

## **DURKHEIM ON RESPECT: MODERN ECHOES OF A 'NAÏVE INTROSPECTIVE GUESS'**

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DURKHEIM'S thinking on the subject of respect in *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) reveals highly original aspects that have not hitherto been given proper critical assessment. His analytical focus on the concept pervades the theory of the sacred in this, his last major work. This theory derives especially from one insuperable difficulty in simultaneously conceptualizing complementary mental attitudes in relation to transgression. At a distance, in every sense of the word, Durkheim developed his own insights into the evidence of things which lie beyond observation by the senses. In this article, I shall examine some of the reasons why Durkheim's epistemological contribution to the analysis of respect can still benefit modern-day ethnography. Social anthropological explorations of emotions—as opposed to the emotionalist theories of old—have received new impetus lately (see James 1997), and Durkheim may well be capable of bringing a fresh contribution to the field, despite the period when he was writing. I shall therefore also seek to explain the nature of this contribution. On the one hand, I show the contrast between his intellectual attitude towards the study of religious experience and that of Evans-Pritchard, while on the other hand I develop a comparison with Godfrey Lienhardt's own interpretation of the Dinka concept of *thek*, which he translated as respect. I also briefly consider aspects of David Parkin's more recent reflections on the topic of the sacred.

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In tracing aspects of the evolution of the theory of the sacred in relation to respect, I shall confine myself to *The Elementary Forms*.<sup>1</sup> I argue that Durkheim's conceptualization of the sacred is partly determined by his struggle to find the proper choice of definition for a specific kind of emotion which lies close to fear and for which there is no equivalent phrasing in either English or French.<sup>2</sup> Durkheim was interested in the structuring of respect in relation to fear. The problem with language comes to the fore, but contrary to modern-day methods of anthropological investigation, Durkheim is not primarily concerned with elucidating local concepts according to the specificity of their contexts. The difficulty is therefore not merely one of translation or the analysis of the language, but of the history of engagement with a concept ridden with Old Testament connotations and pertaining to a logic of morality based on ambivalence. There was ambiguity in Durkheim's thinking which nevertheless was to prove of great epistemological value. That the ambiguity should remain after all these years is an altogether different problem, creating a situation that would not be tolerated elsewhere in the humanities.

Attempts to derive the origin of religious attitudes from the notion of awe, understood as holy dread or reverential fear, have been widely discredited among social anthropologists. The work of Marett in that regard, for instance, long ago failed to impress and might be regarded as crude. Similarly, the centrality of awe in the work of the theologian Otto has not drawn much support inside the discipline (see Parkin 1991: 222). Furthermore, an exploration of the anthropological literature suggests that the driving force of awe is not the only aspect that has been brought into discredit. Investigations of religious forms of action still tend to reject the role of emotions in favour of intellectualist approaches. I suggest that the separation, if not the dichotomy, between intellectualist and emotionalist positions, especially on the subject of religious life, is not warranted. The distinction between emotions and ideas can be arbitrary and is not necessarily more relevant than the distinction between science and art (cf. Durkheim's comments on the continuum between science and religion, e.g. 1912: 17, n. 3).

### *Naming the Elementary Forms: Inside Fear*

Durkheim was among the first to challenge the dominant focus on authority in the interpretation of religious phenomena (see Pickering 1984). But rather than

1. When quoting Durkheim below I present the original French version followed by my own English translation, in preference to existing published translations. Most scholars of Durkheim's work will be familiar with Swain's translation (1915), which is often inaccurate.

2. Readers may find it interesting to compare the gist of this paper with David Parkin's 'Towards an Apprehension of Fear' in *Sociophobics: The Anthropology of Fear* (1986).

neglecting the role of awe or similar affects, Durkheim works a shift in the definition of its analytical significance by connecting it with other spheres of mental action. He is faithful to his own guiding principle: 'Aujourd'hui comme autrefois, expliquer, c'est montrer comment une chose participe d'une ou de plusieurs autres' (1912: 341; 'Today as yesterday, to explain is to show how one thing partakes in one or many other things'). Durkheim uses the word *crainte* in French, which is not rendered accurately in English by either 'awe' or 'dread'; he never uses the word *peur*, which in English would unequivocally be translated as 'fear'. *La crainte* in French is a diffuse notion closely associated with a psychological state, while the word *peur* is more in keeping with a less abstract bodily emotion associated with tangible objects identified unambiguously, with a strong sense of the immediacy of threat. A complete separation between the two concepts cannot be maintained in everyday life, even though the movements of thoughts and emotions correspond to different realities. I translate the word *crainte* in Durkheim's usage with the English word 'fear' for a number of reasons that will become clearer as I proceed, but above all because the noun 'awe' has no intransitive verb form and is therefore ill suited to expressing the kind of mental action Durkheim is describing. The concept of *crainte*—hereafter 'fear'—is essential for an understanding of the concept of the sacred in Durkheim, something I will demonstrate while drawing attention to its links with the concept of respect.

Durkheim introduces the notion of fear for the first time while attempting to undermine Tylor's theory of the 'double', namely his idea of a disembodied soul that can cause harm or be benevolent to the living according to the ways in which it is being treated. There is a gap, says Durkheim, a logical and psychological void, between the idea of a double set free in motion and that of a spirit which is the object of a cult:

...il ne suffit pas qu'un être inquiète son entourage pour qu'il semble être d'une autre nature que ceux dont il menace la tranquillité. Sans doute, dans le sentiment que le fidèle éprouve pour les choses qu'il adore, il entre toujours quelque réserve et quelque crainte; mais c'est une crainte *sui generis*, faite de respect plus que de frayeur, et où domine cette émotion très particulière qu'inspire à l'homme *la majesté*. L'idée de majesté est essentiellement religieuse. (Ibid.: 87, original emphases)

(...it is not enough for a being to produce anxiety<sup>3</sup> around him to be seen as partaking of a different nature than those whose peace he threatens. Undoubtedly, in the emotion the faithful feels for the things he adores, there is always some reserve and some fear; but this fear is *sui generis*, composed more of respect than of fright, and in it there dominates that very particular emotion which is prompted in people by *majesty*. The idea of majesty is essentially a religious one.)

3. Swain translates *inquiète* as 'disturb' (1915: 62).

This passage can be regarded as one of the keystones in the intellectual architecture of *The Elementary Forms*. A compound experience is being reduced to its constituent elements according to the following logical steps. Anxiety in its own right is not an emotion conducive to religious activity; the faithful always feels cautious (a qualified caution) and fearful in relation to the objects held in veneration; this fear has its own stamp, and among the component elements of it, respect is more prominent than fright; this feeling of fear is itself subordinate to another emotion that remains unnamed; the unnamed emotion, theoretically dominant, is a response to 'majesty'; and majesty is the essence of religion. Durkheim's dense writing succeeds in integrating into one single conceptual frame of reference what many authors would keep as separate entities. Furthermore, he introduces a new element—majesty—without which there would be no grounds for distinguishing his approach to fear, and consequently to religion, from those of many authors preceding and following him. The response to majesty differs from awe inasmuch as it has none of its passive connotations and does not lead to derivatives (such as 'awful' in this case). Majesty is 'out there': it is not an experience of the individual in the sense that awe is. Perhaps a king or an emperor would provide an exception. This substitution of the poetic and hence obscure notion of majesty for that of awe has far-reaching consequences, opening wide the doors for an appreciation of the place of aesthetic ideas and emotions in religious life—a leitmotiv of *The Elementary Forms*. Durkheim was to say no more on the subject of majesty, and its origins remain shrouded in mystery.

There are grounds for assuming that all collective representations fall under the category of majesty, and society as Durkheim conceives of it is inescapably majestic, especially society as effervescence. For Durkheim, the world of social effervescence is the realm of the sacred: 'C'est...dans ces milieux sociaux effervescents et de cette effervescence même que paraît être née l'idée religieuse' (ibid.: 313; '...the idea of religion seems to have been born out of such effervescent social contexts and of effervescence in its own right'). But there are seeming paradoxes here. In almost all of his ethnographic examples, effervescence derives from circumstances already defined as religious (see especially ibid.: 312 n. 1, 313): the motives for which crowds gather and reach a state of effervescence are the ceremonies whose religious nature effervescence is purported to have created. But for Durkheim, synchronic (psychological) causality is not on a par with diachronic (historical) causality: he can reverse cause and effect in a feedback motion according to the different levels of observation and abstraction. Indeed, he does so repeatedly. But the fact that the direction of causality varies according to shifts in context does not mean intellectual anarchy: effervescence leads to religious emotions, and the purpose of ceremonies with a religious stamp is to re-create effervescence. This Durkheimian idea of effervescence is greatly influenced by images of the French revolutionary mobs, and the French Revolution is the single instance in the book where Durkheim is prepared to conceive of a cult towards 'society and its essential ideas' (ibid.: 306) without any transfiguration at all, contrary to his main thesis on collective representations—a cult without moral

imperatives. The concept of majesty remains potentially close to that of effervescence, in the sense that both involve a quantum of energy and intensity.

Durkheim thus set in motion the analysis of a particular constellation of ideas and emotions. He will systematically come back to this chain of thoughts, building linkages between fear and respect, experimenting with different vantage-points, looking for new avenues, sometimes going round in circles—the impression can be quite labyrinthine. Two hundred pages or so later, he resumes his investigation into this territory:

Si telle espèce animale ou végétale est l'objet d'une *crainte révérentielle*, ce n'est pas en raison de ses propriétés spécifiques, puisque les membres humains du clan jouissent, quoique à un degré légèrement inférieur, du même privilège, et que la simple image de cette même plante ou de ce même animal inspire un *respect* encore plus prononcé. Les sentiments semblables, que ces différentes sortes de choses éveillent dans la conscience du fidèle et qui font leur nature sacrée, ne peuvent évidemment venir que d'un principe qui leur est commun à toutes indistinctement, aux emblèmes totémiques comme aux gens du clan et aux individus de l'espèce qui sert de totem. (Ibid.: 268–9; my emphases)

(If a certain species of animal or plant is the object of a *reverential fear*, this is not because of its peculiar qualities, since the human members of the clan enjoy this same privilege, albeit to a slightly lower degree, and since the mere image of this very plant or animal prompts *respect* to an even greater degree. The similar emotions these various kinds of things arouse in the consciousness of the believer, which determine their sacred character, can obviously derive only from some principle that they all possess indiscriminately, be they the totemic emblems, the members of the clan or the individuals of the species serving as totem.)

A range of objects, namely the totemic emblems, the human members of the clan, and the individual of the totemic species, cause feelings of one kind, namely reverential fear or respect (which are here equated). These feelings are evidence of the sacredness of the objects: the objects are sacred because of the feelings they cause. What gives unity to these feelings is a principle they share in common. Durkheim then proceeds to give a formal description of this principle:

Quand nous disons de ces principes que ce sont des forces, nous ne prenons pas le mot dans une acception métaphorique; ils agissent comme des forces véritables. Ce sont même, en un sens, des forces matérielles qui engendrent mécaniquement des effets physiques....

Mais *en même temps* qu'un aspect physique, elles ont un caractère moral. Quand on demande à l'indigène pourquoi il observe ces rites, il répond que les ancêtres les ont toujours observés et qu'il doit suivre leur exemple. Si donc il se comporte de telle ou telle manière avec les êtres totémiques, ce n'est pas seulement parce que les forces qui y résident sont d'abord physiquement redoutable, c'est qu'il se sent moralement obligé de se comporter ainsi; il a le sentiment qu'il obéit

à une sorte d'impératif, qu'il remplit un devoir. *Il n'a pas seulement pour les être sacrés de la crainte, mais du respect.* (Ibid.: 270–1; my emphases)

(When we say these principles are forces, we are not using the word in a metaphorical sense; they act like real forces. In a way, they even are material forces mechanically producing physical effects....

But *coincidentally* with this physical aspect, they possess a moral character. When asked why he observes such rites, the native replies that his ancestors have always done so, and he ought to follow their example. So if he behaves in a certain way towards the totemic beings, it is not merely because the forces residing in them are physically dangerous to approach, but rather that he feels himself morally obliged to behave in this way; he has the feeling he is obeying an imperative as it were, and he is fulfilling a duty. *What he feels with regard to the sacred beings is not only fear, but also respect.*)

Fear and respect correspond to different realities with separate representatives. Fear is the emotion felt when people are confronted with powers seen from the vantage-point of their physical might. Respect is what they feel towards these same powers when seen from the vantage-point of human legacy and continuity—what has been inherited from the dead forebears. Moral representations are linked to the fear of rupturing identity with the dead. Durkheim will later on write in that regard: '...le seul moyen que nous ayons de nous libérer des forces physiques est de leur opposer des forces collectives' (ibid.: 389; '...the only means we have at our disposal to free ourselves from physical forces is to confront them with collective ones'). Durkheim's concern with the origins of religious life justifies the speculative movement from fear to respect which is left unexplained by the juxtaposition of the two ideas in the phrase 'reverential fear'. In a time-space picture, respect follows fear, but in real life and in causal terms, both are lived at the same time. There is complementarity in the mental forces at work on the same object. I now turn to this notion, which requires some explanation.

### *Complementarity*

The revolutionary discoveries in quantum physics at the beginning of the century had repercussions far beyond the field of physics. Although Durkheim had embarked upon his course of intellectual action in pursuit of social anthropological problems prior to such discoveries, the elaboration of *The Elementary Forms* cannot be seen in isolation from the major scientific upheaval occurring at that time. There is no reason to suppose that Durkheim was directly influenced by the theory of relativity and its impact on rational thought, but the difficulties he encounters in the analysis of his object of study show striking parallels worthy of attention.

In 1927, the physicist Niels Bohr propounded his theory of complementarity, which was to put to rest one epistemological problem which had previously been considered insurmountable and which had appeared at the beginning of the century, when the concept of relativity was introduced in quantum physics. Bohr's revolutionary approach to the theory of knowledge brought about new ways of conceiving phenomena and of rational thinking at a time when the boundaries of classical causality had become too narrow. The problem appears with the identification of elementary particles which can be observed individually. The laws of classical physics can only apply to structures made of an almost unlimited number of atoms. At the level of observation, it is impossible in quantum physics to dissociate isolated elements and the instrumental apparatus that determines observation. The light which is necessary to identify a particle causes changes to occur in the position of that particle, and it is impossible to determine both the speed of the particle and its position *at the same time*. The theory of light in quantum physics which explains this phenomenon is at once a wave and a particle theory. Both views are correct, but they cannot be reconciled. The theory of complementarity brought a solution to this problem. It is unavoidable that the observer should modify what he is observing in the very process of observation, and the observer and the phenomenon cannot be separated. There is no other way of perceiving the phenomenon, and an elementary particle such as an electron cannot be observed without interfering with its state or its behaviour. A different apparatus is required in order to observe either state or behaviour, and this can never be done at the same time. In classical physics, the phenomenon always behaves in the same fashion whether it is observed or not, and objectivity can be achieved. But the objects of quantum physics are beyond its reach. Complementarity is the strange result of a peculiar problem of observation which does not take place only in the realm of quantum physics, but each time observation deals with objects beyond the reach of sensory perception. According to Bohr, the word complementarity is used 'to characterize the relationship between experiences obtained by different experimental arrangements and capable of visualization only by mutually exclusive ideas' (Bohr 1939: 271). Nevertheless, we have no other choice but to use the terms of classical causality in order to describe the results of observation (Levin 1979).<sup>4</sup>

I believe this to be the situation confronting Durkheim. The forces he describes are at once physical and moral forces (it is important to stress that they are the same forces). But he was not a reductionist and did not attempt to reduce either sort of force to the other. Rather, he was striving to describe complementary mental objects at a level of abstraction for which no language was available at that time. His theory of the sacred is not unified, but complementary. This should suffice to explain why the problem of simultaneity is such a dominant analytical theme of the book: '*...des forces qui les dominant et qui en même temps les*

4. This section relies on ideas developed by Levin in relation to Freud's work and the problem of observation in psychoanalysis.

soutiennent, c'est-à-dire en somme, des forces religieuses' (1912: 306, my emphasis; '...forces that dominate them and support them at the same time, i.e. in brief, religious forces.'). And: '...l'esprit se refuse à les [choses sacrées et choses profanes] penser *en même temps*' (ibid.: 342, my emphasis; '...the mind refuses to conceive of them [sacred things and profane things] at the same time.'). Similar examples abound. In two important footnotes, where he answers accusations of having paid undue attention to aspects of constraint in social life, Durkheim finds himself caught between Old and New Testament themes. The significance of the problem of simultaneity comes to the fore:

Parce que nous avons fait de la contrainte le *signe extérieur* auquel les faits sociaux peuvent le plus aisément se reconnaître et se distinguer des faits de psychologie individuelle, on a cru que, pour nous, la contrainte physique était tout l'essentiel de la vie sociale. En réalité, nous n'y avons jamais vu que l'expression matérielle et apparente d'un fait intérieur et profond qui, lui, est tout idéal; c'est *l'autorité morale*. Le problème sociologique—si l'on peut dire qu'il a y a un problème sociologique—consiste à chercher, à travers les différentes formes de contrainte extérieure, les différentes sortes d'autorité morale qui y correspondent, et à découvrir les causes qui ont déterminé ces dernières. En particulier, la question que nous traitons dans le présent ouvrage a pour principal objet de trouver sous quelle forme cette espèce particulière d'autorité morale qui est inhérente à tout ce qui est religieux a pris naissance et de quoi elle est formée. On verra d'ailleurs plus loin que, si nous faisons de la pression sociale un des caractères distinctifs des phénomènes sociologiques, nous n'entendons pas dire que ce soit le seul. Nous montrerons un autre aspect de la vie collective, presque opposé au précédent, mais non moins réel. (Ibid.: 298, n. 2, original emphases)

(Because I saw in constraint the *external sign* by which social facts can most readily be identified as such and be distinguished from the facts of individual psychology, some have understood this to mean that, in my view, physical constraint was the complete essence of social life. In truth, I never saw in it more than the concrete and visible expression of an internal and deep fact which itself is entirely ideal, namely *moral authority*. The sociological problem—if one can say that there is *one* sociological problem—consists in finding the different kinds of moral authority that correspond to the different forms of external constraint, and to discover the causes that have determined the former. In particular, the main object of the issue I address in the present work is to find out the form under which the particular type of moral authority inherent in all that is religious has originated and what constitutes it. In fact it will become possible later on to see that, if I regard social pressure as one of the distinctive features of sociological phenomena, by no means do I intend to say it is the only one. I will eventually show another aspect of collective life, almost the opposite of the former, but no less real.)

Some parallels with what I have been discussing above in relation to complementarity are also apparent in another footnote, where Durkheim refers to the benevolent powers that sustain and protect man:

Tel est l'autre aspect de la société qui, *en même temps* qu'impérative, nous apparaît, comme bonne et bienveillante. Elle nous domine et elle nous assiste. Si nous avons défini le fait social par le premier de ces caractères plutôt que par le second, c'est qu'il est *plus facilement observable parce qu'il se traduit par des signes extérieurs et visibles*; mais il s'en faut que nous ayons jamais songé à nier la réalité du second. (Ibid.: 303, n. 1, my emphases)

(Such is the other side of society which, *at the same time* as being imperative, also appears to us as good and benevolent. It dominates us, and it assists us. If I have defined social facts by the first of these features rather than by the second, this is because it is *easier to observe since it is manifest in external and visible signs*; but by no means have I ever thought of denying the reality of the second.)

Durkheim needs to elaborate this issue further, and here lies the main point of disagreement between himself and other writers on the subject: he grants analytical priority to respect over fear by focusing on the moral dilemmas of religious life rather than the unrivalled authority and power with which it is usually associated. But he will not abandon fear altogether in the process:

...si la société n'obtenait de nous ces concessions et ces sacrifices que par une contrainte matérielle, elle ne pourrait éveiller en nous que l'idée d'une force physique à laquelle il nous faut céder par nécessité, non d'une puissance morale comme celles que les religions adorent. Mais en réalité, l'empire qu'elle exerce sur les consciences tient beaucoup moins à la suprématie physique dont elle a le privilège qu'à l'autorité morale dont elle est investie. Si nous déférons à ses ordres, ce n'est pas seulement parce qu'elle est armée de manière à triompher de nos résistances; c'est, avant tout, parce qu'elle est l'objet d'un véritable respect. (Ibid.: 296)

(...were society to secure these renunciations and sacrifices on our part merely through physical constraint, it could only give rise within us to the idea of a physical might to which we must yield out of sheer necessity, and not that of a moral power such as those which religions adore. But in reality, the power society holds over our consciousness owes much less to the physical supremacy to which it has the right than to the moral authority vested in it. If we comply with its orders, it is not merely because it has the power to crush our defenses; it is primarily because it is the object of genuine respect.)<sup>5</sup>

5. Swain translates *véritable respect* as 'venerable respect' (1915: 207).

Respect is seen in connection with moral and collective forces, not physical ones. Immediately following this passage, for the first time in three hundred pages, Durkheim presents his first definition of respect:

On dit d'un sujet, individuel ou collectif, qu'il inspire le respect quand la représentation qui l'exprime dans les consciences est douée d'une telle force que, automatiquement, elle suscite ou inhibe des actes, *abstraction faite de toute considération relative aux effets utiles ou nuisibles des uns et des autres....* Le respect est l'émotion que nous éprouvons quand nous sentons cette pression intérieure et toute spirituelle se produire en nous. Ce qui nous détermine alors, ce ne sont pas les avantages ou les inconvénients de l'attitude qui nous est prescrite ou recommandée; c'est la façon dont nous nous représentons celui qui nous la recommande ou qui nous la prescrit. (Ibid., original emphasis)

(We say that a subject, whether individual or collective, inspires respect when the representation expressing the subject in the realm of consciousness is endowed with such a force as automatically to cause or inhibit actions, *any consideration of their useful or harmful effects notwithstanding....* Respect is the emotion we experience when we feel this pressure which is internal and entirely spiritual taking place inside us. Our decisions in such circumstances are not determined by the benefits or drawbacks of the attitude prescribed or recommended to us, but rather by the ways in which we represent to ourselves the person recommending or prescribing it.)

Much further on, some hundred and fifty pages later, as he seeks to trace the causes of the system of prohibitions, Durkheim propounds his second definition of respect, which is almost identical with the first, though he is now concerned with prohibitions, not injunctions:

[Le système des interdits] est logiquement impliqué dans la notion même du sacré. Tout ce qui est sacré est objet de respect et tout sentiment de respect se traduit, chez celui qui l'éprouve, par des mouvements d'inhibitions. (Ibid.: 453).....

([The system of prohibitions] is logically implied in the very notion of sacredness. All that is sacred is the object of respect, and every emotion of respect finds expression, in the person who feels it, in a tendency towards inhibition.)

He hastens to add that this is not sufficient, for there are beings which are the objects of respect, yet without being protected by strict systematic prohibitions. The reason for the powerful ritual precautions must lie with 'the extraordinary contagiousness of sacredness' ('l'extraordinaire contagiosité du caractère sacré'; *ibid.*: 455). And further, 'if the contagiousness of sacredness helps to explain the system of prohibitions, how is it to be accounted for?' ('si la contagiosité du sacré contribue à expliquer le système des interdits, comme s'explique-t-elle elle-même?'; *ibid.*: 459). Durkheim dismisses the association of ideas as a causal source of

explanation. His interpretation leaves no doubt as to the absolute priority of emotions:

Ce n'est pas parce que l'animal totémique a tel aspect ou telle propriété qu'il inspire des sentiments religieux; ceux-ci résultent de causes tout à fait étrangères à la nature de l'objet sur lequel ils viennent se fixer. Ce qui les constitue, ce sont *les impressions de réconfort et de dépendance*, que l'action de la société provoque dans les consciences. Par elles-mêmes, ces émotions ne sont liées à l'idée d'aucun objet déterminé; mais, parce que ce sont des émotions et qu'elles sont particulièrement intenses, elles sont aussi éminemment contagieuses.... La contagion n'est donc pas une sorte de procédé secondaire par lequel le caractère sacré, une fois acquis, se propage; c'est le procédé même par lequel il s'acquiert. (Ibid.: 462–3, my emphasis)

(It is not because the totemic animal has a certain aspect or property that it inspires religious sentiments; these result from causes wholly alien to the nature of the object to which they become attached. What fashions them are *the feelings of support and dependence* which the working of society triggers at the level of moral conscience. Of themselves, these emotions are not linked to the idea of any particular object; but since these are emotions, and furthermore since they are especially intense emotions, they are also eminently contagious.... Hence contagion is not a kind of secondary process whereby sacredness spreads once it has been acquired: it is the very process by which it is acquired.)

Having stated the importance of emotions as creative forces, however, Durkheim ventures into a dim interpretation of the mechanism of contagion which seems to be based on a model of fission. The emotions cannot be contained because of their intensity, which explains their contagious character. Durkheim heavily relies on the contagiousness of sacred things in order to account for many aspects of his dichotomy between the sacred and the profane: 'elle explique aisément [*sic*] l'extrême rigueur des interdits qui séparent le sacré du profane' ('it easily [*sic*] explains the extreme strictness of the prohibitions that keeps the sacred apart from the profane'; *ibid.*: 457). In spite of the explanatory powers that he ascribes to contagion, it is remarkable that such an important notion should escape analysis. In the realm of philosophical speculation, Durkheim's main analytic tool—deduction—can be seen as the equivalent of contagion. The notion is left unexamined for this very reason: it cannot account for itself.

In his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*, written well before *The Elementary Forms*, Robertson Smith has one passage that, in other circumstances, might well address Durkheim's methods of investigation by way of criticism:

The word 'holy' has had a long and complicated history, and has various shades of meaning according to the connection in which it is used. It is not possible, by mere analysis of the modern use of the word, to arrive at a single definite conception of the meaning of holiness; nor is it possible to fix on any one of the modern

aspects of the conception, and say that it represents the fundamental idea from which all other modifications of the idea can be deduced. The primitive conception of holiness, to which the modern variations of the idea must be traced back, belonged to a habit of thought with which we have lost touch, and we cannot hope to understand it by the aid of logical discussion, but only by studying it on its own ground as it is exhibited in the actual working of early religion. (1927 [1889]: 91)

Side by side with the evolutionist assumption is a rejection of logical deduction as a means of exploring contrasted mental attitudes, one of the very dynamic principles at the foundation of Durkheim's analysis. To this day, there is a timeless quality to *The Elementary Forms* which makes anthropologists uneasy.

In discussing Robertson Smith and the ambiguity of the sacred, Durkheim introduces yet another side to respect, this time with the emphasis on love, but the linkage with fear persists. Religious forces, he writes, are of two kinds. On the one hand, there are beneficent forces, guardians of the physical and moral order, sources of life and of all qualities men hold dear; on the other hand there are evil and impure powers generating disorder, causing death, driving people to sacrilege. The respect which the former inspire is mixed with love and gratitude, while the only emotions men have concerning the latter are fear: 'une crainte où il entre généralement de l'horreur' ('a fear in which there is usually some horror'; 1912: 585). Durkheim concludes that religious life revolves around two opposite poles between which there exists the same opposition as between the pure and the impure, the saintly and the sacrilegious, the divine and the diabolical (ibid.: 586). But most importantly, he adds:

*Mais en même temps que ces deux aspects de la vie religieuse s'opposent l'un à l'autre, il existe entre eux une étroite parenté. D'abord, ils soutiennent tous deux le même rapport avec les êtres profanes: ceux-ci doivent s'abstenir de tout rapport avec les choses impures comme avec les choses très saintes. Les premières ne sont pas moins interdites que les secondes; elles sont également retirées de la circulation. C'est dire qu'elles sont aussi sacrées. Sans doute les sentiments qu'inspirent les unes et les autres ne sont pas identiques: autre chose est le respect, autre chose le dégoût et l'horreur. Cependant, pour que les gestes soient les mêmes dans les deux cas, il faut que les sentiments exprimés ne diffèrent pas en nature. Et en effet, il y a de l'horreur dans le respect religieux, surtout quant il est très intense, et la crainte qu'inspirent les puissances malignes n'est généralement pas sans avoir quelque caractère révérentiel.* (Ibid., my emphasis)

*(But if these two aspects of the religious life oppose one another, there is at the same time a close kinship between them. In the first place, both are in a similar position with regard to profane beings: these must equally abstain from any form of contact with things impure as with things most holy. The former are no less forbidden than the latter: they are equally withdrawn from circulation. That is to say, they are sacred too. Surely the emotions that both inspire are not identical: respect is one thing, disgust and horror another. Yet, for the behaviour to be the same in both cases, the emotions expressed must not differ in nature. And in effect, there is horror in religious respect, especially when it is very intense, and*

*the fear inspired by malign powers is generally not without a certain reverential character.)*

This was a daring interpretation at the time. Durkheim reaches this fundamental conclusion, with its stress on the importance of emotional intensity, on the basis of his interpretation of what he calls ‘piacular rites’. He had earlier stated his concern to undermine the idea that primitive religious conceptions must be traced back to feelings of weakness and dependence, awe and anxiety, that took hold of humans when they entered into a relationship with the world. Such an interpretation depicts humans as the victim of a kind of nightmare they themselves created, whereby they would see themselves surrounded by hostile and fearsome powers which the purpose of rites was to appease (ibid.: 320). Durkheim had then submitted this representation to the test of an antithetic reality:

Ce qui est à la racine du totémisme, ce sont, en définitive, des sentiments de joyeuse confiance plus que de terreur et de compression. Si l’on fait abstraction des rites funéraires—côté sombre de toute religion—le culte totémique se célèbre au milieu de chants, de danses, de représentations dramatiques.... Les dieux jaloux et terribles n’apparaissent que plus tard dans l’évolution religieuse. C’est que les sociétés primitives ne sont pas des sortes de Léviathan qui accablent l’homme de l’énormité de leur pouvoir et le soumettent à une dure discipline; il se donne à elles spontanément et sans résistance. (Ibid.: 320–1)

(In fine, what lie at the root of totemism are feelings of joyful trust rather than terror and crushing. If one abstracts from funerary rites—the dark<sup>6</sup> side of every religion—the totemic cult is a celebration in the midst of songs, dances, and dramatic performances.... Awful and jealous gods appear later in the evolution of religious life. The point is that primitive societies are not some sort of Leviathan which overwhelm man by their awful power and submit him to a most severe discipline; he gives himself to them of his own free will and without resistance.)

He then goes back to the same theme once more:

On voit combien il s’en faut que les religions primitives soient filles de l’angoisse et de la crainte, puisque les rites qui traduisent des émotions douloureuses y sont relativement rares. (Ibid.: 580)

(We see how far primitive religions are from being the products [lit. the daughters] of anxiety<sup>7</sup> and fear, since rites expressing painful emotions are relatively rare.)

6. Swain translates *côté sombre de toute religion* as ‘the sober side of every religion’ (1915: 224).

7. Here, Swain translates *angoisse* as ‘agony’ (1915: 406).

Durkheim seems to have lost from sight the balance of feelings that informs his core argument, and this poses problems. Mourning is not a rare occurrence, and furthermore, Durkheim deduces his theory of the sacred and the profane from his reading of the ethnography of rites which are emblematic of what he himself describes in terms of fear:

Tout malheur, tout ce qui est de mauvais augure, tout ce qui inspire des sentiments d'angoisse ou de crainte nécessite un *piaculum* et, par conséquent, est appelé *piaculaire*. (Ibid.: 557)

(Every misfortune, everything which is a bad omen, everything that inspires feelings of anxiety<sup>8</sup> or fear requires a *piaculum*: hence we call it *piacular*.)

One sentence in particular expresses in no uncertain terms the direction of the causal link Durkheim privileges: 'On ne pleure pas le mort parce qu'on le craint, on le craint parce qu'on le pleure' ('Men do not weep for the dead because they fear them; they fear them because they weep for them'; *ibid.*: 573). This *technique du corps* analysis forms an attempt to derive fear from respect, contrary to several other attempts in the opposite direction. It amounts to a dismissal of fear as a driving force. There is evidence of some intense intellectual struggle here, and the lack of clarity in the overall picture does not necessarily imply a lack of consistency. Attention may be deflected by the shifting lines of enquiry owing to the nature of the multifaceted demonstration, but there is no doubt that Durkheim is moving away from the primary impact of emotions. In doing so, he is also abandoning the elementary forms. Admittedly, it is not easy to present this kind of argument in text-book fashion.

Forty years later, Evans-Pritchard himself was not immune from contradiction when he came to tackle similar issues. With regard to explanations of primitive religions, he wrote:

Intellectualist interpretations were succeeded by emotionalist interpretations and they by psychoanalytical interpretations. Religion was discussed and explained in terms of association of ideas, of personification of natural phenomena, of awe, of thrill, of fear, anxiety and frustration, of projection, and so forth. Most of these theories have long ago been discredited as naive introspective guesses. Certainly one cannot speak of any specifically religious emotion for the Nuer. (1956: 312)

It would be an over-simplification and a misunderstanding to say, like some missionaries who live among them, that Nuer religion is a religion of fear:

It is true that Nuer, like everyone else, fear death, bereavement, sickness, and other troubles, and that it is precisely in such situations that they so often pray and

8. Here, Swain translates *angoisse* as 'sorrow' (1915: 389).

sacrifice.... But we cannot say that their religion is simply one of fear, which is, moreover, a very complex state of mind, and one not easy to define or assess. On the contrary, it is because Nuer are afraid of these misfortunes that one might speak of their religion as one of hope and comfort. But I think what fits the facts best is to say that it is a religion of both fear and trust, which may be opposites but are not contraries, or that the Nuer attitude towards Spirit might be described as ambiguous, and perhaps as ambivalent. (Ibid.)

So we come back ultimately to a psychoanalytic notion, ambivalence, which Evans-Pritchard does not subject to analysis. Also, the statement concerning fear and trust as opposites but not contraries is confusing when left unexplained. There are many points of agreement here with Durkheim, who none the less, as we saw, took a different position when he ventured into this 'very complex state of mind...not easy to define or assess' (ibid.). Evans-Pritchard goes on to discuss the sense of guilt, which is 'not just fear, but a complex psychological state' (ibid.: 313), pointing at its moral significance:

It is then not so much regarded as a natural crisis which can be overcome by spiritual aid as a moral crisis brought about by human action, and of which the outcome, it is thought, may depend on so delicate and indiscernible a factor as intention. Faced with so complex and variable a problem, to speak of Nuer religion simply as one of fear or awe, or as a projection or as cathartic, and so forth, must be a distortion, and one that does not greatly help us to understand it. All emotions enter into it; they blend; and there is nothing constant that we can say is characteristic of the religious life, which is rather to be defined in terms of disposition than of emotion. (Ibid.)

The separability of emotions from dispositions is questionable. I will not determine whether Evans-Pritchard was the wiser for abandoning the difficulty he so clearly identified. For his part, Durkheim was determined to untangle this web of emotions, and while his endeavour has fascinated generations of scholars, it is too easily forgotten that he was most concerned with the borderline between emotions and ideas and its implications. His theory of respect is equally an ethnography of respect. It was a different kind of ethnography, and there certainly remains much to be done in that direction.

### *Beyond Dualisms: The Principle of Integration*

What follows is an attempt to show that the integration of opposite spheres of experience and their corresponding realities is one analytical principle that plays a far greater role in Durkheim's thinking than the separation brought about by the

dualisms he builds on. The integration of fear and respect is emblematic of an intellectual attitude in Durkheim that extends to almost any topic he explores.

As a writer, Durkheim can be quite emotional (in sharp contrast to Mauss), something which does not come across in the various English translations of *The Elementary Forms*. He is literally immersed in his material. His own translation of some passages in Spencer and Gillen has a emotional ring which is clearly added on top of the original when one pays close attention to details. He is far from a passionate writer, like Lucien Fèvre for instance: he shows restraint, yet one can feel a quantum of 'effervescence' in every other page of *The Elementary Forms* running like a thread through the carefully crafted arguments. In the philosophical tradition—responsible for his greater freedom of action as a writer—his style of writing in *The Elementary Forms* comes closest to Rousseau in *Le Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*.

Throughout *The Elementary Forms*, Durkheim rarely keeps the words 'idea' and 'emotion' separate, oscillating between them, as it were, with the odd exception that Lévi-Strauss chose to cite (1962: p. 142) in *Le Totémisme Aujourd'hui*:

Une opposition encore plus marquée est celle qui existe entre les choses sacrées et les choses profanes. Elles se repoussent et se contredisent avec une telle force que l'esprit se refuse à les penser en même temps. Elles se chassent mutuellement de la conscience.

Ainsi, entre la logique de la pensée religieuse et la logique de la pensée scientifique il n'y a pas un abîme. L'une et l'autre sont faites des mêmes éléments essentiels, mais inégalement et différemment développés. Ce qui paraît surtout caractériser la première, c'est un goût naturel aussi bien pour les confusions intempérantes que pour les contrastes heurtés. Elle est volontiers excessive dans les deux sens. Quand elle rapproche, elle confond; quand elle distingue, elle oppose. Elle ne connaît pas la mesure et les nuances, elle recherche les extrêmes; elle emploie, par suite, les mécanismes logiques avec une sorte de gaucherie, mais elle n'en ignore aucun. (Durkheim 1912: 342)

(The contrast between sacred and profane things is even more acute. They repel and contradict each other with such a force that the mind refuses to conceive of them at the same time. They mutually banish each other from consciousness.

Thus, there is no gulf between the logic of religious thought and that of scientific thought. Both are made of the same core elements, yet developed in unequal and different fashion. What most seems to characterize the former is a natural inclination towards both intemperate conflations and clashing contrasts. Religious thought is readily prone to excess in both directions. When it brings together, it conflates; when it distinguishes, it opposes. It ignores moderation and nuances, it strives towards extremes; hence it is awkward when it applies the mechanisms of logic, but there are none it is unaware of.)

Durkheim saw in the elementary forms of religious life he was striving to identify much more than a 'logic'. The remarkable language in the passage just quoted

sounds alien to his whole approach. On the other hand, Durkheim could offer no better illustration of his own way of thinking were he to apply such reflections to his own reasoning. Here is a good example of the confusion between subject and object. This is a rare gift in the great conceptual thinkers, who are able to espouse for their own purposes the very dynamic principles they seek to understand and thus reveal untold aspects. It is in the true sense of the word a communion—which does not mean that it lies beyond criticism.

Durkheim thinks in terms of dualisms, but, unlike Lévi-Strauss he is not a dialectical thinker (see Pickering 1984: 148). One cannot read his *Elementary Forms* as the dialectics of love and constraint or of authority and desire. Rather, Durkheim<sup>9</sup> is constantly aiming at unity between the opposites he creates. His most precious legacy is his principle of integration; witness what he says of his theory of knowledge:

Ainsi renouvelée, la théorie de la connaissance semble donc appelée à réunir les avantages contraires des deux théories rivales.... Elle affirme, comme réelle, la dualité de notre vie intellectuelle, mais elle l'explique, et par des causes naturelles. (1912: 26–7)

(Thus renewed, the theory of knowledge seems therefore destined to bring together the contrary benefits of the two rival theories [empiricism and apriorism].... It affirms as a reality the dual nature of our intellectual life, but it accounts for it, and what's more, it accounts for it by natural causes.)

Rather than belabouring the separation of opposites, Durkheim is engaging in systematic attempts to find some form of integration between them. Here is yet another good illustration:

Cette dualité [corps et âme] n'exclut pas, mais, au contraire, implique une unité profonde et une pénétration intime des deux êtres ainsi différenciés. (Ibid.: 79; see also ibid.: 319 n. 1)

(Such dualism [body and soul] does not preclude a profound unity and an intimate penetration of the two entities thus differentiated; on the contrary, it implies it.)

Only when he introduces the idea of force will Durkheim provide a reason for this last statement:

Il n'est peut-être pas une religion où le mana originel, qu'il soit unique ou plural, se soit résolu tout entier en un nombre bien défini d'êtres discrets et incommunicables les uns aux autres; chacun d'eux garde toujours un nimbe d'impersonnalisme qui le rend apte à entrer dans des combinaisons nouvelles, et cela non par suite

9. I must stress that, throughout this paper, I am only concerned with the Durkheim of *The Elementary Forms*; I cannot speak for what he may have said elsewhere.

d'une simple survivance, mais parce qu'il est dans la nature des forces religieuses de ne pouvoir s'individualiser complètement. (Ibid.: 287)

(There is perhaps no religion where the original mana, be it single or plural, has been entirely resolved into a well-defined number of beings which are discrete and without mutual communication; each one of them always retains a halo of impersonality which makes it well suited to enter into new combinations, not as a result of mere survival, but because it is in the nature of religious forces that they cannot be perfectly individualized.)

The situation equally applies to respect and fear, which cannot be construed separately. Durkheim says of the sacred and the profane: 'Il faut d'autant plus de précautions pour les tenir séparés que, tout en s'opposant l'un à l'autre, ils tendent à se confondre l'un dans l'autre' (ibid.: 457; 'Precautions to keep them apart are all the more necessary, since, while they stand opposed one to the other, they also tend to merge one into the other').

### *Reverential life*

Several passages of *The Elementary Forms* provide evidence that Durkheim is equating religion with respect—never with fear—and the two are even confounded:

Ainsi, le milieu dans lequel nous vivons nous apparaît comme peuplé de forces à la fois impérieuses et secourables, augustes et bienfaisantes, avec lesquelles nous sommes en rapports. Puisqu'elles exercent sur nous une pression dont nous avons conscience, nous sommes nécessités à les localiser hors de nous, comme nous faisons pour les causes objectives de nos sensations. Mais d'un autre côté, les sentiments qu'elles nous inspirent diffèrent en nature de ceux que nous avons pour de simples choses sensibles. Tant que celles-ci sont réduites à leurs caractères empiriques tels qu'ils se manifestent dans l'expérience vulgaire, tant que l'imagination religieuse n'est pas venue les métamorphoser, nous n'avons pour elles rien qui ressemble à du respect et elles n'ont rien de ce qu'il faut pour nous élever au-dessus de nous-mêmes. (Ibid.: 303–4)

(The environment in which we live appears to us to be peopled by powers [*forces*] at once imperious and helpful, majestic and benevolent, to which we relate. These forces exert pressure on us, and being conscious of this, we have no choice but to locate them outside us, just as we do for the objective causes of our sensations. However, the emotions they foster in us differ in nature from those we have for simple tangible things. As long as the latter remain reduced to their empirical characteristics as manifest in everyday experience, as long as the religious imagination has not transformed them, we feel nothing concerning them which comes

close to respect, and they possess nothing of what would be necessary to raise us towards transcendence.)

By analogy, Durkheim extends this line of reasoning to ideas and men, monarchs who were perceived as the direct representatives of divinity: 'la simple déférence qu'inspirent les hommes investis de hautes fonctions sociales n'est pas d'une autre nature que le respect religieux' (ibid.: 304; 'the nature of the very respect shown towards men vested with high social office is in no way different from religious respect'). And: 'Le sentiment que l'on éprouve dans ces circonstances est si proche parent du sentiment religieux que bien des peuples les ont confondus' (ibid.: 305; 'The emotion one feels in those circumstances is so closely related to the religious emotion that many peoples have confused them'). Applying a similar line of reasoning to the totemic emblem, Durkheim states that this is the clan thought of under its concrete form, and since this form also includes the physical beings whose name the clan bears, these would also have provoked the same emotions as those attached to the emblem itself: 'puisque ce dernier est l'objet d'un respect religieux, ils devaient inspirer un respect du même genre et apparaître comme sacrés' (ibid.: 317; 'since the emblem is the object of religious respect, individual beings must have inspired respect of a similar kind and hence appear as sacred'). Here is clear evidence of a chain of thoughts linking religious sentiments, respect, and sacredness. More strongly stated, perhaps: 'une chose est sacrée parce qu'elle inspire, à un titre quelconque, un sentiment collectif de respect qui la soustrait aux choses profanes' (p. 380; 'a thing becomes sacred because it inspires, one way or the other, a collective feeling of respect which separates it from profane things'). And finally: 'l'interdit religieux implique nécessairement la notion du sacré; il vient du respect que l'objet sacré inspire et il a pour but d'empêcher qu'il soit manqué à ce respect' (ibid.: 480; 'the religious prohibition necessarily implies the notion of the sacred; it derives from the respect the sacred object inspires and its aim is to prevent a lack of respect for it'). Religious life becomes almost synonymous with reverential life.

I turn next to Godfrey Lienhardt, whose *Divinity and Experience* (1961) is an undisputed masterpiece in the social anthropology of religion.

### Thek, *Divinity and Experience*

*Divinity and Experience* builds on aspects of Durkheim's work in *The Elementary Forms*. Lienhardt's analysis of a Dinka concept which he translated as respect may help to understand the relevance of Durkheim's position. I merely point to similar difficulties in language analysis on both sides of the fence, as it were, and stress the different solutions to the problem after a fifty-year gap.

Durkheim was striving to shed light on one particular emotion, respect, within a set of mental attitudes constituted as a system, and his struggle was with his own

conceptual language: there was no problem of translation involved. Lienhardt engages in a dialogue with the Dinka concept of *thek*, the difficulty lying in part with conversion into the English language. But nevertheless similar problems come to the fore involving the same objects. The following statement may have some bearing on the reasons for this:

No social phenomenon can be adequately studied merely in the language and categories of thought in which the people among whom it is found represent it to themselves. (1964: 123)

*Thek*, 'respect', is 'a word which in Dinka has two strands of meaning, related to each other in that language, but which, in English, we are forced to tease apart' (ibid.: 124–5). 'Only one of these strands is conveyed by the word "respect"... what we should call "good manners". It involves particularly a firm control of personal self-assertiveness, and to a greater or lesser degree a conspicuous self-effacement which demonstrates that aggressive intentions are absent' (ibid.: 125). This is what Durkheim called the inhibition of action, but the definition of what kind of action receives more qualification here:

It is from the element of demonstrated unaggressiveness in respectful behaviour that the word *thek* derives its second range of meanings, which may be summed up as 'avoidance'. In this sense a man is required to *thek* his wife's mother, and to a smaller extent her father.... In the sense of avoidance, they may be used where no respectfulness in our sense is present. (Ibid.: 125)

Let us consider how Lienhardt addresses the problem of complementarity in comparison to Durkheim:

It is difficult to discover to what extent the Dinka regard the various senses of a word as related to each other.... *Thek* is thus a compound of behaviour which shows unaggressiveness and deference to its object, and of behaviour which shows esteem for it. The 'respect' which it denotes is also connected with a formal shyness which the Dinka call *ryoc* (a verb which also has the senses of 'to fear', or 'to be shamefaced' in the original sense), [in a footnote at this point: As the virtue, that is, of being 'shamefast', bashful or modest.] and which indicates a measure of withdrawal and reticence in those who are said to feel it. As the most extreme expression of unaggressiveness and self-effacement which can be made is a deliberate shrinking from contact, so the extreme expression of formal *thek* is formal avoidance. (Ibid.: 126)

Lienhardt then goes on to analyse what the formal respect relationships have in common. Creating subtle linkages in a very Durkheimian fashion, he is led to the following:

If, as we suggest, 'respect' goes with this gratitude for life, we may see why 'respect' is not expected between coeval clansmen and women, for by the rules of exogamy they must not provide each other with children....

The clan-divinity is respected as the source of life of the clan.... a generative power in each clan is represented by its clan-divinity, and respect for the clan-divinity is related to this representation. Hence husbands respect the clan-divinity of their wives, who will bear their children, and wives respect those of their husbands on account of the children they bear to them' (Ibid.: 129–30).

This carries conviction. It goes much further than Durkheim ever did on the subject, but there remain noteworthy parallels between Lienhardt's notion of 'gratitude for life' and Durkheim's concept of majesty. One telling remark in a footnote provides yet another parallel:

It must again be emphasized, however, that it is not possession of a common clan-divinity which makes intercourse incestuous. It is a human relationship, genealogically counted or, in some cases, strongly suspected. Consequently it is rather that the knowledge or suspicion of incest evokes in the guilty parties the notion of the *anger* of the clan-divinity, than that the notion of the clan-divinity evokes the notion of the guilt of incest. (Ibid.: 130, n. 1, my emphasis)

In terms of the new directions in causality, this last statement is akin to Durkheim saying that 'men do not weep for the dead because they fear them; they fear them because they weep for them' (see above). But closer to our point of our comparison is the fact that the anger of the clan-divinity is here left unexamined. The closest we come to in that direction is this ethnographic detail:

The respect and even awe, *as it would appear from descriptions*, with which masters of the fishing-spear eat their small pieces of raw flesh, and which the women certainly show when venerating the [divinity] Flesh in the bodies of men, is an extreme form of the *thek* already described as 'respect' for the emblems of other clan-divinities. The masters of the fishing-spear are said to be 'afraid' or 'shy'...when they eat it. (Ibid.: 144, my emphasis)

Lienhardt's interpretation focuses on the ostentatious display of unaggressiveness, but he does not address the issue of why this should be so. Painstaking efforts in that direction must surely be grounded in a propensity to feel aggressive towards certain objects. Attempts to tame or reverse the aggressive feelings must obey a reason and entertain possible connections with fear. Lienhardt had already suggested that 'it cannot be observed that the Dinka have any desire to use those emblems [of clan-divinities] in ways which are prohibited' (ibid.: 131). Lienhardt is not interested in displacement—if he were, his last statement would demand more explanation.

Something of the kind occurs in David Parkin's *Sacred Void* (1991). Part of his concluding chapter is a discussion of problems similar to those discussed in

this paper (see *ibid.*: 218–19), but using a different approach. I will restrict my remarks to the topic of fear proper. Parkin writes:

The ambivalence in which the Vaya [secret association of elders] are held reflects the attitude towards the animal with which they are associated. While the sheep is characterized as an animal of peace, the hyena is both *feared and revered* (*ibid.*: 152, my emphasis)... People's apprehension of the Vaya merges with that of the hyena itself: together the Vaya and the hyena embody and evoke in people a *respectful fear*. (*Ibid.*: 154, my emphasis)

He adds elsewhere:

The [Kaya elders including the Vaya] are certainly sometimes feared...but it is not a fear which is based on their being sacred or divine figures. It is very much a practical fear of them as ordinary mortals who have access to powers which their own human frailties may tempt them to abuse. (*Ibid.*: 224)

While not denying this, the extent to which these elders can be deemed ordinary while having access to extraordinary powers remains ambiguous. Parkin clearly states that fear plays a role in this context, but he suggests that cleansing/expulsion rather than awe informs what he translates as the Giriama notion (or version?) of the sacred. Here, once again, it seems difficult to conceive of a concern for purification without making fear a motive for it. This kind of fear requires conceptualization.

Some eighty years after the publication of *The Elementary Forms* in its original French version, ethnographers who choose to do so remain confronted with problems defined in terms similar to those Durkheim first laid out. The decision to grant analytical priority to either respect or fear has often been determined by personal judgement and by the need for balance in the literature. If at one time more weight was given to authoritarian motives in the interpretation of religious phenomena, the reaction has been a tendency to favour more introspective humanist approaches. Each time a contribution has been made in that direction, tremendous progress was achieved. I have tried to argue that the need for balance lies not only with an internal dialogue with the discipline, but with the unfragmented object itself. If there were no correspondence between ideas and emotions, the former would have no foothold in reality. The arbitrary separation between the two can only lead to an incomplete picture of the complementary mental attitudes that often constitute the moral core of religious life. In this sense, the paths along which emotions travel, evolve, and are subject to transformation still pose formidable problems of ethnographic description and analysis.

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