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The Importance of the Concept of Conscience-Collective in Emile Durkheim's Thought: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis

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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF
CONSCIENCE-COLLECTIVE
IN EMILE DURKHEIM'S THOUGHT:
A THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Master of Arts

by
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ABSTRACT

One of the most important contributions to the discipline of sociology was Emile Durkheim's theoretical discussion of the collective conscience. For Durkheim, it was the collective conscience—the common ways of defining the world, as well as the common moral bond between people—that provided the initial foundation for social solidarity. It was the glue that kept society organized and functioning.

While Durkheim's discussion of the collective conscience is a landmark contribution to sociology, it is clear that the idea of collective definitions and representations predates Durkheim. One of the purposes of this theoretical study is to demonstrate how indebted Durkheim's thinking was to the
thinking of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. Significant parallels are shown to exist between Schopenhauer's notion of representation in *The World as Will and Idea* and Durkheim's pivotal concept of common moral bond or conscience as discussed in *The Division of Labor in Society*.

The thesis is concluded by tracing the importance of the collective conscience through the rest of Durkheim's major works—*Suicide*, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, and *The Rules of Sociological Method*. In each case, the link between Durkheim's and Schopenhauer's thinking is highlighted.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Few great discoveries are made by conformists. The health, indeed the existence, of the individuals in a group is often dependent upon a nonconformist who searches into the divergent areas of reality to find answers to social problems. Yet, the individual in society is under constant constraint to conform.

Morality has been defined as that which brings solidarity to society:

Society is not, then, as has often been thought, a stranger to the moral world, or something which has only secondary repercussions on it. It is, on the contrary, the necessary condition of its existence. It is not a simple juxtaposition of individuals who bring an intrinsic morality with them, but rather man is a moral being solidary with a group and varying with this solidarity. Let social life disappear, and moral life will disappear with it, since it would no longer have any objective. (Durkeim [1893] 1947, p. 397)

The laws, rules, and norms of society, if followed exactly, lead to a sameness that would soon hide individuality. In a given group each member agrees as to what it takes to be part of that group. If there is no consensus on what defines the group, the group ceases to exist. Yet there is in each of us, internally, much
variation in how we view reality. We each may see right and wrong in different ways unless we are convinced otherwise. The environment of the group is constantly in a state of flux. The need for existing rules passes; a need for new rules arises. The norms, values, and rules of a group--indeed the total morphology, the "shape" or "form" of the group itself--is constantly changing due to the variability of the individuals in the group.

Most of us, including many sociologists, like to think of the collective as tending toward retaining a given form. An even cursory study of history shows that actually society is amorphous--there is no set way that humans organize their interactions. The norms, values, customs, and morality of a group change constantly, sometimes violently. The process of change is a reaction to the pressure of differences both within and outside the group.

The tendency of any given group is toward survival. A biological entity seeks homeostasis, an internal, functional balance, in order to survive in a harsh environment. Social groups also seek to maintain a kind of internal homeostasis. The structure or shape, the morphology of a group, is the interface between the internal and the external--other social groups it comes into contact with. In order to maintain homeostasis, internal balance, the exterior is in a constant state of change.

One of the ways social groups function efficiently is to appoint leaders who oversee the group and determine what
actions need to occur to maintain homeostasis within the group. As individuals, these leaders, in order to maintain their position of power, have persuaded the collective that what is good for them is good for the group. In order to ensure the safety and continued existence of the group, leaders and their associates tend to protect their own safety and continued position by defining for the group just what is "right and wrong." Thus, after a point in organizational growth, an elite group forms that artificially acts as the definer of the collective moral structure, the conscience-collective.

There are acts that are repressed with greater severity than the strength of their condemnation by public opinion. Thus combinations between officials, the encroachment by judicial authorities on the administrative powers, or by religious upon secular functions are the object of a repression which is disproportionate to the indignation they arouse in the individual consciousness [conscience].

It is undoubtedly the case that once some governmental authority is instituted it possesses enough power of itself to attach penal sanctions on its own initiative to certain rules of conduct. By its own action it has the ability to create certain crimes or to attach greater seriousness to the criminal character of others.

Moreover, how does it come about that the slightest injury done to the organ of government is punished, whilst other injuries of a much more fearsome kind inflicted on other bodies within society are redressed only by recourse to civil law?

The problem is easily solved when we perceive that wherever an authority with
power to govern is established its first and foremost function is to ensure respect for beliefs, traditions and collective practices namely, to defend the common consciousness [conscience-collective] from all its enemies, from within as well as without. It thus becomes the symbol of that consciousness. ... a governing authority categorizes as crimes those acts that are harmful to it [the governing authority], even when the sentiments of the collective are not affected to the same extent.

We shall see that it is in lower societies that this authority is greatest and where this seriousness weighs most heavily, and moreover, that it is in these self-same types of society that the collective consciousness [conscience-collective] possesses most power. Durkheim [1893] 1984, pp. 41-43)

Marx saw the powerful authority of government in terms of economics, a constant changing of hands at the helm but always someone at the helm, exploiting others. Marx predicted the fall of such societies and said such a fall was inevitable. The fall has not happened. In fact, those societies supposedly established on Marx's principles are apparently in danger of falling (have now [1993] fallen) before those types of societies he predicted to fall. Why, with everything leading toward a breakup, does government of one form or another continue? Even if applied from above, coercively, what phenomena hold society together?

Emile Durkheim, in the late nineteenth century, did in fact ask those very questions. According to Talcott Parsons (Giddens 1972, p. 39), Durkheim searched for a resolving of the "...Hobbesian problem of order": that is, how society avoids the 'war of all against all'." One of the principles
he arrived at and which increases social solidarity in the face of the continual possibility of disruption is a process that has been called, variously, "social mind" (Blakmar 1908, p. 245), "social consciousness" (Blakmar 1908, p. 246), "common consciousness" (Denisoff and Wahrman 1983, p. 63; Turner 1967, p. 61), "common conscience" (Durkheim [1893] 1947, pp. 396-397), "collective consciousness" (Van Den Berghe 1978, pp. 244-245), and other terms.

From the variety of terms used in describing this experience it might appear that confusion has run rampant since Durkheim discussed this important unifying factor. It is a paradox, indeed, that a term used to describe a unifying phenomenon in society would be so variously named and described.

On first reading one might accuse Durkheim of being para-psychological, of believing in a psychic "over-mind" that controls the thinking of the people in a group. Another might say that such a phenomenon as a universally experienced moral mind-set does not exist. Jung, in fact, proposed a collective memory. The collective memory, to Jung, was the distillation of traumatic experiences of our ancestors which helped to define our own actions and thinking in modern life.

One introductory textbook (Denisoff and Wahrman 1983, p. 63) that uses the words "common consciousness" quotes Turner (1967) in defining the meaning of the term:

Mechanical solidarity is based upon a "common consciousness" or a sense of likeness with one's fellows. (p. 63)
Berger and Berger (1972, p. 378) define "collective representations" (from Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 1961) and "collective consciousness" together in relationship with each other:

The former term (collective representations) refers to all those ideas (normative or cognitive) that a group of people hold in common. The latter term (collective consciousness) refers to the sum total of the collective representations—in other words, to whatever coherent view of the world is held by a particular group. (p. 346)

Durkheim ([1893] 1964) provides us with his own definitions:

...collective conscience...totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average citizens of the same society. (pp.79-80)

In at least one case Durkheim describes a "social consciousness" (awareness?) in contrast to "individual awareness":

There exists a social consciousness of which individual consciousnesses are, at least in part, only an emanation. How many ideas or sentiments are there which we obtain completely on our own? Very few. Each of us speaks a language which he has not himself created: we find it ready-made. (Durkheim [1885] 1978, p. 102)

Steven Lukes, in the introduction to his historical and critical study of Durkheim, states:

The French word conscience is ambiguous, embracing the meanings of the two English words 'conscience' and 'consciousness.' Thus the 'beliefs and sentiments' comprising the conscience-collective are, on the one hand, moral and religious, and, on the other, cognitive. (1973, p.4)
Lukes explains further by quoting Larousse as giving two main senses of "conscience":

1) The feelings one has about existence, and the exterior world, the representations one has. 2) The feelings one has about the moral judgements of acts being 'right' or "wrong." (1973, p.4) (My translation)

The use of the word "representations" here gives us a connection to the German philosopher Schopenhauer. Lukes, then, shows a link between how we interpret the material world around us, what society teaches us to be aware of, and how to define what we observe and what we come to believe is "right" and "wrong."

There is, then, some variety in defining just what Emile Durkheim meant when he named this phenomenon. While I do not believe we would do justice to sociology and modern sociological theory by limiting the use of Durkheim's ideas to those concepts as he first visualized them, I do believe we will do better service to Durkheim and his ideas if we make an effort to determine just what he meant by "collective conscience."

It was in Durkheim's doctoral paper, Division of Labor in Society, ([1893] 1933) that he discussed the forms of solidarity he saw in action in society to hold it together: 1) mechanical solidarity and 2) organic solidarity. Durkheim described mechanical solidarity as that solidarity experienced in a primitive society, with strong sanctions applied to those who "break the rules." Organic solidarity is experienced in modern, industrial societies, where the
division of labor (responsibilities) causes each individual to need others for his or her existence and comfort. It seems he was a bit prejudiced (ethnocentric) about modern society being superior to and stronger than the primitive.

It was in the study of primitive, mechanical society that Durkheim searched for the origin of laws. It was apparently laws that held this form of society together. How do laws originate? How are they maintained? Why is there so much "universal" agreement in what laws should exist? Durkheim proposed the experience of "collective conscienteness" as the answer.

What then of the cross-cultural nature of this collectiveness that Durkheim observed? Durkheim was studying work that had been done on "primitive" societies when he arrived at the term conscience-collective. It must be remembered that all societies in existence at the present time, regardless of appearances, are the result of the same amount of developmental time.

If our present industrial society is the result of thousands of years of development, then so also is the "primitive" society of the Australian Aborigines. The two types of societies are different due to different environments, not because one society is inherently "better" than another or "newer."

Why is the rule against murder universally held in all societies? Is it universal awareness, some ethereal, psychic "mind set"? Of course, the fact is there is no universal
rule against killing humans, not even a universal rule against killing humans from one's own family or tribe. It is so in many, perhaps most, cultures; but there is no inherent sense of wrongness about murder.

It is easy to see, however, how such things as murder or theft would predominate as "bad things" for humans. People do not want to be harmed or to lose things they cherish. In order not to have those things happen to us we agree with others not to do those things to them. More important, we agree to the punishments for those who do them. Finally, we teach our children the rules so that the cycle may continue.

To sum up, then, the experience of "collective-conscienceness, social consciousness," is a sense of "Everyone around me agrees; I agree with everyone around me," in matters of right and wrong. It is a learned sense, a part of the process of self-formation. Some facet of "me" is that part which "does good" and "does not do bad," and "I" demand total consensus.

The collective consciousness is that that which we as individuals have learned from the collective is to be observed and even how it is to be observed. Collective representations are the collective concepts of reality. The conscience-collective is the near-consensus of what is acceptable or unacceptable, moral or immoral behavior.

It is my goal in this work, to introduce the principle of inter-active equivalence, to show the parallel between the view of Schopenhauer and the view of Durkheim concerning
"representations," both individual and collective, and to discuss the "collective-conscience" and its continuing power in modern society.

In this paper, I am attempting to restate two primal principles and to present one new, yet not so new, one. Emile Durkheim thought that the principle of the collective morality, the conscience-collective, would cease to be the "glue" that would stick society together. He believed that in a society dependent upon differentiation of skills for its economic welfare, that differentiation would itself become the solidarity factor. He did not, could not, discern that humans will not release themselves from primitive or simplistic societal relationships. He did foresee that once established, the coercive social institution, government, would create the conscience-collective to its own ends. He did not foresee that once this power was established, it, the government, would become virtually eternal and all-powerful. Conscience-collective is still the determinant of right and wrong in society.

Schopenhauer proposed that we cannot ever come to know the "thing in itself" in the world around us. We can only "know" the pictures or representations we have in our minds, created by the signals our senses send to our brains. Durkheim would add that society is the determinant of the shape of our individual representations. Durkheim posited that society, as a sentient being in its own right, has representations of its own. This view of reality, often
different from the representations of individuals in the society, is dominant, coercive over the individual mind. Sanctions are created to force the individual to agree with society's view of reality.

I am describing a principle that I see in action throughout society. This principle is the process of coming to agreement with those around you--of dressing alike, talking alike, of agreeing with those around you as to the accepted view of reality. I see this process as a constant, an ongoing process. I call it the principle of interactive equivalence.

It is my hope that the reader may desire to delve into the world of pragmatic, empirical, theoretical sociology. There is a need to return to "first-principles."
CHAPTER II
DURKHEIM AND SCHOPENHAUER

Emile Durkheim was a social-philosopher who lived during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was born in 1858, in the French town of Epinal. He died in 1917 (La Capra 1972, p. 27). His doctoral work, The Division of Labor in Society, was a presentation of his views on society and its solidarity. He had been published in journals before, but Division of Labor was his first book. In Division of Labor, Durkheim, as did Schopenhauer in his doctoral paper, presented the basic ideas that were not to change during his lifetime.

Durkheim did not live in a vacuum. He was familiar with the writings of many social philosophers who had preceded him. He quoted or referred to Spencer, Comte, Kant, Marx, Saint-Simon, and many others. He had read and liked Schopenhauer, a German mystic-philosopher. In fact, he was so accustomed to quoting Schopenhauer that he was nicknamed "Schopen" (Lalande 1960, p. 23). A reading of Schopenhauer's work will quickly determine for the reader the origin of Durkheim's view of "representation" and "consciousness."

Durkheim's goal was to separate the study of society from other disciplines and to establish the use of scientific method in studying society.
To this end, he wrote and published *The Rules of Sociological Method* ([1895] 1982). In this work Durkheim defines the proper study of sociology as "social facts" (pp. 50-59) and describes the rules for their study (pp. 60-84). Durkheim warns against substituting representations for realities (p. 60) and against the use of statistics unless you are dealing with statistics of a complete population (pp. 155-157; 200-202).

The strongest influence on Durkheim's thinking may have been Arthur Schopenhauer rather than Auguste Comte, as most have thought (Mestrovic 1988, p. 1). In fact, Schopenhauer has been thought by many to have been the strongest philosophic influence on sociology in general (Baillot 1927; Durant 1961; Ellenberger 1970; Goodwin 1967; Hamlyn 1980; Janik and Toulmin 1973; Levy 1904; Magee 1983; and Simmel [1907] 1986). If we are to understand Durkheim, then we should examine, at least superficially, the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer as it may apply to Durkheim's sociology.

Arthur Schopenhauer was a German philosopher during the early nineteenth century. Schopenhauer's basic philosophic problems during his life were the questions, "What is reality, really?" and "Can we 'know' reality, really?"

Schopenhauer's view was that there are two "realities." The first, an objective "reality"; the second, a subjective one. Concerning objective reality, he discusses the existence of a "real" table, upon which rests "real" paper, upon which I write with a "real" pen. A "real" sun beats
down upon my "real" head; I "see" before me, a "real" beach, with "real" people sunning themselves. I see, hear, and feel these things and perceive them to be "real." I have no choice, as my experience in life tells me to so perceive them. Do I perceive the objectively "real" object, or something else?

This philosophical position was to influence Emile Durkheim strongly as he devised his theories to explain how a collective can view an event differently from how the individual views the same event, and how the collective will imposes its view upon the individual.

Schopenhauer's Individual Reality

We all are aware of the physical world around us. The sky, a tree, a house, rain, the earth. We all agree when one of us says, "There is a cat." Indeed, that is a cat. But what is a cat? Is a cat a certain kind of fur, or whiskers, or eyes? Is a cat a cat because it "meows" or purrs? If a dog "mewed," would it be a cat? If a cat were mute, would it not be a cat? If you were to take characteristics, one by one, from a cat and gave them to a dog, at what point would the dog become a cat and the cat something else? In a more general sense how do we determine what a cat or dog is? How do we know what a "rock" is? Schopenhauer answered the question by focusing on the relations between the "real" objects around us (the world as "will"), our senses, the representations in our minds (the world as
"representation," or Vorstellung), our memories (recall of representation), and concepts (representations of representations).

Schopenhauer ([1818] 1977), in chapter one of The World as Will and Representation, reminds us that all we "know" of the world around us comes to us through our five senses. If we cannot see, hear, feel, taste or smell it, it does not exist to us. If there is a reality around us that is not known in one of those manners, there is no way we can be aware of it. If through some means we are made to "see" an object that others cannot see, they will think us mad for insisting it is there. Many times a dream is so vivid that one may awaken not sure of which "reality" is real.

We now know that our range of sensitivity is very limited. Other creatures are aware of sights, sounds, tastes and odors that we are not aware of. Compared to the full spectrum of phenomena to be sensed, very little is knowable by us. Yet we cannot even imagine a reality that does not fall within our range.

Sensations we receive from the universe around us travel through the nervous system. These sensations are compared to past experience and stored in the brain. The comparison is very important. How sensory input compares with past experience determines what we think "it" is. Since we have now entered into the computer age, we have a little better understanding of how memory is stored. That glass of water you are looking at is really a composite of all the glasses
of water you have ever seen. The expected taste, feel, and odor of that glass of water comes from all your previous experiences with water. If it is actually a glass of vodka, your system is in for a shock! If this is your first experience with vodka, the memory of it will be placed in an area connected somewhat with water, but not too closely! Along with the physical memory will be stored the memory of the emotions you experience.

Once an event has occurred, it is gone. From then on it is memory, recollection, representation only. What is a cat? Recall a cat. You will "see" in your mind a generic, composite of all cats you have experienced. Say, "Brown cat," and an overlay will occur eliminating all but the brown cats you have experienced. As you become more explicit in your description of the cat you are recalling, the further you will get from the generic concept "cat." "Cat" is not a single memory, but a representation of all cats recalled at once. "Concepts, therefore, can quite appropriately be called representations of representations" (Schopenhauer [1818] 1917, vol. 1, pp. 40-41).

If you remember holding or petting a cat, is that cat and the petting real now? You should agree that the cat you are holding is in your memory only, not in your hands. A moment's reflection will cause you to realize that there is no difference to you between your experience of a "real" cat and a vivid "memory" of an experience with a cat. They are both electrical impulses travelling along your nervous
system. The difference is one of direction.

The world, the universe surrounding us, we call reality. It is exterior to the self, the "object in and of itself" (Schopenhauer [1818] 1977, pp. 4-19). It is this reality of will that imposes itself upon the mind, stimulating the world as representation in the mind through the senses. Neither the object nor the subject is directly knowable, but only the "representation." Subject and object are combined in the representation (Schopenhauer [1818] 1977, pp. vi, 3, 5-8). Many philosophers before Schopenhauer contemplated the possibility of there being only the one reality, that in the mind—which Schopenhauer called representation. Therefore, by extension, the world is mind or will. The Buddhist would solve this question by a slap in the face or a kick in the pants. There is something exterior to the self, but what? Schopenhauer agrees. Because the world as representation is a result of sensory input, he said that this was an imposition of the object's characteristics--its will--upon the mind, or will of the individual. Therefore, there is an imposition of will, even if by an inanimate object. This is not implying consciousness on the part of, say, a stone, but it is as if the stone had conscious will. Therefore, since the stone is real in its consequences, it is real indeed. In this sense, all things that are represented in the mind have will, imposing their existence upon the individual will. Existing in the mind, by representation, they therefore exist. They exist, to us, because of the representation, not
before it. Yet, they exist to themselves, "in reality" in some form, apart from our representation:

Thing in itself signifies that which exists independently of our perception, that which actually is. To Democritus it was matter; fundamentally this is what it still was to Locke; to Kant it was $x$; to me it is will. (Schopenhauer [1813] 1899, p. 55)

Schopenhauer's "World as Will" is the objective world. It is the "thing in itself." This word processor before me, which reflects light waves to my eyes and pushes against my fingers as I type, is an objective reality, a "thing to itself," a "presentation." It exists, probably separate from, and even perhaps different from, the image I have in my mind that I label "word processor." This image in my mind, Plato's "ideal type," is separate from, and exists independently from, the objective "world as will." It is Schopenhauer's "World as Idea," or "representation" (Schopenhauer [1818] 1977, pp. 3-9).

We all know the real world through our senses, as do all living things. The way, according to Schopenhauer, in which humans differ from all other living things is that we have the power of creating conceptual pictures in our minds created from, and "representing" (Vorstellung), the objective reality. It is this representation that we know, not the objectively real object. The thing itself, the objective reality, the real table, is not known to us at all. What we experience is the imposition of the "will" of the object, through our senses, upon our continually amorphous mental
conception. With time we come to think of this representation as the thing itself though it is, of course, not the thing itself at all. The thing in itself is not knowable at all "because appearance remains appearance and does not become thing in itself" (Schopenhauer [1851] 1970, p. 55).

It follows, then, that each individual has his/her own reality—a personalized, unique Vorstellung of the universe. This "reality" is a result of experience with the exterior world. As we interact with the exterior world, we adapt our Vorstellung until we sense that our internal universe agrees with the signals being sent to us from the exterior universe.

Schopenhauer begins The World as Will and Representation with the statement, "The world is my representation (Vorstellung)" (Schopenhauer [1818] 1977, p. 1). In so doing he follows the lead of Plato and Kant, as well as acknowledging a debt to the Eastern philosophies. All I know of reality is the image built in my mind from the sensations sent to my brain from the outside world. My knowledge of the world around me is only a representation. This "reality" Schopenhauer calls Vorstellung. It is mine; it is unique; it may or may not be an accurate representation of an objective "reality." As Schopenhauer put it in the opening lines of his The World as Will and Idea:

'The world is my idea:'--this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness. If he really does this, he has attained to philosophical wisdom.
It then becomes clear and certain to him that what he knows is not a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth; that the world which surrounds him is there only as idea, i.e., only in relation to something else, the consciousness, which is himself... No truth therefore is more certain, more independent of all others, and less in need of proof than this, that all that exists, (exists) for knowledge, and therefore this whole world, is only object in relation to subject, perception of a perceiver, in a word, idea (Vorstellung, representation). (Schopenhauer [1818] 1917, p. 3)

Just as we know of the earth only the surface, not the great, solid masses of the interior, so we know empirically of things and the world nothing at all except their appearances, i.e. the surface. (Schopenhauer [1818] 1917, p. 55)

While Schopenhauer dealt very little with morality, in and of itself, we can easily apply Schopenhauer's methodology to this subject. Conscience is a sense of right and wrong. A person feels that doing a certain thing is either good to do or is evil. This feeling is again representation. Representations are pictures in our minds that are a result of the summation of our experiences. Therefore, it can be said that a person's conscience is a summative result of all the "good" and "evil" experiences he or she has had. Individual experiences result in individual consciences—-but, experiences with what, or whom? For that answer, we must turn to Durkheim.
Chapter III

DURKHEIM'S COLLECTIVE REALITY:
THE COLLECTIVE AS AN ENTITY

Durkheim's most important point in creating sociology as a science was that social facts have an existence of their own, "sui generis." It was his contention that while social facts were created by the interaction of individuals in society, those facts, as rituals, began to exist independently of the individual, even became coercive over the individual. A question we might ask is, "How do we come to create rituals of interaction that dominate us once they are created? Is the rule, 'majority always rules' a universal rule?"

Where there is only one, no society exists. There is only a singularity. Language is not necessary, for there is no one with whom to communicate. Sensations are undefined in the sense that no name is applied to them. No rituals of conduct are necessary because there is no one to be offended. One does not need to be careful of what is picked up because all belongs to the one. The concept of "mine" cannot develop because "mine" only has meaning in contrast to "yours." In fact, the concept that we think of as "me" is so wrapped up in the concept "other" that once a person has learned to think of "self" in contrast to "other self," it is nearly
impossible to think of "self" in any other terms.

There are documented cases of "feral children," children who have grown to young adulthood without the normal interaction with peers. These people were often called "wolf-children" in times past. They do not have what socialized humans would call a language. They know nothing of how to communicate in human society, but they do learn quickly.

Before we learned to speak, as children, we must have had thoughts. Pure thinking, without the dilution of socially constructed representations, is a goal of many who seek "nirvana." It is supposed that before the overlay of language, the thoughts of the fetal mind are "pure" in kind. Once language is learned, whatever thought was to us is lost, probably forever.

Adam was not alone. There was always God as other to be used as comparison. Once there was a recognized other that was similar to, but not exactly the same as self (Eve), very important and devastating events began to occur. The monad exists without shame. There is no wrong, for there is no one to be wronged. Property rights are not in question. There was no shame. Shame needs an "other" before which to be shamed.

The dyad introduces all of these. There is no knowledge of good or evil until other appears, for there is no good or evil to be performed until there is an other upon whom good or evil can be performed. The serpent of Genesis is the "sui
"generis" social entity that comes into existence when society is formed. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is the result of awareness (knowledge) of the possibility of good and evil being performed, for now there is other to whom to do good or evil.

Now that there is other, there is a need to communicate, a naming of "mine" and "your's." Territory is created—language, emotion, pain, joy, desire. Loneliness is a creation of the dyad. When one has been alone only, there is no idea of any other condition. It is, no doubt, a good thing not to be alone, but there is a price to be paid for company. The introducing of a third has complications of its own.

When a third person is introduced to the dyad, all kinds of things are now capable of happening. When there were two, attention and/or affection were easily monopolized. With the third, there is now real competition for material objects and space, as well as emotional support. With three, there is always the possibility of one using manipulation of the other two to attain control. If government is defined as control of others, it first rears its ugly head in the triad.

Development of Collective Phenomena

A person is born into a society with no more than instincts and capabilities. There is no previous knowledge of right or wrong. How to act in specific situations, the meanings of words, and the nature of a God are learned in the
process of being socialized, which has traditionally been called "growing up." Maturity, rather than being significant of some period of time of existence, is actually acquired when the individual has reached the point of being capable of acting or reacting properly in the majority of situations a given society might present. Place a mature person from one society into a society drastically different from the one he/she is accustomed to, and the person becomes immature again, a stranger in a strange land.

The first influence most humans receive in the process of defining right and wrong is most often the mother. Mother is the source of warmth, food, comfort, and sounds. Such nurturing occurs very much by biological necessity. Other situations are becoming more common, but experience is teaching us that being raised without a mother figure causes incomplete or defective socialization, often resulting in inability to communicate emotionally with others.

It is from "mother" we first learn correct and incorrect behavior. The necessity to urinate or defecate in proper places and times, the meanings of facial expressions are all first discovered in the bosom of mother. The first expansion from a totally self-centered monad to a loving dyad, the first reaching out to "other" to give as well as to receive warmth, comfort, and affection are experienced while yet firmly attached to the breast of mother.

Very early in the process of socialization, the child begins to experience the beginnings of the triad of mother,
father, and child. The child becomes aware of new entities, unfamiliar faces, and sounds. The child finds that there are other places to go for comfort, feelings, and interactions. Very soon ways are learned to hold captive the attentions of more than one person.

As the child's capability to self-motivate and to touch and experience the world around him/her increases, the child also experiences the fact that some things are good to do and other things are bad to do. This learning usually comes through the actions of punishment and reward. When something unacceptable is done, pain or removal of a comfort source results. When acceptable actions are performed, comfort is given, or, at the least, no action results. Through this process the basic concepts of "right" and "wrong" are taught. At first the action is related to the punishment, but very quickly the activity itself is seen as being wrong in and of itself. The punishment for wrong acts is no longer external but internalized. It becomes obvious or apparent that certain acts are, of themselves, right or wrong. The social rules, through the use of sanctions from the first social institution, the family, become realities, actualities in and of themselves, reified. The first social fact, first experienced by the individual through the actions of the first social institution, is the conscience-collective. Through the sanctions imposed on the individual by the family to enforce the accepted moral structure, the individual conscience is created.
From this point on, as the person grows to "maturity," growing social institutions are encountered. As the person comes to be acquainted with church, school, peer-groups, neighborhood, government, the media, employment, clubs, and lodges, modifications and adjustments are made in the moral structure, in the conscience. Few societies are totally consistent in structure. Each social institution has its own special situational morality. Yet, societies are not totally amorphous. The shape of a society, or any part of a society, is the shape of its moral structure. By definition, a society is formed by its social facts. As Durkheim observed, social facts are

...any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint; which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations. (Durkheim, [1895] 1966, p. 13) (emphasis added)

The individual comes to know that what is correct action in a private lodge--walking around naked, saying strange things, or hugging other members--is not proper action in a public place. There is no stable morality, but what is right to do here and now is not right to do then and there. Yet, there is a consistency. The conscience-collective of a given society has/is a core of generalized, basic rules. In American society, for instance, it is right to follow orders, be punctual, conform to company rules, be honest, believe in a god, etc. This core, commonly agreed to, strictly enforced by society, composes the conscience-collective:
The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own. It can be termed the collective or common conscience. (Durkheim, [1893] 1933, p. 79)

Each social institution strengthens some aspects of the individual conscience and weakens others. The conscience-collective, being a resultant vector, a generalization of intent or direction rather than a canon of rules, means that each individual contributes to its aspects. Interaction, trying out actions with those that are met, and observing the resultant reaction, performed by all those in a society, eventually brings on some kind of consensus of proper and improper conduct. This consensus is, then, the conscience-collective.

When humans first appeared on this earth, they were adapted to the conditions then extant. Simple observation of human anatomy shows that conditions on this planet were, by evolution of the species, comfortable and quite different from the conditions now existing. Under ideal conditions there is little to no necessity for grouping. With plentiful food and comfortable weather conditions, individual family groups could exist without community. Conditions did not continue as they were when humans first appeared. Food plants were not so plentiful. It became necessary to add meat to the diet. The seasonal changes brought about a need for clothing. Feast and famine cycles brought about an advantage to group food-gathering and hunting. A proliferation of carnivores made it advantageous to group for
defense.

Along with the new social conditions came a need for new rules of conduct. Anything that tended to solidify the group was a survival trait; tendencies that would weaken the group were destructive. Those humans that had a tendency to group tended to survive. Those that tended to "go it alone" had a rougher time of it. It was not long before those that did not "go along to get along" were rejected from the group. This need for group solidarity is still true of our modern society.

Durkheim's Collective Will

Durkheim spoke of social facts, the proper study of sociology, as being universal throughout a given society, external to the individual, exerting motivation power over the individual, being moral in character, and being sui generis, having a life of its own separate from the individual.

Is not this a case of Durkheim seeing a parallel in the social world to Schopenhauer's material "world as will"? Is there a similarity in Durkheim's way of thinking between the manner in which the material world imposes its form on the awareness of the individual and the manner in which society imposes its form? The two would seem to be parallel. All we know and can know of the material world is through the representations in our minds, created by the external world of will through our senses. All we know of the social world
is through representations in our minds, created by the external social world through the conscience-collective:

Durkheim's collective conscience is the social will acting upon humans even when they are asleep or otherwise unaware of it. It is the spontaneous action of the division of labor which human agency did not and could not create. (Mestrovic 1988, p. 4)

Durkheim, in his description of the conscience-collective, builds a picture of nearly absolute constraint. The society imposes its "will" upon the individual. Like God, society is to the individual eternal in that it existed before the individual, will continue through the lifetime of the individual, and will continue after the individual is gone. Society, through the imposition of moral sanctions, becomes all-powerful in the enforcement of the conscience-collective. Society is external to the individual, yet the moral aspects of social life are indelibly imprinted on the mind of the individual. Society is, therefore, like Calvin's God—eternal, omniscient, all-powerful, demanding of absolute obedience, and internally experienced. "In Durkheim's sociology, society became the representation of Calvin's God" (Mestrovic 1988, p. 2).

Even sociological phenomena, such as division of labor, are seen to have "lives" and "wills" of their own that are independent of the individual wills that would seem to make them up:

Durkheim, like Schopenhauer, believed
that the division of labor is fueled by a "will" of its own that develops independent of human reason, because it must." (Mestrovic 1988, p. 12)

This collective will, this imposition of form upon the conscience of the individual, like God, is never resting, invisible, insidious, and all-powerful over even the unconscious of the individual. Durkheim's social world as will, then, directly parallels Schopenhauer's objective world as will.

Durkheim's Collective Representation/Vorstellung

Durkheim did, then, view society as constraining, as exercising a will of its own over the individual. Now, the question is, did Durkheim also view society in terms of Schopenhauer's "idea" or Vorstellung? We turn again to Mestrovic:

Durkheim built his sociology upon the notion of representation, ideas, and symbols, insisting that society is a system of representations. But Schopenhauer had earlier made that claim in The World as Will and Idea, which Durkheim ([1887] 1976) apparently admired. The philosophical starting point for Schopenhauer is that no inquiry should start with the object of the subject—as most inquiries do, especially in contemporary sociology—but with the representation, which encompasses both. The world can never be known as a thing-in-itself; reality can never speak for itself. For him (Durkheim), society is a representation, not the outcome of human agency nor material determinants. It is neither entirely objective nor subjective. (Mestrovic 1988, p. 2)

Durkheim saw that without the use of symbols to express
representations, society itself would not be possible. Human society may be unique in that it is built upon representations, and not upon immediate physical necessity:

Social life, in all its aspects and in every period of its history, is made possible only by a vast symbolism including all kinds of "representations." (Durkheim [1912] 1965, p. 264).

By extension, then, Durkheim presages George H. Mead in viewing language <=> symbols <=> representations as being the very structure of society (Mauss [1950] 1979, p. 11).

The very structure of language is symbols. If society is made possible only by the use of symbols, then perhaps without language society would not exist. If it can be shown that the concept of self is made possible only through the interactions within society, the question arises, very Durkheimianly, does the "self" exist without symbols?

Durkheim argued that religion was of paramount importance in shaping people's representations (Durkheim [1950] 1957). Religion, the keeper of the conscience-collective, shapes reality in the same manner as Schopenhauer had proposed that the senses and the mind shape and distort reality. Later social philosophers have proposed that society, through collective representations, consciousness and conscience, control how the individual shapes personal representations, not only of social facts but physical ones as well.

We have looked at the main principles of Schopenhauer and Durkheim separately. Next we must see if there are any
parallels in their thinking and how they might apply to the collective mind and will.
Schopenhauer was concerned with defining the reality of a physical, objective universe. Durkheim was concerned with defining a subjective, but none the less real, social universe. Schopenhauer viewed the external world to be interpreted by the mind. The senses pick up signals from objects. These signals are then translated into digital electrical signals which impress or impose themselves upon the brain, which then interprets these signals into some kind of sense, a representation of the external reality.

Durkheim looks at a similar situation in defining the social world. For whatever reason, social restrictions upon individual actions are created. From that point on these restrictions have a life and a reality of their own. Imposed upon the individual from birth through the actions of social facts and institutions, they become, for the individual, social "reality," "the way things are." The individual, if well socialized, is incapable of seeing any "reality" other than that within which he or she was raised.

It must be emphasized that the way we interpret the sensory signals we receive from the "world as will," the objective universe and how we define what is, in fact,
"reality," is socially defined and taught to us from birth. It can be said, then, that "reality" is not separate from society but rather is always defined by the collective. We have created not only a god in our own image but also a universe after our likeness.

These two philosophers, one studying individual representations of the physical world and the other societal representations, viewed their universes in nearly, if not exactly, the same manner. Can it be said that Durkheim derived his ideas after reading Schopenhauer? Or is it that truly great minds follow similar paths? The important point here is that both social and individual views of reality are but interpretations, representations, and not the "things in themselves." They are individual representations created by social consciousness.

How can we see an influence of Schopenhauer's ideas on Durkheim? First of all, Durkheim was certainly familiar with and admired the work of Schopenhauer. Lalande (1960, p. 22) states that Schopenhauer was Durkheim's "favorite philosopher." There is also a parallel in their thinking. In Durkheim's definition of the proper study for sociologists, he defines the term "social facts" as 1) being universal throughout the society, 2) existing external to the individual, 3) being coercive (having impositive power over the individual), 4) having moral implications, and 5) having a history or continuing existence (Durkheim [1895] 1982, pp. 50-59).
With the possible exception of the moral sanctions, Durkheim's definition of social facts parallels Schopenhauer's definition of world as will. Society defines a correct interpretation of reality by labelling what is socially correct as good and that which is not socially correct as bad. It makes the definition of reality not only a collective action but a moral one as well.

Social facts, like the world as will, impose upon the individual a way of thinking, a forcing of a particular view of reality upon the individual will. The collective will, through the action of social facts or social institutions, forces a representation of reality upon the individual mind, just as Schopenhauer's world as will forces upon the individual will a representation of the material world.

There is both an individual representation of the subjective world and a social, collective representation of the world. Durkheim called this collective representation the conscience-collective. The French word conscience is used here not just in a moral sense but in the broadest sense of total awareness, total consciousness, or "representation."

The individual will often accept the interpretation of reality made by the collective, even when the senses say otherwise. Thus, Durkheim completes Schopenhauer by defining whence comes the representation, not just a reaction to the signals sent to the brain by the senses but also a definition of reality provided by society. Durkheim's debt
to the thinking of Schopenhauer is shown by Durkheim's building of his theory of society on the notion that society is made up of representations, ideas, and symbols. Schopenhauer first made this statement and Durkheim apparently accepted the argument. Schopenhauer ([1818] 1977, p. 3) makes the statement that we can only "know" the world in terms of ideas and perceptions. This statement precedes Durkheim's idea of society as "representation" and, no doubt, was the source of Durkheim's view of society in general. Durkheim carried Schopenhauer's thinking a step further, however, by refocusing representations from being only an individual experience into being a social experience as well.

While it may be that Durkheim owed much to Schopenhauer for defining how the individual interprets the external world, there were others just as deeply indebted to Schopenhauer. Freud ([1933] 1965, p. 107), for example, owed a debt to Schopenhauer, as stated in an aside at one of his lectures:

You may perhaps shrug your shoulders and say: "that isn't natural science, it's Schopenhauer's philosophy!" Gentlemen, why should not a bold thinker have guessed something that is afterwards confirmed by sober and painstaking detailed research?

In Schopenhauer and Nietzsche Simmel ([1851] 1970) shows sociology's debt to Schopenhauer in describing the "will." "Schopenhauer's will became Georg Simmel's 'life'" (Mestrovic 1988, p. 3). According to Mestrovic, (1988, p. 3), the concept of the "will" was as follows:
...almost an obsession with philosophers and serious thinkers from Nietzsche and his "will to power," to William James and his "will to believe." Durkheim posited two "wills," one, the social will, the conscience-collective, and the other, the individual will, which in Suicide (1897), would lead to anomie, and even suicide if not held in check by the collective will of society.

Schopenhauer refused to accept either pole of philosophical thought, that is, subject or object. He believed that inquiry should begin with neither human perception nor "objective" reality. Durkheim also rejected both idealism and realism and tried for a a middle ground. This was made clear in "Individual and Collective Representations" (1898), and "The Dualism of Human Nature and Its Social Conditions" (1914). But not just here, Durkheim's work en toto reflects this dialectic way of thinking.

"Durkheim denies that society is merely the outcome of human agency as well as that humans are strictly determined by society. (Mestrovic 1988, p. 3)

Schopenhauer posed these problems and created a context for answers in The World as Will and Idea ([1818] 1977). Durkheim accepted the context, and throughout his works developed a picture of the dialectic between the individual and his/her social environment.

It may be the single most important concept in both the philosophic and sociological world, that all is simultaneous presentation and representation. Schopenhauer's Vorstellung, Plato's "idea," and Durkheim's "collective-representation" are one and the same concept. The individual consciousness is guided by that of the collective. Reality is a social construction. Language, itself a social construct, not only labels reality but limits the individual consciousness as to
what it can "see." The conscience-collective, by forming the individual conscience, determines not only what the collective considers to be "real" but also decides for the well socialized individual what is "right" or "wrong" about his/her view of "reality."

The French word "representation" literally means idea, but is the French word for the German word Vorstellung, which is the word used by Schopenhauer in the work The World as Will and Idea (Vorstellung). In The Rules of Sociological Method, Durkheim states:

[1] had expressly stated and reiterated in every way possible that social life was made up entirely of representations. (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 34)

....essentially social life is made up of representation. (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 312)

[Society]...is a complex of ideas and sentiments, of ways of seeing and of feeling, a certain intellectual and moral framework distinctive of the entire group. (Durkheim [1925] 1961, p. 277)

Without doubt, collective life is only made of representations. (Durkheim [1900] 1973, p. 16)

To have repeated the point so often in so many of his works Durkheim must have felt the concept to be essential to the understanding of sociology. Pre-stating modern social-psychologists, Durkheim considered the collective representation to reach even into the creation of the individual ego-self. The collective even defines not only proper conduct but the individual personality as well. He
also may have been the first to predict a possible conflict between the "self" as collective representation and the "self" as individual representation.

Durkheim regarded individualism as a collective representation, a force that would impress itself on human minds regardless of their subjective opinions, as well as the manifestation of the egotistical will. In other words, Durkheim distinguished between two radically different forms of individualism that correspond roughly to the two poles of homo duplex, a collective representation of individualism that battles the narcissistic will. These two antagonistic forms of individualism also correspond roughly to Schopenhauer's opposition between individualism as an "idea" versus "will." (Mestrovic 1988, p. 8)

Durkheim developed a sociology not at all unlike Schopenhauer's philosophy of the material world and its definition. It was a sociology that viewed the collective as a "thing to itself" that imposed a form upon the individual conception. At the same time, the collective itself views a representation of itself. This act of introspection on the part of society Durkheim called conscience-collective.

Collective Representations and Conscience Compared

Schopenhauer stated the premise that all we, as humans, know of the world is known as representation, Vorstellung. The world as will imposes its form upon our senses. The mind, receiving this form, then enters into memory a conception of this form--a subjective representation--Vorstellung, world-as-idea of the objective world-as-will
Durkheim proposes a social or collective equivalent of this phenomenon. There is, he suggests, a socially acceptable view of the world around us, whether it be the physical world or the social world. This collective representation is taught to us from birth, reinforced as we grow, and supported and legitimized by social institutions as well as our fellow human contacts. We believe it because it becomes "obvious" to us, but obvious because we have been taught the "rules" of how and what to observe and how to interpret. We are taught to ignore what disagrees with this collective representation. "Everybody knows" is the most powerful social concept (Durkheim [1893] 1933, p. 37; [1895] 1982, p. 34; [1897] 1951, p. 312; [1900] 1973, p. 16; [1912] 1965, p. 264; [1925] 1961, p. 277; Mestrovic 1988, pp. 2-8).

The collective enforces its "world as idea" by tagging those ideas that are acceptable as right or, more exactly, good and those ideas that are not acceptable to the collective as bad or evil. This particular collective representation, this collective morality, that includes, but is not exclusive to good or bad actions on the part of individuals, is the conscience-collective (Durkheim [1893] 1984, pp. 33-40).

What a powerful tool for a Machiavellian power monger! In order to justify his/her own actions in the pursuit of power, one need only to manipulate the public or, more precisely, collective opinion or
representation of good and bad or right and wrong (Durkheim [1893] 1984, pp. 41-44). The present "war on drugs" is a good example.

The British colony in Virginia during the seventeenth century was saved from extinction by the exporting of a powerful mood-altering drug, nicotine, in tobacco. The settlers in the towns east of the Mississippi were supported almost entirely by the manufacturing and exporting of another mind-altering drug, alcohol. The colonies of South America were supported by the export of caffeine, a mood altering drug.

Wars for the control of the trafficking of drugs have been fought throughout the history of mankind. In the past the so-called "opium wars" in Indo-China, which began with the English, passed on to the French, and most recently carried on by the American government, were not fought for the elimination of opium distribution. They were fought over who would control and receive the profits from that distribution.

Drugs are used by birds, cats, and even elephants. Archaeologists have discovered drug usage by humans back as far as human remains can be found. The use of drugs for comfort from the stresses of existence is universal among societies. The use of opium and its derivatives for the relief from distress of injury or illness has saved countless millions from hours of agony. Without drugs humans might, it is arguable, not have societies at all.
Yet, through careful manipulation of the collective representation of what drug usage is, a collective conscience has been formed that not only tolerates but encourages what Milton Freidman has repeatedly, in numerous interviews and speeches, called a war against the people of the United States. Numerous atrocities are committed against the people in the name of the drug war. Houses are broken into, lives are destroyed, homes are invaded, property is stolen, children are taken from their homes, people are incarcerated or killed; and all is acceptable because of a carefully manipulated collective conscience.

Because of information disseminated to the people of the United States and manipulation of social institutions, the collective representation of illegal drugs is that they are costly and harmful, not only to individuals but to society as a whole. The empirical truth is that the legal drugs--caffeine, nicotine, alcohol--are more addictive, more psychoactive, and more deadly than all illegal drugs taken together! The collective representation of illegal drugs, then, influences the collective conscience, which says that certain drugs are bad, evil. Other drugs, more dangerous, are acceptable to the conscience-collective and, therefore, good. According to Durkheim the collective conscience would bring about the passing of laws against certain drug usage and distribution. What is abhorrent to the collective is sanctioned by laws to enforce the collective conscience.
However, drug usage is endemic to our society. We take pills to wake up in the morning, pills to sleep at night, pills to lose or gain weight, pills to stop the pain, and pills to make us more aware. The first cigarette and cup of coffee in the morning are almost as legendary as a beer or cocktail after work with the boys or girls. It would not be possible to manipulate the collective conscience against all drugs (it was tried against alcohol in the 1920s with disastrous results, nearly as bad as the results of the present situation); therefore, restrictions are made against only drugs that are not so popular or necessary to our economy.

Thus, the present situation serves as a graphic example of Schopenhauer's and Durkheim's ideas at work. Conscience-collective is the name of the phenomenon of a consensus of people in a society agreeing as to what is acceptable or unacceptable conduct in that society. In some societies infanticide is an acceptable means of population control. In America, today, infanticide is acceptable only if the child has not yet been born. Women in America shudder in horror at the idea of leaving unwanted children in the woods to die but actively demonstrate for their right to kill their own children while still in the womb.

In both cases the subjective facts are the same. In both instances it is a matter of the child being undesirable, often but not always, due to economic
hardship. In both cases the subjective truth is the same—a child, the result of sexual intercourse, held within and nourished by the woman's body. The difference is in the representation. To the woman who lives in the society that practices post-partum infanticide, the child is a human being that will surely starve if allowed to live. It will bring additional sorrow to all involved if allowed to live. The woman whose society practices pre-partum infanticide is convinced that the life within her is not a living being, de facto, but only a living being en potentia and therefore subject to her will. The subject and object in this case is the same; the representation is different.

In the first case the representation is a general one, common to the great majority of people in the society. Having a common representation, a common sentiment is experienced. The outcome is a conscience-collective from which societal rules result. In the second case the representation is not universal. There are differing representations in the same society, resulting in differing views of what should or should not be acceptable conduct in the society, thus creating disagreement as to what laws should be enacted and enforced.

Anomie is a condition of confusion that results when a person is not clear as to what the collective representation and resulting conscience-collective is and
when a person is not clear what is expected of him by the collective. Anomie should result in social or even anti-social activities on the part of individuals, even, in extreme cases, leading to suicide. These products of anomie are exactly what we find in American society today. There is extreme unrest in American society today—demonstrations, near riots, violence and arrests over value differences on abortion and related issues. There is an increase in stress-related disease among American women today. These are good examples of collective representations and conscience-collective in action in the modern world. Conscience-collective is not identical to but a result of a collective representation.

Durkheim had drawn much from Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer proposed that reality is not directly known by the observer. All that is known is the mind's image of reality drawn from the signals given to it by the senses. What we think of the universe around us as being is, in actuality, a collection of images, pictures drawn in our minds. If the physical world around us is nothing but a series of images, how much easier it is to think of a created social being, created by us, yet once created, independent of us and coercive over us—Dr. Frankenstein's monster. Perhaps Mary Shelley had read both Schopenhauer and Durkheim, or they her.

There is, therefore, a clear connection between Schopenhauer's and Durkheim's thinking—Schopenhauer
seeing representations as individual events, Durkheim observing that all individual phenomena are shaped, molded, and judged by the collective.
Emile Durkheim's doctoral thesis was to become one of the most important papers written in sociology. It was pivotal in that, for the first time, the basic operations of society and the constraints placed upon the behavior of the individual in both "primitive" and modern societies were examined. A model was proposed in which there were two methods whereby society is held together, two processes of solidarity.

Early Societies

Durkheim studied the societies of the aboriginal tribes of Australia and the Amerindians of America. From his examination he determined that in such societies, called by him "inorganic," solidarity was provided by laws, rules of conduct that were strictly enforced. To his own question, "Whence cometh these laws?" he answered: "From the phenomenon of the majority being in agreement as to what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'" (Durkheim [1893] 1984, p. 39). This commonality of belief, collective agreement, he termed conscience-collective. In describing the action of this phenomenon, he stressed that first comes the collective conscience-ness,
then afterward, the formal laws, "...an act is not offensive to the majority because it is criminal, it is criminal because it offends that consciousness" (Durkheim [1893], 1984, p. 40).

Perhaps the word "inorganic" is unfortunate as it may lead the reader to surmise that the "inorganic" or "mechanical" form of social solidarity is somehow mechanistic or robotic rather than being natural or living. In fact, Durkehim's use of the word here is as not having organs--simple, nondifferentiated as opposed to complex, having specialization. There is nothing mechanical about either simple societies or simple forms of life. It is probably distracting to use the word "primitive" when speaking of either.

The primitive life-form amoeba, while primitive in the sense of being simple, exists even today, 1993, and is the resultant of perhaps millions of years of adaptation on the part of its ancestors to a constantly changing environment. The world of today is not the same as the world of the day of the first amoeba. The amoeba of today may be like the first amoeba in only very superficial ways.

By the same token "primitive" societies of the twentieth century, while seemingly simple in social structure, are also the end result of thousands of years of adaptation to their environment. They exist, like the amoeba, in the form they have because it works. In biologic life a characteristic continues just so long as it does not kill its holder before
it reproduces. In society, a characteristic (institution, ethos, culture) continues as long as it does not bring about the downfall of the collective before it brings on a new generation.

The amoeba seems to be simple in structure, but modern research has shown us that, in fact, its structure is quite complex and is a paradigm of system and order. The exterior of the amoeba is highly developed to do what it does, basically let food in and waste out, while holding the amoeba in and barring admittance to possible invaders. The building of proteins for growth and repair is a process that would impress Weber for its structure, order, and specialization of "workers," very much like a "modern" manufacturing corporation. The description of an amoeba as being "simple" is really a description of it's social life!

The process of reproduction, while seeming at first to be a simple idea--each amoeba simply divides into two, the two into four, and so on--is a very complicated process that ensures that after division each daughter cell carries exactly, identically, the same genetic structure. The survival idea is that what has managed to survive in the past is most likely to survive in the future. Each amoeba is a "clone" of the others in an amoeba society. They eat the same things, secrete the same things, and tend to travel together until the group gets too big for the available food.

Amoebae protect the collective from annihilation in a very interesting manner. If an amoeba eater comes to dinner,
it tends to eat the first amoeba it comes to and so on until it is full or gets tired. The amoebae in the center of the group live on to reproduce. The survival strategy of the amoeba collective is to sacrifice the outer unlucky amoebae so that the inner amoebae may live to reproduce more quickly than the enemy can eat them.

Durkheim, in *The Division of Labor in Society* [1893] 1933, described early nondifferentiated societies in a manner that could be called a "collective of equals." Each individual in these nondifferentiated societies is basically a social clone of the others. For the most part each person is capable of surviving, providing his/her own food, clothes, shelter, etc., without the help of the others. There is little to no social skills differentiation in a jungle tribe. Like the amoeba, each individual tends to agree with the others in choices of food, clothing, shelter, and conduct.

The means of survival for the human collective in a nondifferentiated society is the same as for the amoeba. Individuals may die as a result of the struggle against the environment; but since all are alike, the group continues. The good of the many supersedes the good of the few. The individual may be sacrificed for the good of all. The missionary asks the witchdoctor, "Why do you sacrifice a young person every year to the (volcanic; harvest; weather) gods? You haven't had a (volcanic; harvest; weather) problem for hundreds of years!" The witchdoctor simply answers, "Well?!" If a social activity does not destroy the
collective before it brings about a new generation, it continues. If that activity can be thought to be the reason for the continuation of the society, it becomes mandatory.

What, knowing the tendency of many humans to go their own way, causes humans in a nondifferentiated society to conform, more, to willingly agree to conform, to such stringent rules? Durkheim states that it would appear that such nondifferentiated societies are held together by strict rules (laws) that have attached to them very strict penalties. These laws are always highly respected, even revered, as having come from a god, as well as feared, because of the penalties attached to them. Where do the laws come from? The first law would seem to be the law that is common to both cellular and human social systems. This law, or phenomenon, would appear "naturally" by the fact that in most cases in the primal world those animals who had a propensity for grouping survived—and more important to our subject, survived as a group.

Those who wandered off, and surely there were those who wandered, were never seen or heard from again. They were assumed to be dead. Having entered the world of the unseen, they were thought to be just like those who had died in the presence of the group. The conclusion is logical and obvious: those who stay with the group survive; those who do not are never heard from again. It is just as obvious to see that when one leaves, the collective is weakened.

There is safety in the group, danger in being alone.
There is safety in conformity, danger in being different. The greatest punishment the group can impose is rejection from the group, to the dangers of being "out." The greatest crime one can commit is to be "different," not to be "part of the group." Those who are guilty are "cast out," outcasts from the safety of the group.

Even in the days of Plato the greatest punishment was "ostracizing," expulsion from the honor of being "Athenian." Socrates' crime was being different and enticing others to do the same; his punishment was expulsion from Athens. He, like most Athenians, chose rather to die than not to be part of the group. In the end even Socrates was a conformist. What events occurred to the descendants of those who left the group and survived is the subject for another study. Our history is the history of those who stayed, the stories of societies.

There is a need for definition. Humans are not all the same. To what degree must I conform and in what areas? Social rules are decided upon by consensus. There is a need to protect the group from violence. Taking another person's tools or weapons could bring dissension and internal lack of trust. Not practicing the group's religious rituals could again lead to dissolution of the group. It is not so far from the obvious to the not so obvious details of rules against certain forms of posture, attitudes, clothing, places to be, and things to do. All of these rules are based on consensus. They are not "abhorred because they are against
Collective representation comes before conscience collective. Conscience collective is a direct result of a collective representation of right-wrong, good-evil, and safety-danger. Conscience collective is the consensus of what should and should not be done, or even thought. The consensus is not always spontaneous, not always properly internalized, not always logical or rational; but consensus is demanded and always enforced. It is this phenomenon of agreed-upon rules of conduct that, according to Durkheim, holds together a nondifferentiated society.

"Modern" Societies

Time passes; the environment becomes less harsh; there is a surplus of natural resources; and the numbers of people in a group increase. There is time for leisure. It is not necessary for every male to go on the hunt. Every female is not needed to tend the crops. A person has time to develop specialized skills. Someone begins to study the design of tools and weapons, making new designs that are more efficient, bringing about even more surplus. Trade begins. "Bring me a newly killed deer, and I will trade you my new knife for it." Value begins to be applied to specialized skills. A person is honored not only for the ability to bring food to the group but also for his/her ability to make life easier or more interesting. Rather than every person being something of a "jack-of-all-trades," each person begins
to feel encouraged to express his/her special abilities. Once this has happened to a society, this "division of labor," it remains. Even if times get hard again, the group has learned the increased value to the group of specialization over generalization.

As time passed for the early life forms, a similar event occurred. A mutation occurs in the DNA of a cell when it divides that makes it more efficient at processing food. It is so efficient that it is surrounded by surplus food. Another cell comes along eating food and, in the process, gulps down the new, more highly efficient cell. The cell membrane of the enveloped cell protects it from being digested. It continues to do what it does best--process food, which feeds its host and gives them both an advantage in the microscopic world of cell life. When its host divides, it divides. Given enough time, and time is plentiful, this cooperative situation becomes necessary to both cells' survival. Neither could live without the other. The process of differentiation was to continue and become more complex until multicellular, organic life finally appeared. For the cells this process of differentiation brought about a need for new methods of defense. Specific cells, cells very much like their ancestral beginnings, were called upon to distinguish between "self" and "other," others to destroy "other." For human societies, just as in biological organisms, differentiation leads to interdependence.
One individual learns how to make improved bows and arrows. His bows and arrows become so good, in fact, that the hunters would rather use his bows and arrows than their own. They are willing to give him some of the game if he will stay home and just make bows and arrows. Before, in the nondifferentiated society, all men would have gone on the hunt, and the game would have been shared with all. Now, since some are encouraged to stay home from the hunt, there is a value placed on their skills. One arrow is worth two squirrels, one bow worth one deer and so on. A free market has been created in which value is placed on differentiation rather than conformity. With time, the ability to make good bows and arrows is lost to the majority, known only by the children and grandchildren of the bow maker. Without the bowmaker the tribe would perish. He is protected in order to ensure the continuation of the collective. This phenomenon Durkheim called "the division of labor in society."

Durkheim's observation was that as a society becomes more differentiated, the reliance on conformity decreases. The solidarity involved in a differentiated society Durkheim called "organic," referring to the same phenomenon in biological life where each organ of the body contributes to the well-being of the whole and none could survive alone. It was this interdependence upon the skills of each that Durkheim predicted would hold "modern" society together.

Rather than conscience collective disappearing, however, being replaced by interdependence, conscience collective is
still with us. It has lost its former air of consensus. Where at one time rules were created because everyone in the collective agreed what acts were unacceptable, now there is a specialized entity—a minority, who decide for the majority what acts are unacceptable. A few now decide right and wrong, good and evil; but the few control the means of socialization, and the majority are persuaded to believe. The conscience collective is now no longer a spontaneous phenomenon of agreement but a phenomenon of a society under the control of its institutions and those that control them.
CHAPTER VI
THE COLLECTIVE-CONSCIENCE IN
DURKHEIM'S OTHER MAJOR WORKS

It was Durkheim's desire for sociology to become a field of study separate from history, psychology, and economics. In order to accomplish this task, it was necessary to ask questions different from questions already asked about societal phenomena.

Among those very necessary questions are: "What is it that sociologists are to study?" "How do you study that which is to be studied?" and "How do you present the results of your studies?" Durkheim dealt with these matters and more in The Rules of Sociological Method ([1895] 1982). My goal in this chapter is to determine if the conscience-collective is, according to Durkheim, a valid sociological phenomenon to be studied.

Social Facts

In order to be a scientific field, according to Durkheim, it is necessary for sociology to have "things" that can be observed. These "things" Durkheim chose to call "social facts" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, pp. 50-59). In order to qualify as a social fact, a phenomenon must be external to the individual.
Even when they conform to my own sentiments and when I feel their reality within me, that reality does not cease to be objective, for it is not I who have prescribed these duties; I have received them through education. (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 50)

These social facts are duties that are mandatory, even if I think they are things I desire to do. I want to be a good father,...but why? It is because I have been taught that it is a good thing to be a good father. Social social facts are, then, coercively imposed upon the individual. "Not only are these types of behaviour and thinking external to the individual, but they are imbued with a compelling and coercive power..." (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 51).

Social facts are moral in nature. They are ways of acting and of being and how individuals feel about acting and existing in certain ways. This moral nature is shown by the use of the words "good," "bad," "right," and "wrong."

Here, then, is a category of facts which present very special characteristics: they consist of manners of acting, thinking, and feeling external to the individual, which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him. Consequently, since they consist of representations and actions, they cannot be confused with organic phenomena, nor with psychic phenomena, which have no existence save in and through the individual consciousness. (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 52)

Durkheim so strongly believed in the power of the social fact that he called what we think of as individual conscience an illusion. "Hence we are victims of an illusion which leads us to believe we have ourselves produced what has been
imposed upon us externally" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 53). Just as Schopenhauer viewed the external material world as imposing its form on our minds, Durkheim viewed social facts as imposing their forms and shapes upon our minds, so much so that we think of our views of the external world as our own. Right and wrong, our very ethic that we like to think of as created within and by ourselves is really a creation of the sum of the experiences we have had in society.

But, individual consciences are separate and different from the conscience-collective and are left for the psychologist to study. The sociologist is to study social facts. And, "...social facts are the beliefs, tendencies, and practice of the group taken collectively" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 54). Social facts are to be viewed as having an independent life of their own, the ability to reproduce without the aid of individuals, "...a reality sui generis" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 54).

Durkheim's definition of what sociologists are to study, with exceptions, is social facts, defined as

A social fact is any way of acting whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint. (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 59)

or

...which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own independent of its individual manifestations. (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 59)

Does the conscience-collective qualify as a social fact? By definition the conscience-collective is collective,
therefore social and not individual. It is external to the individual and separate from individual manifestations. In order to be a conscience-collective it would have to be universal to a given society. Does the conscience-collective exert power over the individual? By experience we can see that this is the case.

Individuals or groups who observe holy days or holidays different from the majority and those who choose to eat differently, speak differently, or want to be left alone are placed under the pressure of the group, often through violence, to conform to the norm. Certainly the collective ideas of right or wrong and proper or improper are coercively imposed.

The conscience-collective is a contemporary, vital force in all societies and is valid for study by sociologists. It can even be said it is the primary, universal force behind all social facts, the capo de capo of social facts.

Suicide

Of all the activities of mankind, one might consider the act of suicide to be the most personal, the least social in nature. In the study Suicide: A Study in Sociology ([1897] 1951) Durkheim examined this phenomenon statistically. By using statistics from the total populations of Western European countries, Durkheim eliminated individual phenomena such as "psychopathic states" (pp. 57-81), "race, and heredity" (pp. 82-103), "the weather, or seasons" (pp.
104-122), and "imitation" (pp. 123-144) as causative for suicide. While not totally eliminating individual motivation as a reason for any singular suicidal event, he did effectively show that, even in such individualistic cases, the particular psychological state is generally a reflection of the condition of the collective of which the individual was a member.

Social Types/Causes of Suicide

Durkheim proposes that there are three social states that statistically seem to generate increases in the rate of suicide in a given society: 1) times of high individuality (egoism) in a society, 2) times of strong collectivity in a society (altruism), and 3) times of social confusion and lack of clarity in a society (anomie).

In describing these types of social causes for suicide, Durkheim is also describing three basic types of collectives or societies. Durkheim observes that altruistic suicide is prevalent among "primitive societies" (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 219), by which he means "nondifferentiated." I propose that we take the logical step of observing that any society that is nondifferentiated, that is, in which there is little to no specialization, may be termed to be an altruistic society.

When humans in primitive conditions begin to associate in groups, it is most likely to be for purposes of defense and cooperation in distribution of natural resources (one
storehouse for twenty people is easier to maintain and defend than twenty storehouses for twenty people). In the wild a loner has to be tough or fast to survive long enough to generate and raise the next generation. The need for specific functional strengths explains why there are so few genetic loners in the human species.

Under these conditions the survival of the group is paramount. The individual is deemed to amount to little; only his contribution to the existence of the group is important. The governmental form in such a society would tend to be highly totalitarian in nature. Ritual and correctness of action and attitude would be religious in nature. Every action of individual life would be strictly delineated by the rules of the collective. Society and the individual would be "one" in the sense that no deviation would be allowed. A concise way of expressing this would be to say that an altruistic society is one in which the individual conscience is totally dominated by the conscience-collective. Suicide in such a society, like every other activity, would be a result of collective pressure or collective consent.

In egoistic and altruistic societies, society's ability to influence the individual is observed. Egoistic societies have little influence on the individual. The individual is considered to be very much on his or her own. Altruistic societies have absolute power over individual conduct. In this type of society we are brought to see society's power to
control the individual by examining what happens when the controlling signal, the conscience-collective, is not clearly expressed. In this type of society the individual may seek direction: "What is right to do?" or "What is wrong?" But, those signals are not clear, or in some cases, perhaps, the individual is rejected by the collective, saying "It doesn't matter that you want to conform; we don't want you." In either case the individual is caused to feel disconnected from society.

An anomic society is a society in transition. Such a society does not send clear signals to its members as to what is moral or immoral. Individuals in such a society are "on their own," left to their own devises. This isolation brings about insecurity, a sense of imminent danger that drives some to escape, even the escape of suicide.

Altruistic Suicide

If, as we have just seen, excessive individuation leads to suicide, insufficient individuation has the same effects. When man has become detached from society, he encounters less resistance to suicide in himself, and he does so likewise when social integration is too strong. (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 217)

Durkheim examined several primitive societies to determine what may have been a commonality in motivation for suicide. Historically there are cases of soldiers being socially constrained to commit suicide upon the death of the king or general. There are cases of wives being constrained to kill themselves. We can all remember the cases of the
servants of the Egyptian Pharaohs, who were buried with their former sovereigns.

Durkheim called this form of suicide "altruistic" suicide. He discusses three sub-types of altruistic suicide: 1) obligatory altruistic suicide, 2) optional altruistic suicide, and 3) acute, or typically, mystical suicide.

**Obligatory Suicide**

Durkheim discusses three situations of obligatory altruistic suicide: 1) suicides of men on the threshold of old age or stricken with sickness, 2) suicides of women on their husbands death, and 3) suicides of followers or servants on the death of their chiefs.

Now when a person kills himself, in all these cases, it is not because he assumes the right to do so but, on the contrary, because it is his duty. If he fails in this obligation, he is dishonored, and also punished, usually by religious sanctions. (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 219)

**Optional Suicide**

There are cases in which a society does not command suicide nor condemn it, but in certain cases it is allowed, and even a degree of status applied to the act. An example is the Japanese ritual of hara-kiri, which is very nearly, but not in all cases, obligatory. In many cases it is prestigious for one who has lost face to commit suicide ritually. Because the person has a choice in the matter, Durkheim calls this "optional altruistic suicide."

**Acute Altruistic Suicide**

In acute altruistic suicide, the person commits suicide
not because of a felt obligation to do so, but in order to experience the "joy of sacrifice" (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 223). Durkheim gives examples of Hindu, Jainist, and early Christian martyrs as examples. In this case the person, through the teachings he has received, sees death as a release, a passing to a better existence. The conscience-collective of the social group to which he belongs not only allows for the act of suicide but even offers rewards for the act. The conscience-collective is so strong that the individual senses that "he has no personal existence" (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 226).

"The person kills himself at the command of his conscience; he submits to an imperative" (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 283). We have already seen that the individual conscience is only a reflection of the collective conscience. Altruistic suicides amount to self-sacrifices to the state, commanded by the conscience-collective. Durkheim attributes altruistic suicide to "lower societies" (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 227). By lower societies he is referring to societies in which there is little differentiation. The majority of the members of these societies perform the same societal functions. Each individual is unnecessary to the whole. If one dies, another just like himself/herself is there to fill the gap. Because there is little specialization, each is like the other. For all practical purposes the collective mind, thought, conscience is the individual's (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 221). An Altruistic
society, then, is one in which the conscience-collective is all-powerful. The individual conscience is only a reflection of the collective.

Egoistic Suicide

"Egoistic suicide results from the fact that society is not sufficiently integrated at all points to keep all its members under its control" (Durkheim, [1897] 1951, p. 373). There are periods in history in which the state, government, or society is not looked upon with favor by the majority of its citizens. The rules of society are not well observed. Children are taught that the individual is more important than the state. The majority of members of such a society manage to find cohesiveness in church or social organizations. "However individualized a man may be, there is always something collective remaining..." (Durkheim [1987] 1951, p. 214).

It might appear that the person who finds in religion solace from a weak society is less susceptible to suicide because of the teachings of the church against it. However Durkheim proposes a different reason:

If religion protects man against the desire for self-destruction, it is not that it preaches the respect for his own person to him with arguments sui generis; but because it is a society. What constitutes this society is the existence of a certain number of beliefs and practices common to all the faithful, traditional and thus obligatory. The more numerous and strong these collective states of mind are, the stronger the integration of the religious community, and also the greater its preservative
value. The details of dogmas and rites are secondary. The essential thing is that they be capable of supporting a sufficiently intense collective life. (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 170)

Durkheim describes the protection a strongly knit society provides against suicide as the result of an interaction between individual and collective beliefs (consciences).

Where collective sentiments are strong, it is because the force with which they affect each individual conscience is echoed in all the others, and reciprocally. (Durkheim [1987] 1951, p. 201)

When the conscience-collective and the individual conscience are in agreement, the result is a stable society in which the members are content and free of insecurity. This is a state which Plato, in The Republic, defined as justice. When the individual feels agreement and security in society, individualization is unnecessary, the person is absorbed into the collective, personal tragedies are not essential tragedies, and the collective is seen as a haven in which to hide from life's slings and arrows of misfortune. When not in agreement, the individual feels a sense that his fate is his own, security is hard to come by. In a society where the individual is considered to be of prime importance, the person has only himself to turn to. As Durkheim said "...there is always something collective remaining..." (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 214). It would seem that a need for acceptance by the collective, as well as the protection of the collective, is an essential characteristic
of Homo Sapiens Sapiens. When help outside one's self is needed, and one believes only in one's self, the sense of hopelessness becomes unbearable; and with no collective moral restriction on the taking of one's life, the person escapes by the only means available (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 288). We might say, then, that when social solidarity is strong, the conscience-collective is strong. When the conscience-collective is strong, individual conscience tends to be patterned after it. When individual conscience agrees that the collective it greater than the individual, egoism is lessened, along with a lessening of egoistic suicide.

Most of our early ancestors who survived the early days of danger from outside the group, survived because they had a sense of security in numbers. The herding instinct served to protect the majority of humans. If a hundred animals form a circled mass, only those on the outside edge of the circle are in danger. These individuals would tend to be the most adventurous, the bravest, and the most individualistic. In times of danger these would be the chosen ones, the leaders in war, the protectors. Individualism, in a person who is genetically predisposed to egoism, is an acceptable, even desired situation. But, to a person who is of the majority, living in a society that stresses individualism is unacceptable. A groupie cannot exist as a loner. A bovine does not make a good wolf. Persons not predisposed to self-sufficiency do not find satisfaction in a society that is built on individualism. As a result, such people decide that
since their lives are their own, they are free to destroy their lives. In terms of conscience, a sense of right and wrong, the individual conscience is considered to be superior to the collective conscience; and the individual, having no personal qualms concerning suicide, performs it without offering excuse or seeking acceptance of the act.

"...collective force is one of the obstacles best calculated to restrain suicide.... But how could society impose its supremacy upon them--people--when they refuse to accept this subordination as legitimate? ...So far as they are the admitted masters of their destinies, it is their privilege to end their lives." (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 209)

When the collective sentiment is strong, so is the conscience-collective. When collective sentiment is weak, the collective conscience is also weak. The individual conscience rules. If the individual's morals find suicide an acceptable means of dealing with life's problems, there is little to restrain him/her.

An anomic society would be one in which the society is undergoing change. Transition from one collective-conscience to another, such as we have been experiencing in the United States, is a good example. While the basic premise of the founders of our country was individualistic, they were being highly idealistic and naive to believe that a society would remain so. What we have experienced over the last two hundred years is a continual state of transition. The "melting pot" idea of the nature of our populous is an interesting concept. "Stirring pot" would be more accurate.
The varieties of social backgrounds of those people who make up our country and the fact that the influx of new people is on a continual basis has meant that we are constantly redefining what it means to be "American."

It becomes very hard for the average person to decide, then, what is right and what is wrong. The conscience-collective is not weak, but it is sending mixed and constantly changing signals and definitions of right and wrong. Should prostitution be legal or illegal? Should all drugs be considered illegal, or should we legalize the use of some but not others, or should all drugs be legalized? How should the two sexes communicate with each other? What is a man? What is a woman? What is expected of me? These are questions that would not, could not, be asked in an altruistic society.

In an altruistic society the definitions are clear, the conscience-collective is well defined, and the collective control over the individual is absolute. In an anomic society there is constant wonder on the part of the individual as to his/her place in the society and what is proper conduct. In an anomic society, there should be frequent "explosions" of nonconformity. Times of equilibrium and altruism would be punctuated by periods of unrest, nonconformity, even violence, and certainly anomie.

This nonconformity is, of course, what we see in the course of the history of our country, even of our world. The evolution of human society is not a gradualistic,
analog-change evolution, but a state of punctuated-equilibrium evolution. Societies tend to have long periods of altruistic peace through control. Between these periods the spirit of individualism begins to move over the waters of society. Unrest begins. Demand for change, for a new level of human freedom, begins to spread. The general public becomes aware of the problems of the protesters and joins the call to the "definers of the conscience-collective" to make changes to accommodate the deviant behavior. Many even begin to incorporate attributes of the deviant group into their own ways of life. The rightness of allowing people to do their own thing is internalized and reified by the majority of the totality.

Finally enough pressure is brought to bear upon the leadership that the structure itself is changed to allow for parts of the deviant behavior to become first "acceptable" then actually incorporated into the official conscience-collective itself. It is interesting to note that no official changes in rules of conduct are made until the actual conscience-collective, that of the majority of people, has already changed.

During these periods of anomie there should also be an increase in the use of mood-altering, mind-altering drugs, as well as an increase in material-world-escaping religious experience, which, of course, we find to be true.

If, then, societies evolve and human society as a totality evolves by punctuated equilibrium, the question
arises, "Evolves from what to what?" Is there a direction to the change of human society? If so, what is that direction?

"Primitive" societies, societies of little individualism, little specialization of skills, therefore, little division of labor, are so out of necessity for survival. As society conquers the environment, the dangers of the exterior (to the society) world lessens. The need for solidarity is not so greatly felt. Opportunity for self-expression arises. All humans feel this need to "be one's self." As the need for conformity decreases, this need for individualism increases. But the conscience-collective changes only slowly. The old ways have "always worked." Change brings insecurity, danger, to those who were raised from childhood believing in the "old ways." It is the young who are not afraid of change. It takes time for the old generation to accept change or to die out until they are no longer in the majority. By the time the young are in control, they are no longer the young. It is their ways that bring the security of time and usefulness, and their ways are no longer so different from the old ways. But they are different. Each new generation brings with it a renewed call for individual rights, for a redefinition of the conscience-collective. Each new generation takes another step, most often a small one, toward that Edenic society of individual liberty.

So, the apparent goal of this punctuated-equilibrium evolution of human society is a society in which the
individual is paramount, rather than the collective. In this society the division of labor would, as Durkheim proposed, be the ultimate means of solidarity. The specialty-skill of the person and its need by the society would be paramount to his/her success. The important point of this form of society would be the need, therefore the worth, of the individual. In this society the individual would be pampered, even coddled. To lose even one person to the collective, to lose the specialized skills the individual brings to the survival of all, would be considered devastating. In this society every form of conduct would be acceptable to the conscience-collective except conduct that would endanger the life or liberties of another individual, and through that, the life and liberty of the collective.

This form of society, which history tells us is the ultimate goal of societal evolution, could be termed, in Durkheimian terms, an "egoist society." During anomic periods in societal evolution, the attention is brought to the individual. At the end of anomic periods compromises are made which allow renewed equilibrium. New rules are compiled to restrict the individual from deviating "too far" from the norm. Often the result is a backward step toward more control rather than less, if the controlling elite is very powerful. When intense egoism occurs, the end is ultimately, finally, collapse of the society.

The "official" conscience, the conscience-collective and the individual conscience--three definitions of right
and wrong--are in a state of flux during the transition from unrest to equilibrium. The individual who has a great need for self sufficiency, the egoist, finds himself in a state of personal anomie. Thus, the incidence of egoistic suicide would increase during a period in society that might be called an "egoistic period."

We have looked at three forms of society and the three forms of suicide common in each society: egoistic, altruistic and anomic. Each of these forms of society can be described by describing the relative functions of the conscience-collective in it. In the egoist society the individual is all important. By the same token society is considered a protector of the rights and freedoms of the individual. Each person determines his/her own moral system. The individual conscience is very strong, the conscience-collective very weak. All social institutions of a society reflect the society itself. The institution of suicide dominant in an egoistic society, called egoistic suicide, is a result of the individual feeling such a distance from the collective that a sense of uselessness and purposelessness takes him over (Durkheim [1897] 1951, p. 225). Finding no reason for living, no goals beyond self, suicide is the result.

In the altruistic society, which is normally a nondifferentiated society in which there is little division of labor, the situation is exactly the opposite. The sense of "being like all the others" is very strong. The individual is unimportant. The collective is all. The gods
work with the "people," the "nation," or the "family," but seldom with the individual unless it is to use him/her in some way to guide the collective. The dominant form of suicide in this society is one in which societal sanctions demand the act in certain cases. If you are about to become a burden to the collective, if you are about to become useless, or if the society is about to undergo a drastic change in which you will not fit—such as the death of your master or husband—the answer is to die. Often, to facilitate this, the promise of a happier existence in the after-life is made. If this promise is believed in strongly enough, there are some who will commit suicide, just to "get over."

Religious Experience

In You Shall Be As Gods Erich Fromm (1966, pp. 17-18) makes an important point concerning the religious experience of an individual.

There is simultaneously permanence and change in any living being; hence, there is permanence and change in any concept reflecting the experience of a living man. However, that concepts have their own lives, and that they grow, can be understood only if the concepts are not separated from the experience to which they give expression. If the concept becomes alienated—that is, separated from the experience to which it refers—it loses its reality and is transformed into an artifact of man's mind. The fiction is thereby created that anyone who uses the concepts is referring to the substratum of experience underlying it. Once this happens—and this process of the alienation of
concepts is the rule rather than the exception—the idea expressing an experience has been transformed into an ideology that usurps the place of the underlying reality within the living human being. History then becomes a history of ideologies rather than the history of concrete, real men who are the producers of their ideas.

Fromm is here giving a perfect description of the operation of Schopenhauer's and Durkheim's representation and conscience-collective. For example, a man is lost in a woods. He has no food or water. He is afraid, tired, and hungry. Finally, he sits, leaning on an oak tree. In his condition he begins to cry out for help. A bright light becomes visible to him. He hears sounds like voices but cannot tell what is being said. A wind shakes the trees, making a loud, "whooshing" sound. Fruit and nuts fall at his feet. He eats. Being filled, he lies down and sleeps the drugged sleep of one who has been starved and exhausted and has now been filled with a high amount of simple carbohydrates (a sugar high). He dreams of an old man who speaks to him, telling him that he need never worry when lost in the woods if he finds a tree like this one with which to nourish himself.

When he awakes, now rested and his hunger satiated, he easily finds his way home. When he arrives at his village, friends and neighbors who had worried about him now rejoice for him and are anxious to know how he survived all night in the storm. As he relates his story, the people make joyful noises for every event related. He gets caught up in the
telling of the story. People ask questions. He answers, the story getting more and more interesting with the telling. He fills in blanks. The dream becomes reality to him as well as to those listening. The old man becomes a powerful entity who has power to help those who believe in Him when lost. Soon the peripherals become more important than the actual events, and a new reality is born.

The people ask to see the tree. He takes them to it; and while they are there, they ask him to tell the story again. He tells the story again, now highly elaborated upon. He begins to sense an uplifting rush of emotion during the exciting parts (which get more exciting each time), and the people feel it too. The wind blows as before, and the people believe that the old man is showing his presence in the wind. They all experience, together, a sense of well-being and emotional elation here at the tree. With time, our hero becomes a priest, the intermediary between the people and the old man. A god has been born.

The next generation, not knowing the original story or the events leading up to the creation of the new religion, experience the religion as something that is eternal—that is, it existed before them and will exist after they are gone. It exists everywhere they go; it is external to themselves; it has absolute power over every aspect of their lives and those around them; it defines what is right and what is wrong and has continuity, or history. This religion has become, as Durkheim would say, a social fact.
What exists, from the moment of the first telling of the story, is not a reality, nor even a factual relating of the story, but a representation of the events of the story. Since each person cannot experience the same "reality" that the first man did, they share in the relating of the story and share the emotional thrill of the presence of the old man. The representation is the reality for the tribe; the actual event is lost forever.

As story tellers are trained, there is a right way, and there are wrong ways of telling the story. There are proper ways of approaching the "holy tree." There are lessons to be learned from the story. Morals are defined by the tellers. Since all in the tribe are taught from birth those beliefs important to the religion, all have no choice but to think of the story as true. All agree. What is important is that while there may be sanctions against improper conduct as defined by the tellers, for the most part these sanctions are unnecessary. The majority just accepts "truth" as truth. This is the conscience-collective in action in the formation and maintenance of religious dogma.

An experience that is not shared is an experience soon forgotten. We all want to share experiences we have had, whether they be good ones or bad. In the attempt to explain or understand events that happen to us, we attribute powers above us as causes for events. A sense of understanding comes over us as we attribute events to the "gods." As we
begin to understand that some power above us can control us, we of course seek to placate or please that power. We begin to sense that we all can share in the comfort and security of believing. Soon a group is formed, a group of believers. As the assembly begins to form, as always, rules of conduct are created. When one is performing placations for the power, there must be order, a way to act and a way not to act. Rituals are created. Soon there is a consensus of opinion on proper and improper conduct—morals. A sense of right and wrong, the conscience-collective has taken root.

Thus we arrive at the following definition:

A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community, called a "church," all those who adhere to them. (Durkheim [1912] 1960, p. 65)

It is, thus, very probable—this brief exposition, of course, is not rigorous proof—that religion corresponds to an equally very central area of the conscience collective. (Durkheim [1893] 1960, p. 143)

Religion in modern society remains a focal point for determinations of right and wrong. The collective conscience is still first shaped and formed by religion. It is wrong to abort unborn children but right to kill those convicted of certain crimes. It is wrong to smoke marijuana but acceptable to smoke tobacco. It is wrong to use heroin but acceptable to drink alcohol. There is no consistency to the conscience-collective; there is only what is traditionally socially acceptable and what is not. The church is not the
Equivalence of Immune System and Conscience-Collective

The immune system of mammals provides an interesting parallel with the activity of the conscience-collective. A good example of social preservation is given by the actions of amoebae:

"Self" has two senses when applied to a single-cell organism, for example the amoebae, which usually reproduces asexually by dividing. One sense of "self" is genetic. A colony of amoebae that has arisen as clones—with all its cells descended through cell division from a single ancestor—is a single "self," since all members of the clone are genetically identical. They have all descended from their ancestor without any changes in the genetic material, such changes generally being wrought through sexual reproduction. Death of one or more of the cells in the clone does not mean an end to a particular set of genes. "Self" in this sense still requires that each cell have some protection against invasion by "foreign," since without such protection the entire colony is likely to be destroyed once one of its members is invaded by another organism. For example, a bacterium can invade one member, then reproduce itself and go on to invade other members of the clone. A second sense of "self" might be termed geometric or physical. This is the sense in which the single amoeba functions. "Self" begins at its surface, and anything outside of that surface is "foreign." For the amoeba in the first instance, "foreign" is food; so, food-processing and destruction of harmful foreign molecules and cells are the same. The ways in which amoebae seek, capture, and digest "foreign" are not unique to them and their kin. They are also used by amoeba-like cells that destroy invad-
ing bacteria and damaged cells in multicellular animals. (Adler 1961, p. 4)

Amoebae experience "collective self" in a way not unlike human society. In a very real sense, all amoebae in a given "clan" are extensions of the original "self." There are a number of possible genetic variabilities caused by a variety of genetic processes; but, for the most part, it can be said of a given "clan" of amoebae that they are genetically the same. If some variability enters in that proves to be fatal or if there is an attack from some exterior agency and one, a few, or many amoebae die as a result, there is still no fatal blow to the social "self," as long as some, who resist the attack, survive to reproduce and continue the "clan."

In the case of more complex animals and plants, specialized organs and systems exist which defend the organism from general damage while sacrificing a few individual cells for the sake of the whole. In both cases, the simple cell and the organism, there is a complex methodology to determine sameness or differentness. If an intruder is determined to be "different," it is destroyed; no deviance allowed.

How similar this is to the process of sociation. The collective, according to Durkheim, forms a "collective representation" of reality, of "sameness," conformity. (Durkheim [1898] 1974). There develops a conscience-collective which serves as a "litmus test" of correct individual opinion to determine the level of conformity. If the individual agrees with the conscience-collective, then
no special defensive activity takes place. If the individual is found wanting in conformity, then all the defenses available begin to activate.

If purely moral rules are at stake, the public conscience restricts any act which infringes them by the surveillance it exercises over the conduct of citizens and by the special punishments it has at its disposal (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 51).

What is available to the collective as a means of enforcing conformity on the part of individuals? In the case of amoebae, the "sport" is eaten. In human society deviant individuals are not killed and eaten, at least not physically, not in "modern civilization." What of societies' tools for enforcement? In the case of "primitive" mechanical societies, rules are enforced strictly. Those who threaten the tranquility of the collective are tried and punished. (Durkheim [1893] 1984, p. 31).

In the case of "modern" organic solidarity, where the individual is valuable because of some difference in skill or ability and where these differences are the prime factor in solidarity, punishment for deviance is usually a penalty of restitution or fine; but basically the individual is forced to conform, rather than be cast out (Durkheim [1893] 1984, p. 68). It would seem that, since individuality in several areas is valued for its contribution to the solidarity of the whole, minor infractions are not abhorred as they are in mechanical solidarity.

Durkheim may have expected that modern society would finally shake itself loose from the mechanical forms of
solidarity. If so, at least to the present, though many have tried for a process of resocialization rather than punishment, he was, apparently, wrong. We yet have the concept of punishment in effect in our societies. The primal human within the collective still cries for an "eye for an eye" rather than redemption.

This is not to say that there is no individuality, either in amoebae or in human society. As long as the individuality is not threatening to the solidarity of the collective, it is tolerated or permitted. "Moreover, we know that all social constraints do not necessarily exclude the individual personality" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 52).

Durkheim may have gone so far in the direction of "clonism" concerning the social individual that, like the symbolic interactionists of later social theory, he may have seen the individual self as a social creation, socially maintained.

Durkheim regarded individualism as a collective representation, a force that would impress itself on human minds regardless of their subjective opinions, and the manifestation of the egotistical will. (Mestrovic 1988, p. 8)

Like the individual amoeba, the individual human finds himself a "one of many," not quite identical to the others but enough in sameness as to not be a cause for sanctions. The majority of us learn very early to conform, to not rock the boat or risk punishment. Like the amoeba, as an individual, he/she is expendable. Die or leave the collective, and the collective goes on as if nothing had
happened. Fail to conform, and the conscience-collective is activated, bringing into play the forces of the social institutions, the "immune system" of the collective.

Societies form from people who are in close proximity to each other. As the numbers of individuals in the group grow, positions and officers are created, and a division of labor occurs; people become specialists. Finally, a given group increases in size until, like Abraham and Lot, the group, or collective, is too large to interact efficiently, and a division occurs.

As long as people are in physical contact with each other, the common conscience, the agreed upon sense of what is right and wrong, is safe, common to all. "...no social fact can exist except where there is a well defined social organisation" (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 52). When people separate, the environment is different for some from what it is for others. In order to maintain continuity, occasional reunions are organized. Persons at fairs, carnivals, picnics, and places where people can touch again, share experiences, and reaffirm common acceptance of mores and customs. At such events the conscience-collective is reshaped and shared.

Nothing is more certain than growth and change. The number of human beings has increased until it is impossible for all to communicate to the general collective. We appoint representatives to meet with other representatives. They will communicate, share their common experiences, and pass
back to us the results of their meeting. But these groups become too large for effective communication, and new collectives are formed from newly appointed representatives. Finally, the distance from the UN to one's neighborhood is too great; there occurs a breakdown in communications. Collectives create their own conscience, different from one another. Things that would offend the collective conscience in the neighborhood are performed daily in the state capitol. The Federal government prosecutes state-elected officers for actions that are daily activities of Federal officials.

The collective-conscience of those "on the hill" is different from that in Metcalfe County. They are two different societies. Someone "on the hill" who is from Metcalfe county will act differently at home than he will in Washington. Things done daily on the job are kept secret from the home. The appearance of consensus must be kept up, even if it doesn't exist. There exists a multitude of widely differing societies, ruled over by a series of smaller and more powerful elitist societies. For each separate society there exists a separate conscience-collective. Only when there is direct interaction between these societies does any commonality appear.
CHAPTER VII
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this paper I have discussed Durkheim's concept of collective phenomena, especially the conscience-collective. I have compared Durkheim's collective phenomena with Schopenhauer's individual phenomena. Durkheim's probable dependence upon Schopenhauer's basic premise was explored. Examples of the conscience-collective in action have been given, along with brief summaries of Durkheim's major works and their dependence upon the concept of the conscience-collective. The previous chapter ends with a comparison of collective action in human society and the collective conduct of amoebae, microscopic animals which few people would care to be compared with, and yet....

Sociology, Quo Vadis?

Important studies are being conducted today. It would seem that not only social realities are socially created, but also that much of the process by which Schopenhauer's "world as will" imposes itself upon the individual will is very much a social process as well. A simple example of this is how our view of the atom has changed during this century. At first, only a few esoteric scientists will be aware of a new "model" of reality, but
eventually we all come to accept new paradigms of knowledge. Our old "realities" are quite comfortable until we find that a majority of our friends are beginning to see the new reality. Only then does our view of the universe change. It is habitual, even necessary, for academicians to refer to "higher" authority in their work. This rule is socially imposed, having no "reality" of its own in the philosophic sense. This rule alone has caused knowledge to stagnate in the cesspool of repetitive intercessory ritual. Let us take a lesson from Schopenhauer and Durkheim and view these representations as just that and not as the reality, or "thing in itself." To whose maps do the pioneers refer? Those of us who desire to delve into the unknown, by definition, will find no one to whom we can refer.

We who desire the light of understanding, who desire to have proper representation of the universe's presentation, find ourselves much in the position of the individual who was delivered from Plato's cave. We know what has gone before is not quite correct, yet we cannot find the proper means to communicate with our former fellow inmates the beauty of the light outside the cave.

In the light of Durkheim's familiarity with Schopenhauer's philosophy of the world as "will and idea," what can be said of the meaning of conscience-collective in today's sociology? Indeed, what can be said of the goals and future of sociology from today onward? It is apparent that Durkheim viewed social facts, social "reality" in the same
manner as Schopenhauer's Vorstellung, or representations. In The Rules of Sociological Method, Durkheim ([1895] 1982) advised us to study social facts and limit ourselves to studying that area of reality that lies between ourselves as we interact in daily social life. We are to study, then, the act of the creation of "collective representations."

In Durkheim's time, there was no strict delineation between the social sciences. History, psychology, economics, and sociology each melded one into the other in terms of expertise. It was up to him to define that specific area of study for the sociologist as the representation that seems to be created in the process of human interaction. Durkheim warned us about the danger of accumulation of facts without interpretation. In this time of division in sociology, perhaps we should return to our roots. The study of Durkheim would bring us to understand that social realities are, in themselves, representations, "collective consciences" which are, while being very powerful over the individual representations, yet malleable and changeable. Following Durkheim we can come to realize that discrimination, poverty, crime, drug abuse, and violence are caused by and, indeed, are, themselves, representations. If we are to conquer these social ills, we must fight them at the level of representation, individual representation, through the process of socialization (Durkheim [1895] 1982, p. 66).
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