

From:
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THE GIFT:
Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies
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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

I. MORAL CONCLUSIONS

LET us extend our observations to the present day. Much of our everyday morality is concerned with the question of obligation and spontaneity in the gift. It is our good fortune that all is not yet couched in terms of purchase and sale. Things have values which are emotional as well as material; indeed in some cases the values are entirely emotional. Our morality is not solely commercial. We still have people and classes who uphold past customs and we bow to them on special occasions and at certain periods of the year.

The gift not yet repaid debases the man who accepted it, particularly if he did so without thought of return. In recalling Emerson's curious essay *On Gifts and Presents* we are not leaving the Germanic field; charity wounds him who receives, and our whole moral effort is directed towards suppressing the unconscious harmful patronage of the rich almoner.¹

Just as a courtesy has to be returned, so must an invitation. Here we find traces of the traditional basis, the aristocratic potlatch, and we see at work also some of the fundamental motives of human activity: emulation between individuals of the same sex, the basic 'imperialism' of men—of origin part social, part animal or psychological no doubt.² In the distinctive sphere of our social life we can never remain at rest. We must always return more than we receive; the return is always bigger and more costly. A family of my childhood in Lorraine, which was forced to a most frugal existence, would face ruin for the sake of its guests on Saints' Days, weddings, first communions and funerals. You had to be a *grand seigneur* on these occasions. Some of our people behave like this all the time and spend money recklessly on their guests, parties and New Year gifts.

Invitations have to be offered and have to be accepted. This usage still exists in our present-day liberal societies. Scarcely fifty years ago, and perhaps more recently in some parts of France and Germany, the whole village would take part in a wedding feast; if anyone held away it was an indication of jealousy and at the same time a fateful omen. In many districts of France everyone still has a part in the proceedings. In Provence on the birth of a child folk still bring along their egg or some other symbolic present.

Things sold have their personality even nowadays. At Cornimont, in a valley in the Vosges, the following custom prevailed a short time ago and may perhaps still be found in some families: in order that animals should forget their former masters and not be tempted to go back to them, a cross was made on the

lintel of the stable door, the vendor's halter was retained and the animals were hand-fed with salt. At Raonaux-Bois a small butter-tart was carried thrice round the dairy and offered to the animals with the right hand. Numerous other French customs show how it is necessary to detach the thing sold from the man who sells it; a thing may be slapped, a sheep may be whipped when sold, and so on.³

It appears that the whole field of industrial and commercial law is in conflict with morality. The economic prejudices of the people and producers derive from their strong desire to pursue the thing they have produced once they realize that they have given their labour without sharing in the profits.

Today the ancient principles are making their influence felt upon the rigours, abstractions and inhumanities of our codes. From this point of view much of our law is in process of reformulation and some of our innovations consist in putting back the clock. This reaction against Roman and Saxon insensibility in our régime is a good thing. We can interpret in this way some of the more recent developments in our laws and customs.

It took a long time for artistic, literary or scientific ownership to be recognized beyond the right to sell the manuscript, invention, or work of art. Societies have little interest in admitting that the heirs of an author or inventor—who are, after all, their benefactors—have more than a few paltry rights in the things created. These are readily acclaimed as products of the collective as well as the individual mind, and hence to be public property. However, the scandal of the increment value of paintings, sculptures and *objets d'art* inspired the French law of September 1923 which gives the artist and his heirs and claimants a 'right of pursuit' over the successive increments of his works.

French legislation on social insurance, and accomplished state socialism, are inspired by the principle that the worker gives his life and labour partly to the community and partly to his bosses. If the worker has to collaborate in the business of insurance then those who benefit from his services are not square with him simply by paying him a wage. The State, representing the community, owes him and his management and fellow-workers a certain security in his life against unemployment, sickness, old age and death.

In the same way some ingenious innovations like the family funds freely and enthusiastically provided by industrialists for workers with families, are an answer to the need for employers to get men attached to them and to realize their responsibilities and the degree of material and moral interest that these responsibilities entail. In Great Britain the long period of unemployment affecting millions of workers gave rise to a movement for compulsory unemployment insurance organized by unions. The cities and the State were slow to support the high cost of paying the workless, whose condition arose from that of industry and the market; but some distinguished economists and captains of industry saw that industries themselves should organize unemployment savings

and make the necessary sacrifices. They wanted the cost of the workers' security against unemployment to form a part of the expenses of the industry concerned.

We believe that such ideas and legislation correspond not to an upheaval, but to a return to law.⁴ We are seeing the dawn and realization of professional morality and corporate law. The compensation funds and mutual societies which industrial groups are forming in favour of labour have, in the eyes of pure morality, only one flaw: their administration is in the hands of the bosses. But there is also group activity; the State, municipalities, public assistance establishments, works managements and wage-earners are all associated, for instance, in the social legislation of Germany and Alsace-Lorraine, and will shortly be in France. Thus we are returning to a group morality.

On the other hand, it is the individual that the State and the groups within the State want to look after. Society wants to discover the social 'cell'. It seeks the individual in a curious frame of mind in which the sentiments of its own laws are mingled with other, purer sentiments: charity, social service and solidarity. The theme of the gift, of freedom and obligation in the gift, of generosity and self-interest in giving, reappear in our own society like the resurrection of a dominant motif long forgotten.

But a mere statement of what is taking place is not enough. We should deduce from it some course of action or moral precept. It is not sufficient to say that law is in the process of shedding an abstraction—the distinction between real and personal law—or that it is adding some fresh rules to the ill-made legislation on sale and payment for services. We want to show also that the transformation is a good one.

We are returning, as indeed we must do, to the old theme of 'noble expenditure'. It is essential that, as in Anglo-Saxon countries and so many contemporary societies, savage and civilized, the rich should come once more, freely or by obligation, to consider themselves as the treasurers, as it were, of their fellow-citizens. Of the ancient civilizations from which ours has arisen some had the jubilee, others the liturgy, the choragus, the trierarchy, the syssita or the obligatory expenses of the aedile or consular official. We should return to customs of this sort. Then we need better care of the individual's life, health and education, his family and its future. We need more good faith, sympathy and generosity in the contracts of hire and service, rents and sale of the necessities of life. And we have to find the means of limiting the fruits of speculation and usury. Meanwhile the individual must work and be made to rely more upon himself than upon others. From another angle he must defend his group's interest as well as his own. Communism and too much generosity is as harmful to him and society as the selfishness of our contemporaries or the individualism of our laws. In the *Mahabharata* a malignant wood spirit explains to a Brahmin who has given too much away to the wrong people: 'That is why you are thin and pale.'

The life of the monk and the life of Shylock are both to be avoided. This new morality will consist of a happy medium between the ideal and the real.

Hence we should return to the old and elemental. Once again we shall discover those motives of action still remembered by many societies and classes: the joy of giving in public, the delight in generous artistic expenditure, the pleasure of hospitality in the public or private feast. Social insurance, solicitude in mutuality or co-operation, in the professional group and all those moral persons called Friendly Societies, are better than the mere personal security guaranteed by the nobleman to his tenant, better than the mean life afforded by the daily wage handed out by managements, and better even than the uncertainty of capitalist savings.

We can visualize a society in which these principles obtain. In the liberal professions of our great nations such a moral and economic system is to some degree in evidence. For honour, disinterestedness and corporate solidarity are not vain words, nor do they deny the necessity for work. We should humanize the other liberal professions and make all of them more perfect. That would be a great deed, and one which Durkheim already had in view.

In doing this we should, we believe, return to the everpresent bases of law, to its real fundamentals and to the very heart of normal social life. There is no need to wish that the citizen should be too subjective, too insensitive or too realistic. He should be vividly aware of himself, of others and of the social reality (and what other reality is there in these moral matters?). He must act with full realization of himself, of society and its sub-groups. The basis of moral action is general; it is common to societies of the highest degree of evolution, to those of the future and to societies of the least advancement. Here we touch bedrock. We are talking no longer in terms of law. We are talking of men and groups since it is they, society, and their sentiments that are in action all the time.

Let us demonstrate this point. What we call total prestation—prestation between clan and clan in which individuals and groups exchange everything between them—constitutes the oldest economic system we know. It is the base from which gift-exchange arose. Now it is precisely this same type towards which we are striving to have our own society—on its own scale—directed. The better to visualize these distant epochs we give two examples from widely differing societies.

In a corroboree of Pine Mountain (East Central Queensland) each person enters the sacred place in turn, his spear-thrower in one hand and the other hand behind his back; he lobs his weapon to the far end of the dancing ground, shouting at the same time the name of the place he comes from, like: 'Kunyan is my home'. He stands still for a moment while his friends put gifts, a spear, a boomerang or other weapon, into his other hand. 'Thus a good warrior may get more than his hand can hold, particularly if he has marriageable daughters.'⁵

In the Winnebago tribe clan chiefs make speeches to chiefs of other clans; these are characteristic examples of a ceremonial which is widespread among North American Indian civilizations.⁶ At the clan feast each clan cooks food and prepares tobacco for the representatives of other clans. Here by way of illustration are extracts from the speeches given by the Snake Clan chief: 'I salute you; it is well; how could I say otherwise? I am a poor man of no worth and you have remembered me. You have thought of the spirits and you have come to sit with me. And so your dishes will soon be filled, and I salute you again, you men who take the place of the spirits....' When one of the chiefs has eaten, an offering of tobacco is put in the fire and the final sentences express the moral significance of the feast and the prestations: 'I thank you for coming to fill my places and I am grateful to you. You have encouraged me. The blessings of your grandfathers [who had revelations and whom you incarnate] are equal to those of the spirits. It is good that you have partaken of my feast. It must be that our grandfathers have said: "Your life is weak and can be strengthened only by the advice of the warriors." You have helped me and that means life to me.'⁷

A wise precept has run right through human evolution, and we would be as well to adopt it as a principle of action. We should come out of ourselves and regard the duty of giving as a liberty, for in it there lies no risk. A fine Maori proverb runs:

*'Ko maru kai atu
Ko maru kai mai,
Ka ngohe ngohe.'*

'Give as much as you receive and all is for the best.'⁸

2. POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONCLUSIONS

Our facts do more than illumine our morality and point out our ideal; for they help us to analyse economic facts of a more general nature, and our analysis might suggest the way to better administrative procedures for our societies.

We have repeatedly pointed out how this economy of gift exchange fails to conform to the principles of so-called natural economy or utilitarianism. The phenomena in the economic life of the people we have studied (and they are good representatives of the great neolithic stage of civilization) and the survivals of these traditions in societies closer to ours and even in our own custom, are disregarded in the schemes adopted by the few economists who have tried to compare the various forms of economic life.⁹ We add our own observations to those of Malinowski who devoted a whole work to ousting the prevalent doctrines on primitive economics.¹⁰

Here is a chain of undoubted fact. The notion of value exists in these societies. Very great surpluses, even by European standards, are amassed; they are expended often at pure loss with tremendous extravagance and without a trace of mercenariness;¹¹ among things exchanged are tokens of wealth, a kind of money. All this very rich economy is nevertheless imbued with religious elements; money still has its magical power and is linked to clan and individual. Diverse economic activities—for example, the market—are impregnated with ritual and myth; they retain a ceremonial character, obligatory and efficacious;¹² they have their own ritual and etiquette. Here is the answer to the question already posed by Durkheim about the religious origin of the notion of economic value.¹³ The facts also supply answers to a string of problems about the forms and origins of what is so badly termed exchange—the barter or *permutatio* of useful articles.¹⁴ In the view of cautious Latin authors in the Aristotelian tradition and their *a priori* economic history, this is the origin of the division of labour.¹⁵ On the contrary, it is something other than utility which makes goods circulate in these multifarious and fairly enlightened societies. Clans, age groups and sexes, in view of the many relationships ensuing from contacts between them, are in a state of perpetual economic effervescence which has little about it that is materialistic; it is much less prosaic than our sale and purchase, hire of services and speculations.

We may go farther than this and break down, reconsider and redefine the principal notions of which we have already made use. Our terms ‘present’ and ‘gift’ do not have precise meanings, but we could find no others. Concepts which we like to put in opposition—freedom and obligation; generosity, liberality, luxury on the one hand and saving, interest, austerity on the other—are not exact and it would be well to put them to the test. We cannot deal very fully with this; but let us take an example from the Trobriands. It is a complex notion that inspires the economic actions we have described, a notion neither of purely free and gratuitous prestations, nor of purely interested and utilitarian production and exchange; it is a kind of hybrid.

Malinowski made a serious effort to classify all the transactions he witnessed in the Trobriands according to the interest or disinterestedness present in them. He ranges them from pure gift to barter with bargaining, but this classification is untenable.¹⁶ Thus according to Malinowski the typical ‘pure gift’ is that between spouses. Now in our view one of the most important acts noted by the author, and one which throws a strong light on sexual relationships, is the *mapula*, the sequence of payments by a husband to his wife as a kind of salary for sexual services.¹⁷ Likewise the payments to chiefs are tribute; the distributions of food (*sagali*) are payments for labour or ritual accomplished, such as work done on the eve of a funeral.¹⁸ Thus basically as these gifts are not spontaneous so also they are not really disinterested. They are for the most part counterprestations made not solely in order to pay for goods or services, but also

to maintain a profitable alliance which it would be unwise to reject, as for instance partnership between fishing tribes and tribes of hunters and potters.¹⁹ Now this fact is widespread—we have met it with the Maori, Tsimshian and others.²⁰ Thus it is clear wherein this mystical and practical force resides, which at once binds clans together and keeps them separate, which divides their labour and constrains them to exchange. Even in these societies the individuals and the groups, or rather the sub-groups, have always felt the sovereign right to refuse a contract, and it is this which lends an appearance of generosity to the circulation of goods. On the other hand, normally they had neither the right of, nor interest in, such a refusal; and it is that which makes these distant societies seem akin to ours.

The use of money suggests other considerations. The Trobriand *voygu'a*, armshells and necklaces, like the North-West American coppers and Iroquois *wampum*, are at once wealth, tokens of wealth,²¹ means of exchange and payment, and things to be given away or destroyed. In addition they are pledges, linked to the persons who use them and who in turn are bound by them. Since, however, at other times they serve as tokens of money, there is interest in giving them away, for if they are transformed into services or merchandise that yield money then one is better off in the end. We may truly say that the Trobriand or Tsimshian chief behaves somewhat like the capitalist who knows how to spend his money at the right time only to build his capital up again. Interest and disinterestedness taken together explain this form of the circulation of wealth and of the circulation of tokens of wealth that follows upon it.

Even the destruction of wealth does not correspond to the complete disinterestedness which one might expect. These great acts of generosity are not free from self-interest. The extravagant consumption of wealth, particularly in the potlatch, always exaggerated and often purely destructive, in which goods long stored are all at once given away or destroyed, lends to these institutions the appearance of wasteful expenditure and child-like prodigality.²² Not only are valuable goods thrown away and foodstuffs consumed to excess but there is destruction for its own sake—coppers are thrown into the sea or broken. But the motives of such excessive gifts and reckless consumption, such mad losses and destruction of wealth, especially in these potlatch societies, are in no way disinterested. Between vassals and chiefs, between vassals and their henchmen, the hierarchy is established by means of these gifts. To give is to show one's superiority, to show that one is something more and higher, that one is *magister*. To accept without returning or repaying more is to face subordination, to become a client and subservient, to become *minister*.

The magic ritual in the *kula* known as *mwasila* contains spells and symbols which show that the man who wants to enter into a contract seeks above all profit in the form of social—one might almost say animal—superiority. Thus he charms the betel-nut to be used with his partners, casts a spell over the chief

and his fellows, then over his own pigs, his necklaces, his head and mouth, the opening gifts and whatever else he carries; then he chants, not without exaggeration: 'I shall kick the mountain, the mountain moves . . . the mountain falls down. . . . My spell shall go to the top of Dobu Mountain. . . . My canoe will sink. . . . My fame is like thunder, my treading is like the roar of flying witches. . . . Tudududu.'²³ The aim is to be the first, the finest, luckiest, strongest and richest and that is how to set about it. Later the chief confirms his mana when he redistributes to his vassals and relatives what he has just received; he maintains his rank among the chiefs by exchanging armshells for necklaces, hospitality for visits, and so on. In this case wealth is, in every aspect, as much a thing of prestige as a thing of utility. But are we certain that our own position is different and that wealth with us is not first and foremost a means of controlling others ?

Let us test now the notion to which we have opposed the ideas of the gift and disinterestedness: that of interest and the individual pursuit of utility. This agrees no better with previous theories. If similar motives animate Trobriand and American chiefs and Andaman clans and once animated generous Hindu or Germanic noblemen in their giving and spending, they are not to be found in the cold reasoning of the business man, banker or capitalist. In those earlier civilizations one had interests but they differed from those of our time. There, if one hoards, it is only to spend later on, to put people under obligations and to win followers. Exchanges are made as well, but only of luxury objects like clothing and ornaments, or feasts and other things that are consumed at once. Return is made with interest, but that is done in order to humiliate the original donor or exchange partner and not merely to recompense him for the loss that the lapse of time causes him. He has an interest but it is only analogous to the one which we say is our guiding principle.

Ranged between the relatively amorphous and disinterested economy within the sub-groups of Australian and North American (Eastern and Prairie) clans, and the individualistic economy of pure interest which our societies have had to some extent ever since their discovery by Greeks and Semites, there is a great series of institutions and economic events not governed by the rationalism which past theory so readily took for granted.

The word 'interest' is recent in origin and can be traced back to the Latin interest written on account books opposite rents to be recovered. In the most epicurean of these philosophies pleasure and the good were pursued and not material utility. The victory of rationalism and mercantilism was required before the notions of profit and the individual were given currency and raised to the level of principles. One can date roughly—after Mandeville and his *Fable des Abeilles*—the triumph of the notion of individual interest. It is only by awkward paraphrasing that one can render the phrase 'individual interest' in Latin, Greek or Arabic. Even the men who wrote in classical Sanskrit and used the word *artha*, which is fairly close to our idea of interest, turned it, as they did with other

categories of action, into an idea different from ours. The sacred books of ancient India divide human actions into the categories of law (*dharma*), interest (*artha*) and desire (*kama*). But *artha* refers particularly to the political interest of king, Brahmins and ministers, or royalty and the various castes. The considerable literature of the *Niticastra* is not economic in tone.

It is only our Western societies that quite recently turned man into an economic animal. But we are not yet all animals of the same species. In both lower and upper classes pure irrational expenditure is in current practice: it is still characteristic of some French noble houses. *Homo oeconomicus* is not behind us, but before, like the moral man, the man of duty, the scientific man and the reasonable man. For a long time man was something quite different; and it is not so long now since he became a machine—a calculating machine.

In other respects we are still far from frigid utilitarian calculation. Make a thorough statistical analysis, as Halbwachs did for the working classes, of the consumption and expenditure of our middle classes and how many needs are found satisfied? How many desires are fulfilled that have utility as their end? Does not the rich man's expenditure on luxury, art, servants and extravagances recall the expenditure of the nobleman of former times or the savage chiefs whose customs we have been describing?

It is another question to ask if it is good that this should be so. It is a good thing possibly that there exist means of expenditure and exchange other than economic ones. However, we contend that the best economic procedure is not to be found in the calculation of individual needs. I believe that we must become, in proportion as we would develop our wealth, something more than better financiers, accountants and administrators. The mere pursuit of individual ends is harmful to the ends and peace of the whole, to the rhythm of its work and pleasures, and hence in the end to the individual.

We have just seen how important sections and groups of our capital industries are seeking to attach groups of their employees to them. Again all the syndicalist groups, employers' as much as wage-earners', claim that they are defending and representing the general interest with a fervour equal to that of the particular interests of their members, or of the interests of the groups themselves. Their speeches are burnished with many fine metaphors. Nevertheless, one has to admit that not only ethics and philosophy, but also economic opinion and practice, are starting to rise to this 'social' level. The feeling is that there is no better way of making men work than by reassuring them of being paid loyally all their lives for labour which they give loyally not only for their own sakes but for that of others. The producer-exchanger feels now as he has always felt—but this time he feels it more acutely—that he is giving something of himself, his time and his life. Thus he wants recompense, however modest, for this gift. And to refuse him this recompense is to incite him to laziness and lower production.

We draw now a conclusion both sociological and practical. The famous Sura LXIV, 'Mutual Deception', given at Mecca to Mohammed, says:

15. Your possessions and your children are only a trial and Allah it is with whom is a great reward.

16. Therefore be careful [of your duty to] Allah as much as you can, and hear and obey and spend (*sadaqa*), it is better for your souls; and whoever is saved from the greediness of his soul, these it is that are the successful.

17. If you set apart from Allah a goodly portion, He will double it for you and forgive you; and Allah is the multiplier of rewards, forbearing.

18. The knower of the unseen and the seen, the mighty, the wise.

Replace the name of Allah by that of the society or professional group, or unite all three; replace the concept of alms by that of co-operation, of a prestation altruistically made; you will have a fair idea of the practice which is now coming into being. It can be seen at work already in certain economic groups and in the hearts of the masses who often enough know their own interest and the common interest better than their leaders do.

3. SOCIOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL CONCLUSIONS

We may be permitted another note about the method we have used. We do not set this work up as a model; it simply proffers one or two suggestions. It is incomplete: the analysis could be pushed farther.²⁴ We are really posing questions for historians and anthropologists and offering possible lines of research for them rather than resolving a problem and laying down definite answers. It is enough for us to be sure for the moment that we have given sufficient data for such an end.

This being the case, we would point out that there is a heuristic element in our manner of treatment. The facts we have studied are all 'total' social phenomena. The word 'general' may be preferred although we like it less. Some of the facts presented concern the whole of society and its institutions (as with potlatch, opposing clans, tribes on visit, etc.); others, in which exchanges and contracts are the concern of individuals, embrace a large number of institutions.

These phenomena are at once legal, economic, religious, aesthetic, morphological and so on. They are legal in that they concern individual and collective rights, organized and diffuse morality; they may be entirely obligatory, or subject simply to praise or disapproval. They are at once political and domestic, being of interest both to classes and to clans and families. They are religious; they concern true religion, animism, magic and diffuse religious

mentality. They are economic, for the notions of value, utility, interest, luxury, wealth, acquisition, accumulation, consumption and liberal and sumptuous expenditure are all present, although not perhaps in their modern senses. Moreover, these institutions have an important aesthetic side which we have left unstudied; but the dances performed, the songs and shows, the dramatic representations given between camps or partners, the objects made, used, decorated, polished, amassed and transmitted with affection, received with joy, given away in triumph, the feasts in which everyone participates—all these, the food, objects and services, are the source of aesthetic emotions as well as emotions aroused by interest.²⁵ This is true not only of Melanesia but also, and particularly, of the potlatch of North-West America and still more true of the market-festival of the Indo-European world. Lastly, our phenomena are clearly morphological. Everything that happens in the course of gatherings, fairs and markets or in the feasts that replace them, presupposes groups whose duration exceeds the season of social concentration, like the winter potlatch of the Kwakiutl or the few weeks of the Melanesian maritime expeditions. Moreover, in order that these meetings may be carried out in peace, there must be roads or water for transport and tribal, inter-tribal or international alliances—*commercium* and *connubium*.²⁶

We are dealing then with something more than a set of themes, more than institutional elements, more than institutions, more even than systems of institutions divisible into legal, economic, religious and other parts. We are concerned with ‘wholes’, with systems in their entirety. We have not described them as if they were fixed, in a static or skeletal condition, and still less have we dissected them into the rules and myths and values and so on of which they are composed. It is only by considering them as wholes that we have been able to see their essence, their operation and their living aspect, and to catch the fleeting moment when the society and its members take emotional stock of themselves and their situation as regards others. Only by making such concrete observation of social life is it possible to come upon facts such as those which our study is beginning to reveal. Nothing in our opinion is more urgent or promising than research into ‘total’ social phenomena.

The advantage is twofold. Firstly there is an advantage in generality, for facts of widespread occurrence are more likely to be universal than local institutions or themes, which are invariably tinged with local colour. But particularly the advantage is in realism. We see social facts in the round, as they really are. In society there are not merely ideas and rules, but also men and groups and their behaviours. We see them in motion as an engineer sees masses and systems, or as we observe octopuses and anemones in the sea. We see groups of men, and active forces, submerged in their environments and sentiments.

Historians believe and justly resent the fact that sociologists make too many abstractions and separate unduly the various elements of society. We

should follow their precepts and observe what is given. The tangible fact is Rome or Athens or the average Frenchman or the Melanesian of some island, and not prayer or law as such. Whereas formerly sociologists were obliged to analyse and abstract rather too much, they should now force themselves to reconstitute the whole. This is the way to reach incontestable facts. They will also find a way of satisfying psychologists who have a pronounced viewpoint, and particularly psycho-pathologists, since there is no doubt that the object of their study is concrete. They all observe, or at least ought to, minds as wholes and not minds divided into faculties. We should follow suit. The study of the concrete, which is the study of the whole, is made more readily, is more interesting and furnishes more explanations in the sphere of sociology than the study of the abstract. For we observe complete and complex beings. We too describe them in their organisms and *psychai* as well as in their behaviour as groups, with the attendant psychoses: sentiments, ideas and desires of the crowd, of organized societies and their sub-groups. We see bodies and their reactions, and their ideas and sentiments as interpretations or as motive forces. The aim and principle of sociology is to observe and understand the whole group in its total behaviour.

It is not possible here—it would have meant extending a restricted study unduly—to seek the morphological implications of our facts. It may be worth while, however, to indicate the method one might follow in such a piece of research.

All the societies we have described above with the exception of our European societies are segmentary. Even the Indo-Europeans, the Romans before the Twelve Tables, the Germanic societies up to the *Edda*, and Irish society to the time of its chief literature, were still societies based on the clan or on great families more or less undivided internally and isolated from each other externally. All these were far removed from the degree of unification with which historians have credited them or which is ours today. Within these groups the individuals, even the most influential, were less serious, avaricious and selfish than we are; externally at least they were and are generous and more ready to give. In tribal feasts, in ceremonies of rival clans, allied families or those that assist at each other's initiation, groups visit each other; and with the development of the law of hospitality in more advanced societies, the rules of friendship and the contract are present—along with the gods—to ensure the peace of markets and villages; at these times men meet in a curious frame of mind with exaggerated fear and an equally exaggerated generosity which appear stupid in no one's eyes but our own. In these primitive and archaic societies there is no middle path. There is either complete trust or mistrust. One lays down one's arms, renounces magic and gives everything away, from casual hospitality to one's daughter or one's property. It is in such conditions that men, despite themselves, learnt to renounce what was theirs and made contracts to give and repay.

But then they had no choice in the matter. When two groups of men meet they may move away or in case of mistrust or defiance they may resort to arms; or else they can come to terms. Business has always been done with foreigners, although these might have been allies. The people of Kiriwina said to Malinowski: 'The Dobu man is not good as we are. He is fierce, he is a man-eater. When we come to Dobu, we fear him, he might kill us! But see! I spit the charmed ginger root and their mind turns. They lay down their spears, they receive us well.'²⁷ Nothing better expresses how close together lie festival and warfare.

Thurnwald describes with reference to another Melanesian tribe, with genealogical material, an actual event which shows just as clearly how these people pass in a group quite suddenly from a feast to a battle.²⁸ Buleau, a chief, had invited Bobal, another chief, and his people to a feast which was probably to be the first of a long series. Dances were performed all night long. By morning everyone was excited by the sleepless night of song and dance. On a remark made by Buleau one of Bobal's men killed him; and the troop of men massacred and pillaged and ran off with the women of the village. 'Buleau and Bobal were more friends than rivals' they said to Thurnwald. We all have experience of events like this.

It is by opposing reason to emotion and setting up the will for peace against rash follies of this kind that peoples succeed in substituting alliance, gift and commerce for war, isolation and stagnation.

The research proposed would have some conclusion of this kind. Societies have progressed in the measure in which they, their sub-groups and their members, have been able to stabilize their contracts and to give, receive and repay. In order to trade, man must first lay down his spear. When that is done he can succeed in exchanging goods and persons not only between clan and clan but between tribe and tribe and nation and nation, and above all between individuals. It is only then that people can create, can satisfy their interests mutually and define them without recourse to arms. It is in this way that the clan, the tribe and nation have learnt—just as in the future the classes and nations and individuals will learn—how to oppose one another without slaughter and to give without sacrificing themselves to others. That is one of the secrets of their wisdom and solidarity.

There is no other course feasible. *The Chronicles of Arthur*²⁹ relate how King Arthur, with the help of a Cornish carpenter, invented the marvel of his court, the miraculous Round Table at which his knights would never come to blows. Formerly because of jealousy, skirmishes, duels and murders had set blood flowing in the most sumptuous of feasts. The carpenter says to Arthur: 'I will make thee a fine table, where sixteen hundred may sit at once, and from which none need be excluded. . . . And no knight will be able to raise combat, for there the highly placed will be on the same level as the lowly.' There was no

'head of the table' and hence no more quarrels. Wherever Arthur took his table, contented and invincible remained his noble company. And this today is the way of the nations that are strong, rich, good and happy. Peoples, classes, families and individuals may become rich, but they will not achieve happiness until they can sit down like the knights around their common riches. There is no need to seek far for goodness and happiness. It is to be found in the imposed peace, in the rhythm of communal and private labour, in wealth amassed and redistributed, in the mutual respect and reciprocal generosity that education can impart.

Thus we see how it is possible under certain circumstances to study total human behaviour; and how that concrete study leads not only to a science of manners, a partial social science, but even to ethical conclusions—'civility', or 'civics' as we say today. Through studies of this sort we can find, measure and assess the various determinants, aesthetic, moral, religious and economic, and the material and demographic factors, whose sum is the basis of society and constitutes the common life, and whose conscious direction is the supreme art—politics in the Socratic sense of the word.

NOTES

¹ Cf. *Koran*, sura II; cf. Kohler in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. I, p. 465.

² William James, *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, p. 409.

³ Kruyt, *Koopen*, p. 12 of extract, for similar facts from Celebes. Cf. '*De Toradja's . . .*', *Tijd. v. Kon. Batav. Gen.*, LXIII, 2, p. 299: rite for bringing buffalo to stable; p. 296, ritual for buying a dog limb by limb; p. 281, the cat is not sold, on any pretext, but loans itself.

⁴ Of course we do not imply any destruction; the legal principles of the market, of buying and selling, which are the indispensable conditions for the formation of capital, can and must exist beside other new and old principles.

Yet the moralist and legislator should not be bound in by so-called principles of natural law. The distinction between real and personal law should be considered as a theoretical abstraction derived from some of our laws. It should be allowed to exist, but kept in its proper place.

⁵ Roth, 'Games' in *Bulletin of the Ethnology of Queensland*, no. 28, p. 23. The announcement of the name of the visiting clan is a common custom in East Australia and is connected with the honour and virtue of the name. The last sentence suggests that betrothals are contracted through the exchange of gifts.

⁶ Radin, 'Winnebago Tribe', *A.R.B.A.E.*, XXXVII, 320 ff. See article 'Etiquette' in Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 326. Exceptionally two chiefs invited were members of the Snake Clan. Cf. almost identical speeches in a funeral feast: *Tlingit T. and M.*, p. 372.

⁸ Taylor, *Te ika a Mani*, p. 130, gives this translation, but the literal rendering is probably as follows: 'As much as Maru gives, so much Maru receives, and all is well' (Maru is god of war and justice).

⁹ Bücher, *Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, 3rd edn., p. 73, saw these economic phenomena but underestimated their importance, reducing them all to a matter of hospitality.

¹⁰ *Argonauts*, pp. 167 ff.; *Primitive Ec.*, 1921. See Frazer's preface to *Argonauts*.

¹¹ One of the most extravagant we can quote is the sacrifice of dogs among the Chukchee. The owners of the best kennels destroy their whole teams and sledges and have to buy new ones.

- ¹² *Argonauts*, p. 95. Cf. Preface.
- ¹³ *Formes Élémentaires de la Vie religieuse*, p. 598.
- ¹⁴ *Digest*, XVIII, I, *de contr. emt.* Paulus explains the great Roman debate on whether or not permutatio was a sale. The whole passage is of interest—even the mistake which the legal scholar makes in his interpretation of Homer, *Iliad*, VII, 472-5: *σίουντο* certainly means to buy, but Greek money was bronze, iron, skins, cows and slaves, all having predetermined values.
- ¹⁵ *Pol.*, Book I, 1257; note the word *μεταδος*.
- ¹⁶ *Argonauts*, p. 177. Note that in this case there is no sale for there is no exchange of *voygu'a*. The Trobrianders do not go so far as to use money in exchange.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 179; cf. p. 183 for payment of a kind of licit prostitution of unmarried girls.
- ¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 81. Sagali (cf. hakari) means distribution.
- ¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 82, in particular the gift of urigubu to the brother-in-law; harvest products in exchange for labour.
- ²⁰ The division of labour and how it works in the inter-clan Tsimshian feast is admirably described in a potlatch myth in *Tsim. Myth.*, p. 274, cf. p. 378. There are many examples like this. These economic institutions exist even with societies much less developed, e.g. Australia—the remarkable situation of a local group possessing a deposit of red ochre (Aiston and Horne, *Savage Life in C. Australia*, London, 1924, pp. 81, 130).
- ²¹ The equivalence in Germanic languages of the words token and *Zeichen* for money in general is a survival of these institutions. The mark on money and the pledge it is are the same thing, just as a man's signature is also a mark of his responsibility.
- ²² *Foi Jurée*, pp. 344 ff. In '*Des Clans aux Empires*', *Éléments de Sociologie*, Vol. I, he exaggerates the importance of these points. The potlatch is useful for establishing the hierarchy and does often establish it, but this is not a necessary element. African societies either do not have the potlatch, or have it only slightly developed, or perhaps have lost it; yet they have all possible kinds of political organization.
- ²³ *Argonauts*, pp. 199-201, 203. The 'mountain' here is the d'Entrecasteaux group. The canoe will sink beneath the weight of stuff brought back from the kula; cf. pp. zoo, 441-2: play on the word 'foam'.
- ²⁴ We should perhaps also have studied Micronesia. There is a money and contract system of first importance especially at Yap and the Palaos. In Indo-China among the Mon-Khmer, in Assam and among the Tibeto-Burmans are also institutions of this kind. The Berbers, finally, have developed the remarkable *thaoussa* customs (Westermarck, *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco*, see index under 'present'). Old Semitic law and Bedouin custom should also give useful material.
- ²⁵ See the 'ritual of beauty' in the Trobriand *kula*, *Argonauts*, pp. 334, 336: 'Our partner looks at us, sees our faces are beautiful; he throws the *vaygu'a* at us.' Cf. Thurnwald on the use of silver as ornament: *Forschungen*, Vol. III, p. 39; p. 35, the expression *Prachtbaum* to denote a man or woman decorated with money. The chief is the 'tree', I, p. 298; and the ornamented man lets forth a perfume, p. 192.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, III, p. 36.
- ²⁷ *Argonauts*, p. 246.
- ²⁸ *Samoa-Inseln*, III, Tab. 35.
- ²⁹ *Layamon's Brut*, 11. 22336 ff., 9994 ff.

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