# Tarde, Canetti, and Deleuze on crowds and packs

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## Abstract
A discussion of the works of Tarde, Canetti, and Deleuze reveals some common insights into a social epistemology that rejects both methodological individualism and methodological holism. In this respect, the debate on crowds in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is particularly interesting because it is the historical context within which the individualist and holist epistemologies took shape. Arguably, that debate is still rich and inspiring today insofar as it can be said to open the problem field of the relationship between the individual and the group in social thought and sociological theory. Despite several differences, Tarde, Canetti, and Deleuze converge on a concept that can be termed 'multiplicity'. It includes phenomena like crowds and packs (or 'sects', in Tarde's terminology) that are properly speaking neither subjects nor objects. The concept provides a prism that also has relevant consequences for an understanding of the processes of imitation and leadership.

## Crowds, social thought, and political options

Gabriel Tarde, Elias Canetti, and Gilles Deleuze do not form a school of thought, or an intellectual descent.[1] Yet there are notable points of resonance in their respective theorizations which can be said to constitute a valuable source of inspiration for all attempts to develop a new epistemology for the social sciences. Here, I would like to explore some crucial passages – some 'lines of force', as Deleuze himself used to call these explorations – in their conception of social formations, focusing in particular on the phenomena of crowds and packs.

The background for my discussion is the idea that the real stake for social theory today is to find out precisely how to avoid being dualist (including well-known troubled dichotomies such as social phenomenology versus social physics, agency versus structure, and so on) without becoming monist (neopositivism and social constructionism

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serving as two examples of monism). This is, in other words, the challenge of radical epistemological pluralism. Radical epistemological pluralism is not a metalevel or second-order claim: it does not consist in saying 'one can be a monist, the other can be a dualist'. On the contrary, radical epistemological pluralism advances a claim to the number of entities or orders of the social that should be considered and researched. More precisely, it takes a position on the type of nexus one should look for between different social entities or orders. From this point of view, epistemological pluralism differs from both epistemological individualism and epistemological holism. Instead of individual or group entities, pluralism is based on a type of social entity which can be called 'multiplicity'. A multiplicity is neither an individual nor a group, yet it is to be regarded as a social formation. In this paper, I argue that multiplicity, in the ways in which it has been variously described and explored by Tarde, Canetti, and Deleuze, can be an important benchmark for developing a social theoretical perspective capable of sailing between the Scylla of dualism and the Charybdis of monism.

Epistemological choices are not matters of mere intellectual fashion trends. Rather they stem from immediate and concrete problems. Concepts are never created for their own sake; on the contrary, they are introduced to face the puzzles we engage with during our research into the social, its configurations and its dynamics. The case of crowds, or *masses*, and packs, or *sects*, can be taken as one such problem.[2] Urban crowds emerged as social actors and, simultaneously, as matter of deep concern in the wake of the French Revolution. Most observers regarded crowds as excessive and dangerous.[3] They were represented as inherently unsettling and potentially revolutionary (McClelland, 1989). A crowd, it was argued, is never far from a mob and potentially very close to an overthrowing force. Fear of crowds is almost a topos in mid-nineteenth-century novels: to take one among many illustrations, recall the assault on the Grucce bakery in Alessandro Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* (*The Betrothed,* 1840–1842 [1822]). Subsequently, in the last quarter of the century the crowd became the object of an intense reflection and a lively intellectual production which included, among others, positivist criminologists (Cesare Lombroso, 1876; Enrico Ferri, 1884; Scipio Sighele, 1891, 1897), physicians and neurologists (Hippolyte Bernheim, 1884; Alexandre Lacassagne, 1890; Henri Fournial, 1892), historians (Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, 1876–1894), psychologists (Pierre Janet, 1889; Gustave Le Bon, 1895) and sociologists (Gabriel Tarde, 1901; Émile Durkheim, 1912).[4] In the majority of cases, the nexus between crowds and crime is significant: for most of these authors the study of crowds had to support the attempt at controlling them. From a Foucauldian perspective, one could say that these authors were the intellectual shore of the governmental practice that, since the late eighteenth century, had been developing a series of technologies of security for the government of the population (see in particular Foucault, 2004). In Le Bon's conservative variant, for instance, the main political task – in which he was actively involved, organizing regular meetings with prominent political figures of his time (see van Ginneken, 1992) – was the construction of a strong nationalist myth capable of subjecting the masses to a strong leadership in order to curb the danger of uncontrollable crowds.

Historically speaking, this moment corresponds to the dawn of a topic of inquiry which was later to be developed into different specialized disciplines, notably social psychology and communication studies. It is the study of social influence and mass

persuasion. In this context, Georg Simmel acutely remarked that the birth of a discipline such as sociology was to be considered as a side-effect of the rise of mass society itself. He wrote: '… the claims which sociology is wont to make are the theoretical continuation and reflection of the practical power which, in the nineteenth century, the masses had gained, in contrast with the interests of the individual' (Simmel 1909: 290). During the course of the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud (1921) and Elias Canetti (1960), with their conflicting yet intimately related theses, are probably to be counted as the last two major classical contributors to this debate on crowds as a distinctive epistemic object. They were, of course, not the only ones. Recently, Christian Borch (2006, 2008) has explored in detail the theories developed by the sociologist Theodor Geiger and the intellectual and writer Hermann Broch. Whereas the former focused on a distinction between latent and actual revolutionary crowds, thus allowing him to link actual crowds to more general socio-economic conditions and identify the proletariat as the 'human material of the social association of the crowd', the latter focused on the phenomenon of *Massenwahn*, mass aberration or mass delusion, and the dangers inherent to rationality impoverishment without concurrent irrationality enrichment.[5]

In the course of the debate over crowds that occurred throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the moral and the epistemic dimensions constantly criss-crossed and overlapped. Because manifestations of crowd phenomena were extremely powerful in this period, some of these theories were conceived out of traumatic or even tragic biographical experiences, ranging from lynch mobs to mass extermination,[6] as well as in strict connection to political ideologies and political orientation. It is Canetti who, recalling his first reading of Freud, has best captured the *hatred of crowds* that had long dominated intellectual discussion:[7]

> The first thing I found in it, typical for Freud, was quotations by authors who had dealt with the same subject matter; most of these passages were from Le Bon. The very manner in which the topic was approached irritated me. Nearly all these writers had closed themselves off against masses, crowds; they found them alien or seemed to fear them; and when they set about investigating them, they gestured: Keep ten feet away from me! A crowd seems something leprous to them, it was like a disease. They were supposed to find the symptoms and describe them. It was crucial for them, when confronted with a crowd, to keep their heads, not be seduced by the crowd, not melt into it.
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> (Canetti, 1999: 407)

It is not simply a matter of theoretically re-evaluating the crowd vis-à-vis its demonization undertaken by conservative and elitist authors alone. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain, inter alia, the success of the theory of crowd proposed by a conservative like Le Bon among *both* nazi-fascist *and* democratic leaders: Mussolini, Hitler, and Goebbels, on the one hand; F.D. Roosevelt, De Gaulle, and Giscard d'Estaing, on the other – not to mention the Zionist leader Herzl (see Moscovici, 1985). Similarly, Bendersky (2007) has documented the success and impact of Le Bon's work on US military thinking and practice through World War II.

Whereas the nineteenth-century conservatives *feared* revolutionary crowds and thus endorsed theorists who *hated* crowds, almost all populist movements during the twentieth

century attempted to exploit crowds and their powerful desire investments.[8] After the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia, Western European right-wing movements were quicker than left-wing movements in exploiting such social forces, and the revolutionary upsurge theorized by Marx was in fact in some way anticipated by fascist movements since the early 1920s but especially in the 1930s. The problem is explicitly discussed for the first time by Wilhelm Reich (1946 [1933]), who asked how it was possible that pauperized masses embraced extremely reactionary ideologies, instead of revolutionary ones. The masses, he argued, were not cheated by fascism; they truly wanted it. This means that fascism was able to offer them something that they desired. As contended by Deleuze and Guattari (1972: § I, 4), fascism led the masses into a perversion of desire; it exploited their desire, and desires produce realities. In this context, Le Bon's success is due not only to his plain writing, his clear-cut sentences and his simplifying view – all suitable for propaganda purposes – but basically to his attitude, no longer merely defensive, but rather proactively exploiting crowd desire.

## What is an individual?

Even beyond and apart from these historical facts – whose relevance may always be criticized, to some extent, on the basis of their contingency – there lurks the real stake of our inquiry, which is the *epistemic* nature of collective phenomena. Indeed, behind the fear and hate of crowds as politically destabilizing actors, there lies a much deeper concern, namely the fact that the crowd is a type of social entity that inherently threatens the physical and psychic boundaries of the individual. Not only is the crowd a dangerous political subject, it is also an outrageous epistemological object. This is the great discovery and the great concern of the rich interdisciplinary debate that took place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[9]

During the course of the twentieth century, the various disciplines concerned with collective phenomena settled the issue of the epistemic nature of collective phenomena mainly in conventionalist terms.[10] From this point of view, at least part of the originality of Tarde's, Canetti's and Deleuze's views on these issues derives from the fact that their contributions cannot easily be confined within a specific academic discipline. While all of these three authors have resisted disciplinary specialization, Tarde and Canetti are even more difficult to locate than Deleuze. Tarde was a lawyer, judge, criminologist, statistician, social theorist and fiction writer (as, for instance, in Tarde, 1890a and 2003 [1893]). His own attempt to create the new discipline he dubbed 'psychological sociology' failed and he could not even manage to change the title of the course he taught at the Collège de France (which remained a course in 'Modern Philosophy' and was subsequently taken up by Bergson at Tarde's death).[11] Canetti, an independent thinker originally trained as a chemist, who never pursued an academic career, is possibly among the most deterritorialized intellectuals ever. According to Ishaghpour, 'He was not the representative of any country, of any school, of any movement, of any single genre of writing' (1990: 13).[12] Deleuze himself, though a professor of philosophy all his life, dealt with an astounding number of topics and fields, including science, politics, psychoanalysis, literature and the arts; and his theorizations have had an impact on an equally wide range of fields and audiences, from social movements, to contemporary artistic avant-garde

and technological applications (including, incredibly, military strategy: see Weizman, 2007). Deleuze also insisted on the necessity of granting and allowing for a double reading – a professional reading and a lay reading – of every philosophical text, thus contributing to keeping the field of philosophy open vis-à-vis the tendencies towards formalist specializations in the analytical vein.

The difficulties in classifying these authors is linked to their distinctive epistemological take on the problem of collective entities, insofar as their epistemologies are intrinsically resistant to disciplinary conventionalism. My argument is that the particular perspective that they have developed can be meaningfully contrasted with both individualism and holism. The reasons why methodological individualism has become dominant in social sciences like economics (especially in the version of rational choice theory) are complex, and probably the socio-economic and ideological historical context (for example, the 1980s rise of neoliberalism) is just one of these (see Wagner, 2008). Among the most significant consequences of such dominance is the fact that, in the hey-day of methodological individualism, the individual takes the pride of place in the theory of action as the agentic unit par excellence. Such conceptual hegemony – transcribed into and supported by common sense – makes it difficult even to perceive how unstable and shaky the category of individual is as a building block of the social. The burden of proof is reversed and completely – one may also add, unfairly – assigned to the *holos*. Within one and the same move, the individual is presented as the natural unit of the social, and the collective alone is assumed as in need of explanation.

The idea of the individual as a unit of intention and, concurrently, as *the* intentional social unit par excellence is somewhat implicit in Weber's definition of social action: 'Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby orientated in its course' (1922: § 1.1.1).[13] It would be unfair towards Weber, though, to classify him as a rude methodological individualist. To my knowledge, he never even endorsed the phrase 'methodological individualism'. In any case, his theory undeniably reflects some of the implicit assumptions that underpin the individualist view. Epistemological choices in this field have clear political implications. Liberal political theory, for instance, is premised on the idea that democracy essentially means 'one head, one vote' because one head is supposed necessarily to reflect one mind. In short, the individualist needs to locate the unit of action in some precise and homogeneous intentional centre.

However, the problem of where this intentional centre is to be found tends to systematically recede into invisibility and is ultimately left out of the inquiry.[14] Consequently, before one can actually start thinking about the concept of the individual in any meaningful way, the concept should be thoroughly de-naturalized. We must, so to speak, learn to un-familiarize ourselves with the individual. In order to bring the individual back into a proper visibility and legibility as a *problematic* foundational concept, let us consider the holist perspective. In his theory of rituals famously exposed in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim described the effects of the physical co-presence of the members of a group congregated in a religious assembly in terms of an 'avalanche' that grows bigger and bigger as a sort of 'electricity' passes among the participants tightly packed together:

The very fact of the concentration acts as an exceptionally powerful stimulant. When they are once come together, a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation. Every sentiment expressed finds a place without resistance in all the minds, which are very open to outside impressions; each re-echoes the others, and is re-echoed by the others. The initial impulse thus proceeds, growing as it goes, as an avalanche grows in its advance. And as such active passions so free from all control could not fail to burst out, on every side one sees nothing but violent gestures, cries, veritable howls, and deafening noises of every sort, which aid in intensifying still more the state of mind which they manifest.

(Durkheim, 1912: 215–216, Eng. edn)[15]

But what exactly is this 'electricity' flowing 'without resistance' that Durkheim is talking about? In a subsequent passage, he employs the well-known expression 'collective effervescence', evoking the bio-chemical process of fermentation analysed a few decades before by microbiologist Louis Pasteur (1922 [1857–1879]).[16] Both electricity and effervescence are processes that involve accumulation and transmission. When one then goes on to ask what is accumulated and what flows in between the parts that constitute a crowd, one soon steps into the old problem of the *explanandum* and the *explanans*, the balance between what needs to be explained and what else can be taken as the ground for that explanation. What is the proper object of sociological analysis: the parts, the whole, or 'electricity' itself? Durkheim famously opts for the idea that the whole is irreducible to its constituent parts. But the subsequent debate between methodological holists and methodological individualists seemed to forget electricity. Alternatively, that debate can be seen as an implicit attempt to determine the jurisdiction of electricity: was it a property of the single or of the group? The point, I think, is that in the original passage from Durkheim quoted above, electricity can be understood as either a vague metaphor, or something quite literal that cannot be simply degraded to a product of either the individual or the group.

What is it precisely flowing within a collective entity? Canetti, recalling his participation in a workers' demonstration in Vienna on 15 July 1927, describes the peculiar *unity* of extremely *heterogeneous* parts forming a crowd. In his memory, that unity of heterogeneous parts corresponds to a similarly heterogeneous union of experiential details and fragments. Thus the unity is achieved in neither the parts nor the whole. Rather, it lies in the *movement* of the whole and its parts – what Canetti renders through the image of 'the wave':

This day, which was borne by a uniform feeling (a single, tremendous wave surging over the city, absorbing it: when the wave ebbed, you could scarcely believe that the city was still there) – this day was made up of countless details, each one etched in your mind, none slipping away. Each detail exists in itself, memorable and discernible, and yet each one also forms a part of a tremendous wave, without which everything seems hollow and absurd. The thing to be grasped is the wave, not these details. During the following years and then again and again later on, I tried to grasp the wave, but I have never succeeded. I could not succeed, for nothing is more mysterious and more incomprehensible than a crowd. Had I fully understood it, I would not have wrestled with the problem of a crowd for thirty years, trying to puzzle it out and trying to depict it and reconstruct it as thoroughly as possible, like other human phenomena.

(Canetti, 1999: 488)

The wave is a vague image and Canetti does not develop it further.[17] However, in *Crowds and Power* (1960), he describes the moment of crowd formation as a 'discharge' that runs through the crowd when its members, all packed together, feel that they are all equal and that therefore all individual differences can be thrown away as irrelevant accidents. The discharge is described by Canetti as generating an immense sense of relief.[18] In both cases, even without venturing further into an exegesis of Canetti here, what is important to note is his attempt to meet the challenge of that 'electricity' Durkheim identified, but very soon dropped in favour of the irreducibility and the 'thingness' of social facts. Rather than any social substance, the *unity* of the crowd phenomenon is retrieved in its *continuity*, the peculiar movement that characterizes the continuity *through* the details and the parts – a continuity that does not amount at all to any 'whole' in the Durkheimian sense.[19] But what do the wave and the discharge mean when observed from the perspective of the individual? In short, they imply the existence of a twilight zone. It is precisely in the attempt to explain such a twilight zone of the individual that Freud will elaborate his theory of the unconscious. However, rejecting the idea of group conscience, as it becomes particularly clear in his famous essay on group psychology (Freud, 1921; see also Moscovici, 1985), Freud sticks to the individualist solution, locating the twilight zone inside the individual him- or herself and explaining it through – or as – the unconscious.

## Otherwise than Individuals and groups

To borrow from Emmanuel Levinas's *Otherwise Than Being* (1976), one could frame the insights coming from Tarde, Canetti and Deleuze as pointing to an 'otherwise than individuals and groups'. Furthermore, in the debate between methodological individualists and methodological holists, Tarde, Canetti and Deleuze have not confined themselves to criticizing individualist and holist solutions from the outside. Rather, they have addressed and questioned those founding categories which are taken for granted respectively by individualists and holists. They have asked precisely: What is an individual? What is a group?[20] Their answer to these two questions leads, I think, towards a rejection of the classical dichotomy between micro- and macro-sociology – a dichotomy in which the micro is associated with the individual and the macro with collective social constructs or aggregations.

Once the existence of the individual as social building block is scrutinized, it soon becomes apparent that the individual is in fact a phenomenon that exists only under certain conditions, from a certain point of view, at a certain scale: the individual is something that exists only within a given *anthropological range*. This range is located between two other regions, which might be provisionally termed the 'infra' and the 'inter', where no such thing as individual-based processes can be found. As a consequence, the individual emerges as a range within the larger horizon of anthropological possibilities. The individual is a phenomenon that exists only within that proper range, endowed with its own thresholds. What happens beneath and beyond those thresholds? In Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913–1927), we find one of the most fine-grained descriptions of the passage through these regions: for it is only gradually that Albertine gets to stand out as an individual presence from the *petit groupe* of the young girls in flower. The *petit groupe* is in fact a different type of entity, which Marcel perceives most strongly and directly, as fascination and love. Long, patient work is needed in order to extract and

consolidate Albertine as an individual out of the ensemble of the *groupe*. Only at that point can Marcel fall in love with Albertine. Without doubt, the individual is a long journey. But subsequently, Albertine's existence as an individual ceases again when, during the first kiss, she literally dissolves into parts, into an ensemble of vibrant atoms. The individual is but an in-between, an island of homogeneity which momentarily takes shape inside a horizon of much more heterogeneous configurations.[21]

The micro versus macro view, which represents the classical way of resolving this relationship between the anthropological different regions mentioned above, suggests that we establish a hierarchy, or, in other words, interpret the relation vertically. But there is another solution, that is, a horizontal view. We can contrast these two views on the constitution of the link between individual and non-individual social forms as shown in Figure 1. Whereas in the former view the individual appears as the building block of the social, in the sense that all higher order interaction can and must be reduced to a sum of interacting intentional social units, in the latter view the individual is revealed as an in-between, a range located within a more complex social but not individual field, where the regions beneath and beyond the individual have their own domain. It is particularly important to note that the region 'beyond' the individual does not correspond at all to an aggregated level: what lies beyond the threshold of the individual is not a group of individuals; rather, we should understand it precisely as a crowd or a pack. Consequently we have, on the one hand, a vertical view, based on the idea of stratified layers, where the macro level is built upon the micro level, and, on the other hand, a horizontal view, which recognizes different types of ranges or regions within the social field, rejecting the idea of any irreducible building block.

A further fundamental insight follows from this second way of considering the link between the infra and the inter, as opposed to individualism and holism: the two zones that lie respectively beneath and beyond the individual are in fact *one single* region. It is the region where we can properly locate Canetti's experience of the 'wave'. It is the region of the 'infinitesimal' or, in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, the 'molecular'.
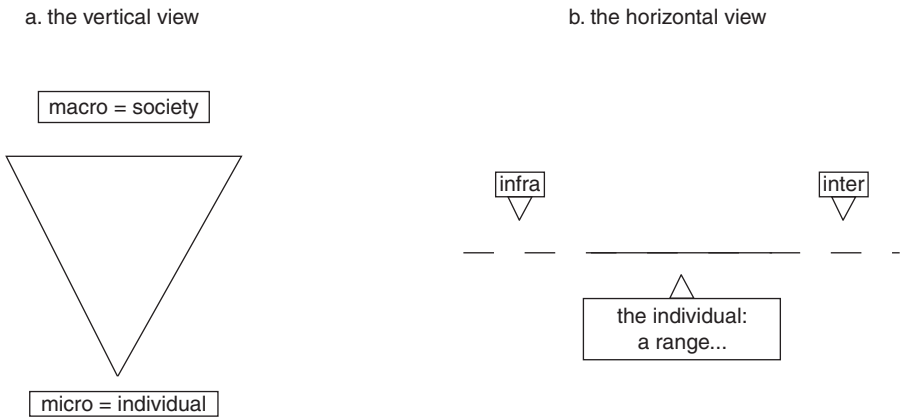


**Figure 1.** Two views on the individual

The molecular is the undulatory domain of undifferentiated differences, where phenomena like crowds and packs occur. The molecular is a state of thriving differences which do not submit themselves to any categorization, identification or totalization. Molecular phenomena side-step the distinction between one and many, between the individual and the group. That is why crowds and packs can never be reduced to either a group or a sum of individuals.

A peculiar aspect of this conception of molecular phenomena lies in its relationship to numbers or quantities. As observed by McClelland, '… all crowd theory is concerned about numbers; crowds number in thousands, and the masses in millions' (1989: 294). The point with such large numbers is that they destroy the principle of individuation. They become countless. If the number is small, say three or four, one can still perceive it as a sum, an aggregate of single units; but when it comes to thousands, or millions, single units necessarily get lost and what remains is a state of proliferation, a sense of thriving. This is exactly what a mass is. Freud transcribed the state of proliferation into his theory of psychotic schizophrenia. On his part, Canetti described the delirium as a crowd state[22] and also examined the phenomenon of economic inflation as a crowd condition, connected it to the abasement of the value of human life, and showed the unsettling similarities that exist with the extermination of European Jews by the Nazis.

The large numbers of a crowd exceed a purely quantitative determination; rather, they entail a qualitative determination. Consequently what we see here is a type of social formation that is plural but is not based on a mere aggregation of units. The category of 'multiplicity', first introduced by Deleuze (1966) in his interpretation of Bergson and later developed in the joint work with Guattari, might be an apt term to describe these formations. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) explain the concept of multiplicity precisely as a way to overcome the idea that formations such as crowds and packs are a 'numerical fragment' or an 'organic element' of some type of unity. In other words, multiplicities are neither numerical aggregates of individuals nor organic expressions of a group. Thus, a multiplicity should be taken grammatically as a substantive rather than an adjective:

> Let us return to the story of multiplicity, for the creation of this substantive marks a very important moment. It was created precisely in order to escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics, to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state, to cease treating it as a numerical fragment of a lost Unity or Totality or as the organic element of a Unity or Totality yet to come, and instead distinguish between different types of multiplicity.
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> (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 32, Eng. edn)[23]

Rather than finding the building block unity behind the different multiplicities, the stake is to identify the various *types* of multiplicities: the mass, or crowd, is one such phenomena of multiplicity; the packs, sect, small band or crew is another one. I think it is important to observe that these types do not correspond to subject positions because, properly speaking, a crowd or a pack is neither a subject, nor an object. Following Deleuze's (1968) interpretation of Spinoza's *Ethics,* crowds and packs are 'modes', or ways of expression. They are nothing in themselves but the process and the result of given encounters, of specific 'experiments' within a social field. Such attempts to avoid the subjectification of a multiplicity are resonant with Canetti's view, which Roberto Farneti

(2006) has recently interpreted as a 'history without agency', a natural history. Rather than subjects and objects, in multiplicities we have encounters, and encounters occur in series; they are chains of interlinkages, each of which can be settled or unsettled. Because of their existence in series, multiplicities are not 'at the present' time. Rather, they arrive in the dimension of becoming.[24] Multiplicities are *acts* that constitute territories in the social field, each having its own characteristics in terms of extension and intension, longitude and latitude, speed and affect (Deleuze, 1970; see also Brighenti, 2010). This is the reason why a multiplicity cannot be reduced to either a subject or an object and needs to be observed and studied through a type of epistemology that is distinctively different from both the individualist and the collectivist.

It is also worth mentioning the fact that there are other various types of collective entities or multiplicities sharing family resemblances with packs and crowds. Among the most important ones we can find are the sect, the party, the movement, the class, the people and the population. Most of these collective terms have been received as problematic by commentators. For instance, the notion of 'the people' was first criticized by Hegel (1821: § 279) in his *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel argued that, taken in isolation from their monarch and state institutions, 'the people' (*Volk*) is in fact a 'formless mass'. Interestingly, after having become the object of the intense mythological work of nationalism, 'the people' is nowadays criticized by Marxist theorists such as Hardt and Negri (2004), according to whom the concept is inextricably imbued into the nationalist discourse. In contrast to the (nationalized) people and the (passive) crowd, as well as to overcome the classic Marxist concept of class, Hardt and Negri elaborate the Spinozist entity of 'multitude' as the new communist political actor. One final crucial form of multiplicity that should be recalled is the population. Foucault (2004) described how, from the late eighteenth century, a series of *dispositifs de sécurité* were introduced to support the government of the population. Governmentality is designed to deal with the problem of 'irreducible multiplicities': whereas discipline encloses spaces and individualizes bodies in order to conform them to a norm, security operates in open spaces and previews possible events that occur inside an irreducible multiplicity. For the purposes of governing, the population is configured as such a multiplicity: it cannot be broken down and must be treated as a single living being (hence, biopolitics). However, the character of irreducibility is historically contingent and pragmatic, relative to certain technological devices. Indeed, nowadays one of the major political questions is raised by the technological capacity to bridge the gap between the level of the aggregate and the level of the individual, namely to 'reduce' multiplicities, as in the case of surveillance practices.

## Leading, Imitating, Resisting

The three movements of repetition, opposition and adaptation identified and described by Tarde (1890b, 1897, 1898) provide a ground to distinguish various types of multiplicities. Repetition, opposition and adaptation are invisible, infinitesimal, molecular operations that determine the emergence of visible, finite, molar compositions. Tarde begins one of his major methodological works precisely with the problem of how to describe phenomena of multiplicity, such as 'a starry sky', 'the sea', 'a forest', 'a crowd' or 'a city':

Let us put ourselves before a large object, the starry sky, the sea, a forest, a crowd, a city. From every part of such objects impressions flow that lay siege to the savage man as well as the scientist. But, these multiple and incoherent sensations are understood by the latter as a pattern of logically connected notions, a bunch of explicative formulas. How are these sensations and notions slowly transformed into laws? How could knowledge become more and more scientific? To my mind, it is to the extent that we find more similarities or that, after having perceived superficial, seeming and deceitful similarities, we discover more real and deeper similarities. More generally, that means that we have moved from similarities and repetitions of complex and confused masses to detailed repetitions, more difficult to grasp but more precise, elementary and infinitely numerous as well as infinitesimal.

(Tarde, 1898: 15–16, French edn) [25]

It is vis-à-vis Weber's individual intentional unit and vis-à-vis Durkheim's collective conscience that Tarde's imitational process – itself part of the larger phenomenon of repetition – can be best appreciated in its originality. In this passage, in particular, Tarde provides a thoroughly operational view of multiplicities, in which the repetitions of any recursive, fractal phenomenon needs to be appreciated at multiple scales, and can never be subsumed to a unity.

However, since the aim of this paper is not an unconditional celebration of Tarde – a celebration towards which some recent literature seems predisposed – the shortcomings inherent to Tarde's conception should not be overlooked. After all, we should not forget that he was an intellectual of the late nineteenth century and not a cognitivist, a deconstructionist, or a post-structuralist. His most important shortcomings concern the issue of social influence and, more specifically, the question of how the flow of notions and volitions occurs within a multiplicity such as a crowd. In Tarde's days, the answer was given mainly in terms of psychic contagion, epidemics, automatic reflex, and hypnotic suggestion. Ferri (1897), for instance, regarded both sectarian and crowd delinquency as the effect of psychic contagion, while Bernheim's (1884) analysis of hypnotic suggestion stressed the strength of phenomena such as somnambulism and automatic obedience to commands. Le Bon (1895: II, § III) paralleled crowd behaviour to the behaviour of a subject under hypnosis, arguing that the crowd, just like the hypnotized, obeys the leader 'automatically and compulsively'. On these topics, Tarde, too, follows rather neatly both the Italian positivist school of criminology and the Nancy medical school.[26]

From this point of view, one of Tarde's major weaknesses is precisely the heritage of the tradition of positivist criminology and hypnotist psychology. The corollary of the idea of automatic obedience is the idea of *individual origin* of the repeated elements. What is repeated through imitation must, for Tarde, have an origin somewhere, and such origin is deemed to be individual and private. The assumption behind Le Bon's effective dictum that crowds accumulate emotional intensity but not intellectual quality[27] is that within a multiplicity ideas cannot be accumulated because they are essentially the *same* idea. Consequently, ideas were said to flow through crowds and packs without changing their nature. This picture is completed by the typical politically conservative thesis that ideas come essentially from outside a multiplicity because neither crowds nor packs have any creative power. I regard it as a politically conservative idea because it perfectly fits with Le Bon's conclusion that there must be a strong, 'central' leader to provide the

crowd with the few, clear ideas it needs. Whereas the idea that the whole crowd, as well as the members of a pack, share the same idea – inasmuch and insofar as they all have in mind one and the same thing – can be easily conceded, the question of the origin is much more delicate. As late as in *L'opinion et la foule*, Tarde (1901) believes, as conservative authors like Taine and Le Bon did (running very much in the line of Ferri and Sighele on this point),[28] that the crowd needs a leader and it is always ready to follow the leader without hesitation:

> An assembly or an association, a crowd or a sect, has no other idea than the one that is blown into it, and this idea, this more or less intelligible trace of an aim to pursue, a means to employ, may well diffuse from one's brain to the brains of all, remains the same; he who blows the idea is therefore accountable of its direct effects. But the emotion that comes with this idea and diffuses with it, does not remain the same, rather it intensifies through a sort of mathematical progression, so that what was moderate desire or hesitant opinion in the mind of the author of such propagation, for instance the first inspirer of a suspicion about a certain category of citizens, swiftly turns into passion and belief, hate and fanaticism, in the fermentable mass where such germ is brought.
>
> (Tarde, 1901: 165–166, French edn)[29]

Crowds, these disorganized collectives, are seen as more unstable, more forgetful, more cruel, and definitively more credulous and gullible than most of their constituent members taken separately. Consequently, the only skill the leader really needs to take control of them is the ability to speak the right type of language, for within a crowd it is easier to propagate a puerile image than an abstract truth. Besides, insofar as the leader gives to the crowd its aim, *he* – here the gendered language is definitely not innocent – is not simply a commander, but turns into a demiurge of the crowd itself. Gendered language is appropriate because the leader was pictured as necessarily male and, more precisely, as a seducer of that essentially irrational, impulsive, and *therefore* feminine entity which was the crowd. With his theory of the primal horde led by a dominant male, Freud (1921) follows in the line of these conservative theorists, transcribing the leaders/followers relationship into psychoanalytical categories: the leader is of course the father, and the energy that flows between the leader and the mass is a libidinal investment. The leader is the erotic object of the mass, and is essentially an auto-erotic subject: the mass loves the leader, while the leader loves only himself.

There is no space here to venture into the complex issue of leadership and followership. Suffice to recall that, later, Theodor Geiger (1926) reflected that, in the case of crowds, to establish who actually leads and who is led is not so easy because the relationship between the leader and the crowd is in fact circular (see in particular Borch, 2006: 9). Rather than the omnipotent demiurge dreamt by Le Bon, the leader is more often than not a mediocre person. Avowedly, the character of meanness in the episodic demagogue was already detected by Le Bon himself, who distinguished this vulgar figure from the 'real' leader, who was ultimately bound to stay in place for a longer time. These considerations also illuminate the breadth of the term 'crowd' in Le Bon, spanning the episodic tumult and the mass of a whole population. In any case, the leader leads insofar as s/he is led. A similar circularity is theorized by Pierre Bourdieu in his social field theory,

where the question is raised about what type of freedom social capital grants to actors who occupy a central or crucial position in a given social field, for example Louis XIV in the French *ancien régime* (see in particular Bourdieu, 1989, 1997).[30]

Nonetheless, two of Tarde's intellectual merits must be fully acknowledged. To begin with, he repeatedly tries to relativize hypnotism as one example of imitation among the others. Hypnotism still provides the major model for conceiving imitation ('imitation is a kind of somnambulism'), but only insofar as its features are the most visible and immediately evident.[31] More importantly, even if Tarde subscribes to the image of the leader 'blowing the spirit into the mass', he nonetheless advances a view on this process that is more sociologically relevant than that offered by impressionistic publicists like Le Bon. Tarde observes that in the majority of cases leaders are not isolated individuals operating by virtue of some magic personal gift; rather, they are sectarians who belong in some tightly ideologized sects. Such sects are small corporations whose core mission is to mobilize crowds. They are associations of faithful, indoctrinated people. Almost literally, packs are the yeast of crowds. Writing under the influence of Tarde, Sighele (1903) proposed another captivating image: political parties as the 'cocoon' (*bozzolo*) out of which the crowd emerges.

Besides the distinction between two basic types of multiplicity, crowds and packs, Tarde also introduces a further distinction that can help us grasp the complexity of the phenomena of multiplicity. It is the distinction between natural and artificial crowds. Through such a distinction, Tarde reduces part of the ambiguity that the term 'crowd' had in Le Bon. An insight from Canetti might help us understand the rationale for this distinction. Canetti insists, as no other author before, on the *boundless* nature of the crowd. In its original configuration, the crowd is the incommensurable alternative to organization: it is the anti-organization par excellence. As such, the original crowd does not lend itself to being governed:

> As soon as it exists at all, it wants to consist of *more* people: the urge to grow is the first and supreme attribute of the crowd. It wants to seize everyone within reach; anything shaped like a human being can join it.
>
> (Canetti, 1960: 16, Eng. edn)[32]

This original crowd Canetti calls the *open* crowd, whose only tension is towards unlimited growth.[33] The crowd appears the moment in which a gravitational, intensive social field is created and people surrender to it, overcoming the fear of being touched. But infinite expansion would eventually prove fatally exhaustive in terms of resources: the open crowd risks and in fact tends towards its own dissipation. Turning expansion in space and number into duration through time is what transforms an open crowd into something else. It is the strategy undertaken by what Tarde calls 'artificial crowds', or corporations, as opposed to 'natural crowds'. Canetti interprets Tarde's artificial crowds as *closed* crowds, crowds that have absorbed some organizational features in order to last. They have traded space for time. This apparent reconciliation between organization and the crowd is a complex and partly contradictory fact which should be analysed more in depth, considering, for instance, how, during the history of closed and domesticated crowds, eruptions constantly take place that re-open the crowd and

reassert its unconditional tension towards growth. In any case, beyond a certain degree of institutionalization, Canetti would not see a crowd any longer, but some other type of formation. Hence, his polemics against Freud, who studied the army and the church as crowds – which, for Canetti, are exactly what a crowd is *not*.

## Characters of a multiplicity

Three essential characteristics of artificial crowds are identified by Tarde: first, artificial crowds can accumulate cleverness and not only emotion; second, the effects of leadership are more intense in artificial, organized crowds than in natural crowds; and consequently, third, the gulf between beneficial and odious artificial crowds is much wider than the gulf between beneficial and odious natural crowds. The distinction between the two types of crowds may not be always clear-cut. However, taken in combination with the role of sects as crowd's yeast, the distinction gives us the tools to develop a more subtle appreciation of multiplicities. Indeed, here we have *in nuce* a view which has the potential of setting us free from the traditional conceptions on leadership and followership. The idea is that entities such as crowds and packs are *not mutually exclusive*; rather, they are created operationally and processually, as stages of successive transformations nested within each other. It is an idea that is developed extensively by Deleuze and Guattari (1980). Further, on this basis Canetti can be defended from the criticism by Arnason and Roberts (2004), who reproached him for providing a 'totalitarian' theory of totalitarianism. Arnason and Roberts compared Canetti's theory to Arendt's (1979 [1958]) in order to point out that Arendt added a new decisive dimension to the study of totalitarianism: the mass *movement* led by the totalitarian party. The idea of movement, they argue, plays no role in crowd theory. While not questioning the fundamental contribution by Arendt, Canetti's images of 'pack' and 'crowd crystals' should not be overlooked; in practice, they provide Canetti's contribution to the understanding of sects and parties as machines for precipitating crowds and setting them in motion.

What are the features we can take to characterize a multiplicity? In Canetti and Deleuze, each multiplicity has at least two fundamental dimensions. We might call them the 'dromological' (composition of relative speeds and slownesses) and the 'affective' (capacities of affecting and being affected). The dromology of a crowd is defined by the fact that its growth and direction determine vectors and gradients of concentration and dispersal. Canetti refers in particular to the 'black' that marks the concentration of bodies. The crowd is thus a composition of relative speeds, which leads to the instauration of a specific rhythm that contains the boundaries of the multiplicity. It is through its own dromology that the crowd becomes capable of affecting other social entities and being affected by them. This happens through a series of encounters. Tarde was the first to suggest this line of inquiry:

> We can say that all forms of human association can be distinguished: firstly, according to how an idea or will among many becomes dominant, through the conditions of thought and will from which it triumphs; secondly, according to the greater or lesser ease with which the dominant thought and dominant will is propagated.
>
> (Tarde, 1901: 173–174, French edn)[34]

For his part, Deleuze is probably the one who has best captured the problem inherent to every multiplicity as a peculiar social entity – or, more accurately, a social mode. He argued that a multiplicity implies a specific order of thought and existence. Thus, a multiplicity can only be approached properly when the dichotomy between the one and the many is overcome. Whereas the one–many continuum exists at a purely *quantitative* order, a multiplicity implies a *qualitative* order. Conceptually, to speak of multiplicity implies an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between single and multiple in the attempt to focus on the point in which the 'many' stops being a sum of discrete entities and acquires its own status, not as a unity, substance, or group, but as a movement, operation, or act.

## Conclusions

What are the consequences of the concept of multiplicity for radical epistemological pluralism? For Deleuze and Guattari, monism and pluralism are in fact the same thing; the only enemy, they say, is dualism. This might be taken as ironic on the part of two authors who proceed mainly through dichotomies (in most cases, double-layered dichotomies: for example, image of thought vs matter of being). Yet dualism, the authors argue, is not defined by the fact of resorting to dichotomies; rather, it is defined by the employment of the one and the multiple as 'adjectives', as subordinates to a duality:

> We invoke one dualism in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time, mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualisms we had no wish to construct but through which we must pass. Arrive at the magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM – via all the dualisms that are the enemy, an entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging.
> (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 20–21, Eng. edn)[35]

I am not following Deleuze and Guattari in the idea that monism and pluralism are the same. Indeed, in this paper I have suggested that in the epistemology of social sciences monism may in fact be as dangerous as dualism. I think that monist options, such as individualist neopositivism and social constructionism, give us an impoverished, flattened vision of the social that has not very much to say on phenomena like crowds and packs, at least insofar as it insists on a quantitative view of social formations. On the contrary, in order to advance in our apprehension of such complex phenomena, we must resolutely overcome dualist and monist solutions, recognizing the type of contingent experience involved in the unending series of movements and encounters that is inherent to all multiplicities.

Let me conclude by resorting to Canetti. According to Canetti, the crowd or pack is the social *prius* – again, not in the sense of an original but in the sense of a phenomenological reduction. It is not so much that the crowd is a fusion of single individuals, as Le Bon held it. The point is, on the contrary, that the individual is what remains when the tide of the crowd withdraws and people remain trapped into power. From the point of view of a multiplicity, the individual is what remains *after* the dissipation of the crowd – when the wave, so to speak, retreats. It is a sad product, though, far from the glorious image of the rational subject capable of responsible action depicted by modern Cartesian dualists.

The individual is a creature of hierarchies and distances who fears being touched. He or she is made of power, imbued with commands, subdued to power differences. Only by merging again in the crowd can the individual get rid of the stings of past commands that endure in his or her flesh (Brighenti, 2006). Admittedly, though, to destitute the subject without becoming (or turning it into) an object is a difficult task; it is a matter of pushing oneself towards one's thresholds – it does not matter whether towards the infra or the inter. The impossibility of achieving such liberation alone is described by Deleuze (1981: § III), in his book on Bacon, as 'hysteria' or 'spasm'. One will never be able to do that alone, for '[o]nly together can men free themselves from their burdens of distance' (Canetti, 1960: 18, Eng. edn).[36]

## Notes

1. Nonetheless, on the intellectual debt of Deleuze towards Tarde, see Alliez (2001). Apparently less studied is the relationship between Canetti and Deleuze. For my part, I have tried to explore the influence of the former on the latter in a forthcoming paper (Brighenti, forthcoming 2011).

2. Important related terms include horde, mass, multitude, throng, host, army, herd, flock, drove, swarm, mob, sea, troop, pack, crush, collection, company, gathering, assembly, congregation, gaggle, bunch, gang – as well as verbs such as throng, flock, stream, swarm, troop, pour in, crowd, cluster, mill, swarm, surge, congregate, gather. While there is clearly no space here to study them in depth, the most notable family resemblances among these terms have to do with the challenge they pose to both epistemological individualism and collectivism.

3. As Schweingruber and Wohlstein (2005) have shown in their analysis of a number of introductions to sociology textbooks, a certain number of myths regarding the crowd still survive.

4. Notably, the reception of this debate in the United States was mediated by a crucial figure in early American sociology, Robert Ezra Park (1972 [1904]), who wrote a dissertation that presented and discussed the ideas of Sighele, Tarde and Le Bon.

5. Incidentally, one cannot fail to notice the resonance between Broch's idea of *Wahn*, delusion, and the title of Canetti's novel *Die Blendung*, which means not only blinding, but also, precisely, deception.

6. Various generations of Jewish intellectuals – including Marx, Durkheim, Freud, Broch and Canetti – directly experienced these events. In relation to Canetti in particular, Mack (2001) suggests that his theorization on crowds is in fact 'a response to the Shoah'. In this context, it could also be interesting to read the essay by the Italian positivist criminologist Lombroso (1899) on antisemitism. Lombroso interpreted antisemitism in terms of psychic epidemic ('épidémie psychique'), thus applying the same category that Ferri and Sighele were using to understand crowd and sectarian delinquency. Specifically, Lombroso describes an epidemic as 'a sudden and intense rise of germs we all possess at a latent stage [une exacerbation rapide et intense de germes que nous possédons en nous à l'état latent]' (1899: 25–26).

7. See also the extensive Canettian inquiry by Sloterdijk (2000) on the contempt of the masses.

8. From this point of view, Ortega y Gasset (1930) and other twentieth-century elitist authors are late in their external critiques based on the fear of *oclocracy*, the deteriorate version of democracy.

9. Unfortunately, there is no space here to consider the role of literature as a key contributor to this debate. Suffice to recall a passage from Maupassant, who, in those same years, finely captured the anguish of the individual who feels the 'spirit of the crowd' trying to penetrate the individual's boundaries:

Since then, I am scared by crowds. I cannot go into a theatre nor assist a public celebration. I am soon assailed by a strange, unbearable feeling, a terrible nerve strain as if I were struggling with all my strength against an irresistible and mysterious influence. And actually I am struggling against the spirit of the crowd that attempts to penetrate me. [D'ailleurs, j'ai ... l'horreur des foules. Je ne puis entrer dans un théâtre ni assister à une fête publique. J'y éprouve aussitôt un malaise bizarre, insoutenable, un énervement affreux comme si je luttais de toute ma force contre une influence irrésistible et mystérieuse. Et je lutte en effet contre l'âme de la foule qui essaie de pénétrer en moi.]

(1973 [1881]: 92)

10. Again, it is literature that has kept the inquiry open to its most disquieting horizons, as for instance in Georges Bataille's oeuvre.

11. Tarde is recognized as a founding father of communication studies (Clark, 1969; Katz, 2006), urban sociology and the study of public space (Borch, 2005; Joseph,1984, 2001), innovation and diffusion studies (Kinnunen, 1996), as a critic of liberal political economy and theorist of immaterial production (Lazzarato, 2002), and, more pointedly for our present discussion, as the proponent of an alternative sociological paradigm to Durkheim (Latour, 2002; Toews, 2003). In all these cases, what is to be appreciated in Tarde is his relationalism (his 'psychologie inter-cérébrale' or 'inter-psychology'), opposed to Durkheim's substantivism.

12.  'Il n'est pas l'homme d'un pays, d'une école, d'un mouvement, ni d'un seul genre d'écrit.'

13. '«Soziales» Handeln aber soll ein solches Handeln heißen, welches seinem von dem oder den Handelnden gemeinten Sinn nach auf das Verhalten anderer bezogen wird und daran in seinem Ablauf orientiert ist.'

14. It can, for instance, be handed to psychology, which in turn hands it to neurophysiology. What happens in the course of these disciplinary passages (or dumpings) is that the individual dissolves and a body, or a neural system, appears in its place as the object of inquiry.

15. 'Or, le seul fait de l'agglomération agit comme un excitant exceptionnellement puissant. Une fois les individus assemblés il se dégage de leur rapprochement une sorte d'électricité qui les transporte vite à un degré extraordinaire d'exaltation. Chaque sentiment exprimé vient retentir, sans résistance, dans toutes ces consciences largement ouvertes aux impressions extérieures: chacune d'elles fait écho aux autres et réciproquement. L'impulsion initiale va ainsi s'amplifiant à mesure qu'elle se répercute, comme une avalanche grossit à mesure qu'elle avance. Et comme des passions aussi vives et aussi affranchies de tout contrôle ne peuvent pas ne pas se répandre au dehors, ce ne sont, de toutes parts, que gestes violents, que cris, véritables hurlements, bruits assourdissants de toute sorte qui contribuent encore à intensifier l'état qu'ils manifestent' (Durkheim, 1912: II, § VII, III).

16. The idea of fermentation typically appears in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the French school of criminal anthropology, notably Lacassagne and Fournial, who were critics of the Italian positivist school (Lombroso, Ferri, Sighele). While, for the Italian positivists, a propensity to crime was hereditary, or ancestral, French anthropologists emphasized the effect of the environment, describing the potential criminal as a microbe that needed the proper fermentative broth (*bouillon*) to become active.

17. Another interesting Canettian image is the *voice*. With its anonymous, unlocalized dimension, the voice shares some resemblances with the wave described in the *Memoirs*. See in particular Canetti (1968).

18.  Canetti describes the precise moment where the fear of crowds is reversed:

> It is only in a crowd that man can become free of this fear of being touched. That is the only situation in which the fear changes into its opposite. The crowd he needs is the dense crowd, in which body is pressed to body; a crowd, too, whose psychical constitution is also dense, or compact, so that he no longer notices who it is that presses against him. [Es ist die *Masse* allein, in der Mensch von dieser Berührungsfurcht erlöst werden kann. Sie ist die einzige Situation, in der diese Furcht in ihr Gegenteil umschlägt. Es ist die *dichte* Masse, die man dazu braucht, in der Körper an Körper drängt, dicht auch in ihrer seelischen Verfassung, nämlich so, das man nicht darauf achtet, wer es ist, der einen «bedrängt».]
>
> (Canetti, 1960: 18 (Eng. edn), 14 (German edn))

It is the reversal of a fear that may evolve into a pathological anguish or a paranoid concern for one's bodily boundaries.

19.  The element of continuity is stressed in a very similar way by Tarde, who speaks of a

> … homogeneous and continuous tide that circulates always identical to itself, at times divided, scattered, at times concentrated, and that, from person to person as well as from one perception to the next one within each of them, is transmitted without alteration. [… courant homogène et continu qui ... circule identique, tantôt divise, éparpillé, tantôt concentre, et qui, d'une personne à une autre, aussi bien que d'une perception à une autre dans chacune d'elles, se communique sans alteration.]
>
> (1898: 31, French edn)

Albeit with a negative connotation, Maupassant (1973 [1881]) had proposed a similar image:

> Contacts, shared ideas, everything we say, everything we are forced to hear, to listen to and to reply to, acts upon thought. An ebb and flow of ideas circulates from mind to mind, from home to home, from street to street, from city to city, from people to people, and it establishes a level, an average intelligence through an agglomeration of many. [Les contacts, les idées répandues, tout ce qu'on dit, tout ce qu'on est forcé d'écouter, d'entendre et de répondre, agissent sur la pensée. Un flux et reflux d'idées va de tête en tête, de maison en maison, de rue en rue, de ville en ville, de peuple à peuple, et un niveau s'établit, une moyenne d'intelligence pour toute agglomération nombreuse d'individus.]
>
> (1973 [1881]: 92)

20.  In the case of Canetti, Elbaz (2003) also suggests that such inquiry has been conducted not in the abstract, but on the basis of a compelling 'epistemology of the concrete'.
21.  Interestingly, the example is discussed by Deleuze and Guattari (1972: § II, 3), too. The critique Deleuze and Guattari move against mechanism and vitalism in biology, through the three types of syntheses of desire they describe (in this usage, 'synthesis' should be properly understood as 'syn-títhēmi', 'putting together'), matches perfectly with the rejection of sociological individualism and holism. The image of desire as a machine, together with the image of machine as a set of fluxes and ruptures, is used by the authors to explain the way multiplicities work.

22. In this context, the case of the paranoiac president Schreber is first studied by Freud (one of the very few cases in which Freud made an analysis based only on textual evidence), subsequently by Canetti (1960), and then by Deleuze and Guattari (1972), who possibly traced the example precisely from Canetti (see in particular Deleuze and Guattari 1972: § IV, 1).

23. 'Revenons à cette histoire de multiplicité, car ce fut un moment très important, lorsqu'on créa un tel substantif précisément pour échapper à l'opposition abstraite du multiple et de l'un, pour échapper à la dialectique, pour arriver à penser le multiple à l'état pur, pour cesser d'en faire le fragment numérique d'une Unité ou Totalité perdues, ou au contraire l'élément organique d'une Unité ou Totalité à venir – et pour distinguer plutôt des types de multiplicité' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 45–46).

24. Deleuze explained *dévenir* as a sort of double movement, or setting in motion of series of transformations, rather than a simple passage from one stage to another. It is an idea that is very similar to Canetti's concept of metamorphosis.

25. 'Mettons-nous en présence d'un grand objet, le ciel étoilé, la mer, une forêt, une foule, une ville. De tous les points de cet objet émanent des impressions qui assiègent les sens du sauvage aussi bien que ceux du savant. Mais, chez ce dernier, ces sensations multiples et incohérentes suggèrent des notions logiquement agencées, un faisceau de formules explicatives. Comment s'est opérée l'élaboration lente de ces sensations en notions et en lois? Comment la connaissance de ces choses est-elle devenue de plus en plus scientifique? Je dis que c'est, d'abord, à mesure qu'on y a découvert plus de similitudes ou qu'après avoir cru y voir des similitudes superficielles, apparentes et décevantes, on y a aperçu des similitudes plus réelles, plus profondes. En général, cela signifie qu'on a passé de similitudes et de répétitions de masse complexes et confuses, à des similitudes et à des répétitions de détail, plus difficiles à saisir, mais plus précises, élémentaires et infiniment nombreuses autant qu'infinitésimales.'

26. In his books, Tarde mentions both the Salpêtrière and the Nancy school, led respectively by Jean-Martin Charcot (who appointed the younger Pierre Janet at the psychology laboratory) and by Hyppolite Bernheim, together with his teacher, Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault, one of the theorists of animal magnetism. These were the two major medical-neurological-psychological schools at the time that dealt with the phenomenon of hypnosis and automatic behaviour and, as is well known, they were at odds with each other on a number of topics. In particular, Bernheim, who was one generation younger than Charcot, criticized the latter for having framed hypnosis within the study of hysteria, arguing that, on the contrary, it was to be understood as just a case of the more general phenomenon of suggestion. On the history of hypnosis in France, see Carroy (1991).

27. Sighele and Tarde extensively discussed this proposition in their epistolary (see Van Ginneken 1992: § 6).

28. It is important to recall that Ferri and Sighele were both defence attorneys who used this argument to plead for diminished responsibility of their defendants. In the years around the turn of the twentieth century, Ferri was a socialist, but later turned into a fascist and a personal collaborator of Mussolini. By contrast, Sighele always remained a leftist liberal, but he was also a supporter of the Italian nationalist movement known as 'irredentism', aimed at the political separation of Trentino and Friuli Venezia-Giulia (the *terre irredente*) from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

29. 'Une assemblée ou une association, une foule ou une secte, n'a d'autre idée que celle qu'on lui souffle, et cette idée, cette indication plus ou moins intelligente, d'un but à poursuivre,

d'un moyen à employer, a beau se propager du cerveau d'un seul dans le cerveau de tous, elle reste la même; le souffleur est donc responsable de ses effets directs. Mais l'émotion jointe à cette idée et qui se propage avec elle, ne reste pas la même en se propageant, elle s'intensifie par une sorte de progression mathématique, et ce qui était désir modéré ou opinion hésitante chez l'auteur de cette propagation, chez le premier inspirateur d'un soupçon, par exemple, hasardé contre une catégorie de citoyens, devient promptement passion et conviction, haine et fanatisme, dans la masse fermentescible où ce germe est tombé.'

30. Bourdieu is really among the heirs, so to speak, of this debate: 'The spokesperson is the substitute of the group which fully exists only through this delegation and which acts and speaks through him. He is the group made man, personified' (Bourdieu, 1989: 24).

31. 'On ne s'étonnera donc pas de me voir passer en revue les principaux phénomènes de ces états singuliers, et les retrouver à la fois agrandis et atténués, dissimulés et transparents dans les phénomènes sociaux. Peut-être, à l'aide de ce rapprochement, comprendrons-nous mieux le fait réputé anormal, en constatant à quel point il est général, et le fait général en apercevant en haut-relief dans l'anomalie apparente ses traits distinctifs' (Tarde, 1890b: § IV, ii).

32. 'Sobald sie besteht, will sie aus *mehr* bestehen. Der Drang zu wachsen ist die erste und oberste Eigenschaft der Masse. Sie will jeden erfassen, der ihr erreichbar ist. Wer immer wie ein Mensch gestaltet ist, kann zu ihr stoßen' (Canetti, 1960: 14, German edn).

33. The adjective 'original' here does not necessarily entail the primordialist view Canetti is sometimes charged with. For a refutation of such an interpretation of Canetti, see McClelland (1989). In my view, a more fruitful way of understanding the image of the 'original crowd' is to regard it from a methodological point of view, as the step of a 'phenomenological reduction' (Husserl, 1988 [1931]) and, for sociologists, as an invitation to venture along new epistemological paths to understand the social.

34. 'On peut affirmer que toutes les formes de l'association humaine se distinguent: 1 – par la manière dont une pensée ou une volonté entre mille y devient dirigeante, par les conditions du concours de pensées et de volontés d'où elle sort victorieuse; 2 – par la plus ou moins grande facilité qui y est offerte à la propagation de la pensée, de la volonté dirigeante.'

35. 'Nous n'invoquons un dualisme que pour en récuser un autre. Nous ne nous servons d'un dualisme de modèles que pour atteindre à un processus qui récuserait tout modèle. Il faut à chaque fois des correcteurs cérébraux qui défont les dualismes que nous n'avons pas voulu faire, par lesquels nous passons. Arriver à la formule magique que nous cherchons tous: PLURALISME = MONISME, en passant par tous les dualismes qui sont l'ennemi, mais l'ennemi tout à fait nécessaire, le meuble que nous ne cessons pas de déplacer' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980: 31).

36. 'Nur alle zusammen können sich von ihren Distanzlasten befreien' (Canetti, 1960: 15, German edn).

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