in which we become permeated with the idea of a certain nature or moral type that each magistrate whom we know, whether directly or through the grapevine, or simply from history and books, represents in his own way and helps to establish. This idea involves qualities that are both personal, in that not everyone has them, and those who do, possess them in varying degrees, and social, in that it is society that understands and values them, for these qualities can emerge only within the forms society determines. Undoubtedly we do not think about these forms; they are only the occasions on which qualities can be displayed. We instead think only about the qualities themselves. That is why, when we encounter a magistrate in daily life with whom we converse or share a need, we see in him a person who must be valued by virtue of his talent, his experience of human affairs, his acumen, his seriousness, etc. It may well be that such judgments often turn out to be false. Nevertheless in every period and in every society a function is valued in a way that presupposes in the person who performs it a certain class of personal qualities. The long-held assumption that a man performs a function by virtue of inborn or hereditary abilities is at the root of our attributing to judges qualities that have been highlighted in the history of the body of magistrates. Magistrates judge themselves and each other in such a manner. These qualities pertain to the value of social beings at the same time as they refer to the functionary; that is why, when a society takes into account the function of one of its members, beyond the function itself, it is the qualities of that member that interest society. For these are qualities that qualify a person not only for a

function but also for life in the family and in the everyday world. While I made a distinction between title and function in the noble class, in our society a function represents a technical activity in one respect; in another respect it represents those qualities that have a social value outside the profession. In this sense a function is partially equivalent to a title. But where could society have found the source for the idea of these qualities if not in tradition?

Similarly, wealth as seen from the eyes of a notary is one thing, while the social rank that corresponds to a style of life and a certain level of conspicuous expenses is another. Varying degrees of wealth, especially inside a group that associates people of the same class, and conflicts of interest both oppose people to each other more than they draw them together. Moreover if we considered only the quantity of money each person possessed, there would be nothing on which to base a social idea or evaluation. People conflated with their possessions would be like things. When we take a walk along the estate of a rich man and stop in front of his house, calculating the extent of his wealth, we are moved by the spectacle of power, for behind this display of power we imagine the man who possesses it. Wealth has a principle of power that does not reside in material goods but rather in the person of the one who has acquired and retained them. If there were only an accidental relationship between the rich man and his wealth, if we did not assume that a person is rich because he is qualified to be rich, society (by which I always mean those milieus that are foreign to technical or lucrative activities, in which the only interest is in relations between people, not between people and things) would fail to take account of wealth in its evaluation of persons.

When the person is seen in the foreground, when possessions are the signifier and the visible manifestation of the personal qualities of the person who possesses them, and when deeds to property reside in formal titles, we are speaking of noble society, especially when we consider investiture, the distinction between noble and nonnoble lands,¹⁹ the rules for the transmission of property *intra vivos* or after death, etc. This is also why nobles for a long time were diverted from lucrative commercial or industrial occupations (in France), in which the

19. "The plebeian holdings were of lands that, in distinction to the fiefs, did not possess the quality of nobles." Initially the principle is maintained that the commoners could not, as long as they were such, acquire fiefs or become nobles if they acquired them. Later this rule was abolished: the commoners could acquire fiefs, while remaining commoners. "The law became fixed in this direction, but slowly and not without resistance; this did not become a general and precise law until the sixteenth century, through the statute of Blois in 1579." Esmein, *Histoire du droit français*, pp. 211, 224f.

function too clearly enriches the man. A fortune whose sources are too visible can be too easily traced to the function performed by its owner and loses some of its prestige. When a rich person explains how he has become rich, he offends people of higher rank. In fact he disparages wealth by showing how it has resulted from work or management that has nothing mysterious about it. This is as scandalous as claiming to explain to religious people how a legend can emerge through the fairly simple operations of collective psychology, or how a saint can be fabricated. The word "fortune" preserves a part of its etymological meaning: Those who possess it must appear to be favored by destiny not for their wealth, but because they have been born under a favorable star, and because since birth they have been furnished with this exceptional nature that in popular thought distinguishes rich people from others and destines them to a life of wealth. Experience undoubtedly obliges us to recognize that the wealthy lose their wealth and that the poor can become rich, though nothing indicates that they have changed in other ways. But we do not hesitate to maintain, concerning the first category, a part at least of that deference displayed toward the wealthy at the time of their prosperity. The recollection of their former wealth still abides; they continue to live in environments which their reduced fortune would seem no longer to be able to afford. The aura of affluence hence does not disappear with the loss of wealth, just as the aura of nobility survives the abolition of titles. As for those who acquire their wealth too quickly or too visibly—the parvenus and nouveaux riches—it would appear that they do not have sufficient claim to be admitted to the class of those who have possessed equivalent fortunes for a longer time. Similarly, in religion there are saints who no longer produce miracles, and there are also false miracles.

So it is the case that, while from an economic point of view fortune immediately becomes what it is and can be created or destroyed within a few days or even within a few hours (in the stock trade)—even within a few moments at the gambling table—it will count socially in the best society only after a certain amount of time has elapsed. Given the qualities that popular opinion assumes to exist behind wealth, it would not be allowed or seem proper (nor even possible) that one could gain access to polite society within a very short time span by displaying titles to property or by showing the contents of one's safe. In addition, different levels of society will differ in what they demand to be convinced of social wealth. The man in the street is content with relatively easy proofs that require little time or effort, such as the cut of one's clothes, a certain general style of behavior that indicates decisiveness and confidence in oneself, presence in certain parts of town as

well as absence from other parts, means of transportation used, etc. In certain somewhat pluralistic social contexts, people judge each other in terms of their bearing and manners, their language, and their conversation. More time, opportunities, study, and experience are needed to make an effortless impression in these matters according to the rules governing behavior among these groups. People will moreover attribute less importance to those factors that require little time. They will allow a careless appearance in a society in which there exist other manners requiring more stringent application, for these make a firmer impression on the memory in displaying that one belongs. A still narrower milieu, in which people see each other more frequently and intimately, obliges demonstrating that one knows people and their families and that one knows what according to the opinion of the group are the deserts of each. A rich man will be forgiven a certain crudeness of manners, even insolence and an affectation of coarseness—which in other milieus would suggest an inferior birth—provided that the person does not ignore conventions. These conventions are all the more delicate because there is almost a different one for each new person and for each new set of circumstances, and because all of these conventions are based on frequently numerous recollections that are maintained only within the group itself. In this way the manners, taste, politeness, and distinction of the man of society become transformed and increasingly differentiated, to the degree that he gains access into the levels of society in which persons are well known because they have been observed there for a long time.

But what are the foundations of these conventions? What are these memories, what is this history? Are they those that emphasize the qualities assumed to exist behind wealth? Do the abilities of an industrialist or of a financier really interest society (from the point of view of high society)? Moreover, are there not fortunes transmitted by inheritance and administered by businessmen that do not require any kind of ability and activity on the part of those who possess them?

Let us return to the distinction which I have already made when I spoke of the manner in which society classifies people according to their profession. I noted that society values professional qualities from its own perspective, which is the perspective not of technology but of tradition. Society considers these qualities from the perspective that interests it. Could this also be the case when it comes to lucrative qualities? *A priori* one might answer: why not?

Let us imagine a society in which fortunes are not inherited, but in which energetic people who are capable of sustained and painstaking effort find many occasions to make a fortune. This is the case among

certain classes, in certain eras, and in certain countries: in England for example, among the commercial and artisan classes in the sixteenth century, and in America during a long period of establishment and expansion. It is conceivable that, in these societies, the ascetic spirit which applies to lucrative occupations was also cultivated and valued for its own sake. Sociologists have not failed to emphasize that large-scale industrialization and capitalism appeared and developed first within the Protestant countries. Was this, as some have believed, because the bulk of the population—or at least their higher classes—belonged to the Anglo-Saxon race, which is assumed to be both more energetic and more matter-of-fact than other races?²⁰ Or may it be because the population in these countries was the first to uphold and to remain attached to the moral and religious doctrines of Protestantism? Did Protestantism teach them to love effort for effort's sake so that capitalist activity reproduced in the economic domain what Puritan activity was in the religious domain?²¹

Certain ethnic tendencies, just like certain religious attitudes, may predispose people to labor willingly and without relaxation. Economy,

20. Thorstein Veblen, *The Instinct of Workmanship*, New York, 1914, 2d ed., 1918. See also my article: "Le facteur instinctif dans l'art industriel," *Revue philosophique* (1921): 229.

21. This is the thesis developed by Max Weber in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, pp. 17–236, *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus*, Tübingen, 1920 (first published in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 1904–5). According to him, the "capitalist spirit" would be a direct product of Puritanism. Capitalist activity presupposes a set of moral qualities, strength of character, intensive application, renunciation of all pleasures and distractions, methodical organization of professional life—all of which arise from the individual's attempt thus to verify through fact that he is in a state of grace. Lujo Brentano, in *Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus*, pp. 117–57, *Puritanismus und Kapitalismus*, Munich, 1916, maintains on the contrary that the feelings of professional duty, of bourgeois duty (civic duty and the work ethic), resulted from the corporative regime of the guilds. He speculates that, in this regard, there was no resolution of continuity between the period preceding and following Reformation. The Puritan idea superimposed itself when "in the northwest of Europe, the *petit bourgeoisie* struggled with the kings and the aristocracy and temporarily conquered them. . . . It needed to find a powerful support in a doctrine that would transfigure what gave it strength—professional occupation—in a glorification of God, and condemned all aristocracy as an idolization of the creature that is an insult to the glory of God" (p. 147). But the "Puritan ethic has been the traditionalist economic ethic of the *petit bourgeoisie*, in which is reflected the spirit of the class of artisans in the second half of the Middle Ages" (p. 148). This involves an enormous historical problem that can hardly be examined and resolved in a footnote. What is important here is less the origin of this new valorization of lucrative activity than the fact of its existence and diffusion during the last centuries of the *ancien régime* in the extensive circles of the bourgeoisie.

honesty, and austerity—virtues that were not unknown in the societies and in the moralities of antiquity—perhaps received the stamp of Puritan Anglo-Saxon societies. These virtues ceased to be considered as humdrum qualities of practical merchants at the moment in which they moved to the first rank in the scale of social values. When they were transported from the profession into relations with family and friends, as well as into all other relations that people maintain outside their offices during the time that is not devoted to profit, these virtues could serve to construct a hierarchy of ranks. People became part of a class and were judged positively or negatively by the members of that class on account of their wealth. This wealth undoubtedly guarantees the presence within us of qualities that, in this kind of society, alone permit us to become wealthy. But these qualities were considered in a way that dissociated them from their commercial and artisan form. It was not really the money they acquired but the moral and social values that they presuppose which became highlighted. It was acknowledged that, in the wealthy classes more than in other classes, is to be found mastery of self, a spirit of sacrifice, a firm disposition to live up to one's ideas, a sharper sense of honesty and probity, more loyalty and fidelity in friendship, more stable family virtues, and an irreproachable moral purity. Poverty became equivalent to immorality, and legislation concerning the poor treated beggars like culprits. These ideas, preserved in collective memory, became grounded in the experience of the virtues—or at least in the manifestations of virtue—of the wealthy. There were found the reflection and echo of virtuous figures and acts that vividly struck the imagination, as well as of the sermons and exhortations that were incessantly heard in public places, in gatherings of families or friends, in the newspapers and in literature. Certain periods in which this bourgeois and Puritan morality had to struggle against other moralities, in which heroism and an almost supernatural effort were required to maintain and to make such a moral stance triumphant, left more pronounced memories behind them. The powerfully formative or deforming influence that this morality exercised in the past became inscribed in the rigidity of gestures, in the snuffing of preachers, and in the stiff and stilted way of thinking. The ideal form of such a society became a kind of patriarchal capitalism, in which the industrial class and the rich merchants tried to elevate the morality of the poor and to teach them the virtues that are paramount in its own morality: economy, abstinence, love of work. In fact these qualities are not naturally to be found among the poor precisely because they are poor. There are no moral traditions among the poor that might be the

equivalent of these bourgeois virtues; it is hence necessary that the example must come from the morality of the high and mighty. We therefore find here the claim to construct a new nobility with new titles, which cannot be said to have failed entirely. The important thing is the new morality that becomes elaborated since the end of the Middle Ages, in the cities, especially among artisans and merchants. This was a morality for which professional moralists sought proofs, but which is a historical fact. The origin of the various ideas of this morality could in fact be found in the history of the industrial and commercial classes. When we think of such virtues even today, we call to mind the memory of those who were the first to preach and practice them. The prestige that still today is linked to wealth can be explained at least in part by the feeling that the modern idea of virtue was elaborated in the wealthy class, and that the first and most memorable examples of it can be found in that class. Even though economic conditions have changed, the tradition survives of a period in which each individual and each head of a family could amass wealth only by his own effort.

It is likely that this conception—just like the liberal doctrine of the rights of men, of the dignity and independence of the individual—opposed as it was by merchants and artisans to the feudal conception of wealth based on nobility of origin, and to the doctrine of rights founded on the bloodline and the primacy of titles, succeeded in becoming imposed only at the moment in which it no longer corresponded to reality, and in which, in particular, wealth became accessible to the extent that one profited from some social source of revenue.²² But belief in patriarchal virtues and in the moral discipline of the rich has been present for too long in the collective memory of the industrial and commercial classes; it is a recollection that is too strongly grounded in a large mass of experiences for it not to continue to play its role in the modern consciousness of societies. It is reinforced from time to time by the edifying example of a man or family who finds the reward for privations and efforts in belated wealth. On this belief rather than on respect for birth the prestige of wealth is based. This is especially so since the virtues of the rich can be transmitted by education in the family, and since the fact that descendants have privileges can thus be explained in a more rational fashion. In short, despite the demoralizing examples of fortunes acquired too quickly and with too much facility, despite what the moralists call the corrupting influence of wealth, there remain rich people who still take account of their

22. Veblen, *Instinct of Workmanship*, p. 340.

good and bad actions with as much exactness as they set down debits and credits. They bring to private life, that is, to social life, the sense of duty developed in them in the exercise of their profession.

What people respect in wealth is not a certain quantity of material possessions regardless of who possesses them, but the presumed merit of the person who possesses these goods, and who is more or less considered to be the author of his own fortune. There must be, behind the scale of wealth, a scale of personal merits that corresponds approximately to the former, with the result that wealth is respected as if it were a social value. What distinguishes the holdings and quantity of goods of the possessor from his qualities is the fact that, whereas the quantity of wealth is given and can be calculated in its entirety at any moment, the possessor and his qualities live and develop through the passage of time, so that a society can hence value these qualities only after they have been observed for a long time and after they have sufficiently made an imprint in the memory of society. Thus people respected privileges in feudal society up to the revolution, for behind the privileges there were titles, and titles (the equivalent of a series of collective memories) guaranteed the value of the person. When the commercial and artisan bourgeoisie acquire a fortune, it cannot invoke such titles. But the exercise of and success in these professions require from the start—in addition to aptitudes and technical knowledge that after all can be learned and acquired in their essentials—human qualities, specific to the person, that a class can reinforce and transmit to its members by a kind of social discipline. These virtues are defined under the regime and in the framework of the various professions. From these frameworks is assumed the habit of evaluating people according to the norms of a new morality that soon become traditional. Today wealth is respected because of the qualities of laborious energy, honesty, and economy that seem indispensable to become rich. It is true that economic conditions change rather rapidly, and many members of the bourgeoisie have become rich simply through inheritance, competence, or chance. But the old conception continues to live on, perhaps because it is still frequently in accordance with the facts, or perhaps in part because the wealthy class sees in it the best justification of its wealth. It is apparent that those who inherit a bourgeois fortune acquire along with it bourgeois virtues, under the influence of education and environment. It is moreover difficult to determine in an enterprise what portion of the success is due to ability and what to sheer effort. Is prudence an ability or a virtue? We are inclined to think that, since honesty is sometimes the best of all abilities, the two seem from a higher point of view interchangeable. Utilitarian morality, which

arose in the classic country of commerce, has no other object than morally to justify commercial activity, since utilitarianism applies the norms of commercial accounting to human conduct. Even risk can be found in the framework of these virtues, for it presupposes an effort of sacrifice and altruism.²³ In every era there have been occupations in which one becomes more liable than in other occupations. It is even likely that the first corporations arose among those itinerant troops of adventurous merchants, who crossed countries infested with armed men and brigands.²⁴ Modern doctrines concerning interest acknowledge that a risk merits remuneration as does effort or deferred consumption; we find in fact an element of sacrifice and renunciation in one place or another. In any case, necessary fictions helped to save, if not titles, at least the chief substance of them. Society respects wealth because it respects persons who are rich, in terms of the moral qualities that it assumes in them.

The type of rich person I have just defined early on became distinguished from another type. Already in the Middle Ages, when guilds regulated commerce and industry within townships, they were unable to impose their precise customs and morality on strangers who were busy establishing rapports with the various urban markets. As new commercial and industrial functions developed in modern national economies, this opposition between two categories of merchants—industrialists and businessmen—became more accentuated.

In every era there are lucrative methods that might be called traditional and others that might be called modern. In every era of economic transformation in particular, new strata of the bourgeoisie emerge that have enriched themselves through new methods. A wealthy class that is too much the slave of traditions that perhaps corresponded to a recent state of affairs but that have been surpassed must yield its position in the domain of the production of wealth to people who are animated by another kind of spirit, that is, who know how to adapt themselves to present-day conditions. But, on the other hand, in every society that is somewhat developed, areas in which the activities of producers and merchants develop within long-established frameworks can be distinguished from others in which instability seems to be the rule. The latter are found in the stock exchange, in finance, in new industrial and commercial enterprises, or in a restructuring of

23. The Council of Latran in 1515, under Pope Leon X, defined usury as follows: "Usury consists of recovering a profit from the usage of a thing that is not in itself productive (unlike a flock or a field), without work, without expense or risk on the part of the lender." Ashley, *Histoire et doctrines* 2:534.

24. Henri Pirenne, *Les anciennes démocraties des Pays-Bas*, p. 31.

older industries. In other words, among economic functions there are some (and these moreover play an increasing role as society becomes more complicated) that serve to put other functions into relation so as to maintain a degree of equilibrium. In these circles one becomes rich only by taking advantage of a momentary disequilibrium that must be recognized at once, and sufficient decisiveness is essential to exploit the opportunity.

In the face of the *nouveaux riches*, old money experiences rather mixed feelings. Up until this point wealth was explained and legitimized by what was perceived behind it, in habits of order and work, of commercial honesty and prudent management. The merchant and the industrialist practiced a profession that had long been recognized; they conformed to the traditional rules of their guilds. But these new activities do not fit into the frameworks of the older professions; those who practice them seem to depend on no tradition. They are not afraid of speculative ventures, and the relationship between their gains and their efforts seems unclear. They appear indifferent as to the nature of the commerce, industry, or general business in which they are engaged. What is of interest to them is that the enterprise or the companies in which they invest their capital are financially well organized, i.e., that they promise high profits. Their thought regarding such enterprises becomes engaged only to the extent that it is necessary for them to understand the mechanisms behind these businesses and to calculate the returns. They are not really interested in engaging and immersing themselves to a degree that would leave some imprint on themselves. They become adapted relatively quickly to contemporary conditions because they are not hampered by the experience of earlier conditions, for they have not lived the life of society before actually entering it. The bourgeois class, as we have seen, judges itself and its members according to a rather narrow idea of morality, which, even though hypocrisy and class egoism are found in it, is nevertheless for this class *the* morality. When this class notices among the new bourgeoisie the absence of these qualities and the presence of ones that are opposed to it, it is tempted to see in them the very incarnation of immorality.

This is the obscure feeling that has often driven an old bourgeois class to condemn new modes of acquisition of wealth and the men who practiced them. But, at the same time, and especially after it has been forced to put up with their proximity, this older class could not fail to notice that the new lucrative activities and their accompanying habits, mores, and social beliefs do not exist in a void. How could they deny that these men have a social nature, that is, traditions and tendencies

that assume a collective life? After all, they succeeded in creating and spending wealth in society through social methods and formations. When the Jews of this period, who were excluded from the guilds, played the role of resellers or gave out loans at interest under conditions condemned by the business morality of the time, or when they sold their wares at lower prices and therefore succeeded in selling larger quantities, one could accuse them of parasitism and immorality. From an economic point of view they did not create any wealth (at least superficially). With their humble and sordid style of life and their beliefs that had no roots in the society of their time, they posed the risk, if they were admitted to society, of exercising only a negative influence of destruction and dissolution. And it was not clear moreover in what manner they could help to enrich society. But when the transition was made from the urban and artisan economy to capitalist industry and a national economy, financial operations took on a wider scope, and the wealth that was at the origin of this transformation did not correspond to a simple parasitical activity. If these new methods were criticized, one did not deny that it was possible by this means to produce more, to satisfy more needs, and to save more time and effort. On the other hand, if new ideas and new mores were criticized, one did not dispute that these were mores and ideas, that is, ways of thinking and acting that a society could adopt and that the class itself could assimilate. From that point it became difficult to consider the people who had introduced these new methods, ideas, and mores as people lacking traditions. But where had they acquired these abilities and tastes? It could not be from the bourgeois class, since its entire economic organization and style of life were contrary to it. It must hence have originated in other strata.

We would in fact be mistaken to assume that these men do not depend on the past because they are strangers to the traditions of the old bourgeoisie and because their attention is always focused on the latest stage of society, on its latest needs and modes of production. It is incorrect that they exemplify that zone or level of social activity in which collective memory is no longer operative. This is true only if we speak of the collective memory of the old bourgeoisie, and even then only to a certain degree. First of all, this progressive class of bourgeoisie or of those aspiring to bourgeois status, encompasses, together with these new men, descendants and members of the old bourgeoisie who aspire to participate in the movement of modern affairs and ideas. A portion of their tradition infiltrates this world of new thoughts. It may happen either that a part of the old framework survives in an enlarged and

better organized manner so that modern thought may amalgamate with the old culture, or that new frameworks are made with traditional elements in part.

But, above all, the conservative bourgeoisie do not realize that modes of production, ideas, and customs that become introduced at a certain moment into a society or into a class are only superficially novel, that they exist and are developed in a neighboring society or classes, and that they too are based on traditions that happen to be the traditions of other groups. A society can hardly adapt itself to new conditions without redesigning its structure either by modifying the hierarchy and the relations among its various parts or by amalgamating, in whole or in part, with neighboring societies. Sometimes the collective memory of the bourgeois class does not provide, or is incapable of providing, a response to questions that it encounters for the first time. An individual who does not find in his memory the remembrance of a case similar to the one that is the source of confusion would look to the people in his midst, or, no longer counting on his memory, would try to use reason. Society does the same thing: it addresses itself to other groups or to those of its members who enjoy close connection with other groups. Society consults other collective memories. It is in this way that the majority of new methods that revolutionize industry and commerce are introduced from the outside. An improved technology is discovered by the industrialists who had contacts with scholars or with engineers who are more preoccupied with research than with application, and by intrepid industrialists who have learned to become so through frequenting businessmen. Sometimes an industry is inspired through the example of other industries and a country borrows ideas from abroad. Modern capitalism may perhaps consist in the growing infiltration of financial methods within industry and commerce. Where the artisan and commercial tradition does not indicate how to adapt to modern industrial conditions, an appeal is made to the experience of bankers or to intermediary circles located between finance and industry which combine the traditions and the methods of both. How could it be otherwise? In a society dominated by old customs, how did newer ones, contrary to their predecessors, arise? How is it that all the necessarily individual attempts in this direction were not quickly suppressed? It is on another level and within another category of ideas that such experiences must be prepared, and that a new social current must freely emerge. Because society does not immediately perceive the applications that can be made in an area in which it tends to change nothing, it allows these ideas and methods to be devel-

oped within circles whose activities seem too far removed from its own for society to be able to worry about contagion from their example.

We must now acknowledge that these rich newcomers bring to the domain of expenses, luxury, and even culture the same active faculties that raised them to wealth in the first place. As in industry and commerce they found the old positions already taken, so too in high society they find the older ranks occupied. In both cases it could seem that the present serves them as their fulcrum. They exploit enterprises that did not exist—or did not exist in their present form—in the past. Similarly, they introduce into high society social distinctions based on present-day modes of living and thinking that could not have taken the form of tradition. Circumstances incite and encourage them to accelerate the evolution of ideas and mores within the circle of the wealthy, while their own commandeering faculty enables them to do so. In a society that is above all concerned with multiplying and renewing to the utmost its objects of interest, men who are able to adapt quickly and who are able to help others adapt through their example will be valued more than others. They are not required to have some superiority in one domain or another, nor a particular and long-lasting interest in artistic or literary activities, etc. The great scholar, the genial artist, just like the famous boxing champion and the movie star, will be able to bring to the attention of the public for the time being a theory, a form of talent, a performance, or a film image; but what society above all values in them is that one succeeds the other, that each provides some nourishment for a superficial curiosity so that their very diversity allows society to enlarge indefinitely the field of its attention. Society values the fact that their multiplicity obliges its members to perform increasingly difficult gymnastics and establishes an increasingly accelerated rhythm of social life. In this regard, the bourgeois newcomers might deserve to be placed very high in the esteem of such a society. Since they are really interested only in what is new within the field of investments and enterprises, they can but be attracted to what is new in the field of ideas, needs, tastes, and fashions. Thus it is that what is respected behind wealth in terms of social superiority is no longer the moral qualities that were once attributed to the older wealthy, but rather the mobility and the versatility of mind that define the rich newcomer.

What I have just presented is undoubtedly written from a perspective that is somewhat external and informal in regard to modern society and the wealth of newcomers. The restless curiosity and feverish activity that worry the traditionalists are only a symptom of uneasi-

ness. Society feels hampered and restricted in institutions and ideas tailored to what its needs in the past were. When it comes to the modern and progressive wealthy, it is not correct that they are interested only in the present, and that they run hurriedly and with closed eyes through any door society opens up to them, whether successively or simultaneously but in any case incessantly. To the contrary, as we have seen, they obey collective impulses that sometimes come from a distance and that have a rather fixed meaning.

Although the old bourgeois class tried to maintain barriers and watertight divisions between itself and other groups that lacked traditions as continuous and elaborated as its own, the latter did not hesitate to expose it to all kinds of contacts with the outside. They carried within themselves ideas and habits taken from contexts in which bourgeois conceptions were not in command: groups of artists, political groups, the world of the theater, the stock exchange, newspapers, sports, collectivities that were more open and more diverse, in which, as in a neutral terrain, people of every background lived side by side. Think of the Saint-Simonian industrialists who, at the beginning of Louis-Philippe's reign, entered bourgeois careers²⁵ still replete with social experiences and ideas so very strange to this middle class, whose spirit, according to Toqueville, "when it is mixed with that of the people or of the aristocracy can accomplish wonders, but which when left to itself will produce only a government without virtue and without greatness." Before creating the first railroads, financially organizing publicity, constructing international canals, speculating in real estate in the major cities, and developing banks, it was through contact with philosophers, scholars, artists, and people representing the popular classes that the thought of these industrialists became accustomed to vast projects and to complex methods corresponding to a more evolved type of society that undoubtedly was more extensive than the Western world of their time. Modern ideas were born in these groups outside the traditional bourgeoisie; sometimes they were defensive or aggressive reactions against the constraint of traditions. These ideas exist or tend to become formulated when constraint is in full force. They therefore also have their own traditions. It should not be astonishing, moreover, when these ideas are transplanted through these groups into the framework of bourgeois thought (in the narrow sense),

25. See Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne: son influence jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, 1896, for a discussion of the system of the Mediterranean (pp. 112-13), the Saint-Simonists in Africa (chap. 5), and Saint-Simonism under Louis-Philippe (chap. 7). See S. Charléty, *Histoire du Saint-Simonisme*, Paris, 1896, for a discussion of the practice of Saint-Simonism (bk. 4).

that they assume the appearance of entirely new ideas. How could these modes of thinking and acting have a future if they have no past? This is how traditionalists reason. Since these modes of acting and thinking do not base themselves on tradition, they can derive only from reliance on reason—this is the way that progressive people reason. But reason in reality represents an effort to break out of a narrower tradition to a wider one in which past experiences not only of a class but of all groups find their place. Since the new groups are not yet fused with the older, and since a more comprehensive social consciousness has barely emerged from the rare and partial relations that these two groups have with each other, it is not surprising that one cannot yet discern in that consciousness or behind it a collective memory.

At the end of the *ancien régime* the bourgeoisie sheltered itself under the mantle of the nobility in order to obtain a recognition which its wealth alone could not attract, because society still respected titles and did not yet recognize bourgeois merit. In a similar way, today the rich newcomers are intermingled with the mass of the older rich and lay claim to the same traditions. Two ways of legitimating wealth cannot in fact exist at the same time and in the same milieu, for this would mean having two types of morality that were the basis for the privileges of the wealthy, and especially for the esteem that is accorded them. This is why the modern industrialist and businessman make people believe that their gains are compensation for individual activity and effort, when they could instead claim merit for their social significance. The administrator of a company who works to further the interests of that company soon realizes that he is like an agent implicated with that group and deserves high standing to the extent that he understands and advances the interests of all its members. But he also knows that public opinion, whether of the bourgeois class or of any other, does not yet fully value the worth of his kind of ability, that public opinion fails to understand the collective nature of certain manifestations of will, and that in any case it is not willing to recognize its morality. This being the case, the businessman and industrialist are forced to uphold and accept on their own account the fiction that the privileges of the rich are compensation for effort, work, and personal frugality. After a while they also tend to take on a conservative mind-set, a stiff-necked and reserved attitude, and the kind of conformist seriousness that suits a somewhat pharisaic social class. And yet to the degree that lucrative activity assumes its collective form more clearly, the traditional idea of the merit that underlies wealth evolves. New experiences and ideas become introduced. The collective memory of

the bourgeois class is forced to adapt to modern conditions. When society becomes too different from what it had been in the past and from the conditions in which these traditions had arisen, it will no longer find within itself the elements necessary to reconstruct, consolidate, and repair these traditions. Society will then be obligated to adopt new values, that is, to rely on other traditions that are more closely in tune with present-day needs and tendencies. But it is within the framework of these old notions and under the pretext of traditional ideas, that a new order of values would become slowly elaborated.

* *

Let me summarize this entire chapter. I distinguish, as my preceding conclusions invite me to do, two zones or two realms within society. One I will call the zone of technical activities, and the other the zone of personal relations (in the family, the everyday world, etc.). I will acknowledge, moreover, that these zones, which might seem neatly separated according to the times and the places in which the profession is practiced or not practiced, are in fact involved with each other, inasmuch as the bureaucrats or functionaries who perform their functions do not forget the relationships on another level that they once had or that they may have. Technical activity is hence not the same as professional activity. How is one to define it? Technical activity consists in knowing and in applying the rules and precepts that in every period prescribe for the functionary the general terms of the actions, linguistic forms, and gestures of his function. A technique hence has characteristics that are largely negative: it specifies what has to be done, the lack of which will leave the function unaccomplished. If a professor does not follow the curriculum, if a judge does not pronounce his verdict in the required forms, if a banker applies an illegal rate, in all these cases their activity does not reach its goal. A technique is undoubtedly composed in large part of old rules, written or unwritten; it moreover signifies a disposition that is pedantic, procedural, meticulous, and formalistic, and that differs according to techniques but can be found and seems to be traditionally transmitted within each group of technicians. Is this something that can be called a collective memory? But those who apply these rules are directed toward present actions and attempt to understand how they work rather than to know their origins or to recall their history. They very often operate almost mechanically, like those habits that, after appearing in an organism, can no longer be distinguished from instinctive acts and seem constitutive attributes of our nature. It is the same with this kind of spirit that we breathe, so to speak, when we enter a courtroom or walk into

a banker's office. Indeed this spirit makes us still laugh at the *Malade imaginaire*, even though physicians of today no longer wear unusual costumes or speak Latin. This is a necessary product of the profession, much more than an inheritance from the past. The academic spirit arises spontaneously in a small group of scholars or of provincial wits, even though none of them could have brought it from the outside and though they meet for the first time. The military cast of mind reappears, without much change, the day a war is over even though it may have almost wiped out and then replaced the military personnel. Despite intervals of peace there is what may be called a natural and historical species of soldier. That is, there are certain common traits characterizing soldiers in all historical periods that can be explained in terms of the soldier's life in the trenches and camps and which only incidentally derives from military traditions. If we go beyond this sort of technical routine, in which the specific spirit of each function is narrowed and disfigured, and contemplate the latter in its pure form—for example among those who must be most fully infiltrated with the principles and the spirit of a technology inasmuch as they teach it—we certainly find a historical knowledge of the origin and evolution of rules that is often precise and widespread. But all that is taught is oriented toward practical knowledge. It is, for example, useful for a prospective magistrate first to study Roman law, since principles and rules appear there in simpler forms and since this is the classical model of law. But what of the historical data in themselves is retained in the mind of the magistrate? On how many occasions does he use them or think about them? In fact, the history of law and the study of judicial tradition interest only a small number of people. They are scholars or individuals placed high in the hierarchy of the profession and are called upon to give their advice and to intervene actively when a modification of a technique is contemplated. But when it comes to the exercise of the function within the present technical framework, the historical study of law is increasingly useless. A rule, like an instrument, is attuned to a reality that is assumed to be both unchanging and uniform. People could not conform to it, and it would have no authority, if they saw in it only a provisional adaptation to momentary circumstances that have not always existed, and that will change one day. Certainly, since these rules are exterior to the individual and are imposed on him from the outside, they will appear to that individual as the work of the society. They are neither physical laws nor material forces. But in their rigidity and generality they nevertheless imitate the law and forces of matter. The social will that is felt at work behind them is fixed and simplified. It has renounced the possibility to adapt

itself to all the variations that occur in time and space within the group from which it emanates.²⁶ Of all social influences, those that take the form of a technique most closely imitate the mechanisms of nonsocial things.

However, if the entities to which the various functions of society are entrusted can appear from certain points of view as part of matter, they are nevertheless essentially a human matter. If the influence that a society exercises over them resembles a physical influence through its uniformity and fixity, it remains essentially a social influence. Society cannot imprison itself within forms that it fixes once and for all. Even during a limited period of time, society must ceaselessly adapt its rules to the social conditions it perceives behind each particular case. The definition of each type of case in fact yields only an entirely schematic view of the matter. It may be sufficient in what is called "current practice." When simple lawsuits must be judged, in which the facts cannot be disputed and the opinion of the common conscience is clear, the judge is only an executive organ. He is asked only to proceed according to given forms and to render his judgment within the limits of the law. But even then there are details and circumstances that cannot be discovered without shrewdness. Moreover, the authority of the judge is respected, even in cases where another person would be just as acceptable, because we know that in more delicate and difficult cases he alone is capable of forming judgment. Let us now consider this judge, the attorney, and the defendant, imagining one of those trials that raise all sorts of problems, the precise solution of which cannot be found within the codes or even within jurisprudence. In this case the material aspects of acts count for less than the psychological and moral disposition of the defendants. Their origins, education, influences, social status, and profession must be taken into consideration. One must obtain and weigh testimony, observe the timbre of voice, the silences, the contradictions, the humorous episodes, and the entire play of human passions as they transpire in physiognomy, gestures, and speech. One must participate in discussions among people of the same or different social worlds, and one's opinion must be formulated "in one's soul and conscience," that is, by giving voice and expression to the collective soul and conscience of one's own group. In this case one forgets or overlooks the judicial robe, the external appearance of the courtroom, and all the solemnity of the judicial framework. The judge even forgets

26. The contract of private right, which is based on the fiction that the wills of the parties do not change, is, in this sense, only a technical instrument. See Georges Dereux, *De l'interprétation des actes juridiques privés*, Paris, 1904.

somewhat that he is a judge, the lawyer that he is a lawyer, and the defendant that he is charged. The judicial language becomes flexible and humanized so that it resembles the tone of a conversation. Indeed these are people brought together without forethought who discuss a question of facts, a varied happening, a crime of passion, or a political crime. They judge the persons and their acts according to the modes of evaluation commonly held in their world; these are modes of traditional evaluation that one comes to know only if one is part of the social groups, classes, or fashionable circles in which they are transmitted. In this way, without noticing it, we have now moved from the technical realm to the fully social milieu, i.e., to that zone of personal relations in which society does not limit its horizon, for it is not concerned with accomplishing a function, but only with fortifying in each of its members the awareness of his social rank, or of intensifying collective life. We are transported from the present, from the realm of necessities and immediate influence, to a near or distant past. We no longer see the judge of today, but rather the man of the world, the *pater familias*, who remembers not only his conversation with his kin and friends of yesterday, of a month or several months ago, but also his whole life and experience, the ideas and judgments that he owes to family and friends, the traditions of the circles that he frequents and of the books that have taught him: in short, it is such a man and no longer a cape, a robe, or a code who pronounces judgment. To be sure, he will again become a judge pure and simple when he pronounces his verdicts, composed in the proper forms. With the lawyer the situation is quite similar. His eloquence feeds on the sources of common social life. He appeals to the most general human feelings while at the same time flattering the tastes, preferences, and prejudices—recent or antiquated—of a social circle or of a class; but he again becomes a lawyer when he summarizes his conclusions. Likewise, a tragedy must have five acts and the curtain must come down after the last; but the inspiration and the genius of actors are independent of classical rules, costumes, decor, and scenery. An author observes passions in the world, and it is in that world that actors learn to imitate them.

Is what is true of the judicial profession also true of other professions? We will acknowledge without difficulty that the authority of those who dispense justice indeed comes from the fact that they have a sense of certain traditions that dominate all social life. Justice must bring into being a conformity not only of actions, but of beliefs, especially of moral beliefs. If those who apply and interpret the laws were to give the impression that they proceed automatically, we would respect neither judges nor the law. As Pascal has said, "It is dangerous to

tell people that the laws are unjust, for they obey them only because they think they are just." To locate the law within the tradition of a social life that is both old and strongly organized is to strengthen the letter with all the authority of the spirit; it is to reveal society behind the technical apparatus. But let us move to another realm: that of commerce, industry, and business. Following that of the judge, let us examine the function of men who become rich by creating and manipulating wealth. In this case is not technique everything, and are we at all concerned with knowing that beside the industrialist and the merchant engaged in certain economic operations, there is a man belonging to some social milieu and occupying a certain rank? What role does tradition play in this respect? Is not the aim of the merchant above all and even completely to make money? If the technique of his trade is adequate, is it not enough that he possesses it? Does not economic organization differ from all others precisely in that it changes at a quicker pace than the latter? But economic organization engages in its movement all of its agents, who confront it like workers confronting a machine. If in other realms technique is an instrument driven by society, in this case technique seems like a mechanism that drives society.

Nevertheless, if my previous analysis of lucrative activity was not mistaken, in which I enumerated the qualities that it implies, here as elsewhere it makes sense to distinguish technical activity from social activity. At the basis of a social function one always finds a set of traditions. Continuing with commerce, let me describe the merchant's activity in the simplest terms. He has relations with a client. Commercial technique assigns to one the role of a seller and to the other the role of a buyer. It dissociates persons from the various groups of which they are a part and considers them only under that aspect, placing them opposite each other according to this simple quality. But, understood thus, the relation between seller and buyer is one of opposition, an almost warlike relation. There is antagonism between them in regard to the price as well as to the quality of the thing sold. To be sure, commercial technique may sometimes motivate compromise so as not to discourage clients, but this is so only in the interest of improving future sales. If this were all, it is not even certain that an exchange of goods would ever have taken place; in any case, the commercial function would not have assumed a social form. Durkheim has remarked in regard to the division of labor that, despite its technical utility, it could function only among men who were from the start part of the same society. The difference in needs that makes two people oppose each other is in itself not sufficient to unify them and to make them collaborate. No social relationship can arise from a simple antagonism, or

from warfare. It is hence necessary that sellers and buyers become aware both of what makes them oppose each other and what unites them; this is to say that each must see, beyond the antagonist, a social individual and a society of which he is himself a part.

The businessman can in many cases be replaced by an employee. Commercial technique in fact allows classification of clients and goods within a certain number of categories; when a client or a product fits exactly into one of these categories, the exchange takes place almost mechanically, even though there is still an element of chance involved. But in certain kinds of business, when it is a question of certain goods or certain clients, the sale becomes a more delicate operation in which the businessman must personally participate. The client is not satisfied with looking at the product; he wants to be assured of its good quality, that it is not too expensive. This assurance will be of value to the extent that the person who gives it is convincing in the eyes of the client. The businessman is not satisfied with offering a product; he persuades the client that he has made a good deal, that he has not been deceived. In order so to persuade him he must get to know the client. In this way, two persons confront each other, and the sale takes the form of a debate, an exchange of proposals, of a conversation between people who, momentarily, forget or pretend to forget that they are buyer and seller. The client leaves the store saying to himself: "This is truly a store on which I can rely." By this he means that it is a business with traditions; such a business gives him the impression of going back to the past, of having made contact with a bygone society in which the spirit of the old guilds still lived. Or he may leave the store and say: "This is a store that is on the upswing, it is a modern business." By this he means that the businessman, when selling a new product or trying a new sales routine, has revealed horizons of needs and tastes that have just come into being, and of the groups who contribute most to developing such needs and tastes. It will seem to the client that he has made contact with these groups or (if he was already part of them) that he has again found himself among them, that he speaks their language, adopts their judgments of people and behavior, and their perspectives on the past and the future. As to the two businessmen depicted in these transactions, both of them have fulfilled their role, whether by reawakening the taste for what is old, or by creating and reinforcing new tastes in their client. The difference between old and new is moreover completely relative. Collective memory goes back, as the case may be, to varying points of the past. Merchants rely on the traditions of a society that is more or less old and more or less circumscribed, according to whether their clients are caught up in the life-style of the old

bourgeoisie, or remain open to needs that have been discovered and developed within a shorter time span than is the case for other groups.

Thus every activity that has as its goal the production of commodities, their sale, and, more generally, the valorization of wealth, also shows a twofold aspect. It is a technique but, on the other hand, those who practice it must take their inspiration from the needs, customs, and traditions of a society.

Technique represents those parts of its activity that society leaves temporarily to mechanisms. But, on the other hand, however technical they may be, functions presuppose, at least on the part of some of those who perform them, qualities that can emerge and develop only in the heart of society, for on this condition alone can they become specialized without losing contact with society. Just as with everything that is social and presented in a personal form, society is interested in the acts and the persons who display these qualities; it fixes its attention on them and retains them. Thereby are formed those traditional value judgments that each social class preserves in its memory. People carry these value judgments within themselves and find inspiration from them when they leave the family circles and social world in which these judgments were born to take a position within the professions. From these value judgments, well beyond their specialized activity, they retrieve a notion of the position that this activity occupies and that is occupied by those who are qualified to perform it within society in the narrow sense, i.e., within that zone of social life in which one is solely interested in individuals.

Since these functions have not all developed at the same time, the qualities that they assume are only progressively understood in terms of their uniquely social value. It is natural that old value judgments have for a long time prevented new ones from moving to the forefront and that the latter become introduced only by assuming the appearance of the former. But along with that appearance, new value judgments have slowly assumed the form of tradition. That has sufficed for them to become accepted at a certain moment. They have succeeded, and they succeed all the better, when they correspond to a wider society with richer collective content that slowly becomes outlined and makes its appearance. The society of yesterday could indeed be diverted from the contemplation of its own image—reflected in the mirror of the past—only if little by little there appeared in the same mirror other images, perhaps less clear and less familiar, but that opened up to that society vaster perspectives.

Conclusion

In the whole of the first part of this study I did not hesitate to follow the psychologists on their terrain. It is in fact with the individual that we observe dreams, the functioning of memory, and the disorders of aphasia, whether we self-examine ourselves or whether we interrogate others about what was going on in their minds. I was hence obligated to use this method of introspection which, so it seems, cannot be employed without at the same time admitting that the facts of consciousness that are hidden from societal observation also escape its operation. How could society in fact extend its power over these regions of the individual psyche in which it finds nothing that corresponds to its nature and of which it can perceive nothing? But how, on the other hand, could we have the opportunity of discovering in one or several consciousnesses anything that resembles the operation of the totality of all the others on each consciousness, since we place ourselves in the perspective of those who separate and isolate these consciousnesses as through a multitude of tight partitions?

It could however be the case that the psychologist who believes he is engaged in introspection proceeds no differently from the way in which he studies any other object, so that his observation is of value only to the extent that it is, as we say, objective. There are two possibilities. First, what he observes may be unique in its kind, so that there are no words which would permit him to express it. In this case he is not able to verify his observation by referring to the observations of others, nor could others conclude that he has not succumbed to an illusion. What can be the value of a description of this kind which disallows every possibility of collective verification in the present or future? Second (and this is certainly the case in regard to Bergson's psychology), what the psychologist observes is perhaps not unique, so that there are words that allow him to express it. Let us acknowledge that this observation requires a particularly difficult kind of effort and that there exists an interval or gap between the expression and the thing expressed. But we are not faced with an impossibility and we can hope that, little by little, through habit, the effort will become less exacting and the expression more accurate. Will we however argue that

there are certain aspects of states of consciousness that escape every expression but the feeling of which nevertheless can be indicated to those in whom these states appear? That is where introspection would begin; and the possibility of verifying one's observation by those of others would not end there. But what would permit such verification, if not an agreement as to the meaning of the signs that reveal that we are in fact dealing with the same feelings that others have experienced before us? From the moment that the psychologist claims to explain to others what they should see within themselves, he exposes states of consciousness and exteriorizes them. It is true that from what we see we can infer the existence of characteristics or realities which we do not see. But the latter make sense only in relation to what we see, which is to say that the knowledge we possess is grounded entirely in what is called exterior observation.

Introspection is defined by psychologists through opposition to the perception of material objects. It seems that in the latter we go outside ourselves and become partially fused with exterior things, whereas in the case of introspection we withdraw into ourselves. But this distinction makes sense only if we think of an isolated individual. In this case what we refer to as exterior is all that is exterior to the individual's body and, by extension, his body itself—exterior to what we believe is his mind. We call interior all that which is not exterior to the body, and, by extension, to the mind, that is to say, the contents of the mind itself, especially our memories. If, on the other hand, we consider not an isolated individual but a group of people who live together in society, this distinction makes no sense at all. In this case, there are no perceptions that can be called purely exterior, since when a member of the group perceives an object, he gives it a name and arranges it into a specific category. In other words, he conforms to the group's conventions, which supply his thought as they supply the thought of others. If we can imagine an intuitive perception without any admixture of memory in an isolated individual who has never been part of any society, there is on the other hand no collective perception that must not be accompanied by the memory of words and notions that allows people to come to some agreement in regard to objects, for this memory alone makes the perception possible. Purely exterior observations are hence in this case not possible. In the same moment that we see objects we represent to ourselves the manner in which others would look at them. If we go outside the self, this is not to become fused with objects but rather to look at them from the point of view of others. This, in turn, is possible only because we remember the relations we have previously had with them. There are hence no perceptions with-

out recollections. But, inversely, there are no recollections which can be said to be purely interior, that is, which can be preserved only within individual memory. Indeed, from the moment that a recollection reproduces a collective perception, it can itself only be collective; it would be impossible for the individual to represent to himself anew, using only his forces, that which he could not represent to himself previously—unless he has recourse to the thought of his group. If recollections were preserved in individual form within memory, and if the individual could remember things only by forgetting human society and by proceeding all by himself—without the burden of all the ideas that he has acquired from others—to recapture stages of his past, he would become fused with this past; that is, he would have the illusion of reliving it. I have shown that there is indeed one case in which people become fused with the images that they represent to themselves, that is, where the person believes he is living what he imagines all by himself. But this is also the only moment in which he is no longer capable of the act of memory: when he dreams. To the contrary, he remembers all the better and reproduces his past in forms that are so much more precise and concrete that he can better differentiate the past from the present. That is, he himself lives in the present, when his mind turns toward exterior objects and toward other people, in other words, when he goes outside of himself. There is hence no memory without perception. As soon as we locate people in society it is no longer possible to distinguish two types of observations, one exterior, the other interior.

Let me present the same idea in another form. Let us detach the individual from society. We consider on the one hand his body and on the other his consciousness, as if he were the only individual whom we encounter in the world. We try to find out what can be found at the end of this abstraction, within his body and in his consciousness, when he perceives and when he remembers. In his body we find a brain and nervous sensory-motor organs which can produce certain purely material modifications. Since in this perspective we disregard society, we are not concerned with and give no account to the origin of these movements—the way in which these mechanisms have been rooted in the cerebral substance. From the moment that we isolate those we find in one individual from those that correspond to them in others, we no longer pay attention to their meaning and turn instead to their material nature. It is not difficult at this point to show that from these material movements we can extract nothing that resembles, close up or from a distance, a state of consciousness. How then can we explain memory? Since there is only an individual (to stress again the initial

hypothesis), and his memory cannot follow from his body, we must conclude that there is something outside his body yet nevertheless within the individual that can explain the recurrence of memories. But what do we find within consciousness that does not presuppose to any degree the intervention of other human beings? What is the model of the purely individual state of consciousness? It is the image—detached from the word, to the extent that it refers to the individual and the individual alone. This image is the abstraction made from the general significations of all that surrounds this individual, from relations and ideas: that is, from all those social elements that we decided at the beginning of our hypothesis to disregard. Since this image cannot derive from the body, it can be explained only by itself. We will then say that recollections are nothing but images that exist such as they are from the moment in which they have been lodged for the first time in our consciousness. Let us stop here and recognize that, given the hypotheses from which we started, this is the necessary conclusion. But these hypotheses indeed seem open to doubt.

To begin with, the neurological modifications and movements that are produced in an individual can also be produced in others. They are manifested in one or several individuals only because they are also manifested in others. Of what do they really consist if not of movements of articulation or of cerebral modifications that prepare for such movements? But words and language presuppose not just one person, but a group of associated persons. Why should we break up this group? To be sure, if we isolate an individual and examine his words in themselves, without locating them in the linguistic system, and if we decide to forget that they are questions or answers addressed to a collectivity, our observation can begin only with the material aspect of words and the corporal movements of articulation. However, what is foremost in the consciousness of a person who speaks is the meaning of his words. And the most important fact is that he understands them.¹ Behind the series of articulated words, there is a series of acts of understanding which are so many psychological facts. These are the facts that a psychological analysis limited to the individual cannot deal with precisely because they presuppose the existence of a society. If we show that the movements of articulation considered as movements re-

1. This is close to what Henri Piéron says: "Through this intervention of symbolism (of language), the role of sensorial supports is much less apparent; *attention focuses on the evocative power of the symbol much more than on the sensorial form under which it is evoked and which is of secondary importance, no matter whether this form is uniquely visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or has a mixed character.*" *Le cerveau et la pensée*, Paris, 1923, p. 25.

fer to nothing psychical, and that we cannot derive from them anything that resembles a recollection, we are correct. But this does not at the same time prove that the notions, ideas, and representations that accompany speech and give it its meaning have nothing in common with recollections. They are indeed psychical states. States of the body cannot explain states of consciousness; but states of consciousness can produce or reproduce and explain other states of consciousness.

We speak moreover of purely individual images that subsist such as they are in memory after they have entered at a given moment into our consciousness and which reappear later in the form of recollections. Of what can they consist? A recollection of a picture or of an event is a state of consciousness of some complexity and comprises, so we are told, two kinds of elements: on the one hand those that any member of our group can know and understand. These are notions of objects or persons, words and the meanings of words that express them. On the other hand there is a unique aspect under which recollections appear in our consciousness because we are what we are. I shall disregard the first elements—those that are explained by societal processes—since I am reasoning from a position outside society. But what remains under these circumstances? Since objects and their qualities, as well as persons and their characteristics, considered in isolation, have a clear-cut significance for other persons, all that remains in the manner in which these are grouped in our mind, and in it alone. In other words, all that remains is the particular aspect that the images corresponding to them assume in the midst of the other images which at any moment occupy the field of our consciousness. That is to say, our recollections, each taken in itself, belong to everybody; but the coherence or arrangement of our recollections belongs only to ourselves—we alone are capable of knowing and calling them to mind. But the chief question is to know whether what is true of each of the parts is also true of the whole. Does the society that helps us to understand and call to mind the recollection of an object not also intervene—and must not it intervene—to allow us to understand and call to mind this arrangement of objects that constitutes a complete picture or an event in its totality? The only means of deciding this question would consist in referring to an experience in which we could understand and call to mind the images of objects (or of their qualities and details) in isolation, but which would not allow us to understand or call to mind the arrangement of images that correspond to a complete picture or event in its totality. Such an experience exists and is continually repeated: the experience of dreams. When we dream we understand all the details of our dream. The objects that we view therein are those previ-

ously encountered in our waking state, and we indeed know that this is what they are. If memory takes hold of them during the dream, this undoubtedly shows that all contact between society and ourselves has not been suppressed. We articulate words and understand their meaning. This suffices for us to recognize objects about which we think and speak in our dreams. But we are no longer capable of calling to mind successive scenes, series of events, or full-scale pictures that reproduce what we have seen and experienced when we were awake. Since the dream differs from the waking condition in that we are no longer in contact with other people, what we lack in the dream state for the act of remembering is the support of society.

Life as well as social thought is inconceivable without one or several systems of conventions. When we pass from the dream to the waking state or vice versa, we have the feeling of entering a new world. It is not that we perceive in one world objects of an apparently different nature from that in the other; but these objects are not located within the same frameworks. The frameworks of the dream are determined by the very images that are prepared within them. Outside themselves and considered in themselves, they have no reality and no fixity. In what part of real space and of real time are we when we dream? Even when it seems to us that we are in a familiar place, it is not surprising to find ourselves rapidly transported to a faraway place. The frameworks of the dream have nothing in common with those of the waking state. Moreover, they are valid only for ourselves and do not set limits to our fantasy. When our imaginations change, we just modify these frameworks. When we are awake, on the contrary, time, space, and the order of physical and social events as they are established and recognized by the members of our group are imposed on us. From this comes a "feeling of reality" that is opposed to what we still dream but is the point of departure for all our acts of memory. We can remember only on condition of retrieving the position of past events that interest us from the frameworks of collective memory. A recollection is the richer when it reappears at the junction of a greater number of these frameworks, which in effect intersect each other and overlap in part. Forgetting is explained by the disappearance of these frameworks or of a part of them, either because our attention is no longer able to focus on them or because it is focused somewhere else (distraction is often only the consequence of an effort of attention, and forgetting almost always results from a distraction). But forgetting, or the deformation of certain recollections, is also explained by the fact that these frameworks change from one period to another. Depending on its circumstances and point in time, society represents the past to itself in

different ways: it modifies its conventions. As every one of its members accepts these conventions, they inflect their recollections in the same direction in which collective memory evolves.

We should hence renounce the idea that the past is in itself preserved within individual memories as if from these memories there had been gathered as many distinct proofs as there are individuals. People living in society use words that they find intelligible: this is the precondition for collective thought. But each word (that is understood) is accompanied by recollections. There are no recollections to which words cannot be made to correspond. We speak of our recollections before calling them to mind. It is language, and the whole system of social conventions attached to it, that allows us at every moment to reconstruct our past.

* *

But how can we imagine that our recollections, whether individual images or an assembly of concrete images, can result from a combination of schemes or frameworks? If collective representations are empty forms, how can we obtain the colorful and sensible matter of our individual recollections by bringing them into harmony? How can the container reproduce the content? Here we touch upon a difficulty that is by no means new and that has not ceased to preoccupy philosophers. If, within the system of Bergson in particular, this appears to be unsolvable, it is because he clearly opposes—in a way that has not been done before—that which is called image and concept. The image is defined in his system by disengaging it from every notion of relationship and from every intellectual significance; concept is defined by emptying it of every image. If we presuppose that memory-images continue and reappear, this is so because we cannot reconstruct them with concepts as they are here defined.

I cannot here, however briefly, study such a fundamental problem from a philosophical point of view. Two remarks will have to suffice. Modern interpreters of Plato have shown that his theory was not without relation to the mental habits of the Greek people among whom he had conceived and elaborated it. If popular imagination made gods of Victory, Eros, Laughter, Death, Pity, Health, and Wealth, this was because it saw in them active forces and because people felt their living influence within themselves and others. These were not simple personifications, nor were they abstractions. If people felt that way, would it not have been quite natural also to consider Justice and Virtue as active eternal forces located above all terrestrial things? Poets and artists had undoubtedly taken the first steps before Plato. To be sure, Plat

makes no deity of justice but rather is concerned to discard all personal elements through a neutral designation. Nevertheless this is for him the very contrary of an abstraction. It is not a concept, it is much more. It is a real being. In this way Platonic ideas do not designate "attributes," abstractly considered qualities, but "subjects," if not persons.² But on the other hand Spinoza saw in concepts or common notions only an imperfect and truncated mode of thought. According to him there is a kind of knowledge at the same time more elevated and more adequate that does not represent the abstract properties of things but the "particular essences" of beings. It is as if the real object of our intellectual activity consists in attaining or trying to grasp a reality which is both rational and personal. In this way the philosopher who is usually considered to have invented the theory of ideas and the one who perhaps most thoroughly investigated it never saw in ideas abstract points of view about things that would convey only relations and colorless blueprints. On the contrary, they felt that ideas possessed a content richer than sensible images. In other words, the sensible and individual image was contained within the idea, but it was only a part of its content. On the other hand, the idea contained the image (and many other images as well); but the idea was at the same time container and contained. The notion of collective representation has all that is needed to respond to such a definition. It also comprises all that is necessary to explicate the production or reproduction of individual states of consciousness, and of recollections in particular.

But let us concentrate on facts. The observation of a fact—the knowledge that dreams cannot evoke the recollection of events or of complex pictures—revealed to us the existence of frameworks of collective memory on which individual memory relies. It is by observing these frameworks themselves that we learned to distinguish within them two narrowly connected aspects. We found in effect that the elements of which they are made can be considered both as more or less logical or logically connected notions that give rise to reflection, and as the imaged and concrete representation of events or persons localized in time and space. If social thought contained only purely abstract notions, intelligence within individuals could be completely explained

2. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Platon* 1920, 1:348f. Undoubtedly, in *The Republic* (507b) the idea is completely separated from the image (even though it is called *eidōs*, which can be translated as "form"), in such a way that the idea can resemble a logical concept. This is the direction in which the thought of Plato and of his followers had to evolve, under the influence of the dialectics and of the teaching of the Academy. But that is a later development.

by society; through society, the individuals would participate in collective thought. But between images and ideas there would be a difference of nature such that we could not deduce the former from the latter. If, on the contrary, collective notions are not "concepts," if society cannot think except in regard to given facts, persons, and events, there are no ideas without images. Or, to put it more precisely, ideas and images do not designate two elements, one social and the other individual, of our states of consciousness, but rather two points of view from which society can simultaneously consider the same objects that it situates in the totality of its notions or in its life and history.

We ask how recollections are to be located. And we answer: with the help of landmarks that we always carry within ourselves, for it suffices to look around ourselves, to think about others, and to locate ourselves within the social framework in order to retrieve them. We find, in addition, that these landmarks become multiplied in proportion as our memory explores regions closer to our present, to the point that we can recall all the objects and all the faces on which yesterday our attention was even slightly focused. Finally, it is through a series of reflections that we have the impression of passing from one object to another and from one event to another as if we think of the object and its exterior aspects, of the event and of its place in time and space, at the same time as we think of their nature and significance. In other words, objects and events become arranged in our mind in two ways: either following the chronological order of their appearance, or by the names we give them and the meaning that is attributed to them within our group. That is to say that to each one of them there is a corresponding notion that is both an idea and an image.

Why does society establish landmarks in time that are placed close together—and usually in a very irregular manner, since for certain periods they are almost entirely lacking—whereas around such salient events sometimes many other equally salient events seem to gather, just as street signs and other signposts multiply as a tourist attraction approaches? These not only serve to divide up the passage of time, but they also nourish our thought, like the technical, moral, or religious notions which our thought does not localize in the past but rather in the present. Historians increasingly resist drawing general conclusions and lessons from the events of the past. But society, which pronounces judgments on people while they are alive and on the day of their death, as well as on their deeds when these are produced, actually encompasses in all of its important recollections not only a fragment of its experience, but also a kind of reflection of its thoughts. Since a past

fact is instructive and a person who has disappeared is an encouragement or an advertisement, what we call the framework of memory is also a concatenation of ideas and judgments.

Inversely, there is scarcely a general notion that does not give society an occasion to focus its attention on this or that period of its history. This is evident when we deal with attempts on the part of society to know itself, to reflect on its institutions and its structure, on its laws and mores. Why is it, for example, that a moderately cultivated Frenchman finds it hard to understand the array of political ideas of countries like England or America, so that a simple description of their constitutions at best leaves in his mind only verbal recollections? This is because he does not know, or knows only in a rather stilted way, of the series of great events from which this legislation developed. Notions of constitutional law became clear only in the light of history; this is also true in many other areas. Knowledge, or science, is no exception. To be sure it is not to be confused with its history. But it is not true that the scholar or the scientist operates only from the perspective of the present. Knowledge is too collective a project not to give the scholar, even when he concentrates on a new experience or on original meditations, the feeling of following directions of research and of continuing a theoretical effort of which the origin and point of departure are located previous to himself. Great scholars place their discoveries in the chronology of the history of knowledge. In their eyes, scientific laws represent not only elements of an immense structure situated outside of time; they also perceive behind these laws and along with them the entire history of the efforts of the human spirit in this domain.

From this point of view I have considered some milieus in which all men—or most of them—spend their lives: the family, religious society, and social class. How do we represent these to ourselves? What thoughts do they arouse and what memories do they leave in our minds? We can describe the organization of a family in a particular period and in a specific region from the outside, and we can define in abstract terms the relations among kin and the kind of obligations that they bring in their wake. We can measure the intensity of the familial spirit. We can also outline the framework of the life of the family and divide families up among several categories according to the number of their members and the events that have happened or failed to happen in the family. But people certainly do not in this way think about the domestic group of which each person is a part. It is true that kin relationships contain something that resembles the objectivity of natural laws. Familial duties are imposed on us from the outside. We did not make them and we cannot change them. They cannot be explained

moreover by the emotional and mental qualities and the personality of our kin. When we speak of them we have in mind general notions: notions such as father, child, spouse, etc. But it is nevertheless true that each family has its own history just as each member possesses in the eyes of others an original physiognomy. It is within our family and at the cost of a long series of personal experiences that we have learned to single out all these relationships. There is nothing less abstract—and nothing that appears to us so unique in its kind—than the feeling which we experience for a member of our family.

In other words, the family is an institution. Through reflection, we can locate it among other institutions, distinguish within it special organs, and understand the nature of its functions. Moreover, the life of the family comprises a certain number of events. We recall them and we also preserve the recollection of persons who enacted them. But there is no reason to contrast or to consider separately these two aspects of the domestic group. They are interwoven in reality. Otherwise we would not understand how family recollections can be called to mind or reconstructed. There are indeed cases where it seems our thought is more focused on kinship relations and averted from the history of the family. This happens, for example, when a discussion involving interests creates conflict among kin regarding an inheritance. There are other situations in which personal relations are preeminent, in which kin appear to forget that they are kin and display feelings of affection ordinarily felt among friends. But who would not realize that if we proceed to the extreme in either example, we would be departing from the family? We remain in the family only upon condition of not treating our kin as simple abstract units, but also not as persons who are linked by simple elective affinities. I have said that it is somewhat peculiar and strange that, in the family, our kin are imposed on us by virtue of impersonal rules, and that we nevertheless experience family members in a more personal way than other people and in fact prefer them to others as if we had chosen them. The notion of kinship relations is closely tied to the personal image of our kin. Whether we place ourselves in our own perspective or in that of our domestic group, we imagine one of our kin—and we know that our entire family does so—as a being unique in kind and truly irreplaceable. The mind of the family is made of thoughts that have this double character; they are notions and they are at the same time images of composites of images.

But the same is true in regard to religious beliefs. We readily say that we practice or do not practice a religion. This is because rites, sacraments, the recitation of liturgical formulas, and prayers are thought to have by themselves a permanent value and an immediate

efficacy insofar as they are acts that are accomplished and renewed in many successive moments. The baptism of a newborn child regenerates it even when the child does not yet know what these gestures performed by a priest can signify. Very often when one goes to confession or to Communion, one thinks almost exclusively of the sins one wishes to be washed away, the weight of which is felt up to this moment, and of a grace one wishes to attain that preoccupies us like all benefits we await in the future. Seen from this angle, religious things seem to exist outside of time; dogmas are true with an eternal truth. In a sense, nothing is more abstract than religious thought. Whether we consider God or the supernatural beings to which the cult is addressed and which are defined chiefly by very general attributes, or whether we try to understand the relationships between God and men, original sin, redemption, grace, or the heavenly kingdom, we imagine symbols or articulate words. But we indeed know that these are vague or verbal expressions of a reality that escapes us. If religious thought were nothing else, it would apply only to ideas that do not correspond to any image or sensible reality, that is, to forms empty of content. As Kant has profoundly noted, concepts without content may indeed guide our actions, but they teach us nothing. If "religion within the limits of reason" depends only on ideas of this kind, it can be nothing other than a practical morality.

But religion is surely something other and more than this. When the form of dogmas and rites cannot be explained by purely rational motives, it is not in the present but in the past that we must look for its grounding. In fact, every religion is a survival. It is only the commemoration of events that terminated or sacred personalities who disappeared long ago. There is no religious practice that must not be accompanied, at least for the officiating priest, and if possible, for the believer, by a belief in divine or sacred persons who have manifested their presence in the past and exercised their influence in defined places and periods, and whose gestures, words, and thoughts are reproduced through practices in a more or less symbolic form. In this way, every religious representation is both general and particular, abstract and concrete, logical and historical. Let us examine an article of faith that is accompanied by theological proofs. Theology applies rigorous methods of reasoning for definitive notions. An article of faith is hence a rational truth. If we look at it more closely it presupposes the existence of Christ, the reality of his words, of his life, his death, and his resurrection. What seemed a logical truth has become—or rather was from the beginning—a remembrance.

To be sure, depending on the period, the place, and the person, either the logical aspect or the historical aspect of religion seems to come to the forefront. I have shown that while dogmatic theologians try to prove religion, the mystics claim to live it. Dogmatists focus on the atemporal aspects of dogmas; mystics aspire to enter into an intimate communion of thought and feeling with divine beings that are represented as persons such that they must have manifested themselves at the origin, at the moment in which the religion was born. But, here again, if we exceed the limits in the direction of dogmatism or mysticism, we leave religion behind. Religion cannot be reduced to a system of ideas, nor can it be exhausted in an individual experience alone. What dogmatists oppose to the mystics is not an intellectual construction; it is rather a collective and traditional representation of the events from which the religion has emerged. Mystics, on the other hand, do not oppose their own meaning to the conception of the Church; their visions and ecstasies enter into religion only in a dogmatic form—they take their place within the framework of traditional beliefs. If the mystics' experiences are admitted there, it is because they strengthen this framework as a whole, just as in geometry the solution of a problem illuminates and sharpens our understanding of the theorems of which it is only an application.

Thus there is no religious thought that cannot be understood as an idea and that is not at the same time composed of a series of concrete recollections, of images or events or persons that can be located in space and time. This proves that we do not deal here with two kinds of elements—the one intellectual, the other sensible—that are somehow piled upon each other, or inserted the one in the other. For the substance of dogma grows through all that the mystic introduces to it, and the experience of the mystic becomes more stimulated and appears in a more personal form when it is permeated by dogmatic views. The same substance circulates in the mystic and in dogma. Religious thoughts are concrete images that have the imperative force and generality of ideas, or, if you will, ideas that represent unique persons and events.

Finally, social classes are made of people who are distinguished from each other by the kind of consideration that they display toward one another and that others display toward them. Under the *ancien régime* the nobility was built upon a hierarchy of ranks. One had to occupy one of these ranks in order to be part of the nobility. What was hence in the forefront of the collective consciousness of the nobility, and of society in general when it looked upon the nobility, was the idea

of this hierarchy and of these ranks. In order to conceive such divisions and subdivisions in society and in the noble class, it might have been sufficient in a sense to understand fully its contemporary grounding. It was necessary for the men and families who possessed in the highest degree those qualities of warlike courage and knightly loyalty most valued in the feudal period to be elevated above the masses and to be singled out for respect from their peers and from less highly ranked people through honors and privileges. The kind and order of these prerogatives corresponded to permanent traits of the social organization of the time and were, so to speak, inscribed in the structure of society, in which it was possible at every moment to retrieve and read them. This was the logical and, if you will, conceptual outlook of the notion of nobility and of all other notions that it comprised. But in another respect the nobility seemed to be the result of a long evolution. This evolution appeared accidental and unforeseeable in its details, even though it adequately responded as a whole to contemporary social conditions. The various noble ranks were not frameworks constructed by ingenious lawmakers, an abstraction created by those who were to occupy them and by what was most personal in them. On the contrary, the various titles of nobility were transmitted from father to son, from generation to generation, just like an inheritance—but a spiritual and inalienable inheritance. All their value resided in the number and quality of glorious or honorable recollections that sustained the nobles and which they perpetuated. One could hence not think of a title without calling to mind those who were first in attaining it. They had stamped this title with their imprint and had possessed it before its current bearer. In this way, behind the logical notion of rank, a whole array of historical facts is discovered. Noble titles had two faces. It was inconceivable that one could preserve them, say, in the aftermath of a revolution, and transfer them to new men having no kin relationship with the old nobility. Titles would have no longer been titles in the ancient and traditional sense. But, inversely, magnificent deeds, exploits, or feats would not have sufficed to confer nobility had society not recognized in these deeds so many proofs that the one who accomplished them was worthy of occupying a noble position by right and as if in eternity. It is within the framework of the organization of the nobility and in conformity with the nobility's ideas and customs that the person aspiring to nobility behaved as a man of honor and courage. The title that should have compensated him seemed to be linked in advance to his exploits. This shows how true it is that, within noble thought as well, facts or deeds and ideas cannot be distinguished.

In our modern societies titles have almost disappeared. Yet we continue to distinguish from the masses—and to consider as members of the elevated classes—all those who are endowed (or seem to be endowed) with the qualities most valued in our groups. These qualities are those that allow for the best accomplishment of functions, that is, that display a type of activity which is not purely technical and which presupposes above all the knowledge of people and the sense of human values that prevail or are instituted in the society under consideration. People may hence become conscious of the class to which they belong from the moment in which they represent to themselves the type of activities they are engaged in and are capable of performing. There is in effect a social notion of the judge, the doctor, the officer, and also (when we turn to lucrative functions) of the industrialist, the tradesman, the various categories of capitalists, etc. Nevertheless, such a notion is not abstract, nor would it suffice to consider the present structure of society and to imagine its various functions in order to make it abstract. We think less of functions, when we classify people who fulfill them, than of the qualities that a function presupposes in people. But these qualities cannot arise and develop on their own, since they presuppose knowledge of people and of their judgments; we can appreciate their true value only in a social milieu in which one is primarily concerned with persons. That is why the notion of a judge, for example, is always accompanied by the recollection of a specific magistrate whom we have known, or at least by the recollection of the judgments of society in regard to this specific magistrate, if we have not known him. When we think of upper-class merchants, along with the general traits of commercial activity, we picture in our mind's eye those men with whom we have had personal relations and who possess to a high degree aptitudes that qualify them for high commerce; or we at least remember the traditional reasons that have for a long time justified—in the eyes of merchants themselves as others—the social rank that is accorded to commercial activity.

If in order to define a class we limited ourselves to an idea—the abstract idea of this or that function—we would arrive at a rather paradoxical result, since an idea cannot represent persons and since, on the contrary, what predominates in class consciousness are personal qualities. Yet, inversely, personal aptitudes that have developed in contact with the family and in the world attract the attention of society only when they can be useful for it, or only when these aptitudes allow those who possess them to perform one of society's functions. This is why there are no class representations that are not ori-

ented both to the present and to the past. For a function is in the present and is a permanent condition of social life; but the persons who to our knowledge possess in the highest degree the personal qualities necessary to perform a function could manifest these qualities only in the past.

The frameworks of memory exist both within the passage of time and outside it. External to the passage of time, they communicate to the images and concrete recollections of which they are made a bit of their stability and generality. But these frameworks are in part captivated by the course of time. They are like those wood-floats that descend along a waterway so slowly that one can easily move from one to the other, but which nevertheless are not immobile and go forward. And so it is in regard to frameworks of memory: while following them we can pass as easily from one notion to another, both of which are general and outside of time, through a series of reflections and arguments, as we can go up and down the course of time from one recollection to another. Or, to put it more exactly, depending on the direction we have chosen to travel, whether we go upstream or pass from one riverbank to the other, the same representations seem to be at times recollections, at times notions or general ideas.

* *

The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory. In other words, the various groups that compose society are capable at every moment of reconstructing their past. But, as we have seen, they most frequently distort that past in the act of reconstructing it. There are surely many facts, and many details of certain facts, that the individual would forget if others did not keep their memory alive for him. But, on the other hand, society can live only if there is a sufficient unity of outlooks among the individuals and groups comprising it. The multiplicity and diversity of human groups result from an increase in needs as well as from the intellectual and organizational faculties of the society. Society accommodates itself to these conditions, just as it must accept the limited duration of individual life. It remains nevertheless true that the necessity by which people must enclose themselves in limited groups (families, religious groups, and social classes, just to mention these)—though less ineluctable and less irrevocable than the necessity to be enclosed in a determined duration of life—is opposed to the social need for unity, in the same way that the latter may be opposed to the social need for continuity. This is why society tends to erase from its memory all that might separate

individuals, or that might distance groups from each other. It is also why society, in each period, rearranges its recollections in such a way as to adjust them to the variable conditions of its equilibrium.

If we limited ourselves to the consciousness of individuals, this is what would seem to be the case. Recollections which have not been thought about for a long time are reproduced without change. But when reflection begins to operate, when instead of letting the past recur, we reconstruct it through an effort of reasoning, what happens is that we distort that past, because we wish to introduce greater coherence. It is then reason or intelligence that chooses among the store of recollections, eliminates some of them, and arranges the others according to an order conforming with our ideas of the moment. From this comes many alterations. But I have shown that memory is a collective function. Let us then place ourselves in the perspective of the group. If recollections reappear, this is because at each moment society possesses the necessary means to reproduce them. We might perhaps be led to distinguish two kinds of activities within social thought: on the one hand a memory, that is, a framework made out of notions that serve as landmarks for us and that refer exclusively to the past; on the other hand a rational activity that takes its point of departure in the conditions in which the society at the moment finds itself, in other words, in the present. This memory functions only when under the control of this reason. When a society abandons or modifies its traditions, is it not in order to satisfy rational needs, and at the very moment in which they appear?

But why is it that traditions yield? Why do recollections defer to the ideas and reflections that society opposes to them? These ideas represent, if you will, the consciousness that society has of itself in its present situation. They result from a collective reflection detached from any set of opinions that takes into account only what exists, not what has once been. It is the present. It is undoubtedly difficult to modify the present, but is it not much more difficult in certain respects to transform the image of the past that is also—at least virtually—in the present, since society always carries within its thought the frameworks of memory? After all, the present, if we consider the area of collective thought that it occupies, weighs very little in comparison to the past. Ancient representations are imposed on us with all the force acquired from the ancient societies in which they assumed collective form. The older they are, the stronger they will be; the greater the number of people and the more widespread the groups that have adopted them, the more potent these representations become. Even greater collective

forces would be needed to oppose these collective forces. But present-day ideas extend over a much shorter duration. Whence do such ideas gain the energy and the collective substance needed to resist traditions?

There is only one possible explanation. If the ideas of today are capable of being opposed to recollections and of prevailing over them to the extent of transforming them, this is because such ideas correspond to a collective experience, if not as ancient, at least much larger. Such ideas are (like traditions) held in common not only by the members of the group under consideration, but also by other contemporary groups. Reason is opposed to tradition as an extended society is to a narrow one. In addition, present-day ideas are truly new only for the members of the group which they permeate. Wherever they do not clash with traditions, such ideas have been able to develop freely and to take the form of traditions themselves. What a group opposes to its past is not its present; it is rather the past (perhaps the more recent past, but no matter) of other groups with whom it tends to identify itself.

We have seen that in societies in which the family is strongly established, it tends to resist outside influences, or, at least, to filter and be permeated by such influence only if it is compatible with the family's mind-set and its modes of thinking. But, first of all, it may happen that the continuity of family life is interrupted through the union of a member of one family with a member of another. In such cases, even when the new family is only an extension of one or the other of the original families, a new individual introduces a portion of the atmosphere in which he has previously lived, with the result that the moral milieu of the family is modified. If, as is generally the case in our societies, each marriage marks the point of departure of a truly new domestic group, even though the two spouses do not forget the traditions and recollections that have permeated them through contact with their kin, they were more profoundly influenced than the latter by all currents that come from the outside. A new household "expands" before it settles down and becomes fully conscious of what singles it out from others. Moreover, again in our societies, the family not only enters more and more frequently into relations with families of friends or of others that it encounters in the world, but it also builds bonds through the mediation of these families with still others and with an entire social milieu in which the families are immersed and in which customs and beliefs arise and are propagated that impose themselves on everybody, referring to nobody in particular. In this manner the family can be permeated by the surrounding society. How could it be otherwise, given that the regulations and customs that determine its structure and the

reciprocal obligations of its members are established and imposed on it by that society? In addition, the opinion that one family has of itself very often depends on the opinion others have of it.

These new ideas are substituted for the traditional beliefs of the family and lead it to look on its own past in another light. New ideas would not succeed if they arose within the family itself—if they responded, for example, to a need for independence and renewal abruptly felt by certain of its members. Tradition would quickly overcome such resistance or such temporary revolts. In an isolated society in which all families agree to recognize the authority of the father and the indissolubility of the marital bond, individual claims in the name of equality or liberty would find no echo. Principles can be replaced only by other principles, and traditions by other traditions. In reality, new principles and traditions already exist within families or groups of families included in the same society as other families imbued with older traditions and principles. These newer families, profiting from various circumstances, are more or less exempt from the pressure of beliefs that had been established at an earlier time. Being more sensitive to present conditions than to the prestige of the past, they have organized their life on a new basis and have adopted new perspectives on people and their activities. To be sure, at least in the beginning, such families may be exceptional and far from numerous. But to the extent that the conditions that have led to their differentiation from others are renewed and made more precise, they will grow in number. Such families indicate the traits of a society in which the barriers erected by particular traditions between domestic groups have been lowered, familial life no longer completely absorbs the individual, and the family circle is enlarged and is partly merged through other forms of association. Their ideas and beliefs represent the budding traditions of these more extended groups, into which the old families will be absorbed.

We have seen that every religion refers to the revelations and supernatural facts that marked its appearance as its true source. But we could argue that it is not only the source, that in a sense the whole of religion is so constituted. The role of the fathers of the Church, of the councils, theologians, and priests, was in every successive period simply to better understand all that was said and done by Christ and by the Christians of the first centuries. Where we believe we see an evolution determined by the milieus in which Christianity was practiced, the Church asserts that there was only a development. It is as if by concentrating their attention and their thoughts on such remembrances, the faithful had distinguished new details from century to century and had better understood their sense as time went on. The

faithful at least look to their religion to guide their conduct under conditions that are not the same in every period. It is natural that they would receive different responses; but all these responses would have been contained within the religion from the very beginning. They express only successive aspects, all of which are equally real. One would hence have to say that the remembrances to be found at the basis of religion are not deformed or distorted but better illuminated, to the degree that they are linked to the present and that new applications can be found for them.

Yet, when we study how the Christian doctrine was established and the successive forms under which it has been presented up to this day, we reach completely different conclusions. There has been no development in the sense that we could retrieve in early Christianity—even if only in a vague and cloudy way—all that later became an integral part of the religion. It is through a series of successive additions that new ideas and new points of view have been incorporated. Far from being developed, ancient sources have been limited in many aspects. These new ideas, partially foreign to early Christianity and incorporated in this way, did not simply result from an effort of reflection on ancient data. In the name of what, and with what authority, could reflection or personal intuition be opposed to tradition? One did not obey simple logical necessities. Some of the new elements may appear less rational than the original ones, and people were moreover able to live with many contradictions. But certain of these new ideas had existed already for a more or less long time: people believed in them and were inspired by them within groups that had not yet been touched by Christian preaching. Moreover, the early Church comprised many communities that in certain respects had developed independently of each other. There were doctrines that the Church tolerated without admitting them to the rank of official truths; there were others condemned as heresies that existed no less obscurely, some aspects of which ended up permeating the body of dogma. Here again it is external traditions that entered into conflict and competition with the internal tradition. To be sure, the Church chose among these claimants. But it would be possible to prove that the Church has been most receptive to ideas that could serve as common traditions for a larger Christian community. In other words, the Church relocated its more ancient traditions within the array of more recent beliefs that emanated from groups with which the Church could hope to be merged into an extended religious society. The Church rejected Protestantism because the doctrine of free thought elevated individual reflection above tradition. It is as true that Christian thought could allow compromises only

with other collective thoughts, as that its tradition could be adapted only to other traditions.

The social groups that we call classes comprise people who do not possess the kind of qualities that are the most valued in their society. But since the conditions under which societies live are subject to change, it happens that in successive periods these are not the same qualities that the collective consciousness puts in the forefront. There are hence periods in which the preeminence of the upper classes is contested, because it is based on an order of valuations that belongs to the past. Under which conditions is the struggle between those who rely on ancient titles and those who aspire to replace them carried out? We might posit that the obstacle encountered by ancient traditions is the present. New needs arise that the society can no longer satisfy. It needs to modify its structure. But where can it find the necessary impetus to free itself from the past? And in what direction can it reconstruct itself? A society can live only if its institutions rest on potent collective beliefs. These beliefs cannot arise from a simple reflection. It is all in vain to criticize dominant opinions, to show that they no longer respond to the situation of the present, to denounce their abuses and to protest oppression or exploitation. Society will abandon its ancient beliefs only if it is assured of finding others.

In fact, the nobility was not deprived of its privileges until the day when large parts of society gained the conviction that there is a type of activity more worthwhile than the exercise of warlike virtues, and that there are more previous and more honorable qualities than those leading to nobility. It is in free corporative towns—in the circles of merchants and artisans—that people became accustomed to think along these lines. From these circles such ideas, which had taken the form of tradition, penetrated into the noble classes themselves. The noble privileges retreated, not because they were criticized in themselves, but because other privileges likewise founded on traditional beliefs were opposed to them. But in its turn the bourgeois tradition has been attacked, to the extent that the conditions of industry and commerce have been transformed. It is in the circles of financiers and business people as well as in the milieu of industrialists and tradesmen who are most knowledgeable about modern economic methods—that is, outside the class in which the traditions of old-fashioned manufacturing and individualistic commerce were perpetuated—that an order of new qualities has come to be valued. These encompass a sense of collective forces, an understanding of social modes of production and exchange, and the aptitude to put these to use. The old bourgeoisie has modified its traditions so as to adapt them to some of these new ideas because it

recognized in these ideas beliefs shared for some time already by large groups of progressive people. Behind them it perceived a society in the process of organization that was vaster and more complex than the society for which ancient traditions had been sufficient and which already had a certain stability.

To sum up: social beliefs, whatever their origin, have a double character. They are collective traditions or recollections, but they are also ideas or conventions that result from a knowledge of the present. Were it purely conventional (in this sense), social thought would be purely logical. It would allow only that which is serviceable under its present conditions. It would succeed in extinguishing, in all members of the group, all the recollections that hold them back, be it even slightly, and which would permit them to be both part of the society of yesterday and part of the society of today. Were society purely traditional, it would not allow itself to be permeated by any idea—or even by any fact—that was in disagreement, however slight, with its oldest beliefs. Hence, in both cases, society would not allow any compromise between consciousness of present conditions and attachment to traditional beliefs. Society would be based entirely on the one or the other. But social thought is not abstract. Even when they correspond to and express the present, the ideas of society are always embodied in persons or groups. Behind a title, a virtue, or a quality, society immediately perceives those who possess them. Those groups and persons exist in the passage of time and leave their traces in the memory of people. In this sense, there is no social idea that would not at the same time be a recollection of the society. But, on the other hand, society would labor in vain if it attempted to recapture in a purely concrete form a particular figure or event that has left a strong imprint in its memory. As soon as each person and each historical fact has permeated this memory, it is transposed into a teaching, a notion, or a symbol and takes on a meaning. It becomes an element of the society's system of ideas. This explains why traditions and present-day ideas can exist side by side. In reality present-day ideas are also traditions, and both refer at the same time and with the same right to an ancient or recent social life from which they in some way took their point of departure. Just as the Pantheon of imperial Rome gave shelter to all cults—provided that these were indeed cults—society admits all traditions (even the most recent), provided that they are indeed traditions. In the same way, society admits all ideas (even the most ancient), provided that they are ideas, that is, that they have a place in its thought and that they still interest present-day people who understand

them. From this it follows that social thought is essentially a memory and that its entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances. But it also follows that, among them, only those recollections subsist that in every period society, working within its present-day frameworks, can reconstruct.

Conclusion

Concerning the localization of Christian events before the fourth century we can formulate only a few hypotheses. This is a pity because in this period memories could have been formed and preserved for later retrieval. Consider what we could learn from the tales of a pilgrim who might have visited Palestine in the second century. Let us therefore try to conjecture and to imagine what might have been the first Christian memory of where these events occurred. To be sure, we do not lack all the necessary data, since we have the texts of the New Testament, the Gospels, and by implication the oral traditions that informed them. The pilgrim of Bordeaux had read them;¹ those who guided and instructed him knew them. We must ask if these texts were the original sources that directed the first attempts at locating events.

The Gospels apparently were the result of a collective and indeed partly popular labor of elaboration. This seems to be suggested by both their differences and their similarities. It has been noted, for example, that John does not speak of Gethsemane, and that he locates Jesus's agony elsewhere. He does not speak of Bethlehem. He is the only evangelist to suggest that Jesus was first conducted to Annas (or Hanan), who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas.² John is moreover the only one who recounts the resurrection of Lazarus. On the other hand, he says nothing about Jesus's having instituted Communion: "This is my body," etc. In Luke's account it is a female sinner who pours perfume on the feet of Jesus at the house of a Pharisee. According to John, Mary does this in the house of Lazarus at Bethany. In the accounts of

The whole thesis and documentation of *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: Etude de mémoire collective* is found in the conclusion, which has been translated in full. Earlier chapters are preparatory in character, discussing sources, documentation, and the like. They are primarily of interest to specialists in the area, and have not been translated here.

1. This refers to the oldest existing West European testimony of the events reported in the Gospels, as told by a pilgrim who visited Jerusalem in 333. All subsequent footnotes are translated from the original text—ED.

2. "This circumstance," says Ernest Renan, "which is found only in John, is the strongest proof of the accuracy of this evangelist in regard to the smallest details." *Vie de Jésus*, 1869, note at the beginning of chapter 19.

Mark and Matthew, a woman performs this act in the house of Simon. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus appears only once after his death to the eleven apostles, on a mountain in Galilee. According to Mark and John, he shows himself to Mary Magdalene first of all, near the tomb. In Luke and John, Jesus appears to the eleven apostles for the first time in Jerusalem; only in John does he appear a second time, also in Jerusalem, and later on the shore of Lake Tiberias (and not, as in Matthew, on a mountain in Galilee). Only Mark and Luke tell of the apparition at Emmaus. Luke alone tells of the Ascension at Bethany. It seems there were several versions which differed in some details, but which also frequently borrowed from one another.

In spite of these differences, there is, in general, agreement as to locality. There emerges from all the Gospels a framework of resemblances insofar as localities, events, and their significance are concerned, even though this is not the case with reported speech (and here John is vastly superior to the others). In short, the Gospels already represent a memory or a collection of memories held in common by a group.

Although a short time elapsed between the events and the moment when these memories—even before they were recorded—took a collective form, we should not expect only a minimum of deformations, errors, and omissions. It is not at all paradoxical to argue, on the contrary, that when an event occurs that is worth remembering and reporting, it is precisely the presence of direct witnesses which increases the chances that some of its features will be changed, so that it becomes quite difficult to determine its characteristics. This is especially the case when the event is of a nature that arouses deep emotions in groups of people, giving rise to passionate discussions.

What value do the statements or even the impressions of these witnesses have when, as members of a group, they were ready—before the fact and above all after it—to reconstruct the event according to their beliefs and desires? At the moment when they report what they have seen, they are likely to exclude some details they think are of no interest to their communities. This is no doubt why such details might even have escaped them. No matter how docile and conformist these witnesses may have been, they are the link between reality and the small community in the midst of a larger society that may be hostile or indifferent. Having been stunned and moved by these events, how could they have maintained the necessary detachment to see everything clearly and completely, when in fact they expressed themselves in a language full of emotions, obscurities, and confusion?

Any testimony would seem to require the contradictory requisites

that the witness leave the group to observe the facts as they happen, and that he reenter the group to report these same facts. In succession (and almost at the same moment), he must undo and then reaffirm his identity as a member of the community.

When Jesus is arrested, all his disciples run away and are dispersed. It is only Peter who accompanies him, from a distance. Perhaps at that moment the Christian group was concentrated entirely in Peter. But it may also have been the case that Peter had temporarily left the Christian group. Violent and unexpected images, images that were completely alien to the style of thought of the disciples, appeared in his mind's eye. These are images that, at that moment, the disciples would not have been able to admit or to understand while remaining a group of disciples. It is only natural, then, for Peter to forget that he is a disciple. Only under this condition could he observe and comprehend, as if he were any other of Jesus's assistants rather than one of his disciples. A disciple would have closed his ears and eyes, or would have been overtaken by hallucinations, by some sort of vision leading him to see, behind the Christ and beyond, a whole world of supernatural and suprasensible beings.

This is the meaning that one might attribute to Peter's denial. He denied Christ so as to be a witness, not because he was confused or ashamed, but so he could see and hear without being hindered by pain and indignation (which he had to repress in order not to be chased away). Such emotions would have dulled his senses and would have made it difficult for him to inscribe in his memory what was being said and done in the house of Annas or of Caiaphas. Yet the words he pronounced and the attitude he displayed before the Sanhedrin were to take their place in the Gospels.³

Was the testimony of Peter transcribed verbatim? But Peter the witness—having again become disciple—perhaps did not see and hear what the disciples desired and expected. Were there other Christian witnesses? Only in the Gospel of John (18:15) is it claimed that an-

3. Renan says: "The Sanhedrin was assembled at Caiaphas's house. The inquest began, several witnesses appeared; the fatal word that he really spoke was: 'I will destroy the temple of God and I will rebuild it in three days.' This was quoted by two witnesses. To blaspheme the temple of God was, according to Jewish law, to blaspheme God himself. Jesus remained silent and refused to explain the incriminating words. If one is to believe one account (Mark 14:62), the high priest then beseeched him to say whether he was the Messiah, and Jesus confessed and proclaimed before the assembly that his apocalyptic reign would soon begin. (The courage of a Jesus who had decided to die did not require this—addition to the manuscript.) It is more likely that here, as at the house of Annas, he kept silent." *Ibid.*, chap. 19. Alfarc, *Les manuscrits de la vie de Jésus*, 1939, p. 293.

other disciple (who was known by the high priest) also entered the house of Annas and followed Jesus. In any case, the accounts differ from one Gospel to another. It happens that one evangelist has Jesus say before Caiaphas the same words which in another text he says before Pilate. Was Peter able to understand the words of Jesus from the place in which he was hiding? He may only have observed the bad treatment that Jesus had to endure. It is quite conceivable that after a while he confused in his mind what Christ had said on previous days with what he said on the day Peter was witness. In any case it may well be that this kind of confusion might have arisen in the minds of the other disciples, that Peter then modified his account, and that after a while he was no longer able to distinguish what he had actually seen from what the others claimed.

The Gospels reproduce only a portion of the memories that the disciples must have preserved concerning the life of Jesus and the circumstances of his death. In any case, they are the basis of what remained in the collective memory of the Christian group. To the extent that it grew more distant from the events, this group is likely to have burished, remodeled, and completed the image that it preserved of them. And so it is the case that while under ordinary circumstances people need to inspect an object from nearby in order to verify their own perceptions, they need to establish distance in order to preserve a collective memory.

It is possible that in the beginning, in the years following the death of Jesus and for a time thereafter—during a major part of the first century—one was not preoccupied with preserving and settling the details of this picture. The events were still relatively recent. One dreamed that the end of the world was imminent. In any case, even if the Christian tradition had been established immediately by the first disciples, one might believe that the events of the last days of Jesus would not have been the center around which the rest would become organized, or that these events would become the main, almost unique, object of attention, progressively eclipsing everything else that was not rigorously related to them.

Rather, the companions of Christ must have looked at his violent death as an unforeseeable event. It added some traits to a familiar image without, however, altering it significantly. Who knows whether the thoughts of witnesses dwelled on various incidents of the last days and last weeks or on incidents even further removed in time and space not yet covered by the shadow of Calvary, instead of insisting on the deplorable and unexpected scenes where their master was mixed up with

common criminals and was almost put on their level by popular Jewish opinion?

Galilee and the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, had been Jesus's preferred dwelling places, the spatial frame of his activities where he spent several years of his life. It was there that he had met those who would become his disciples, had chosen them, and had grouped them around himself. He felt uncomfortable and foreign in Jerusalem. He went there only when constrained by circumstances to meet his religious obligations or to perform the tasks his mission imposed on him. Even then he did not live inside the walls of the city, but with friends or disciples on the slopes of the Mount of Olives in Bethany. Rather than picture him in the halls of the Sanhedrin or of Pilate or at the place where criminals were executed—where they may not even have accompanied⁴ or seen him—the disciples were likely to have dreamed about other places, at the borders of the lake where they had met him, in the villages to which they had accompanied him, when he had been free in his movements to propagate his creed like other heads of contemporary sects, and where neither he nor his disciples were regarded as outlaws.

A portrait of the life of Christ that would depict all these details and put them in their proper place would surely better correspond to the overall recollections, or the recollections of his overall impact at that time, engraved in the minds of his disciples, than would the tradition centrally concerned with "the Passion" that came to prevail later. After all, from the moment he engaged himself (voluntarily or not) on the road leading from the Sanhedrin, or tribunal, to Calvary, the place of execution, he had ceased to belong to his disciples. He was asked to

4. "The squad met a certain Simon of Cyrene, who had returned from the countryside, and the Roman soldiers, following the usual procedures of foreign occupations, or perhaps a right to require forced labor, could not themselves carry the infamous wood, but forced him to carry the fatal tree himself. Simon was already a member of the Christian community or joined it later. His two sons were well known. He perhaps told them more than one circumstance of the death of Jesus. None of his disciples were near him at this moment." And at the moment of the crucifixion, "his disciples had fled. John, however, claimed to have stayed and never to have left the foot of the cross." It is true that Renan adds: "It is more certain that the women, his faithful friends from Galilee who followed him to Jerusalem and had continued to serve him, did not abandon him. Mary Cleophas, Mary Magdalene, Jeanne, wife of Chuza, Salome, and still others stayed at a certain distance and followed him with their eyes." Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, chap. 20, following Matthew, Mark, and John. Only Luke said: "And all those who knew Jesus, and the women who followed him in Galilee, were also there and looked from afar at what was taking place" (23:49).

account for what he had said and done as long as he was their master. But these acts and words were then defined in terms of public and penal law. Even his image became identified with that of many other propagandists and agitators who ultimately suffered the same trials and underwent the same punishment. He was so much nearer to his disciples and they felt so much closer to him before the prison, the opprobrious scandal, the public judgment, and the degrading execution!

To be sure, the Gospels seem to convey a completely different impression. They make it appear as if Jesus's whole life was but a preparation for his death, as if this was what he had announced in advance. But could it not be that the group of disciples who had known him and lived with him was not the one that composed the Gospels or elaborated the traditions that were later collected in the Gospels? The latter were part of an enlarged Christian community that had not known him. We do not know for what reasons and under what influences this enlarged community interpreted his life as a preparation for his death and saw in that death a supernatural event in preparation for his resurrection. Of what importance, then, was the testimony of men who had known Jesus only when alive, most of whom had not been present at his death, who had not even been allowed to verify his resurrection? In this respect, Paul, who did not see Jesus, was to attach more importance to his own vision than to the testimony even of the apostles. He felt that he was at least as much entitled as they were to belong to their ranks.

Or perhaps these testimonies were important and worth preserving so far as it was possible to complete them and to give them a new meaning by stressing what the enlarged group of Christians would come to know and understand only much later. These individual memories, fragments of a former collective memory, lacked support henceforth since the group of disciples no longer existed in its original integrity. Their memories were too unsteady and obscure. As a result of the dispersion of Christians, and also of the destruction of Jerusalem, they could no longer oppose the new interpretation of the vestiges of authentic materials. All this was the case only on the assumption that these facts once corresponded to some reality.

The disciples alone could identify those localities where they had gathered around him, where they had met him, where he spoke and performed miracles like the heads of other sects. All these events were part of the normal and daily life of the times, and it is probable that the disciples would have responded to those demanding that they evoke the life of Christ by showing them various places that we do not

know and that we cannot identify because they have no tradition. It is remarkable that all the sacred localities one is shown in Jerusalem evoke some exceptional and supernatural event with religious significance: Gethsemane (where according to Luke 22:43, 44, "an angel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthening him"; where "his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground"); the Holy Sepulcher, where Jesus was resurrected; the Mount of Olives, where he ascended into heaven; the cenacle of the Lord's Supper, where he appeared to the apostles after his death; the place of the Transfiguration, etc. The Christian community reformed and enlarged itself and believers visited these places long after his death, after the destruction and reconstruction of Jerusalem, and after the dispersion. It is the supernatural Christ whom they commemorated. Is it likely that the disciples tried to find and evoke him only in these places? Are they in fact the best and surest witnesses of all that had happened? We deal here with facts that can no longer be properly verified. It is mainly the supernatural significance that is at issue. None of the disciples was the first to see the empty tomb, and it was not to them that the angel or angels announced the Resurrection. Christ appeared to only a few of them. One imagines that there must have been many doubts and contradictions among the disciples regarding the supernatural events that happened after the death of Christ. Their testimony neither fully invalidated nor confirmed beliefs regarding these facts, which must have developed around the disciples as well as later.

Sacred places thus commemorate not facts certified by contemporary witnesses but rather beliefs born perhaps not far from these places and strengthened by taking root in this environment. These beliefs focus most frequently on facts of a supernatural kind, which form the basis of many of the essential dogmas of Christianity. It would then seem that the selected and closely examined events in the early history of the life and death of Christ, which the disciples could know, and the alleged localities where these events took place, are based more on dogma than on actual testimony. At the end of the first century or during the second, as soon as the Christians were convinced that God in human shape had died for the sins of humankind and had been resurrected to eternal life, they tried to rediscover above all the places where Jesus had been tried, crucified, buried, and resurrected, and where he had appeared to his disciples. Was it the case that contact with these localities refreshed and revitalized memories that they maintained at the time and that could have been transmitted by word of mouth beginning with the disciples, just as we come back to places where we have spent a part of our life to relive and rediscover details that had

vanished? Many other things were at stake for the believers. They visited Calvary or the Holy Sepulcher because these were supernatural places perpetually endowed with useful virtues that fortified faith, revitalized dogmas, and embodied and illustrated them.

To be sure, it was important that the believers be confident they were seeing and touching the very places where the facts subsequently transformed into dogma had happened. The memory of groups contains many truths, notions, ideas, and general propositions; the memory of religious groups preserves the recollection of dogmatic truths that were revealed to them in the beginning and that successive generations of believers and clergymen formulated. But if a truth is to be settled in the memory of a group it needs to be presented in the concrete form of an event, of a personality, or of a locality.

A purely abstract truth is not a recollection; a recollection refers us to the past. An abstract truth, in contrast, has no hold on the succession of events; it is of the order of a wish or of an aspiration. The idea of expiation, even the more precise idea of a God who dies in order to expiate the sins of his believers which he takes upon himself, is only an abstract idea, a symbol suspended in the air. This idea, born in the first century or earlier in the oriental world, most probably would have left no recollection at all, had it failed to develop roots in a specific place and to be assigned to a specific time. On the other hand, toward the end of the first third of the first century a group of Galilean Jews may have preserved a rather vivid recollection of somebody who had been their master and companion. They might well remember his teaching, his travels, his discussions with other Jews, and the circumstances that preceded and followed his violent death. These recollections would have remained closely linked to the personalities of the disciples and to the appearance of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem at the time when Jesus had lived. We must ask ourselves what would remain of all this when these disciples disappeared, when all Jesus had known likewise disappeared, when the houses he frequented fell into ruins or were replaced by others, when the look of the city changed through destruction and reconstruction, and when there was no longer anyone to follow in his traces, to evoke his face, his gestures, and the intonation of his voice in all those places that had once been familiar.

In order for recollections of the life and death of Christ and of the places through which he passed to endure, they had to be made part of a doctrine: that is, of an idea that was alive for an enduring and extended group. In order for the abstract idea of expiation to become something other than an aspiration, so that one would believe in it as one would believe in a historical truth or a fact of experience, it was

necessary that it claim to belong to a living tradition and to human testimony. On the one hand there was Paul, absorbed in metaphysical reflections; on the other there was the group of apostles, the witnesses from Jerusalem, whom he calls, not without irony, the arch-apostles. In order for this idea and these recollections to prosper and in time to be combined, they had to become saddled with images of persons and places, and to take on those traits that characterize a recollection and that are allowed to last. As to the facts, they became more prominent, and some of them gained salience in comparison to others. It may even be that they had a tendency to become disengaged from time and space, or at least from that limited region of time and space that had remained in the memory of the disciples. They were related to earlier facts and became part of earlier events reported in the Old Testament, where they had been announced by the prophets.

As the events came to be more and more distant, dogma profoundly modified the story of Jesus. It is not astonishing that the image constructed of Jerusalem was also transformed. The holy places became not only those that were the theater for the activities of Jesus but also sites consecrated by the fact that the essential truths of Christianity focused the thought of believers upon them. This transformation is likely to have occurred little by little. For a while (always assuming that one deals here with a history that has some foundation in fact), the disciples and those who had known Jesus did not completely forget his human form. They still associated it with the various places where they had most frequently seen and heard him. But as they communicated their thoughts within the enlarged Christian group in the first assemblies where the cult was developing, they must have attached greater importance to those places that the believers venerated because they thought that the divine nature of Jesus had been manifested there.

Transported to these places and developed in an enlarged collective memory, Christian recollections became focused on consecrated places that favored the emergence of a cult. Aside from its sacred character, the place of a cult is a part of the soil with a clearly defined position in space. Like all material things, this position tends to remain as is. There is something mechanical about the force that retains people around a sacred place.

But for a place to play this kind of role a few individual memories are insufficient. From the day when a cult has originated, from the day when a place becomes a rallying point for a complete group of believers, it becomes transformed into a holy place. The force of inertia it represents enters human consciousness. This is a point of departure beyond which it is hardly possible to penetrate. Before the Christian

cult had been instituted, the group of disciples could preserve the tradition of the recognizably human life of Christ—of the Christ who was their master, their companion, their friend. But we do not know what interval separates this first tradition from the one that was embodied in the Christian religious community, nor do we know which elements were passed on from one to the other, and what remodeling could have taken place in the process.

At the beginning there must have been a period when the Christian community was not officially recognized and when it was attacked and persecuted. It must then have appeared important to preserve the memory of its historical beginnings, more than of any other epoch. The Christian community had no place in the regular Jewish society or in the legal Roman society of the time. It therefore had to concentrate all its forces upon the immediate past and upon those places that were imbued with its memories. Christian thought contrasted sharply with the outlook of the surrounding groups in the midst of which it tried to organize itself. Its beliefs were drastically opposed to Jewish and pagan belief systems because of its different conceptions of life and society, and because of the whole sum of apocalyptic and supernatural visions which it constructed. This collective representation was construed without the help of any pagan elements, or of aspects of life in Jerusalem. How could such a memory continue if it failed to attach itself to some points in the terrain? These places were just as real in the present as in the past. With their assistance the life of Jesus, whatever its supernatural aspects, could be represented in a world of images that were by no means hallucinatory, but on the contrary familiar, accepted by everybody, and taken for granted in the normal course of contemporary life. It may well be that enemies of emergent Christianity tried to deface these places and to destroy signs that could help to recognize them. Legend has it that an emperor ordered the planting of a sacred wood dedicated to pagan deities on the site of Calvary so as to prevent the Christians from gathering there.⁵ This is like the behavior of a gov-

5. Jerome says in his letter to Paulinus: "From the times of Hadrian to the reign of Constantine, for roughly one hundred eighty years, one adored at the place of the resurrection the idol of Jupiter." F. M. Abel and Hugues Vincent, *Bethléhem: Le sanctuaire de la nativité*, Paris, 1914. p. 886. The same authors say on the other hand: "Cavalry at an entirely different point would have prevented the pilgrims from going there, since they went up the Mount of Olives, and since they went to Bethlehem, where the grotto was accessible to them despite the intrusion of the cult of Adonis. If there was an obstacle that stood in the way of satisfying their piety it was less the presence of pagan altars than complete disappearance," in *ibid.*, p. 900. The sacred wood established on the site of Calvary remains a supposition meant to explain that one had lost the memory of that place.

ernment that, in an attempt to maintain order in a previously rebellious city, destroys the centers of the uprising or the seat of revolutionary battles by constructing large avenues or huge public edifices to wipe out any memories that threaten its reputation.

Let us suppose that Christianity was never propagated beyond its place of origin. In this case the Christian sect would have remained what it started out to be: a very small part of the old Jewish society. The latter would have tried to smother or to eliminate it. The story of Christ would have been forgotten rather quickly—to the degree that the material traces of the Christian facts disappeared. However, it is probable that one was not able to erase in this manner all of the material vestiges of the evangelical events (if these events did in fact take place): there were the stones of houses and the devastated districts, the substructures of buildings that one could not cause to disappear or transport elsewhere. There were the names of places and sites that could not all be changed. A group in a sense takes with it the form of the places where it has lived. When it returns after a long absence (like the Jews and the Judeo-Christians after the reconstruction of Jerusalem), even if the appearance of these places has changed, it seeks them and finds, at least in part, the material frame of which it has preserved the imprint.

At any rate, Christianity, mainly through the preaching of the apostles and of the early Christians, early on took the form of a universalistic religion. In the beliefs of the Christian groups that sprouted up in various cities of the Near East, the image of the holy sites was likely to be of prime importance. One may speculate, for example, that Paul, as well as those who accompanied him—his disciples who, like himself, spread Christian beliefs to often distant places—suggested some idea of the topography of places at the time of Jesus without entirely describing the holy city and its surroundings, and that the essential message was preserved in these communities. This resulted in an undoubtedly incomplete and simplified image. The essential point is that this image remained in the memory of these groups and above all of the enlarged Church, which gained consistency as it extended and established itself more solidly in the society of the time. Christianity was now no longer the belief and the tradition of a local sect excluded from regular society. As it expanded in space, attracting families of all social classes as well as official personalities and adding to its faith influential men and groups, it imbued them with its spirit and modified its framework. At a certain point the Christian community, formerly persecuted and subsequently tolerated, became an official organization that fused with the Roman establishment.

How did the problem of the holy places and their consecration appear at that moment? There must have existed some local traditions about the presence and activities of Jesus in one or another place. But these traditions would have been vague, fragmented, and uncertain. In the meantime several centuries had elapsed, and in the absence of definite landmarks, much confusion must have ensued. As soon as one was forced to argue about these places, many errors could have crept in. Memories do not gain precision from generation to generation—quite the contrary.

Yet there was the image of the holy city—an image that the universal Christian community had slowly construed. It is natural that it would have recovered in large part local traditions where they still existed, and that it assimilated them in the process of transforming them. People who built churches and chapels to commemorate the places where Jesus's feet and those of his first disciples had touched the earth made use of existing traditions. In this way, some of these traditions were preserved while others were definitively wiped out.

But this happens whenever a collective remembrance has a double focus—a physical object, a material reality such as a statue, a monument, a place in space, and also a symbol, or something of spiritual significance, something shared by the group that adheres to and is superimposed on this physical reality. Suppose that a group splits up. Some of its members stay in the original place in the presence of the physical object, with which they retain contact. Others go away but carry with them an image of the object. The object however changes in a sense. The very place it occupies no longer remains the same, since everything around it is in the process of transformation. The object no longer has the same relation to the various aspects of its surrounding physical world.⁶ To be sure, if the symbolic significance of the holy places had moved to the forefront in the minds of the Christians who stayed in Jerusalem, they could nevertheless have preserved a more exact memory of what these places had been originally. But for them Jerusalem was not the celestial city suspended between heaven and earth. It was a city built with stones and made of houses and streets that were familiar to them. It is on account of the stability of these things that their memories endured. But that stability is at the mercy

6. After its reconstruction, Jerusalem had in effect changed place. It now extended toward the north, enclosing within its new walls the whole northwest part, where Golgotha and the Holy Sepulcher were later placed, whereas the southern quarter, including that part of the high hill, where the Cenacle was to be located, remained outside the walls. This explains why the district of the Holy Sepulcher, previously outside the city, almost became the center.

of all the material accidents that slowly transform or even destroy cities—just as the memories we constantly compose regarding a person with whom we live are at the mercy of the physiological accidents that slowly transform or even destroy an organism. These are changes that one does not even notice because they take place slowly and in a continuous manner. Even when such changes are strong and sudden, the force of habit soon renders people who remain in a place insensitive to them.

As to group members who leave these places without seeing them again, who are not involved in the process of their transformation and yet wish to deal with them: they soon create a symbolic representation of these places. The image they conjure up draws its content first, no doubt, from the places themselves (at least indirectly, if it is based on description). But symbolic reflection detaches these places from their physical environment and connects them with the beliefs of the group. Undoubtedly, the stability of the image accounts for the fact that beliefs continue. But this stability is not at the mercy of physical accidents that transform its object; the image subsists independently because the believers are unaware of such accidents. The Christians outside Palestine could invoke Jerusalem without fear of being contradicted by a clashing reality. The image had to adjust itself to beliefs, not to real places. So, while the actual places became effaced, the group's beliefs became stronger. The Christians of Jerusalem, had they been left alone, without the help of other Christian communities, would have found it increasingly difficult to replace evangelical history in an entirely transformed local framework. Although the memory of these events was at risk of disappearing, the Church replaced that same history in a made-to-measure dogmatic framework in which the most vivid beliefs of contemporary society could be expressed. It is hence not surprising that Christians who returned to Jerusalem believed they found the city of Jesus's passion as it had been in his days.

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In all I have said so far, I have assumed that the events related in the Gospels corresponded to some reality. I am willing to speculate that these writings, even though they were written belatedly, were based on oral traditions that gave an image, unshaped and confused though it may be, that was to some degree authentically representative of the events themselves. This point of view perhaps resembles that of Renan. He himself has said to what point he was moved and surprised to find that the events of the Gospels fitted naturally into the Palestine that was before his eyes when he came there. He became personally im-

pressed with the historical reality of these places. He visited Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem in order to locate the various vicissitudes of the life and death of Jesus. Was Renan not led principally by his imagination, as a historical novelist or a poet might be?

We find this same phenomenon with Chateaubriand. He writes at the beginning of the fifth part of his *Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem*: "On October 10, early in the morning, I left Jerusalem through the Ephraim Gate, always accompanied by my trusted Ali, with the aim of examining the battlegrounds immortalized by the poet Tasso." For twelve pages in the chapters devoted to the Holy Land, the story of the pilgrim stands out for its exceedingly natural and sincere enthusiasm. He forgets the Holy Sepulcher, the Via Dolorosa, the convents, and the monks. He simply tries to rediscover on the spot the framework, not of the last days of Jesus and of the Passion, but of the principal heroic and moving episodes from Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, in a kind of romanesque topographical revery:

Proceeding to the north of the city, between the grotto of Jeremiah and the Sepulcher of the Kings, I opened *Jerusalem Delivered* and was immediately struck by the accuracy of the poet's description. Solime (that is, Jerusalem), says Tasso, stands on two opposing hills. . . . Nature offers only an earth that is arid and naked; no springs, no streams refresh the barren grounds; one never sees flowers blooming; no stately trees spread their shelters against the sun's rays. At a distance of more than six miles there emerges only a forest casting a baleful shade that inspires horror and sadness. Nothing can be more clear and precise. The forest situated six miles from the camp, in the direction of Arabia, is not an invention of the poet. William of Tyre speaks of the wood where Tasso makes so many marvels happen. Godfrey finds there the timber for the construction of his war machine⁷ . . . Aladin sits with Erminia on a tower built between two gates from where they can observe the fighting on the plain and the camp of the Christians. This tower is still standing, together with several others, between the Gate of Damas and the Gate of Ephraim.

In fact, the tower exists in the imagination of Chateaubriand, for he imagines the shadow of a tower and the phantom of a forest. He continues:

7. This was the forest that the magician Ismeno bewitched to prevent the Crusaders from constructing new machines. Tancred here heard the complaining voice of Clorinda, which came to him from the trunk of a cypress tree which he was about to split. Later Rinaldo, having escaped from the charms of Armida, will go to the forest in order to free it from her bewitchment. Armida emerges from a myrtle; Rinaldo strikes the shrub and finds himself confronted by a giant with a hundred arms. He triumphs over the giant, the spell is broken immediately, and the supply of wood is assured.

I place the admirable scene of the flight of Erminia [when, armed with the weapons of Clorinda, the princess of Antioch steps through the gates to bring assistance to the wounded Tancred] near the northern extremity of the Valley of Jehoshaphat. When the lover of Tancred goes through the gate of Jerusalem with her trusty squire, *she descends into valleys and takes slanting and roundabout paths* (canto 6.96). She has hence not left by the gate of Ephraim; for the road that leads from that gate to the camp of the Crusaders goes through grounds that are level. She chooses instead to escape by the eastern gate, which is less liable to suspicion and less guarded.

Erminia arrives in a deep and solitary recess: *in solitaria et ima parte*. She directs her squire to talk to Tancred. This deep solitary place is well marked on the upper end of the valley of Jehoshaphat before one turns toward the northern angle of the city. Erminia could wait here safely for the return of her messenger; but she cannot suppress her impatience and climbs to the top and discovers the tents far away. . . . There follow then those admirable stanzas. . . .

One must also admire the precision with which Chateaubriand localized these scenes which are only vaguely adumbrated in Tasso.

But here the rays of light reflected on her weapons (her white dress and the silver tiger that shines on her helmet) attract the attention of Alcander and Polyphernes, the two brothers whose father was killed by Clorinda when he led a vanguard. "Alcander and Polyphernes must have been located near the Sepulcher of the Kings." This train of thought is extraordinary. Chateaubriand, rereading his Tasso, had installed himself very near the Sepulcher of the Kings he had visited at length the day before and to which he devoted several pages. This place therefore must have served as the setting for some incident mentioned in the poem. "One must regret," he adds, "that Tasso did not describe those subterranean dwellings; the quality of his genius called him to paint such a monument."

But let me continue: "It is not as easy to determine the place where the runaway Erminia meets with the shepherd on the edge of the river." Note that we deal here with pure fiction (the episode of Erminia among the shepherds at the beginning of the seventh canto); yet Chateaubriand looks for its location with the same seriousness one would use in localizing a historical fact. "However, since there is only one river in this landscape . . . it seems incredible that he should not have named this river." To the contrary, Tasso has named it, in the third stanza: "Giunse del bel Giordano alle chiare acque." "As to the lake and the castle where the magician Armida keeps the imprisoned knights whom she has seduced, Tasso himself states that the lake is the Dead Sea." "Where once fire from the sky consumed four criminal cit-

ies . . . the waters there are so black and so thick that the most solid objects float to the surface." Here we deal entirely with supernatural facts. Nevertheless Chateaubriand feels it necessary to specify the place where they occurred.

One of the most beautiful parts of the poem describes the attack on the Christian camp by Soliman [this is where hell starts a tempest and angels and demons take part in the fight]. A defeated Soliman takes the road to Gaza all by himself (canto 10). Ismeno meets him and has him climb onto a chariot which he covers with a cloud. Together they cross the camp of the Christians and arrive at the mountain of Zion. This admirable episode is consistent with the sites as far as the outside of the castle of David, near the gate of Jaffa or of Bethlehem.

But the rest is in error. The poet has confounded, or has wanted to confound, the tower of David with the tower of Antonia. The latter was built far away in the downtown area, at the northern angle of the temple. That depends on the path Soliman and Ismeno have taken. There is no reason they could not have walked westward around the city, passing by the ancient Tyropeon and then reaching the tower of Antonia. They could have entered the city (just as they crossed the camp of the Christians), since they were shrouded in a cloud . . .

The procession to the Mount of Olives is historical. It is told by an anonymous source, Robert Moine, and William of Tyre. But, returning to Chateaubriand, we are in plain fiction again:

Soon there starts the terrible battle between Tancred and Clorinda, the most pathetic fiction that ever emerged from the imagination of a poet. The scene of action is easy to find. Clorinda cannot return with Argante by the Golden Gate. She is hence below the temple in the valley of Siloe. Tancred pursues her. Then the battle begins. The dying Clorinda asks to be baptized. Tancred . . . goes to fetch water from a nearby well. This well is a landmark, it is the fountain of Siloe, or rather the springs of Mary which have their source at the foot of the mountain of Zion. . . .

I won't be able to find the place where the ferocious Argante is killed by the generous Tancred; but one has to look for it in the valleys between the west and the north. One cannot place it to the east of the corner tower that Tancred assaulted because then Erminia would not have encountered the wounded hero when she returned from Gaza with Vafirin. . . .

It took me about five hours to examine Tasso's theater of the battle. It occupies hardly more than half a league of ground, and the poet has so well marked the various places where the action takes place that one can recognize them at a glance.

This is an evocation, on site, of a romanesque tale—that of Chateaubriand's detour to the Holy Sepulcher when he went to visit the

holy places. It reminds us of the detour Renan made, during his mission to Phoenicia, to find the sites and the framework of that other fiction which would become the Gospels.

And still it is true that the events told by Tasso are not without verifiable historical reality, since they agree in many points with the history of the Crusades, on which we can rely. "We will see," says Chateaubriand, "how much Tasso had studied the original documents when I translate the historians of the Crusades." But for the story of the Gospels we have no text, no testimony concerning most of the events they recount, a century after they happened.

Tasso introduces into his poem persons who existed. He tells of events that certainly took place. But he also reshapes these persons, exaggerates their characters, and mixes much fiction with real events. It is only natural that this imaginary history, since it was constructed on the basis of historical events, places itself in the material framework of history. Rather than historical fiction, it is fictive history.

Things look different when it comes to the story of the Gospels. The facts of which they speak have not retained the attention of historians. Josephus does not mention them. According to Renan, the account of the death of John the Baptist, as it appears in the Gospel of Mark, would be "the only genuinely historical page in all of the Gospels." In the authentic epistles of Paul, we are told only that the son of God has come to earth, that he died for our sins, and that he was brought back to life again. There is no allusion to the circumstances of his life, except for the Lord's Supper, which, Paul says, appeared to him in a vision (and not through witnesses). There is no indication of locality, no question of Galilee, or of the preachings of Jesus on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret. In the Apocalypse of John, which is, according to Couchoud, together with the epistles of Paul, "the only Christian document that can be dated with certainty in the first century," all we are told of Jesus is that "he died and was resurrected, but not suffering or crucified." Naturally, no specific location is provided either.

This is the source of the thesis that "the Gospels, which were an apocalyptic revelation in the first century, became a legendary form of narrative in the second." Let us understand by this that a mystical belief, a vision that moved the mind into the religious and supernatural realm, was transformed into a series of events that developed on the human level, even though these also had a transcendental significance. It was an answer to the Jews, who refused to acknowledge that the Messiah had appeared, died, and been resurrected, for it provided them with factual proofs in the form of events that could have been seen and that were attested to. But this history, which superseded the

myth, would have been imagined after the fact and projected back into the past, to the time when the supernatural mystery was supposed to have taken place.

This thesis excludes authentic traditions, those that went back to the events themselves. The latter, one believes, did not take place. But it does not exclude traditions in the first, oral form these fictitious tales would have taken before being written down.⁸ This idea of oral traditions moreover puts the whole thesis in question: what means do we possess to determine to which date the oral traditions refer? How can we determine whether they are authentic or not if we cannot come to grips with them and cannot determine at what moment they were formed? In any case, since no authentic text allows us to disprove the hypothesis according to which the Gospels were imagined tales, we must now determine what this means in regard to localizations in the Gospels.

Without going into a study of the composition of the Gospels, one can say that the tales they introduce concern in general two clearly distinct regions of Palestine: Galilee and Jerusalem.⁹ The first concerns the Sermon on the Mount and contains the preachings and miracles that are supposed to have occurred on the shores of the lake of Genesaret. The stories located in Jerusalem concern essentially the Passion. In Galilee we find discourses, above all in the form of parables; in Jerusalem we have facts, actions, events, which are the only ones, moreover, to develop the mythic drama that would be at the origin of Christianity on the human level. The Galilean materials are more or

8. According to Renan also, one third of the text of Luke (Lucanus or Lucas, disciple of Paul in Macedonia, member of the Church of Rome after 70) is to be found in neither Mark nor in Matthew. He would have been largely dependent on the oral tradition.

9. This is what struck Renan and accounts for what is called the Palestinian dualism in his *Vie de Jésus*. Renan has noted "the striking agreement of the texts and the places." "By this he means that the Galilean idyll fits in well with the charming nature of the countryside and its inhabitants, whereas the drama of the Passion is at home in gloomy Judea, in the desiccated atmosphere of Jerusalem. But one may wonder whether this is not simply a private fancy. . . . The antithesis that he established between northern and southern Palestine results so little from an actual vision of the places that he had formulated it already in a note prior to his Palestinian voyage and also in his introduction to the *Song of Songs*" (Alfaric, *Les manuscrits*, p. xxix). But the study of the texts themselves suffices in effect to suggest this supposition.

See the curious note of Taine regarding Renan: "He read a big piece of the *Vie de Jésus* to me . . . He gathers all the sweet and agreeable ideas of Jesus into the period of Nazareth, and, by omitting the sad facts, creates a happy, mystic pastoral. Then, in another chapter, he puts all the threats and the bitterness he tells of into his account of the voyage to Jerusalem . . . Berthelot and I told him in vain that this was to replace a legend with a novel, etc." (Alfaric, *Les manuscrits*, pp. lviii-lxi).

less independent of this mythic drama. Let me also add that localizations are essential for the events. It would seem that the Messiah could have been arrested, judged, crucified, and resurrected nowhere other than in Jerusalem. There had to be specifiable relations between the respective places. These localizations formed a system that was part of a definite spatial framework. This was not the case for the parables, the discourses, and the miracles. They were not necessarily placed at one location or another. Many of them in fact are localized in only a very vague fashion in Galilee, on the shores of the lake, or they are not localized at all.

That these two groups of tales appear to have been born in different milieus, that of Galilee and that of Jerusalem, is shown in the Gospels themselves when they deal with the apparition of Jesus after his death and resurrection. According to several Gospels it was rumored that one would see him again in Galilee. Some of the women claimed that the angel had told them that Jesus had preceded them there (Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7). Others said that Jesus had arranged to meet them there (Matthew 28:10). It was remembered that he had said so himself when he was still alive (Matthew 26:32; Mark 14:28). The disciples returned to Galilee, undoubtedly after the Passover celebrations (Matthew 28:16; John 21). But the Letter to the Hebrews, no doubt because it represented the tradition of the Church of Jerusalem, assumed that all the apparitions had taken place in that city. The Gospel of Luke and one of the final passages in the Gospel of Mark also place all the apparitions in Jerusalem. Paul followed an analogous tradition. Luke says that the disciples returned to Jerusalem after the Resurrection (Luke 24:49, 50, 52). The author of the Acts says the same thing. It seems in any case that a whole group wished to recover Jesus after the events of Jerusalem, and to take him back to Galilee.

One may of course assume that the part of the Gospels that occurs on the shores of the lake was written on the basis of those local traditions which the Galileans preserved when they were in Jerusalem, or when, after the war of the Jews, they had moved to other regions. But (and this is the hypothesis on which I base myself at the moment) one can also assume that the Galilean part of the Gospels had been imagined toward the end of the first century or at the beginning of the second by a group that knew the places and situated the discourses and miracles there in a more or less arbitrary manner. Later one would have used the Gospels as a source to find these places, several of which were specified in a precise fashion. In this hypothesis it would have been a question of villages or cities, which actually existed, being designated by their name, since no local tradition preserved the memory

of facts that had been created in their entirety. The pilgrims would have been guided by the physical aspects of the shores of the lake: a grotto, a spring, the slope of a mountain, a valley. This whole region had for a long time been in the hands of the Jews. It was to satisfy the pious wishes of the pilgrims that, perhaps toward the fourth or fifth century, some chapels and churches were erected that were fashioned from stones, in the form of altars. This is the case of a collective memory that attempts after the fact to localize its recollections on an almost untouched earth where it does not find any traditions.

Attention was above all concentrated on Jerusalem, on the places where the Passion had occurred, to the disadvantage of Galilee. Add to this the fact that the parables evoked the shores of the lake, the fishermen with their nets, their boats, their fields, the sowing and harvesting. Now in the Gospels, as Couchoud has remarked, many of the tales appear to have been parables at first, such as the treading on water, the curse on the fig tree. The most important prerequisite of the places was that they be more or less in harmony with the words, the figures, and the events, all of which could have been imagined just as much as actually observed, but all of which were in any case surrounded by an unreal fringe. This is the way in which the memory of groups, and also of individuals, sometimes transforms into reality what is but imagination and dream, and looks for and finds a place in some region of space. It may well be that the first evangelical event that proved suitable for localization, on the shores of the lake of Genesaret, was the last appearance of Christ walking on the waters—a supernatural fact, a vision.

Those parts of the Gospel that give the account of the last days of Christ, of his death and resurrection, take us to another location, namely to Jerusalem, in Judea; that is, to a city and a region where, before Christianity and outside its purview, there were at every step places that already had been commemorated, that were associated with ancient memories of Jewish history as told in the Old Testament. I noted earlier that such is strikingly true in general regarding those locations mentioned in the Gospels that we learn about in the first accounts of pilgrimages. This pattern also applies to Jerusalem in regard to events surrounding the Passion and the days preceding it, and to Judea and even to other regions of Palestine.

This might be explained in two ways. If the facts reported actually occurred at the sites that are indicated, and if it is actual memories that these sites evoke, this overlap between Christian memories and anterior local Jewish traditions can be due to chance. In a delimited region with a long history of a very religious people whose rites and sacred

books recalled so many facts of its past—a region that evoked an extended and abiding collective memory—there was hardly any place lacking historical significance for some Jewish tradition.¹⁰ It is therefore not surprising that one finds vestiges left by the ancient Jews beneath or close to the vestiges of the passage of Christ and that this proximity or point of contact has been noticed.

However, if they were noticed, was it not in order to fortify Christian memories by connecting them with Jewish ones? This points to the second hypothesis, namely that the Christian facts have been invented. It is possible that there was an attempt to make imagined facts more believable, to superimpose them on the beliefs of the Judeo-Christians by situating them in consecrated places. In this case one would look for support to the authority of local Jewish traditions of old, or one would graft the new upon the old. This would explain how the facts of the New Testament appeared to have been prefigured in the Old.

This is an idea that might provide guidance in solving this puzzle. But we must make necessary distinctions and proceed with caution. This will become immediately clear in the following examples of parallels between Jewish and Christian memories. One example is the well of Jacob and the Samaritan woman, the well of Jacob in fact being a natural stopping point on a much-frequented road. Another set of parallels involves Mount Tabor, Moses, Elijah, and the Transfiguration. Now Mount Tabor was only one of the heights which were said to be visited by the prophets. The Christians could have chosen Mount Carmel (on account of Elijah), Mount Nebo (on account of Moses), or even Mount Hebron. A similar case is the grotto where Jesus taught and the text of Isaiah on the just man who lived in caves up high (which could have referred to a variety of caves). All these parallels could be due to the fact that Christian and Jewish events became attracted to the same spot either because of the situation or because of the physical nature of the spot. In the case of the pit of Joseph and the inn of the good Samaritan, we are dealing with a parable. However, in the parallels between the place where John the Baptist baptized, the road followed by the children of Israel, and the last journey of Elijah before his ascension, we are dealing with locations. But in this case the parallels seem to be more loaded with meaning: for some disciples

10. Gustav Dalman says something similar: "Regarding the question one is sometimes asked in Palestine—is this or that place 'historical'?—I was always obliged to answer: 'Here everything is historical.' I am convinced that every place in this country not only in isolation but with all its more or less immediate surroundings, could signify something historical" (*Jerusalem und sein Gelaende*, Guethersloh, 1930, p. 31).

believed Elijah had reappeared in Jesus. A similar parallel is the *ager Domini* and Gilgal, where the Jews sowed for the first time (according to Joshua). The former seems clearly to depend on the latter, undoubtedly because Jerusalem is closer in this case. The pool of Bethesda, to take another example, involves a Christian miracle grafted onto a Jewish one. Perhaps such grafting is involved in the localization of the Cenacle on what was believed to be the Zion of David, even before the tomb of the prophet king came to be moved there.

In any case, there is a set of Christian localizations of which one can say all of their substance is taken from prior Jewish local traditions: the story of the Nativity at Bethlehem. There is nothing indicating that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, that Joseph and Mary ever passed through or stayed there, or that they were ever in Egypt. The authors of the Gospels seem entirely to have invented this poetic history which has occupied a considerable place in Christian imagination. The story was meant to show to the Jews that Jesus really was the Messiah since he was born in the city of David in conformity with scripture. It was necessary, even before the Jews could raise objections, immediately to impose this belief on them. The best means to succeed in this respect was to place the manger of the infant Jesus very near to the crib of Jewish royalty—not far from the tombs of the patriarchs and the prophets—and to indicate as his place of birth the region consecrated by the anointing of David.

These are the roots of the parallels we have indicated: the tomb of Rachel and the stone on which the Virgin is supposed to have sat on the road near Bethlehem in order to give birth (according to certain apocryphal Gospels); the tombs of Isaiah, of David, of Solomon, and of the nephews of David, the fountain of David, and the Bethlehem manger of the Messiah; the place where Samuel anointed David, son of a shepherd, and the Church of the Nativity; the words of Isaiah on the just man living in a cave in the rocks and the grotto of the crib; the tower of the herd of which Micah speaks, and the field of the shepherds near the tower where they were on the night of the Nativity; the camp of Ruth and Boaz (both are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, in the chapter on the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David; and also in the very different genealogy given by Luke), and the place where the Virgin, so much younger than Joseph, bore the last shoot of the sacred tree. The Christian legend seems to have been culled here, like a fruit which has reached maturity, nourished by the juices that circulated in these holy traditions. This history could be retrieved and deciphered on the spot. It is not of secondary interest that the Mes-

siah's place of birth seemed to have been written in the sky, since the wise men in Matthew came from the East guided by the star. Yet it was not necessary to look at the brilliant points of the star-studded vault of heaven; it was enough to concentrate on the earth of the old Jewish land. One would have realized that the time had come for the juncture between these memories of historical facts, written at the same time on the soil and in the scriptures, that were henceforth to be absorbed by a legend born miraculously and just at the right moment.

This is a special case of a phenomenon that characterizes the memory of religious groups. Such memory can be allied to an entirely new dogma that contradicts precedents, but it can also arise in a new place which has produced no prophets ("What good can come from Galilee?"). But there are no absolute origins in these matters. The Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount might have remained a moral outlook (if, by the way, it could have subsisted in this way), but it would never have been elevated to the rank and power of a religion if it had not incorporated some essential elements of the Jewish religion that were fused with the history of the Jewish people. Christianity itself was a historical event. It marked the triumph of a religion with spiritual content over a formalist cult, and at the same time the victory of a universalistic religion that was not tied to race or nation over a narrowly national religion. But this history and indeed this religion could have been imposed on the first Christians, who lived within a Jewish milieu, only if it came from a conspicuously Judaic background.

In any case, those who composed the Gospels wanted the new religion to preserve the prestige that was connected with the places which the ancient Jews had trod. This is why they made the life of Christ begin in Bethlehem, just as they made it end in Jerusalem—in places where what I call the pure morality of the Gospels, wherever it may have been born, had no reason to venture, if it wished to remain what it was. The Christian collective memory could annex a part of the Jewish collective memory only by appropriating part of the latter's local remembrance while at the same time transforming its entire perspective of historical space. This happens when a territorial group unites with another whose soil is more sacred and more ancient: in this way its own territories become elevated and gain in prestige.

Let me now turn to Jerusalem. According to the hypothesis that I am developing, it is above all there that the essentials of the Christian myth were transposed into a tale of events—perhaps a century after the fact, after the siege of the city, its destruction and reconstruction. That these events were placed in Jerusalem is easily explained, since

Jerusalem with its temple was the great religious center of the Jews.¹¹ But in the sanctuary of a narrowly formalistic and nationalistic religion where the caste of priests and of those devoted to a narrow observance did not recognize the promised Messiah in the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, in the Son of God who died for humanity, Christianity clashed with the beliefs and traditions of the Jews in crucial respects. It seemed necessary for the new traditions one wished to construct to find their place in the city and in the totality of Jewish life. Hence two linked exigencies which were at the same time contraries. The city in its secular structure—in the layout of its sites—had to appear as the expected framework of the Christian drama where the diverse incidents of that drama could be in a sense prefigured. Yet Christian facts, to the extent that they opposed Jewish facts, had to shun certain consecrated places and look for others that showed a contrast in their remoteness, their destitution, and their obscurity. Let me add that the Jerusalem detested by the Christians was the Jerusalem of the Sadducees and the Pharisees, who were attached to the letter of the law but had lost its spirit, who killed the prophets and forgot the promises made to the patriarchs and ancient kings. Christianity had to try to evoke—in the places it now occupied and to which it now wished to give a new sacred aura—the great figures of the early days, the symbols and rites that had been neglected by contemporary Jews. They accomplished this with the help of a mystical elaboration that seems, incidentally, rather belated and artificial.

Here are some examples of this last kind of parallel. Theodosius, speaking of Calvary, says: "There Abraham offered his son as a sacrifice; he built a stone altar at the foot of the mountain, which is itself made of stone, where Christ was crucified (this was also attested by Anthony and Adamnanus)." The name Golgotha, which signifies skull, was given, according to this non-Jewish tradition, because of the skull of Adam which allegedly was found there. Mariti speaks of a chapel near Calvary dedicated to Adam. Peter the Deacon says that behind the Church of the Resurrection one finds the center of the world, *medietas orbis*, and he cites these words of David: "And he dispensed salvation in the middle of the world." And he cites the words of another prophet: "The Lord has said: I have placed Jerusalem in the middle of the nations." On Golgotha he claims to have seen the horn

11. "When Paul leads a deputation of his churches to Jerusalem, he leads them to the temple; surely he does not dream of Golgotha or of Bethlehem in his idealism. But around 135, to the contrary, it is the life of Jesus that is sought, it is an evangelical topography that is being created" (Renan, *l'Eglise Chrétienne*).

that served to anoint the kings as well as the ring of Solomon. The memory of Solomon, who tortured demons, is thus linked to the corner of the terrace of the temple where Jesus was tempted by Satan.

In the temple Jesus is shown discoursing with the teachers, participating in Jewish festivals, entering in triumph, becoming indignant, and expelling those who sully the sanctuary. He takes his place in the line of Nabis, the revolutionary prophets. But in the days just before the Passion, it is from afar that he contemplates the temple, beyond the Valley of Cedron, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. This sanctified place attracts him at the same time that it alienates him; it alienates him even more strongly than it attracts him. The Mount of Olives will later be covered by Christian sanctuaries. For the moment it is a place of isolation, of complete solitude.¹² There is hardly a Jewish tradition that has taken root here. Jesus finds himself there as in a desert cut off from the Jewish community. It is there that he is supposed to have given his instructions to his disciples. Gethsemane is at the foot of the mountain, and it is here that he endures his agony and his arrest.

The Court of Justice was an official building, the seat of Roman authority. At the time the Gospels were composed it no longer existed. Only its ruins remained, and some strewn-about stones. It seems that the Jews themselves were not concerned with preserving the memory of a place that was not Jewish and that was not linked to any of their consecrated places. But for the Christians, the Court of Justice became a consecrated place because Jesus had been there and had appeared there before his judges. They wished to place it neither in the ancient palace of Herod which, having become the residence of Pilate, was no longer a Jewish building, nor in the fortress of Antonia, which was also Roman. They meanwhile believed their search located it either near the house of the grand priest, or, undoubtedly following an older tradition, near the cistern into which Jeremiah had descended and from which he rose again. King Zedekiah did not wish Jeremiah to die, just as Pilate did not desire the death of Christ. Here, then, is a Christian memory backed by a Jewish one—located very near the walls of the temple, yet still outside it, in a lowly and almost hidden location.

The Gospels did not localize the Cenacle. Jesus says to Peter and John, "When you enter into the city, there shall a man meet you, bear-

12. This is not entirely exact. There is the passage of Zachariah: "His feet will walk that day on the Mount of Olives," etc., and also of 2 Samuel 15:32: "When David arrived on the top of the mountain (of Olives), where he was to adore the Lord. . . ." We do not know, it is true, if these texts were invoked by the Christians after the fact, or whether they attracted attention at an earlier time. This is the entire problem of the relations between the prophecies and the Christian events.

ing a pitcher of water; follow him unto the house where he entereth in. And you shall say unto the goodman of the house: The master says unto thee, 'Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready" (Luke 22:10-12; cf. Matthew 26:17 and Mark 14:15). Paul was the first to have spoken of the Lord's Supper, of which he had only a vision.¹³ Was this, then, a vision one later tried to localize? The pilgrim of Bordeaux, in 333, speaks of the house of Caiaphas but does not mention the Cenacle. It was no doubt in the fourth century that the Cenacle was placed near the house of Caiaphas. Now it was in the fourth century that, in a strange reversal, the Christians transported Zion, the city of David, from the eastern or lower part of Jerusalem (in the south of the esplanade of the temple), to the western part, to the west of the Trypoeon, in the upper part of Jerusalem.¹⁴ At that time it may have been believed, on the authority of Josephus, that the palace of David stood in the upper part of the city. The pilgrim of Bordeaux himself says that he climbed up to Zion in order to see the house of Caiaphas. All this indicates that this part of the city was believed to be Zion soon before the Cenacle was located. Thus it could be that what located the Cenacle there was not only the house of Caiaphas but also the City of David. It will be remembered that at a later time the tomb of David, returned from Bethlehem, would be placed there—below the upper chamber where the Lord's Supper and the descent of the Holy Spirit were commemorated. This is a very remarkable example of a Christian localization taking place by creating a parallel with a Jewish tradition, inexact though it was. But at the same time note that this tradition concerns David, from whom Jesus was supposed to descend, and it takes us back a thousand years. This is not an exception—on the contrary, it seems to be the rule. That is, the Christian memories in Jerusalem distance themselves from the places consecrated by the official Judaism of Jesus's time. And moreover, let us not forget that before it was placed on Zion, for a

13. According to Renan, *Les évangiles*, 1877, the account of the Lord's Supper in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the oldest written evangelical text (from the year 57), coincides with that given in Luke (written much later).

14. "In 141 B.C. the Syrian garrison of the citadel of Jerusalem (which was housed in the lower part of the city, to the south of the temple) capitulated. Simeon had it razed and started immediately to level the heights on which it had stood, and which dominated the temple; this work took three years." Salomon Munk, *Palestine* (1845), p. 508. This explains that at the time of Josephus it was no longer thought that the palace of David could have stood there (at the Ophel). Simeon resided to the northeast of the temple, where his successors built a castle called Baris, and later Antonia.

long time the Cenacle was thought to be on the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem, at the border of the temple.

It is in this way that the traditions of older groups become the natural supports of a new community's memories, which affirm and sustain such traditions as if they were its guardians. These memories slowly gain authority and a kind of consecration. But at the same time, and in the long run, the new community takes these traditions up in the current of its memories and detaches them from a past that has become increasingly obscure—from, so to speak, the dark times when these traditions had lost significance. A new community transforms and appropriates these traditions; at the same time, it rewrites them by changing their position in time and space. The new community renews them as well by unusual parallels, by unexpected oppositions, and by combinations. When the prophets are represented on cathedral windows carrying on their shoulders the Christian saints or Christ's apostles, they are placed on a sort of atemporal plane among the latter. Saint Abraham, Saint Jacob, and Saint Moses are now flooded with a Christian light and preserve just enough of their Judaism to convince one that Christianity's roots extend to the most ancient Hebraic history. Yet from the time this new group is formed, the Jewish milieu—Jewish remembrances such as they were, as the collective memory of the Jews recalled them—withdraws into an indefinite background and disappears into the twilight of ages gone by.

* *

Now we must ask how the Christian localizations that were founded in many cases on Jewish memories found ways to subsist by themselves after the ancient Jewish traditions had faded, and to spread, to diversify, to reconstitute, and to reinforce themselves. My purpose is to make discoveries on a terrain that has been little explored. The school of the association of ideas in England (and elsewhere) has looked for the ways in which representations appeal to one another, dissociate, and combine in a people's consciousness. Here I examine the memory of the Christian group to the extent that it applies to places, and wish to show how the collective memories that are attached to a place coalesce, divide, become attached to one another, or scatter, as the case may be. If this is not due to chance, there must exist some simple laws governing the memory of groups, whose operation we must try to observe in the facts themselves.

I first note that in many cases various events were situated in the same place without having a necessary connection. In these cases it

seems that the memory of some earlier consecration made these places attractive. It is as if memories also obey a kind of gregarious instinct. Diverse localizations in the same place support one another. Beliefs in the authentic nature of a place carve the way. There were surely reasons to conflate the house where the apostles gathered after the resurrection (the Cenacle) with the place where the Holy Spirit descended. But why did all this take place near the house of Caiaphas? And why is the Dormition of the Virgin connected with this place—not to mention accessory localizations such as the column of the flagellation, the crown of thorns, or a rock on which Saint Stephen was supposed to have been stoned? Similarly, one is surprised to find on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, near the Seven Fountains, the place where apostles were chosen, the Sermon on the Mount, the appearance of Jesus on the waters after the Resurrection—all in the same place. The Mount of Olives, already sanctified by the grotto of Jesus's teaching, attracted many other elements of the history of Jesus: the Ascension, the Our Father, the *Dominus flavit*, and even the apparition in Galilee, and others. These cases differ from the parallel of the Church of the Paralytic (attested as early as 422–38) with Saint Anne (a vague memory of the nativity of the Virgin may have hung about the place early on). This last case seems to be an accidental phenomenon.

There are other processes. Sometimes a localization divides into two and proliferates. Various parts of the same event may take place in adjoining yet distinct locations. By scattering over several points in space, by this kind of repetition, the memory becomes reinforced and multiplies its traces. This is also a means of renewing and rejuvenating an ancient image. It is as if one had discovered in this image a neglected aspect, a forgotten detail, resulting in a new form of devotion. Around Golgotha and the Holy Sepulcher, for example, we find the rock of anointing, the rock of the angel, the rock of the gardener, the place where Jesus was stripped, etc. Other examples: the tears of Peter, resulting from his denial of Christ, and the crowing of the cock; the palm tree of the processional branches and, at some distance, the place where the donkey was found (Bethphage); above all, in Nazareth, the place where the angel Gabriel appeared during the annunciation, or the place where Mary stayed, the tomb of Joseph, the room of Jesus, the habitation of Mary, the vestibule, the kitchen of the Virgin, the spring of Mary, the school of the Messiah.

If all these traditions were ancient and well founded, there would be no reason to be surprised that they were grouped in this way, multiple and yet distinct, in a shared place. But the localizations I have exemplified came late. Everything indicates that at first the simple idea

that Jesus had spent his childhood in Nazareth, in the house of his parents, was linked to the name of the city. Perhaps at the beginning one sought the site of his house, in a single localization. The Annunciation later became twofold (in the Apocryphal Gospels), commemorated first at the fountain, and later at the house of the Virgin. In Bethlehem there are two distinct places for the birth and the manger. Since the manger was, according to Luke, the symbol of the birth of Christ, it could have been localized first; later the place of Christ's birth would have been distinguished from it. It seems that the force of the faith and devotion believers carry within themselves is not exhausted once and for all. Apparently it needs to be contained in more than one place. When one of these secondary localizations disappears (which then makes people say, "one would see at that time"), it looks as if it had lost its way in the move from the principal localization. Thus, the memory of the Our Father grew distant and was left on the slope of the Mount of Olives, detached from the grotto of Jesus's teaching. Or perhaps it was reabsorbed there without preserving an independent existence. In another example, the crowing of the cock and the tears of Peter—for a long time located on the slope of Christian Zion in the direction of Cedron, where a basilica which has since disappeared commemorated them—were later absorbed by the memory of the house of Caiaphas, since it already contained the memory of Peter's denial.

It happened from time to time, as we have seen, that a Christian fact was localized in two distant places at the same time. Competition seems to appear between the two places, each one attempting to lay claim to the event that it supposedly represents, and even to attract other events linked to the first. This is the case especially with the Court of Justice. Some localize it near the house of Caiaphas, even conflating the two, where they also place the flagellation and the prison of Jesus. Others find the Court of Justice near the walls of the temple, first in the Tyropeon, later at the site of the fortress Antonia, where one also distinguishes, though "in a vague fashion," the house of Annas of Caiaphas, and the prison where Jesus was tormented until dawn. Such localization in two places extended through the major part of the Middle Ages. There were said to be two Courts of Justice, two houses of Caiaphas, two locations of the Via Dolorosa, and of the road followed by Jesus when he was led from the place of betrayal to the Sanhedrin.

Let us take another example: Up to the first third of the fourth century, the Cenacle was located on the Mount of Olives, but for some it took place at Gethsemane and for others in the Grotto of Jesus's teach-

ing. It was later moved to the upper part of the city, on the Christian hill of Zion. These contradictory localizations continued for several centuries during which the collective memory remained divided. There were also two Emmaus locations at the same time, and two mountains on which the appearance in Galilee occurred—one on the shores of Lake Tiberias, the other on the northern summit of the Mount of Olives, which was called Galilee to convince its adherents.

In the presence of different and opposing traditions, there is a reluctance to sacrifice either of them, as long as both remain vivid. It is important to avoid erasing any vestige or losing a single trace. The most real vestiges—or, more exactly, the only real ones—would be found in the midst of the others; therefore all must be retained. This does not prevent each set of localizations from commanding an undivided faith among those who are believers and keepers of the faith through the ages.¹⁵

Concentration in one single place as well as a duality of locations in various regions: these are familiar means used by human groups, not only churches but other communities as well, such as families or nations, with the aim of retaining and organizing memories not only of places, but also of times, events, and persons. Collective memory must be distinguished from history. Historical preoccupations such as we think of them, and which each author of a work of history must be concerned with, were alien to Christians of those periods. It is in the context of a milieu comprising believers devoted to their religion that the cult of the holy sites was created. Their memories were closely tied to rites of commemoration and adoration, to ceremonies, feasts, and processions. The priests, the religious communities of men and women who were numerous and very much alive at this time, were mainly concerned with nourishing the piety of the masses, with reviving the facts which were the origin and foundation of their faith—supernatural facts, to be sure, but at the same time sensible and visible facts—so as to exalt religious feeling in the masses. How could these facts not have been adapted to the needs that are imposed on the memory of a society?

A society first of all needs to find landmarks. Since I deal here with localizations, it is necessary that those sites most charged with religious significance stand out against all others. Similarly, in collective memory there are in general particular figures, dates, and periods of

15. It is important to remember that from the early days of Christianity there is a Greek and a Latin tradition, for example, regarding the Court of Justice. Perhaps this involved no rivalry because Greeks and Latins, even though members of the same Church, did not read quite the same writings and did not follow the same guides.

time that acquire an extraordinary salience. These attract to themselves other figures and events that happened at other moments. A whole period is concentrated, so to speak, in one year, just as a series of actions and events, about which one has forgotten its varying actors and diverse conditions, gathers together in one man and is attributed to him alone.

The Holy Sepulcher and all that surrounded it, Christian Zion, Gethsemane, Eleona—these were the several points in Jerusalem in or around which the greatest number of evangelical memories were arranged. They were part of divinely charged space, prime bearers of Christian memory. Pilgrims were directed to these places, which recur with impressive monotony in all their accounts. During the days of Holy Week there were processions to these places to meditate, to listen to the scriptures, to sing hymns. These religious reunions had the consequence—one that was deliberately pursued—of integrating the memories of these localizations, close as they were to one another, so that, without moving, the assembly of believers could evoke them simultaneously and embrace them in a single act of adoration.

There is another aspect of memories which are evoked in common. They lend themselves to an enumeration, a successive review, so that thought does not remain immobile and so that, even though thought revolves around the same circle, interest is renewed by some diversity of appearances and events. The house of Caiaphas recalls the trial of Christ, the first outrages; and yet Christian memory wishes to preserve and reproduce all the details of this story. It is not enough to evoke the cross: the drama of Calvary has several acts, and the site of each scene must be shown. It is not as if the believers behaved like children who do not want to miss any detail of a familiar story. Each element of the story of Jesus is not only of picturesque value but has its significance in the Christian doctrine. It is a fact, but it is also a truth of faith.

This is moreover the general character of the memory of groups. Such memory retains only those events that are of a pedagogic character. The very manner in which memory distorts facts reflects the need to show that each one has a significance beyond the event itself, that it has a logical place in the complete history and that it is part of a chain of events which together culminate in an event comprising all the others. The story hence becomes a logic based on action. To the degree, for example, that the French Revolution is the object of a cult, it can also be broken down into significant days—the fourteenth of July, the night of August fourth, etc.—and each of these days expresses a truth, an article of the Revolution's doctrine. In the same manner it is easy to imagine how in the course of the religious ceremonies that gathered

believers around Calvary, the priest turned to each rock, altar, and chapel which recalled a phase of Jesus's torment, and made each commemorated event the theme of a doctrinal exposition, using it as a prop of demonstration. It is true that the Christian doctrine is a history; but its visible facts are the symbols of invisible truths.

If, finally, there can coexist for long periods different localizations of the same fact, why should this be astonishing? The Christian community was composed of different groups, each of which had its own traditions and texts—Christians, recently converted Judeo-Christians, Gentiles, Greeks, and Latins. Individuals do not easily admit that a single fact takes place in two different places, at least in regard to events they have personally witnessed. The memory they have of these experiences forms a unique and well-linked system. If such individuals are at the same time members of two groups which disagree on the place where an event has happened, and if they have not personally witnessed the event, these individuals will be in the same state of indecision as is a community made up of groups with traditions and memories that differ regarding the same event. I have adduced the error of the Latin Bible: "*ad Caiapham in praetorium.*" The Greeks did not know the Latin Bible and may have looked to local traditions of an older date. The phenomenon of these two groups may explain the confusion regarding the Court of Justice. As for the Cenacle, one need only read the Gospels. In contradistinction to the Synoptic Gospels (which localize the Cenacle in a house in the city), the Gospel of John provides no specific localization. There is nothing in his text to prevent placing the Cenacle at one of the spots that Jesus frequented, such as the Mount of Olives. It is possible moreover that for a long time many Christians did not believe that Zion was in the upper part of the city (which was contrary to the Jewish tradition). A community must often accommodate itself to contradictions introduced by diverse groups so long as none of these groups prevails, or so long as the community itself does not find a new reason for decisively settling the issue. This is especially true when the community faces a controversy about its rites, which are an anchor for its component groups.

* *

The image that the Christians formed of the holy places—embodied in the consecrated sites shown to believers—could not entirely correspond in every epoch to developing changes in beliefs and doctrine. To be sure, collective memory reconstructs its various recollections to accord with contemporary ideas and preoccupations. But it encounters resistance in the form of material vestiges and written texts as much as

in what has become embodied in rites and institutions. Within a relatively short time, in Palestine, especially in Jerusalem, churches and chapels meant to mark the sites of the principal Christian events were built. Rites were adapted to these places and cultic details and diverse devotions became connected to them as well. All this tended to persist while Christian representations evolved.

After Helena and Constantine had built the churches of Bethlehem, Anastasius, and Martyrium, the bishop of Maximus—under Constantine, around 340—erected the Basilica of the Apostles (called St. Zion) on the actual site of the Cenacle. A notable of Eutheropolis by the name of Paul built the Chapel of St. James the Minor in the ravine of Cedron in 352. After Julian (363) the Martyrium of John the Baptist was erected on the Mount of Olives. Poemimia crowned the place of the Ascension with an octagonal church. From 378 on, the monasteries, hospices, and chapels of Melania the Elder and of Rufinus began to sprout on the slopes of the Olivet. Around 385, Theodosius the Great built at Gethsemane a church in memory of the Agony. Between 431 and 438, the foundations of Melania the Younger on the Mount of Olives (two monasteries with three chapels consecrated to the apostles and martyrs) and of Peter of Iberia (a hospice and convent near the tower of David) were established, and the Basilica of Saint Stephen was erected outside the northern gates of the city. During the stay of Eudocia, wife of Theodosius the Second (438–39), foundations were laid for the Church of the Court of Justice or Saint Sophia, the churches of Saint Peter at the palace of Caiaphas, of John the Baptist to the south of the Holy Sepulcher, and of Siloe at the outlet of the canal of Ezechias. Thus, in little more than a century the first outline of the holy places was established. It is this outline that was imposed on Christian consciousness up until the Arabian conquest, and even afterward. Many of its elements will in fact subsist right up to the Crusades; the Crusaders were the first to make an effort at ascertaining their traces.

This outline of holy places is a construction. One clearly wished to make Jerusalem the center of Christian attention since it had been the theater of the Passion. What was retained above all from the story of Jesus was his death and the Resurrection; it seems that his entire life, all its significance, became concentrated in this holy week.

It could have been otherwise. In 68, before the siege, the Christian church in Jerusalem decided to leave the city under the leadership of the relatives of Jesus. "They went to Pella, in Decapolis (beyond the Jordan, not far from Gennesaret) in the kingdom of Agrippa II. Pella was a Hellenic city, and it was pagan; they became reconciled to this

new environment nevertheless. A long time after this, other Judeo-Christian groups were pointed out by Julius Africanus at Kokhaba, in Transjordanian lands, and at Nazareth in Galilee" (Duchesne 1:118). Renan says that many undoubtedly later returned to Galilee and Samaria: "the dispersion continued after the war. It was impossible to return to Jerusalem, which was so completely razed to the ground that it hardly appeared ever to have been inhabited. For sixty years (from 70 to 132-35) all that remained was the camp of the Tenth Legion (*legio X Fretensis*). The Emperor Hadrian decided to build a new city there, a pagan city. . . . Jews were forbidden to live in the new city, under the penalty of death. Under these conditions Judeo-Christians had no choice but to stay away. And this is what they did. In the Judeo-Christian world authority seems to have rested for a long time in the hands of the relatives of the Savior" (Duchesne 1:119).¹⁶

Although for a long time they were respected or at least tolerated, these Judeo-Christians were later regarded as a sect by St. Irenaeus and Origen: the sect of the Ebionites or Ebioneans (a term signifying the poor). They were characterized by their fidelity to Mosaic observance, including circumcision; they had a great veneration for Jerusalem. They were above all attached to the law. As for their Christianity, they used a gospel of their own (the Gospel of the Hebrews): "They rejected the epistles of Paul, since for them this apostle was an apostate; they believed the savior to be the son of Joseph" (Duchesne 1:125). Renan says that for them (in contrast to the churches emanating from Paul) Jesus was only a prophet elected by God to save Israel.

One may wonder what would have happened in regard to the rites commemorating Jesus had these Judeo-Christians won out. If Jesus was not a god, the central fact of his life would not consist, as it did for Paul, in his passion and resurrection. Jerusalem would be remembered simply as the place where he was condemned to death and executed—as were many other prophets. There would be no reason to locate the place where his judgment and torment had occurred, since these would not have had a supernatural character. The memories of Jesus might well have centered in Galilee, around the shores of the lake of Gennesaret. We ought not to think of the lake and of Galilee as they appear today. Flavius Josephus says that in Galilee "there is a great number of cities, and owing to the bountiful earth, villages everywhere

16. "This Church of Pella, even when one adds to it its colonies in Palestine and Syria, could not be considered to have encompassed the whole of Judeo-Christianity. The Diaspora included just about everywhere—and above all in major centers like Alexandria—Jews converted to Christianity who did not believe that they were dispensed from following the law." (Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église* 1:122.)

are full of people: the smallest have at least 15,000 inhabitants." Actually, the biggest city of Galilee was far from attaining this number. The great caravan route that goes from Damas to Palmyra on the Mediterranean coast cuts through, in its northern extremity, the basin of the lake of Gennesaret. One can imagine the prosperity of a country that had the privilege of such active and industrious populations in this area. But the whole region of Lake Tiberias in Galilee was from early on in the hands of the Jews, and they were hostile to Christianity. It is in Galilee that their learned men resided, and that their best-known school was rooted. In Jerusalem it was orthodox Christianity, separated from the (Jewish) law, that gradually came to prevail.

Let us now turn away from Palestine, far from the Near East, to the Christian circles of Rome, which played such an important role in the elaboration of Christian dogma and legend. "One may conjecture," says Duchesne, "that certain books of the New Testament—the Gospels of Mark and Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, the first Epistle of Peter, the Epistle to the Hebrews—emanated from the Roman environment before or after the conquest of Jerusalem, and that the collection of Paul's letters was assembled there" (1:219). Duchesne adds that in these very early times, "the Christian community of Rome must have had among its members more than one witness of the origins."

Gaston Boissier in his study of the paintings of the catacombs, notes that the first Christians of Rome reproduced scenes from the Old and the New Testaments: Christ and the wise men, the resurrection of Lazarus, the healing of the paralytic, the multiplication of the loaves of bread, etc. But these paintings always refrained from recalling the painful facts of the Passion. "Were they afraid that by representing Christ as dying an ignoble death they might scandalize the weak, make the scoffers laugh, or lack respect for their God? What is certain is that they never represented those scenes between Pilate's judgment and the Resurrection. . . . On the contrary, the artists of the Middle Ages were much attracted to these subjects . . . lavishing images of the flagellation and of the crucifixion" (*Promenades archéologiques, Rome et Pompei*, p. 129).¹⁷

17. Renan, for his part, says: "The antiquity of the paintings in the catacombs is generally exaggerated. Most of them stem from the fourth century, a small portion from the third." At that time the table, sacred loaves, mystical fish, fishing scenes, and the symbolism of the Lord's Supper were represented. These were first purely decorative motifs; later Christian symbols were mixed with them and certain simple themes borrowed from the Bible were painted—Jonah, Daniel, Noah and his dove, Moses drawing water from the rock—as well as Orpheus, and above all the good shepherd, one of the most widespread types of pagan art.

Renan believes that this can be explained by the influence of gnosticism. "The life of Jesus represented by the ancient Christian paintings is exactly that which the gnostics and the docetists had in mind, which is to say that the Passion is not represented there. From the Court of Justice to the Resurrection, all details have been suppressed. This was the way to get rid of the ignominy of the cross. In this period it is the pagans who in mockery show the God of the Christians crucified. Christian art was born heretical. Its subjects are borrowed for the most part from condemned books (the apocryphal books born more or less under gnostic influence)."

Gnosticism came to Rome from Alexandria. "The Fathers of the Church," says Renan, "proclaimed that these poisonous seeds derived basically from the Samaritan sects of Simon of Gitton (the Magus)." Here are some of the fundamental ideas held in common by the gnostics, according to Duchesne: (1) The God who is creator and legislator of the Old Testament is not the real God. Above him, and at an infinite height, is God the Father, supreme principle of all beings; (2) The God of the Old Testament does not know the true God and the world has also not known him until the apparition of Jesus Christ, who derives from the true God . . . ; (5) The incarnation could not result from a serious union between divinity and cursed matter. Evangelical history is explained by a moral and transitory union between a divine emanation and the concrete person of Jesus, or by the evolution of a simple appearance of humanity; (6) There was hence no Passion and no real resurrection of Christ. . . . [In sum] as the gnostics needed somebody to saddle with the responsibility for nature and the laws, they gave the charge for these to the God of Israel. The Gospels, on the other hand, seemed to them to have a very different tone, for they conveyed a revelation of supreme goodness and absolute perfection (*Histoire ancienne de l'église* 1:174).

Let us now suppose that at this moment these ideas had triumphed in Christianity, and in particular in the Roman Church. There would have been no concern with commemorating in Jerusalem the passion of Christ, his death, and his resurrection, since these events would have been but an appearance, a game of sensible images, without a deep and supernatural significance. It would not have been thought necessary to establish in Christian memory the places where these illusionary scenes took place. These conceptions had been elaborated in Egypt. Perhaps there would not even have been a cult of holy places in Palestine.

But Constantine was converted to Christianity. The Council of Nicea met in 325 and formulated the celebrated creed: "We believe in

one God . . . and in one Savior, Jesus Christ . . . who descended, was incarnated, and made man for us humans and for our salvation. He suffered and was resurrected on the third day, rose again to heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead." This text condemned the gnostic heresy together with all heresies more or less affiliated with it.

The center of Christian faith was now found, and the dominant image on which all others within the evangelical tradition were to lean became the dead and resurrected Christ, the cross at Golgotha and the Holy Sepulcher. Their sites were no doubt hidden and unknown. None of them appeared in the visible framework of Jerusalem. But, since the dogma had been formulated in such a way as to imply a site, it was necessary that this site be found.¹⁸

And so it is that long before the Middle Ages, beginning with the constructions by Constantine and Helena in the early fourth century, what was to occupy the forefront of Christian memory would be the scenes of the Passion and the Resurrection. One need only read the account of Arculf, which was dictated to Adamnanus around 670 (the Muslims had taken possession of Jerusalem in 638). The account opens with a detailed description of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher. A chapter is dedicated to the stone that closed the tomb, which is to be found in two fragments in the church. Another chapter is devoted to the Church of the Discovery of the Cross, still another to the chalice and the sponge that were placed in an exedra. The account also contains a chapter on the lance, one on the shroud which covered the head of the Savior in the tomb (the story is told at length), still another on the column which stands on the spot of the miracle of the true cross (the cross that brought a man back to life, or rather cured a man who was dying, thereby authenticating it over two other crosses). There is a chapter on the Mount of Olives, where the ascension took place. The third book deals with the place where the Savior blessed five loaves and two fish, marked not by an edifice, but only by a few stone columns. Only nine lines are devoted to this; and Caphamaum, which Arculf saw only from the height of a neighboring hill, also gets scant attention. There are twenty-eight pages on Jerusalem, while Lake Ti-

18. In the northeast of the city there was a platform on which stood a temple of Venus. The bishop of Aelia, Macarius, who had been present at the Council of Nicea, received the necessary authorization from the emperor to start excavations. Finally a tomb that had been dug into the rock was brought to light. The precise place of the crucifixion, and even the cross of the Savior, were also identified. After the emperor had been informed of these discoveries, he has a basilica built there as well as a small edifice over the tomb.

berias and the places where Jesus passed the major part of his public life receive only one page. In the Gospels, the proportions given to the life of Jesus in Galilee and to the Passion are reversed. The Christian legend has thinned out, according to the thesis suggested above, to the point that one can see it only as a transposition of an apocalyptic myth into a human account. But perhaps this is what Christianity essentially was in this whole period.

One must moreover consider that the conditions under which the Christians existed in the Holy Land became increasingly precarious starting with the seventh century. Jerusalem was devastated by the Persians in 614. The Muslims took hold of it in 638. To cohabit with Muslims who had become more numerous and also more aggressive created many troubles for the Christians dispersed in the city. They finally grouped themselves, beginning in 1063, in the Christian quarter, the Quarter of the Patriarch, where they had received the right to settle upon condition that they would repair the ramparts. This was in the north of the city around the major holy places, Calvary and the Holy Sepulcher.¹⁹ There perhaps the most artificial and constructed environment in the Christian tradition was found. How could they not attach themselves with all their fervent belief to this last nook where their memories found shelter? The fifteenth of July, we are told—the day the city was retaken by the Crusaders—ended with a solemn procession to the Holy Sepulcher, in which the indigenous Christians took part, happy to have been delivered at last.

How can one convey a clear picture of this arrival of the Crusaders, which marks a new era in the history of localizations? For the Christian world, Jerusalem was the holy city par excellence. Even if they had not seen it in reality, they could see it in their imagination. The image they fashioned for themselves was surely not without foundation, since it was rooted not only in the Gospels, but in the testimony and descriptions of the pilgrims and religious who had visited the city. But this image vastly differed from the actual city of this epoch, with which the Christians who lived there were familiar. The local inhabitants knew how difficult it was to save buildings, churches, and chapels from the devastations that had ruined so many quarters and houses of the city. Time was at work here as elsewhere to erase more and more traces of the past. But when the Christians living in Europe talked of Jerusalem, they had quite different mental representations: a supernatural city where the majesty of the Son of God had never ceased to

19. In other words, a quadrilateral standing between the tower of David (at the Jaffa gate), the tower at the northwestern corner, and the eastern gate of Stephen.

radiate; an eternal city where what had been the framework and the support of the events told in the Gospels was expected to be miraculously preserved. It seems that they never doubted for an instant that the city would appear to them just as it had been in the past, once it was rid of unbelievers and once all the traces of their impious occupation had been deleted. This explains their emotions as they approached the city and as they stooped to prostrate themselves before it. What did they know of the successive sieges that had left no stone unturned, of reconstructions, of changes in the direction of streets, in the situation and appearance of houses or districts? They knew very little of these matters. It is said that when they entered the Mosque of Omar, they thought they had reached the ancient Temple of Solomon.

Since Christianity took possession of the Holy Land and returned there legitimately, the Christians returned triumphantly, like descendants of noble or royal families returning to the castles and the lands of their ancestors who had been chased away and dispossessed in the past—and their memories returned with them. But how can spatial memories find their place where everything is changed, where there are no more vestiges or landmarks? If the newly arrived Christians had limited themselves to what the Christians who had dwelled and lived in Jerusalem all their lives had told them, they would have learned that the buildings supposed to commemorate certain events told in the Gospels were in fact buildings from which living tradition had disappeared in the distant past. These buildings had in fact been destroyed in part, and what remained was deformed, of doubtful significance, and of uncertain authenticity.

But the crusaders could not be stopped by discouragements and scruples of this kind. They came with the authority of an immense community. They somehow felt that behind them operated the pressure of innumerable generations. This is why they did not hesitate to resume in their own way the work of commemoration or, more exactly, the reconstruction of the holy places, which the Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries had begun.

To be sure, the Crusaders were inspired whenever possible by the traditions that still remained in regard to Christian monuments, if not also by the traditions pertaining to evangelical facts that could still be invoked at the time of Constantine. It is clear that in many places the churches built by the Crusaders were erected on the site of earlier religious buildings which often dated from a very early period. Their churches were often, in fact, a renovation or an enlargement of some half-ruined building with stones and other materials introduced from the latter or from places nearby. The Crusaders sometimes even tried

to reproduce the very design and layout of the ancient sanctuary. The Cenacle provides an example. In 1130 they built a Church of Zion or of Mary, an edifice with two floors, so that the Cenacle could be placed on the upper floor, with three apses on the lower level recalling the death of Mary, the apparition of Jesus "in Galilee," and the place of the washing of the feet.

But they were not content with rebuilding the ruins in this manner. They instituted new localizations, guided no doubt by the Gospels, but also by apocryphal writings and legends that had circulated for some time in Christian lands, and even by a kind of inspiration. They proceeded with a great deal of assurance, since they were the legitimate possessors of a tradition that the Christians of Jerusalem had forgotten or not known. The Crusaders behaved as if this land and these stones recognized them, as if they had only to stoop down in order suddenly to hear voices that had remained silent merely because they could not resonate in deliberately deaf ears or because God had not wanted to open them before a fixed date.

When it comes to the Christians who were there before the Crusades, everything indicates that they did not resist a movement that went beyond them to such an extent. They very likely quickly forgot the degradation to which they had been condemned for a long time, and the poverty and precariousness of their local traditions. They now joined their voices to the general enthusiasm, all the more so since the disfigured holy places to which they had become accustomed were ennobled and enhanced in the new picture.

In any case, we know that in the twelfth century people were enormously busy building in Jerusalem and elsewhere, in Judea and in Palestine. "Monks of the orders of St. Benedict and of St. Augustine, members of the great military orders, prelates, princes, or rich individuals: they were all rivals in their zeal to cover Jerusalem with a white garment of monasteries."²⁰

Then came the sack of Jerusalem by Saladin on October 2, 1187. All Christians were supposed either to buy their own release or to be taken prisoner. But many native Christians had received permission to stay in Jerusalem by paying a head tax in addition to the war ransom. Four priests were allowed to serve at the sanctuary, and pilgrims came again after the armistice of 1192.

The Turkish occupation started in 1517. The walls were rebuilt following existing outlines and the Cenacle was left outside the walls.

20. Hughes Vincent, *Jérusalem dans l'ancien Testament: Recherches de topographie d'archéologie, et d'histoire*, Paris, 1912.

The materials of the wall were taken largely from the ruins of adjacent localities and of ancient Christian churches. It was said that Soliman had the architect executed for not having included Mount Zion within the walls. After the reign of the Magnificent, constructions came to a close until the nineteenth century—the history of the new Jerusalem therefore ends in the sixteenth century.

Thus, the epoch of Constantine and the epoch of the Crusaders respectively mark the two moments when the Christian memory—the collective memory representing the totality of the Christian community in these two epochs—searched for the sites of the evangelical facts and tried to find locations for its recollections. It tried, in a way, to situate itself in space, in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land. In each case it tried to use local memories as a basis, but it also introduced new localizations. As a result, the general organization of the holy places is strongly marked by contemporary Christian beliefs. In each case one can also say that a narrow and rather direct memory of these places (though frequently vacillating and full of gaps) blended into a more general memory. This latter memory was based on knowledge of the holy sites that came indirectly from writings, descriptions, and legends, and originated at quite some distance from the holy places; but it was richer and better organized, and, above all, was supported by groups that were widely dispersed.

At first, at the time of the formation of the Gospels, there may have been an early system of localization, a first organization of local Christian memories. But we have no way of recovering this. Everything indicates nevertheless that these memories were often attached to ancient Jewish localizations, that they were built within a framework of Jewish memories. This is what may have allowed them to subsist throughout the first centuries, at a time when Christianity had to fight against the Jews and against the Roman authorities, and when there were so many troubles and destructions in Jerusalem—and in all of Palestine. In addition, there must have been among Christian and Judeo-Christian groups different local traditions—in particular a Jerusalemite and a Galilean one—in regard to more than one point. Be that as it may, given these circumstances, this first set of memories probably lost its strength and became obscure, and for that reason gave way, at the time of Constantine, to a new system, which prevailed during the centuries that followed.

The localizations of the fourth and fifth centuries were moreover rather difficult to maintain from the seventh century onward, given the Persian invasions, wars, and the Muslim occupation. There occurred at that time a progressive loss of Christian memory regarding its actual

recollections of the holy places; there occurred gaps, confusions, and obscurities. There were however temporary returns of [Christian] possessions (in particular the reconstructions of Modeste in the sixth century). Nevertheless, sanctuaries fell into ruins and disappeared. The rites and ceremonies that maintained the memories of these places had to be suspended because of the indifference or hostility of the surrounding Muslim milieu.

This explains why, after Jerusalem had been conquered by the Crusaders, a new system of localization could retrieve these vestiges, absorb them, but also modify them, thereby changing their appearance and meanings. Above all it allowed the emergence of a whole new flowering of consecrated sites, basilicas, churches, and chapels. The universal Christian community now took possession of the holy places, and it wished to reproduce the image that it had constructed for itself from afar throughout the centuries. This led to an abundant flowering of new localizations, much more numerous but also, most of the time, more recent. It also led to an invitation to further increase and coordinate them according to the needs of the belief system. The holy places soon fell again into the hands of the infidels, and the constructions of this period in their turn were mostly overthrown. But they opened Jerusalem to forms of devotion born in Europe. These forms left their imprint on the consecrated sites and introduced new localizations that were entirely imaginary, such as, for example, the Via Dolorosa, based on the stations of the cross. The apocryphal tales of the childhood of Jesus, of the youth, the life, and the death of Mary, the mystical meditations on the mystery of the cross, the mystery plays presented in the churches of the Middle Ages, the whole religious iconography of the cathedrals: these were what the pilgrims wished to find again, to situate, to put into place.

This attests to the fact that in each period the collective Christian memory adapts its recollections of the details of Christ's life and of the places where they occurred to the contemporary exigencies of Christianity, to its needs and aspirations.

However, in their effort to adapt, people encounter the resistance of things, sometimes of rites, of mechanical or material formulas, of ancient commemorations fixed in the stones of churches or monuments, where the beliefs and the testimony once took the form of solid and durable objects. It is true that these objects themselves, as they appear to us, were the result of an earlier adaptation of beliefs inherited from the past to the beliefs of the present; at the same time they were the result of adaptation of the latter to the material vestiges of ancient beliefs. This is how one traces the course of time. Whatever epoch is

examined, attention is not directed toward the first events, or perhaps the origin of these events, but rather toward the group of believers and toward their commemorative work. When one looks at the physiognomy of the holy places in successive times, one finds the character of these groups inscribed. Such an exploration of the world of collective memory is yet not without results, and it certainly enriches our knowledge. If the mission of humanity through the ages has been to make an effort to create or recreate gods in order to transcend itself, then one finds the essence of the religious phenomenon in those stones erected and preserved by crowds and by successive generations of people whose traces one can follow in these very stones. These are not traces of a human or supernatural individual but rather of groups animated by a collective faith that remains moving even if one does not really know its true nature. These groups evoked this individual, and those who were associated with him, in each epoch.