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Non-institutional Religion in Modern Society

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This is the lecture given by Meerten ter Borg upon accepting the Chair in Non-institutional Religion in Modern Society at the University of Leiden, Netherlands. It opens by outlining a theoretical model which explains why religion is a timeless phenomenon. It goes on to give an impression of the relationship between institutional and non-institutional religion. Then it suggests what the causes are of the growing importance of religion in modern society. It then uses the theoretical model to make it clear why this so-called comeback of religion is partly non-institutional. The conclusion provides a few examples of non-institutional religion.

Introduction

Religion is a hot topic,[1] but nevertheless secularization is progressing as rapidly as ever before (Bernts *et al.* 2007). Apparently, the much talked-about resurrection of religion takes place beyond the constraints of the traditional religious institutions, such as the churches. This is why a chair has been established to study this topic of religion, as it exists outside church walls.

But how should we conceive of non-institutional religion? And where can we find it? I will attempt to offer a few hypotheses.

Non-institutional religion cannot be understood without a general theory about human beings as religious creatures. First of all, I will attempt to provide an outline of such a theory. Subsequently, I will seek to clarify why it is that religion is gaining in importance at this particular time, while church attendance continues to decline. I will show that this revived

religion is, to an important extent, non-institutional. After that, I will give a few examples of non-institutional religion, from which it will become clear how I intend to study it, and what its relevance is.

Religion as an anthropological category

As for the theoretical exercise about human beings as religious creatures: I will ask you to forget everything you know or think you know about religion for a moment. My proposition is that religion is a consequence of the imaginative powers human beings possess. These powers give people the option of transcendence. Transcendence is not necessarily something religious. I am referring to the word's literal meaning: to transcend. Human beings are capable of transcending the limits of what is given in the here and now.[2] They can push back the borders of their world beyond the immediate horizons of space and time, beyond the perceptible. It allows them to make plans, and to fantasize. They can imagine worlds that do not exist yet, or will never exist. They can transcend their own physical existence. They can do so by inventing machinery that expands the possibilities of their bodies into quasi-infinity. People are also capable of imagining dimensions to which physical creatures have no access, and where they can continue to live after their bodies have expired once and for all.

So they can imagine other worlds, and imagine themselves in those worlds. Those worlds that do not exist yet can be utopias, or five-year plans or business plans, or virtual worlds such as the Second Life website, or concepts of the afterlife, heaven and hell. The impact of those images can have a significant impact on reality here and now. Think of what the image of hell has wrought in millions of lives. Or think of the impact a business plan can have on a bank's decision to extend credit, or the consequences of a career plan, drawn up by a naive student.

That is how the capacity of imagination determines our lives, as well as the direction and the purpose people give to life. In the course of their lives, people jointly develop the sense-making systems on which their lives are based.

To a certain extent, imagination should be conceived of as a group process. The ability to transcend may be an individual quality, but it is nevertheless enabled by society. Most people would not get far with their powers of imagination if these were not fed by their fellow human beings. Images that do not resonate with other people don't count. The social aspect of imagination has its own dynamic, on which I cannot dwell on this occasion,[3] but which we should keep in mind.

This human capability has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that it enables people to create their own worldview, and therefore also, in part, their own world. This is how a kaleidoscopic variety of languages and cultures has come into existence. As a consequence, the human race has achieved an immense cultural diversity. People often know how to deflect threats from nature. They have gone a long way when it comes to conquering material scarcity and poverty, at least in our part of the world. They are also capable of imagining the damaging consequences of this victory, and take measures against the anticipated rise of sea levels, for example.

The power of transcendence is also the precondition of the pressing need for religion. By transcending reality here and now, people are capable of realizing the insignificance of their place within the universe. This can lead to a speechless admiration for a world that transcends their own powers of imagination. But it can also lead to an awareness of the hopelessness of their position. They know they will die, and they know they are likely to suffer, as they have seen others suffer. They know they are fallible, just like others. There is a vague, indeterminate feeling that they cannot control the reality of their lives, regardless of how hard they try. They realize that, in the end, there is no bargaining with truth and reality. They may begin to doubt the way in which they confront reality. They may doubt the aims they set themselves, and the morality according to which they live. They can wonder why they should go through with the effort if it will all turn out to be in vain. Ultimately, people can only survive in such a state of desperation, or, as it is called in professional jargon, a state of *anomie* or *ontological insecurity*,[4] for a limited period of time. They feel a strong desire for something that can prevent, ameliorate, or compensate for this paralysing condition, and liberate them from their doubts.

Yet, as we can infer from our line of reasoning, the talent for transcendence that causes this challenge to exist, can also solve it. The ability to doubt everything, down to the point of total despair, enables people to imagine entities that can put a limit to the damage, by giving all this misery a purpose, or by compensating for it. People can also imagine things that are capable of turning despair into its opposite, by offering them fresh perspectives, and inspiring them to transcend themselves; entities that can change human bewilderment into enthusiasm, and change the feeling of alienation into a feeling of being at one with the world. These entities can be gods, or spirits, or abstract principles such as Beauty, Truth, or Progress. They can take the shape of consolers, sources of succour, inspiring leaders, or even saviours.

This must certainly be considered to be one of the functions of religion: to provide ways to overcome despair. It can be done by looking for an entity, a god, who will cancel this despair by providing absolute truths, coupled to an absolute taboo on doubt. It can also be found in reconciliation and acceptance of human destiny, in a kind of *amor fati*, a love of fate. What it does, at any rate, is to restore the feeling of ontological security.

But mere imagery will not suffice to save people from ontological desertion. It is easy to imagine an entity that comes to your aid, but will it actually do so? In other words, this entity needs to gain credibility. This does not imply that the believers have to be able to observe this aid. One cannot empirically observe, for instance, that somebody has undone human finiteness, in a moral sense, by taking all the sins of the human race upon himself. It is purely a matter of faith. The only thing that can be observed is the effect this faith in a saviour has on the faithful: they feel liberated. It is essential that the saviour should be real to the faithful, that they get the feeling that they are actually connected to something that can undo their insignificance, in any way whatsoever.

If this credibility is based on a conscious, vertical transcendence, that is to say, on the image of something that does not merely transcend the individual, but belongs to a different and decisive reality, we normally call it religion, or, as I would like to add: explicit religion. But it can also be done less consciously, and in relation to things people see around them. In that case, I would speak of implicit religion.[5] An example of the first would be to perceive Jesus in heaven as the saviour. Calling Johan Cruyff "El Salvador" would be an example of the latter.

Another matter is that of intensity. As the ontological security becomes more vulnerable, and the ontological desertion threatening, the intensity of religion will also increase. If people feel that the sense-making system has become inadequate, that it can fall apart at any moment, the inclination to rely on higher powers, either implicitly or explicitly, will increase.

What does credibility require? To my mind, credibility can be generated in one of two ways.

Firstly, there is the pressure of the moment. The awareness of one's finality sometimes causes acute anxiety, and only faith can remedy it. The saviour acquires an aura of superhuman reality, simply because he liberates people from their anxiety. Such a liberation can turn fear into its opposite, and lead to an almost ecstatic state of arousal. These sudden feelings of intense bliss confirm the credibility of the saviour once more.

And secondly, credibility can be confirmed by tradition. Faith is often imparted from a young age, and people are inclined to assume, instinctively, that the beliefs they were brought up with are true.

To summarize: the capacity to transcend, or in other words, human imagination, are the precondition, both of the need for religion, and of the capacity to construct religions.

The need for religion and the fulfilment of that need comes from the same source. From the anthropological perspective that I use, the human capability for transcendence causes people to believe in God, or an equivalent to God

It is possible to analyse religion with the help of this anthropological model, but only insofar as we restrict this enquiry to human beings. Whether or not there is something out there that corresponds to the images people have of their superhuman saviours and enemies, whether there are gods and devils out there, is an interesting question, or even an essential question. But unfortunately I will be unable to answer it, because it is beyond the scope of my scientific, anthropological perspective.[6]

Additionally, it is a purely functional model. It describes religion only insofar as it is useful, or even essential, to human survival. It is a model of religion in its most basic form. It is so abstract and spare that it can by no means do justice to existing religions, with their great wealth of functions and meanings. It does not purport to be a description of any existing religion: it is merely a series of postulates about a few of the basic religious mechanisms. Such an abstracting approach can only be justified if it delivers enough in terms of scientific insights.

So what are the returns on this basic model of religion? It answers a number of recurring questions about religion. It explains why it is that religion is so common that some people define man as a religious animal, or *animal religiosum* (Luckmann, 1967). It explains why religion has always been an extremely important and almost irreplaceable tool for survival.[7] It also explains why there has been a greater need for religion at some times than at other times. Sometimes, people are more directly confronted with their own finality. The model also explains how it is possible that the need for religion can be gratified instantly. It explains why there has always been religion, and it predicts that there will always be religion, either in an institutional, or in a non-institutional, form. And with that, it also touches upon the essence of my assignment: non-institutional religion.

Institutional religion

Religion is at its apex when it assumes an institutional form, that is to say: if religious images and actions become standardized ways of thinking and acting. The process of institutionalization occurs when people agree about religion on a conscious or subconscious level: "We'll do this more often," they could say, or, "In such instances, this is how we'll go about it;" or, "This is the only way of doing it." That is how fixed thinking patterns and fixed patterns of behaviour come into existence. That is how praying or offering sacrifices can turn into a fixed habit. The same goes for the corresponding ideas regarding the God to whom one prays, the specific nature of the sacrifices he demands, or the specific favours and protection that is expected from him.

In principle, there is no end to the process of religious institutionalization. It starts with the most basic forms of consensus-building. In the next stage, religious dignitaries might be appointed, and religious writings and organizations can come into existence. Such religious organizations are often characterized by a hierarchy, which is more strict in some cases than in others. Such an organization can be used to gain a measure of control over society. In the first half of the last century, for instance, the churches in the Netherlands could utilize the system of pillarization to gain a great deal of power in Dutch society.

But institutionalization is never a massive, monolothic process. There are many degrees in the institutionalization of religious notions and customs. Non-institutional religion will never cease to exist, and new rituals and notions can suddenly emerge as if out of nowhere. These can then belatedly be usurped by institutional religion. But the religious powers can also attempt to exterminate them because they are threatening to them.

This should not be taken to mean that non-institutional religion is merely the initial stage of institutional religion. Non-institutional religion precedes institutional religion, but also emerges from it, and exists aside from it. There are always believers who perceive of dogmas in their own, non-institutional way, and build on these perceptions. Every institutional religion is surrounded by a haze of non-institutional religion. Sometimes it is being taken seriously, and persecuted as heresy. Sometimes it is scoffed at, as being primitive superstition. And sometimes it is included in the canon, or turns into a full-blown religion of its own.

Very often, new religious customs and ideas are more or less accepted or tolerated by the dominant institutions, and are thereby also in-

stitutionalized to a certain extent. Hybrid forms are most common. Most non-institutional religions tend to be institutionalized to at least some degree. After all, without a beginning of institutionalization, it is difficult to recognize religion as such. There are various shadings in between institutional and non-institutional religion.

Wherever there is religion—and religion is everywhere—there is non-institutional religion as well. Because of their capability of transcendence, people very often tend to believe in something that is just a bit different from what the people around them believe in.

In summary: the relationship between non-institutional and institutional religion is dynamic, and the difference is graded. It is a matter of more or less. The relation between them changes over time, and the two always co-exist.

But, if non-institutional religion is timeless, then why is there so much interest in the topic right now? Why has a chair been established at this particular point in time? This has to do with the comeback of religion.

The comeback of religion

Nowadays, many people are talking about the "comeback of religion." It would be more accurate to say that religion is more in the public eye than it used to be, that its presence is now more explicit, and that it is once more being taken seriously in public debate. Why is that? Where does this sudden increase in interest come from?

In my view, there are four interconnected causes.

First, I have pointed out that for institutional religions, organization is a means of power, and a means of power that has made its mark in the western world. As a consequence, religious power as institutionalized in the church has evoked strong reactions. But the church has now lost much of its worldly power, and consequently resistance to it has also largely disappeared. This sentiment is succinctly expressed in the phrase, "religion is allowed again." Seen in this perspective, the revival of religion is a consequence of the process of secularization. Because religion appears toothless, we are no longer afraid to embrace it.

When religion is reduced to a non-committal sentiment, it fits in seamlessly with our experience economy. Experiences seem more profound when they have a religious edge to them. This is the kind of religiosity that we see in commercial successes such as Harry Potter or *The Da Vinci Code*. Religion has become a highly marketable sentiment.

Secondly, the ideology that managed to undermine the power of insti-

tutional religion, the modern, scientific worldview, has itself become unhinged. Many westerners have invested their faith in the victories of modernity, and these victories have been significant. At one time, hoping for and enjoying those victories used to be sufficient to support this worldview. It offered a significant ontological security. The myth of progress appeared to be turning into reality. A seemingly unimaginable prosperity resulted. The battle against nature seemed to have been won. Life expectancy rose to unequalled levels. At least in Western Europe, hunger and cold seemed to be things of the past, hard labour was increasingly taken over by machines. Upward mobility also reached unprecedented levels. Living standards were higher than they had been in any other period of history. The welfare state ensured lifelong security: nobody would ever have to beg from their parish again. The promises of the Enlightenment were largely realized.

In short, the success of what is called "the project of modernity" was so overwhelming and consistent that it itself created ontological security, and the reult was a diminished need for explicit religion. Religious notions were no longer required to secure our view of the world. Our worldview appeared to be strong enough.

But now, the success of modernity sometimes seems to have come undone. The miracles of modernization, the bases of modernity's ontological security, appear to have become routine matters. We have become accustomed to them and can't do without them, but they can no longer cure our feeling of ontological insecurity. On the contrary: continuous innovation makes people feel insecure. In addition, it is ever more obvious that the attainments of modernization often threaten the quality of our lives, rather than improve it. The economic growth which helped us to emerge from the swamp of poverty seems to be a threat now. The project of modernity appears to be a sensemaking system that betrays us, in two ways: it doesn't give us a purpose, and it puts us in peril. There doesn't seem to be an alternative. That is one of the reasons why the need for religion is increasing. Our failed sense-making system makes us long for a new sense-making system.

This phenomenon is nothing new in itself. The sense of crisis even seems to be inherent in the process of modernization. The dynamic of this process results in a sense of ontological insecurity time and time again. And every time, attempts are made to satisfy the need for ontological security by means that could be described as being religious.

One of the ways in which people attempt to rehabilitate the project of modernity is to surround this project with implicitly religious

notions. A recent example is the internet hype from around the turn of the millennium. At my university, I am leading research that is being conducted in cooperation with the British *Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion and Contemporary Spirituality*, which was established by Edward Bailey. Research is done about how certain groups in and around Silicon Valley often proclaim in implicitly religious terms how internet technology will realize the ideals of modernity unlike any other. They surround the internet with an implicit religious pathos.

The third reason is the end of the Cold War. While that conflict lasted, the structure of the world was very clear. It was a conflict over an aspect of the project of modernity: what is the best way to propel the progress of technology and the economy? Which is superior, a capitalist or a communist economy? This was not a conflict between explicit religions, but between ideologies within the modern western worldview. This straightforward division of the world no longer applies.

Instead of this structure, which revolved entirely around the secular promises of modernity, the western world is now confronted by a complex multitude of religions and ideologies. Against their will, and even more against their taste, the dominant elite in the Western world is now forced to engage in what I would like to call *religious shadow labour*. They are forced to enter into a debate with religion, even though they had already half forgotten what religion is. They have to take up positions, and possibly even disseminate their own, secular viewpoint. Sometimes, this is done with an unsophisticated, implicitly religious, missionary zeal.

The fourth cause is closely connected: globalization. In this opaque mega-process, the order of the welfare state is replaced by the chaos of the world market. The main point of reference is no longer the nation-state, but a market economy that crosses borders, and it cannot provide us with the same degree of ontological security as the nation-state.

But globalization also causes more general diffidence. Some people feel threatened by the mass migration globalization causes. The institutional religions that many of the newcomers adhere to, undermines the seemingly self-evident idea that religion is not a major force in modern society. In this light, the so-called "comeback of religion" is perceived as another attack on the modern worldview. A religion that did not used to be here, which was confined to distant countries, has all of a sudden entered our old, familiar world.

But do these four factors actually explain religion's comeback? To a large extent, yes. Together with our anthropological model, they make it easier to understand why people now find they can "go back" to a religious worldview, why they feel the need to do so, and why the return to religion is not necessarily a return to an institutional religion.

Some characteristics of non-institutional religion

The people who take an interest in religion are critical, individualistic consumers. Their religiosity is non-traditional, and is not tied to a community. It arises from choices people make at the moment when ontological insecurity makes itself felt.

This lack of commitment means that non-institutional religion is rather shady, hard to grasp, unsystematic, and not supervised by professional theologians. Religion is no longer like a book that is read from cover to cover. In a sense, people surf through religious content. Few people still look for a static religious system. Instead, they go shopping on the religion market. This should also be taken into account when religiosity is characterized as New Age or "*Ietsisme*" (a Dutch neologism that translates as "Somethingism"—the belief in an undefined higher power). By their very definition, these are not fixed theological systems. They are often changeable constellations of religious notions from everywhere and nowhere. The search for religion has become a highly individualized process.

When investigating contemporary non-institutional religion, Max Weber's *religious virtuosity* should not be a leading concept. Usually, it does not involve a few individuals with a gift for religion, but ordinary people, who try to shield themselves from this feeling of ontological insecurity. They are pragmatic. In religion as in everything else, they like to keep their options open (ter Borg 2004). That is to say: they do not practise a religion on a day-to-day basis, but keep religious notions at the ready in case of emergency. Non-institutional religion is mostly fragmentary and *ad hoc*, and is on permanent standby for any occasion when ontological security comes under threat.

It should be added that people don't look to explicit religiosity exclusively. Show business, sports, and politics offer plenty of opportunities for implicit religiosity. This is how the adoration for Pim Fortuin, which seemed to come out of nowhere, should be understood. This game, in which heroes are sacralized, and their opponents demonized, is played over and over in modern society, and is to be understood as a religiously charged attempt to

escape this nagging sense of ontological desertion. This phenomenon can also be studied as non-institutional religion.

Every way of practising religion is influenced by the society in which it figures. This is also true for non-institutional religion. I will therefore briefly showcase four relevant characteristics of our society: extreme individualism, mass society, commercialization, and the need for continuous innovation.

One of the most eye-catching characteristics of the search for religion is the sacralization of the individual. It could almost be described as a religion of the individual. It has many variants.[8] New forms of religion are often presented as the products of religious pottering (Luckman 1967, chap 6). In a thoroughly individualized society, everybody would have his own, highly individual religion. My colleagues from Rotterdam, Aupers and Houtman, have indicated, in various articles, that a great deal of this religious pottering is inspired by a centuries-old European tradition that is expressed most succinctly in the *Corpus Hermeticum* (Aupers and Hourman 2006). The esoteric knowledge collected there is still the basis of the most current form of individualistic religiosity, New Age. The main idea is that every individual should look for the divine inside him- or herself. This is supposed to be the founding idea of New Age. Human beings should listen to their authentic inner voices to get to know the divine, and to act in concordance with the divine order of the cosmos. This form of religion has many kinds of *ad hoc* institutionalizations: courses, different kinds of meditation, alternative medicine, diets, management styles, or methods of education (Aupers *et al.* 2008). Many practitioners prefer to use the term "spirituality" rather than "religion," and, indeed, this term captures the fluid character of the phenomenon better.

Many academics, including Heelas and Woodhead (2005), believe that this could become the dominant form of religion. I would like to offer two caveats. First of all, individual spirituality is so fluid that people will always find new sources of inspiration. Whether they will continue to find inspiration in the esoteric tradition is an open question. There is a whole world of traditions from which they can choose. Secondly, religion is affected by other societal influences as well as individualism. Either way, our society is extremely individualistic and dynamic, and contemporary individual spirituality fits in splendidly.

But our society is also a mass society,[9] and that has an impact on contemporary religiosity. I will limit myself to two aspects of massification.

First, non-institutional religion often assumes the form of mass religiosity. People look for their experience of sacredness to something that transcends the individual: the masses. They lose themselves, and become part of the hordes. Examples are the youth days of Dutch evangelical broadcaster EO, and the world youth days of the Catholic Church. The phenomenon of mass religiosity is also visible in more implicit forms of religion. People lose themselves in the masses at rock concerts, house parties, or football matches.

The masses are often a so-called *trigger* in optional religiosity. People like to do what the masses are doing. It's a me-too effect. People are inspired to participate in silent marches, or they let themselves be moved to tears by the mass mourning, for instance, for Princess Diana.

This takes us to a second aspect of massification. People feel lost in the amorphous crowd, and look for an idol that gives a shape to this inclusion in the crowds. Consequently, the world of today is filled with idols, stars, and icons that are worshipped on a massive scale. People give themselves an identity by identifying with a hero. By adoring them, Prince or Madonna, they also lift their own identities above the mundane. So, identity is secured by things that transcend personal identity: the masses on the one hand, the idol on the other. These are forms of implicit mass religiosity that can be innocuous, such as Beatlemania, but can just as easily become very dangerous, as in the case of Nazism. Non-institutional religion can be very transient, and this explains why idols often rise and fall so quickly. It also explains the short "half-life" of a politician's charisma.

The effects of commercialization are equally significant. In imitation of their American colleagues, researchers often talk about a religious market (see for example Hellenas 2007). The spread of all kinds of religion is no longer a matter of tradition, but of supply and demand. The caprice of consumers decides everything. Religion has to be pleasant; religions have to compete against each other; religions have customers, and, like the customers of supermarkets, the customers of religious organizations are increasingly less loyal.

The commercialization of religion also means that commercial companies, along with old and new media, play an increasing role in the design, upgrading, and dissemination of religion. This means that Disneyfication and merchandising will play an important role in the future of religion.

Finally, all of this is unthinkable in a static culture that is oriented towards the past. Change is central to our culture, and "change" is often assumed to be synonymous with "progress." The new is always more valuable

than the old. In our society, transcendence tends to be focussed on our own living conditions. We always want something new, and something different, and this will also determine the future of non-institutional religion.

Conclusion

I have steered clear of describing actual religions in any detail. Instead, I have attempted to describe the dynamics of religion in our time with the aid of an anthropological model and cultural analysis. When studying non-institutional religion, I don't intend to describe individual religions. Instead, I want to shed light on the underlying process, and clarify how various forms of non-institutional religion come into existence, and disappear again. Our era is characterized by pluriformity. Some people try to find their ultimate confirmation in traditional, institutional religion: in a church, mosque, or synagogue. Other people look to New Age, and others to art, literature, or football. Religion has scattered in many directions, and the share of non-institutional religion has increased ever more. There will be a time when the term "non-institutional religion" will seem too negative to describe the phenomenon, because people will feel that it is much more than just a reaction to institutional religion. A chair may then be established for the study of Religious Creativity.

Notes

1. For example, the spectacular increase in the number of students of World Religions at the Theological Faculty of Leiden University; or the publication of journalistic books on religion such as that of Herman Vuijsje (2007), or the book by the trendwatchers A. Bakas and M. Buwalda (2006), and the success of Klaas Hendrikse (2007). Another indication is that discussion of the problems of multicultural society has been focused on religion (the discussion about Islam). This lecture is focussed on the Netherlands, but the trend it describes could be thought to apply to Northwestern Europe in general.
2. This anthropological definition of transcendence was inspired by T. Luckmann's *The Invisible Religion: The Transformation of Symbols in Industrial Society* (1967), and by the same author's *Shrinking Transcendence, Expanding Religion?* (1990), but it is not entirely identical to it. Luckmann is primarily interested in the experience of transcendence, while I am more concerned with the transcendence of fields of meaning (see my forthcoming article "Transcendence and Implicit Religion" in *Implicit Religion* Vol. 11, Issue 3, Nov. 2008).

3. It is the subject of various paradigms within the social sciences, such as symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, and social constructionism.

4. The terms *anomie* and *ontological insecurity* are synonymous. I use the first term to acknowledge my debt to Emile Durkheim. The second term is the counterpart of Giddens' ontological security (Giddens, 1984). This term refers to the philosophical impact we are talking about: our grip on reality is at stake here.

5. I borrowed this term from E.I. Bailey, *Implicit Religion in Contemporary Society* (1997).

6. The anthropological approach to religion implies methodological agnosticism. For arguments against this view, see, for example, Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (2001).

7. In his most recent bestseller, Richard Dawkins (2007) identifies religion as a dangerous misconception. This raises the question how the continued existence of religion is to be understood in the context of evolutionary theory. Dawkins' answer is that it is a pernicious by-product of a useful human quality: the tendency towards obeisance (a rather poor explanation).

8. The classic theory was formulated by Emile Durkheim in 1898, *L'individualisme et les intellectuels.*

9. It could be said that it is individualism that creates mass society: masses consist of individuals who do not belong. This fact, and the problems associated with it, are central to the thinking of many sociologists. I do not have the opportunity to deal with it in this context.

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