The Sacred Calling of Intellectual Labor in Mystic and Ascetic Durkheimianism

The Sacred as Simultaneously Intellectual and Existential/Personal Concern in the Durkheimian School

The long-standing and profound interest in the sacred on the part of the Durkheimian/Année sociologique school is a fact well known to historians of sociology and sociologists (Pickering 1984; Allen et al. 1998; Nielsen 1986; Tiryakian in Rhea 1981; Isambert 1976). What is much less known is that this interest was arguably not solely scientific and intellectual. The very fact of the Durkheimian interest is indicative of the concept's centrality to the times in which they lived and to the particular cultural and political crises then being experienced, and the Durkheimians were themselves subject to the effects of these crises (Riley 2002). Sociologists of knowledge take as given the proposition that intellectual work is rooted in particular contexts of social, material, ideal and ultimately often very personal interests and dilemmas. Along these lines, some have studied the emergence of sociology in its Durkheimian as well as other guises as a new method not only for gaining an objectifying understanding of the facts of the social world but simultaneously as a new form of personal practice by which, in seeking to understand the central dilemmas facing contemporary humankind, intellectuals in search of new meaning structures in their own lives could formulate and pursue such projects (Frisby 1992; Lepennies 1988; Liebersohn 1988; Riley 2000). The Durkheimian attraction to the sacred is in this view dually motivated by a desire to understand the role of this notion in general social life and to explore its possible relevance in their own personal attempts to construct meaningful lives.

This essay aims to make a contribution to the sociological understanding of the emergence and meaning of intellectual work by examining the ways in which the interest in the sacred on the part of the Durkheimians who worked centrally on religion, i.e., Durkheim himself, Marcel Mauss, Henri Hubert and Robert Hertz is linked to a simultaneous project to remodel some version of the sacred in their own lives. Mauss, Hubert and Hertz were the men most identified with the sociology of religion sub-section1 of the Année sociologique and they were Durkheim's closest collaborators and confidants, both in the...
Année project and in his broader intellectual, political, and private life. Mauss was his nephew, the son of Durkheim's sister Rosine, and his closest intellectual colleague during the years from the establishment of the Année to his death. He became, upon Durkheim's death, the acknowledged inheritor and successor to the Durkheimian legacy without debate or challenge from others on the team, taking possession of the unpublished manuscripts and lectures of his uncle in order to control their gradual dissemination to the intellectual world and assuming Durkheim's position as general editor of the Année in its ill-fated second series in 1925. Hubert, who was one of Mauss's closest friends and his long-term intellectual collaborator, was introduced to Durkheim and the Année through his relationship to Mauss, but developed a significant unmediated relationship to the uncle, stemming from a combination of shared intellectual and political projects and a mutual concern for the 'moral direction' of Mauss. Finally, Hertz, who was separated in age from Mauss and Hubert by almost 10 years, was the student and close intellectual collaborator of both Durkheim and Mauss and was recognized by both as one of the most important young contributors to the Année.

**Durkheim's Pursuit of the Sacred**

Durkheim's basic thesis on religion and the sacred is well known and can be fairly easily summarized in its essentials. In his argument, the sacred/profane binary is the key to understanding religion, and it is society itself that is at the source of the sacred and that forms and worships itself in sacred objects, which are nothing more than hypostatized collective sentiments and forces. The sacred is the presence of society in the form of representations and ideas of the collectivity, transformed to be sure into transcendent or divine language and form but nonetheless representing the immanent force of the social and opposed to the profane individual. This is Durkheim's treatment of the sacred at the formal, abstract level, but to find his most explicit discussion of the role the sacred plays in the intellectual's life, we must turn from the work that is concerned with religious phenomena and focus elsewhere. In addition to the collapse of the sacred into society, we find in Durkheim another such reductive move that helped ground his ideas on the future of the sacred. This second reduction was to make society the source and ground of morality. The
sociological grounding of a moral theory was perhaps the central element in Durkheim's intellectual project, though he never succeeded in completing more than an introduction and an outline for his planned *chef d'oeuvre, La Morale*, and published only a few essays in philosophical journals on the topic during his lifetime. The connection between the sacred and morality is approximated first by closely equating religion and morality. Both, he argues, consist of two correlated components. In religion, religious representations or ideas are celebrated through prescribed rites, while in the realm of morality, *moeurs* provides the ideational substance that *moeurs* endeavor to enact in practice, however imperfectly (Durkheim 1975b:330). Further, both, in Durkheim's argument, ultimately derive their power to compel certain beliefs and appropriate rites or acts to accompany them from their utterly social roots. Moral acts, he says, are never those acts that have merely individual interests as their ends, and individuals in themselves do not constitute legitimate moral ends; therefore, the only possible object of a morality is a group (Durkheim 1953:37). This collective being Durkheim intends to play the role in his moral theory that is played by the divinity in Kant's (Durkheim 1953:2).

But morality must be something more than merely the restraining notion of obligation and duty, as it is defined by Kant; it must appear to actors as *desirable* as well. Thus, in defining the basic elements of morality in his posthumously published course in moral education, Durkheim includes the freedom of the will of the actor in addition to the spirit of discipline and the attachment to a group (Durkheim 1963). This element of desirability provides the way into the comparison, or, rather, equation of morality and the sacred. For is not the sacred, like morality, both compelling, obligatory in its command, and actively loved and pursued by the religious? (Durkheim 1953:36, 48) Do not the two share this seeming contradiction in their structure? The moral domain, even in its secular form, is as if surrounded by a mysterious barrier that holds it apart from profanation, just as the religious domain is protected from the reach of the profane. It is a *sacred* domain. (Durkheim 1963:8, emphasis in original)

From here, Durkheim's position on the role to be played by the sacred in contemporary, secular society *vis-à-vis* the masses of society starts to become clear.
Durkheim's case for the reconfiguration of the sacred in modern society as the cult of Man or the Human is relatively well known. It was this object of consecration and holy devotion to which the masses ought to direct their veneration in the contemporary world in Durkheim's view, inasmuch as the traditional forms of the sacred (as exemplified most generally by the Roman Catholic Church) could not be expected to retain their efficacy (Durkheim 1991:715-716; 1975b:169-170), and he spent a considerable amount of time in his lectures on educational practice and pedagogy detailing the particulars of how the ground for this new mode of 'worship' would be prepared in the French educational system. If the true sacred object of religion was the social, and if a secular morality had to teach an adherence to social solidarity as its central objective, there could, Durkheim argued, be no better educational program for the inculcation of this new sacred practice than the teaching of the discipline he was attempting to place in the seat once held by philosophy as the queen of the human sciences, i.e., sociology. He would advocate this ceaselessly from his chair at the Sorbonne and he had formulated this perspective on the role of sociology in the moral and 'religious' formation of the masses still earlier. In 1900, while still a professor at Bordeaux, Durkheim gave a paper at the Congrès international de l'éducation sociale (which was held in conjunction with the Exposition universelle of that same year and which was dominated by Solidarist theorists and politicians, most notably, Léon Bourgeois), in which he explicated at some length this notion of the sacred role to be played by the teaching of sociology:

It is necessary to show young persons how man, far from being self-sufficient, is only part of a whole from which he cannot be isolated except by abstraction; how society lives and acts within him, how it is the best part of his nature; and how, consequently, he can no more detach himself from it than it from himself...The only discipline capable of rendering these truths evident is sociology (Weisz 1976:382-383).5

While he is specifically referring to the role of sociology in university education in this excerpt, Durkheim makes clear in the same paper that sociology's role as successor to religious morality is not to be limited to the elite who reach the university. "Moral conscience," he writes, "must be the same in all classes and in all spheres of society" and
therefore the sociological sacred must be inculcated in the primary and secondary schools as well (Weisz 1976:385). Durkheim's intent thus was that sociology be substituted in the educational curriculum, at virtually all levels, as a moralizing force for the former coursework in religious (that is, Christian) or philosophical morality. We must remember that Durkheim's first course on moral education at the Sorbonne had been clear about initiating the teaching of "la morale laïque," that is, sociological morality, at the elementary (primaire) school level, and Paul Fauconnet, who wrote the introduction to the published version of this lecture course, notes the existence of another Durkheim course, dating at least from 1907-08, on "L'Enseignement de la morale à l'école primaire," a course that has never been published (Durkheim 1963:vi).

Durkheim had some success at getting this pedagogical and moral program enacted in the French system, and some disciples would attempt to carry on the banner after his death. So, for example, in 1920 Paul Lapie, who was director of primary education and a former contributor to the Année, instituted a course on sociological morality at the Écoles Normales Primaires, the national training ground for future teachers of the elementary schools, that was aimed in part specifically at replacing the religious curriculum on morality. The vehemence with which this program was attacked (it was eventually revoked in the early 1930s) by opponents of the sociological moral project demonstrates the terror Durkheim's ideas on the mass reconfiguration of the sacred/moral evoked in many of his contemporaries. 6

But if this is the model of the modern sacred for the masses, does Durkheim prescribe the same renovated sacred object and practice for the intellectual? For we must acknowledge that, some evidence and much secondary commentary to the contrary, it seems clear that Durkheim viewed the case of the intellectuals as separable from that of the general man here. Although the manuscript has been lost, we know Durkheim gave a course on "l'éducation intellectuelle" during the same period of his course on moral education (Besnard 1993:122), and this suggests something of a distinction between the two that corresponds to an intellectual and a moral function. Is it plausible from this to argue that Durkheim saw an intellectual function that was separable from the moral? I do not think so,
and in any event we do not need to make any such argument in order to present a case in which Durkheim's proposed project for renewal of the sacred for the intellectual and the scientist is, like that for the masses, thoroughly moral, but differently so.

Notwithstanding Durkheim's very clear and even radical egalitarian political position and deep commitment to democracy, he was no radical leveler; he recognized natural, innate hierarchies among men. A fascinating early speech delivered by a very young (25 years old) Durkheim to the graduating lycéens at Sens, where he had recently become an instructor in the fall of the preceding year, shows clearly a very deeply French reverence for "great men" and lays out, albeit in non-systematic fashion, something of a schema for the relations and reciprocal obligations existing among these "grands hommes" and "les petits" (Durkheim 1975a:409-417). It is of course, first, a given that Durkheim is addressing a group largely consisting of "les petits," and he strategically places himself in the same category in presenting his case. The main question at hand is whether men of genius, the elect, are a menace to the mediocre, or whether the general health is dependent on this elect? Durkheim rejects the extreme argument, in the person of Ernest Renan, that humanity's goal is solely the great by arguing that "all individuals, however humble, have the right to aspire to the superior life of the mind" (Durkheim 1975a:413). But if all have the right to so aspire, it remains the case that most will not attain such heights. And, moreover, Durkheim finds the argument for radical leveling and the uselessness of great men advanced by the most extreme democrats and socialists "just as false...[and] perhaps more dangerous" than Renan's extreme Nietzschean position (Durkheim 1975a:414). The 'moderate' position Durkheim advocates between the two is significantly closer to the latter than to the former. It amounts to a kind of evolutionist theory of great men as moral, scientific and spiritual points of superiority that emerge here and there to indicate to the mass, which, even if it is not the miserable toiling mass of the radical aristocrats, can be characterized by a "satisfied mediocrity," the proper direction for the continued evolution of humankind (Durkheim 1975a:415).

How are they to do this? They are to provide an example to the mass, to demonstrate by their lives, but especially by their dedication to that "superior life" that is the life of the
mind, that "humanity is not made to endlessly indulge in easy and vulgar pleasures" and to lead the mass to "despise that inferior life, in order to detach humanity from this mortal slumber and to persuade it to march ahead" (Durkheim 1975a:416). So, clearly, though Durkheim cannot accept the argument of the mass as mere fodder for the surge of the great intellectual toward glory, inasmuch as he understands the two figures in necessary relation to one another, he nonetheless elevates the latter to the status of "benefactors of humanity" (Durkheim 1975a:417) and recognizes in the former an inferior status. After explicitly naming several of the more typical categories of the "great man," namely, the artist, the poet, and the thinker, he closes his address by calling on the young graduates not to blush in according to superior men a just deference, for "there is a certain manner of allowing oneself to be guided that does not at all take away independence" and one must know how to respect "all natural superiority" (Durkheim 1975a:417).

I present the argument from this early text at such length in order to demonstrate the fact of Durkheim's distinction between at least two kinds of social being here, the mundane and the extraordinary, and to show how he makes extraordinariness contingent precisely on intellectual production. The intellectuals then, or at least some subset of them (for we can perhaps imagine that the bulk of them would be classifiable as mundane in so far as they do not create but mimic or follow other more creative intellectuals and artists) are a recognizably distinct group, and Durkheim sees their role in society as distinct from the role of the mundane. Likewise, they have a unique responsibility vis-à-vis the reconfigured sacred. They remain, like the priests of earlier times, the revealers of the nature of the sacred to the masses and, in this, they are required to take on an even more exaggerated attitude of asceticism towards it; as we have argued previously, this notion emerges also from a careful reading of his writing on intellectuals at the time of the Dreyfus Affair. That is, the intellectual is to dedicate himself to the new sacred object, to its progressive study and deciphering through scientific examination, in an ascetic and renunciatory process not unlike that evident in the priesthoods of Judaism and Christianity. In Durkheim's own life, we find a powerful and precise enactment of this project.
Before examining the details of that enactment more closely, though, let us explore the conceptions of the sacred that emerge in the work of Durkheim's colleagues, Mauss, Hubert and Hertz, which will make visible substantial differences between their conception of the sacred and that of Durkheim that end up leading to foundations for quite different conceptions of the intellectual project of meaning construction.

**Mauss, Hubert and Hertz on the Sacred: Differing with Durkheim**

The first detailed exploration of this topic by Mauss and Hubert takes place in their co-authored essay on a general theory of magic in 1904 that appeared as the central original study in the seventh volume of the *Année*, and in many ways this remained their foundational statement on the question, though they were to develop their perspective significantly in later work. The introduction to this essay makes clear that the issue of the sacred is at the foundation of their concerns here (Mauss 1950). Indeed, they argue that their intention in taking up the study of magical facts was to explore more completely this notion that had been at the explanatory root of their earlier essay on sacrifice but that had there been insufficiently elaborated. The distinction between magic and religion was the intellectual ground upon which Mauss and Hubert elaborated a notion of the sacred that differed in important ways from that of Durkheim. For Durkheim, magic, while it both historically and in specific empirical examples intermingled with properly religious belief and ritual and, in so far as that was the case, was therefore of interest to the sociologist, was nonetheless cleanly distinguishable from religion in one fundamental manner: the former, Durkheim argues, has no Church, while the latter does always and everywhere it exists (Mauss 1950:103-104). More, this means that magic is at bottom an individual, rather than collective, phenomenon. Even in those cases where groups of magicians ally themselves in loose 'societies,' he claims, there is no "moral community," no intimate social unity created by a common faith which, as his later equation of the sacred with the social displays clearly, is the very engine for the efficacy of the beliefs and rites shared in that community (Mauss 1950:106). Religious ideas and practices have power because of their sociality, their intimate immersion in a moral community. Magic rites, on the contrary, evidently do not derive any power from such
sources, and "the magician in no way needs, in order to practice his art, to unite himself to his colleagues" (Mauss 1950:105).

The rather evident result of this evaluation of magic's relation to religion is the relegation of the former to the devalued half of the Durkheimian binary of the sacred and the profane, and Durkheim is, in seeming radical contradiction with his own later statements to the contrary, explicit in linking magic to the profane (and, as we have just seen, to its corollary negative category, the individual, which opposes the social): "Magic takes a kind of professional pleasure in profaning holy things; in its rites, it takes the course that is opposed to that of religious ceremonies" (Mauss 1950:102). But how can magic be so full of religious elements, as Durkheim argues in opposing Frazer's neat separation of the two, and in profane opposition to the sacred objects of religion at one and the same time? Curiously, Durkheim cites Hubert and Mauss as authorities for his rather specious argument here, but in so doing, he considerably downplays the rather serious differences in their perspective.

Hubert and Mauss had in fact explicitly taken on this idea that magic was somehow to be equated with the purely individual or the profane. On the first matter, they had taken up the point Durkheim raises, i.e., that magic's independence from a community of faith is a ground for its distinction from religion, and recognized the contradiction that Durkheim appears to have missed. If religion derives its efficacy from the social itself, if it in fact is nothing more than the social, then what explains magic's efficacy? As Mauss and Hubert put it, "we are in the presence of a dilemma: either magic is collective, or the notion of the sacred is individual" (Mauss 1950:3). That is, we cannot have it both ways: either the sacred is derived from the social and therefore magic too is collective, or, if magic is not collective, then the definition Durkheim offers for the sacred must be modified. Their conclusion from the facts presented in their study is that magic is collective, that it differs only rather superficially from religion in this regard; although it is true that it can be called an institution only in a weak sense, it is nonetheless a deeply social phenomenon. This is clear in an examination of the way in which "magical judgments" are carried out:

magical judgments are, as we have said, nearly perfect
synthetic a priori judgments. The terms are linked before every kind of experience. Let us be well understood, we are not saying that magic never makes appeal to analysis or experience, but we are saying that magic is very weakly analytical, weakly experimental, and nearly totally a priori (Mauss 1950:125).

The fact that belief in magic, its efficacy as a form of knowledge, is so clearly tied to a priori reasoning is for Mauss and Hubert the firmest evidence that it must be rooted in something beyond individual judgment and experiment, i.e., in a pre-formed consensus about what constitutes legitimate belief and knowledge that can only come from either a natural human mental structure (which is disproved by the fact that only some groups of people believe in the efficacy of magical knowledge) or from the social.

Further, magic is not merely profane in its conscious and explicit inversion of some religious rites in carrying out its own. Here, Mauss and Hubert reveal a significantly greater sensitivity to the dual character of the sacred that Durkheim traces in the *Formes* than Durkheim himself. One wonders how it is, given Durkheim's understanding of this dual structure of the right and left, or pure and impure sacred, that he manages in his discussion of magic's profane nature to class the black mass as profane, instead of as impure sacred. Mauss and Hubert, in distinguishing religion and magic, draw explicitly on this pure/impure sacred distinction in order to basically map religion and magic to these categories, with some qualification and recognition that the great mass of empirical facts fall somewhere in between the two. Religion thus becomes most clearly exemplified in rite by the institution of sacrifice, which is centrally identified with the pure sacred and the beneficent powers, while the characteristic ritual act of magic is the evil spell, which is exemplary of the impure sacred, of the powers productive of disorder, sickness and death (Mauss 1950:17). Although this classificatory schema is less neat in reality than this suggests (and Mauss and Hubert recognize explicitly the complexity in pointing to the mixed pure/impure sacred quality of sacrifice in their earlier work on that institution), this effort to classify religion and magic along a different pole than that of the sacred and the profane is important.

From this difference on the nature of magic, Mauss and Hubert tackle the theory of the sacred and similarly diverge in crucial ways from Durkheim. For, although they do not follow Durkheim in so radically separating magic from the collective energy of the social,
they do recognize that there is perhaps something distinguishable from the sacred that serves as the 'power supply' of magical rites. Moreover, their theoretical innovation here outflanks the category of the sacred, for they believed they had discovered a category that included the sacred as a sub-category and that applied not only to magic but to religion as well. They felt this new category was broad enough even to see it at work in primitive discussions of power and force in non-religious discourses. They define it as a kind of

Force par excellence...a sort of ether, imponderable, communicable, that spreads out from itself...a pure efficacy, that is however a material and localizable substance at the same time as it is spiritual, that acts at a distance yet by direct connection, if not by contact, mobile and unstable without itself moving, impersonal and clothed in personal forms, divisible and continuous (Mauss 1950:111-112, 118).

A Melanesian term, *mana*, is adopted to name this phenomenon, but Mauss and Hubert argue for its near universality in pre-modern societies. It is mana that most sufficiently explains belief in magic's efficacy. Mauss and Hubert propose it after having eliminated, in good Durkheimian argumentative fashion, the three other possible explanations, respectively, the formula of sympathy (e.g., like produces like), the notion of propriety and that of demons or spirits (Mauss 1950:97). But, again, it is more than this; it is also, they believe, something of a near perfect example of "a category of collective thought," a type of human thought that is clearly linked to the sociological fact of collective experience and existence, as opposed to the Kantian categories that are given *a priori* to the human understanding. The proof of this is the fact that this category has been diminished greatly, even eliminated utterly except in vestigial forms, by the "progress of civilization," that is, with the increasing efficacy of logical and scientific categories of force and action. *Mana* originates as an elemental, foundational category for understanding force in the world, prior even to the sacred/profane dichotomy; in fact, "the sacred is a species of which mana is the genus" (Mauss 1950:120). As such, it takes on a tremendous importance in the effort to understand, in the evolutionary sense undertaken by Durkheim in the *Formes* and elsewhere, the process by which categories of understanding emerge and the ways in which the social interacts with them.
All of this serves as a significant difference between the Durkheimian and the Maussian/Hubertian conceptions of the sacred, as Mauss recognized quite clearly:

We [Hubert and Mauss] detected at its [magic's] foundation, as at the foundation of religion, a vast common notion that we called by a name borrowed from Melaneso-Polynesian, that of mana. This idea is perhaps more general than that of the sacred. Since then, Durkheim has tried to deduct it logically from the notion of the sacred. *We were never sure he was right, and I continue still to speak of the magico-religious base* (Mauss 1979:218, emphasis added).

Hertz's discussion of the sacred can likewise be distinguished from that of Durkheim along this axis of the pure and impure sacred. In both of the substantial works he completed in his brief life (he was killed at age 34 in 1915), his attention is concentrated on the processes by which pure and impure sacred are distinguished and on those by which movement is possible between the two statuses. In nearly all societies, Hertz argues, there exists a fundamental religious polarity in which right represents the pure and left the impure sacred and this distinction can be observed at myriad cultural levels from the architecture of physical space (the pure center and the impure periphery) to the structure of language itself (e.g., in French, the many moral connotations of *droite* and *gauche*). This sacred polarity is particularly evident in the symbolism and practices surrounding the phenomenon of death. Hertz argued that death rites in primitive Indonesian societies provide a clear example of the careful distinction between the impure sacred, represented by the body of the newly deceased and his close relatives, and the pure sacred, present in the bones of the deceased after the flesh has rotted away and the second and final funereal ceremony has been enacted. Initially and for a period that can last for as long as several years, the dead person is an object of "horror and dread" and his relatives are shunned as "impure and accursed"; the horror can be so great as to cause the temporary migration of members of the group, who return to their former dwellings only after the final burial rite removes the aura of dread and transforms the dead (and particularly his bones) into "sacred and magically potent" objects (Hertz 1960:37,48,50,72).8

Hertz's unfinished thesis on sin and expiation (Hertz 1994) was intended to be a sort of summary of the social and symbolic processes by which these two realms were constructed.
His argument in the lone completed chapter of his thesis was that the foundational notions of sin and of expiation are central to understanding the moral structures inherent in any given religious system. In examining the practices of sin and expiation as social institutions, Hertz hoped to shed light on the social nature and history of ideas of good and evil, of the ways in which individuals and groups are morally formed so as to adhere to the given moral structures of their societies through processes involving punishment of acts of transgression and complex rites designed to reintegrate those guilty of transgression and those otherwise beyond the pale of the moral community. Again we see the careful delineation of the two sacred realms, with an attention to the impure side or, in Mauss's words (Hertz 1994:17,39), to the "dark side of humanity" that far exceeds that found in Durkheim. More, the sacred is seen by all three younger members of the Durkheimian religion group as something broader than the merely moral.

The Ascetic and the Mystic: Two Kinds of Durkheimian Intellectual and Understanding of the Sacred, or Two Durkheimian Habitus

As indicated at the outset of this essay, my intention is not merely to point out differences in the way in which the sacred is configured as intellectual object of analysis for the Durkheimian school but rather to show how they are linked to differences in the approach of the members of the religion cluster to their intellectual calling as an essential element in their personal reconstruction of the notion of the sacred. Since Weber's seminal discussion of the role of the calling in the modern secular world as a kind of substitute for the traditional form of religious devotion to the sacred, it has been widely recognized that this mode of personal meaning-construction has broad applicability in the Western world, and not merely for intellectuals. An examination of the Durkheimian intellectual calling will reveal intriguing peculiarities. I argue that there are in fact at least two modes of Durkheimian calling, or two ways of pursuing the sacred in the form of an intellectual calling on the part of the Durkheimians examined herein, or, more broadly still, two Durkheimian habitus that will make clearer broader differences among the various thinkers involved.

How can we characterize and theorize these differing conceptions of the intellectual and his relation to the sacred? I want to suggest that we can consider categories from Max
Weber's sociology of religion as applicable to the two approaches to the intellectual calling/sacred in the Durkheimian religion group. These categories are those of the mystic, who makes resignation and contemplation the foundation of his religious reconciliation of worldly conflict, and the ascetic, who replaces resignation with notions of action and mastery. Weber further defines these two types of religious attitude toward God/the sacred and the world by creating a conceptual grid in which one axis is represented by the nature of the relationship of the believer to God/the sacred and the other is represented by his relationship to the established social world into which he is thrust. On the first axis, one can conceive of the relation to God/the sacred as of the nature of 'possession,' that is, as of a variety in which the believer is the vessel of the God and directly invested with the holy, which is characteristic of the mystic; or one can conceive of the relation to God/the sacred as considerably more distant and doubtful, of a variety in which the believer is not the vessel, but rather the tool of the holy and is acted upon by the holy without being in possession of it, which is characteristic of the ascetic. The second axis yields the two opposing values of remaining in the established world (while yet pursuing the religious direction of either mystical or ascetical orientation) and of rejecting the established world for monastic seclusion (Weber 1946:324-326).

Weber noted that the two types most often present themselves at neat opposites on this grid, as the most frequent outcome of the mystic orientation is toward a total contemplative position and withdrawal from the world (early Hinayana Buddhism is perhaps the closest to an ideal type here), while asceticism, especially in certain Occidental Protestant Christian forms that achieved great expansion in Europe and the Americas, gravitated toward action directed outward toward the world, not of course for the sake of affirming the values of the world but in order to act as tools of God and manifest one's status of election. But he notes too that the categories can sometimes become more complicated. The ascetic mode, rather than focusing its activity on some worldly routine or manifestation (as in, for example, the Calvinist ascetics Weber describes as the originators of the Protestant ethic), may "confine itself to keeping down and to overcoming creatural wickedness in the actor's own nature," and mysticism, instead of fleeing fully from the world,
can "give rise to communal action...characterized by the acosmism of the mystical feeling of love" (Weber 1946:325; 1963:176). Thus, the two axes give rise to four possible religious modes, other- and inner-worldly asceticism and other- and inner-worldly mysticism.

How do I propose to use these categories of the mystic and the ascetic to make sense of the different projects for the intellectual pursuit of the sacred evident in the Durkheimian religion cluster? We must begin by considering carefully an element of the Durkheimian project that was for too long generally overlooked by its interpreters, namely, its thoroughly collective nature. Over the past 25 years, the importance of the collective nature of the intellectual work that made up the *Année* project has begun to be recognized and discussed by a few dedicated historians of French sociology. Philippe Besnard was one of the first to begin to place long-overdue emphasis on the impossibility of considering Durkheimian thought apart from the context of the *Année sociologique*, which entailed thinking about the intricacies of a social unit of intellectuals involved in a collective research team/project (Besnard 1979). Victor Karady has discussed the various transgressions the Durkheimians enacted on standards of intellectual work accepted in their own day, noting among them their firm attachment to internationalism in content and their rejection of established disciplinary divisions, but naming as most important of these transgressions their commitment to truly collective work and their rejection of the then omnipresent model of the individual scholar working alone (Besnard 1979:84). He clarifies this by pointing to the fact that the immense majority of the published work of several key members of the *Année* team, including Mauss, Hubert, and even Durkheim himself, consisted of work specifically for the *Année*, in the form of book reviews and articles, even if it sometimes appeared elsewhere and in other forms later. Hubert, Mauss, and Hertz rarely published books as such, but rather what appeared as their books were revised versions of essays written initially for the *Année*. Many of these works were co-authored, e.g., the essays on sacrifice and magic by Hubert and Mauss, the essay on collective representations by Durkheim and Mauss, and arguably also numerous other works that bear the name of only one writer (e.g., Hubert's essay on time and his posthumously published volumes on Celtic history; Mauss's essay on the gift) but that were clearly the result of lengthy collective reflection and discussion, as
evidenced in correspondence. The correspondence among the central kernel of the group also demonstrates how important the collective sessions at the Mauss-Durkheim family residence at Epinal, during so-called vacations, were for the overall shape and tenor of the project (Besnard 1987; Durkheim 1998).

But if there is much evidence for the collective nature of the project, we have perhaps not yet fully appreciated just what that means in terms of the fundamental character and implications of the work itself and of its meaning for the members of the group. Personal correspondence between the members indicates that the Année itself, and the emphasis on collective work of which it was the clearest manifestation, was seen by Durkheim and by the other members of the religion cluster (and also by at least some other members of the Année team) as a direct realization of just the kind of modern intellectual space wherein moral and even sacred force could be generated. Durkheim could hardly speak more clearly of this aspect of the project in his correspondence with other members of the team. Very early on, for example, in 1901, he writes to Céléstin Bouglé, thanking him for an intervention on behalf of the Année project in another journal and clarifies the importance of the collective nature of the Année:

Your article in the Revue philosophique gave me great pleasure in several ways. I am first of all very grateful for that act of solidarity, the moral effect of which will, I hope, be considerable. Of all the services we can render the most valuable is to show that there are in sociology workers who are more concerned with joining their efforts in order to cooperate, than with differentiating themselves in order to show their originality (Besnard 1979:54).

With Hubert, whose own commitment to the Année and the Durkheimian project as moral projects was arguably consistently more profound than that of nearly any other member of the team, Durkheim is still clearer:

You are quite right to say that our little group is a moral milieu as much as an intellectual one. No one senses this more acutely than I do. But it is felt also beyond our group (Besnard 1987:518, emphasis added).

Besnard makes clear the fact that Hubert was in many ways the central organizational member of the team beyond Durkheim for a good stretch of the Année’s life, playing more
important a role here even than Mauss (Besnard 1987:484). This is a point we will return to momentarily, as it carries a certain weight in defining the two approaches to the Année as sacred and moral project. Further evidence of the depth of Durkheim's understanding of the sacred nature of the Année project can be seen in the language he uses in response to Hubert's own declaration of commitment to the project:

I am very touched, my dear friend, by the terms in which you speak of your dedication, and to employ your own expression, your devotion to the Année. I hope the first volume, which you ought now to have in hand, will not diminish by too much your enthusiasm (Besnard 1987:490, emphasis added).

and in discussing on two separate occasions the problem of the lack of "faith" of a potential Année 'recruit,' Hubert's friend Emmanuel de Martonne:

I had an interview with your friend De Martonne. I doubt he will become one of us. He began by telling me that he didn't understand what sociology was, with the result that I asked myself why, in this case, he had agreed to enter, however provisionally, into relations with me...If you see him, do tell him, please, that he should not come to us unless he believes in the utility of what we are doing. I am not looking for collaborators anyway. Our shared project assumes a shared faith and a great mutual confidence.

As for your comrade de Martonne, we can only let him reflect and take part in complete liberty...If he believes that what we are doing is useful enough and interesting enough to desire to help us, I will be very happy; but I would never want, at any price, him to come to us through kindness of heart or condescension. If he doesn't believe, it is better that he abstain, for when I saw him, he didn't have the faith (Besnard 1987: 494-495, emphasis added).

What emerges in Durkheim's discussion of the collective project of the Année is a powerful emphasis on the moral and sacred force to be produced in this effort toward the institutionalization of the discipline of sociology. This project was of great devotional importance for Durkheim, as reflected in the immense amount of his time and energy he gave to the Année during the formative years of the first series (which ended in 1912). This sense of individual sacrifice for the collective sacred object is also well reflected in his
correspondence from this period. For example, in an exchange with Hubert in 1905, at the moment of a serious crisis for the journal after Hubert complained of being overburdened with *Année* work, Durkheim responds as always in a language saturated with the vocabulary of moral responsibility and devotion, adding commentary on his own selfless devotion to the *Année* as a kind of example and in order to emphasize the need for communal commitment of this variety:

What is serious is what you tell me on the subject of the *Année*. You know that I have always had qualms about seeing you give it such an important part of your time; and you will easily understand how these qualms have increased with your recent confessions. If I accepted such devotion without too much remorse, it was because I believed the *Année* was of service to you, since all the authority we have garnered benefited each one of us and the teaching of each one of us; all while quite well understanding that your situation was a bit complicated as a result of your archaeological relations. But I would be unable to accept a sacrifice of this magnitude, if truly you do not feel personally interested in the shared project (Besnard 1987:527).

A few months later, Hubert apparently having responded to Durkheim's disquiet regarding his commitment to the project, Durkheim restates the necessity for a full moral engagement on the part of his allies:

What struck me was that I had quite believed I noted in you a feeling of detachment from the *Année*. What came out in your letters was that you were starting to find the task heavy and, on another side, you judged that the *Année* brought you little scientifically speaking. Such a state of mind did little to reassure me for the future. On the other hand, you know that I too find the task heavy, the growing size of the volume adds more to it every year. I needed, to remain attached to it, to feel your own attachment to the shared labor. As I didn't feel this from you in part, I no longer myself had the same courage, all the courage that is needed (Besnard 1987:527-528).

It is striking to see in these exchanges the emergence of a kind of mode of intellectual identity, an understanding of the 'techniques of self,' to borrow language from Michel Foucault, that are necessary for the construction of an identity oriented to a particular kind of intellectual goal, coupled with Durkheim's desire to guide others in the *Année* team to this same modality or type of intellectual. The intellectual identity Durkheim sketches in these
passages fits well with the detail we know of his personal demeanor from the testimonies of others. Friend and foe alike accounted him an austere, disciplined, ascetic figure, totally dedicated to the new discipline of sociology and calling for a like commitment on the part of his associates. Hubert Bourgin described him vividly thus:

He received visitors in his study, vast and simple, absent all affectation and all artistic preoccupation. His long thin body was enveloped in an ample dressing-gown, a cassock of flannel, which concealed his bony and muscular frame, the fragile support for his thought. The face emerged, pale and ascetic, its high forehead bare, a short beard, a thick moustache, the pronounced nose of a rabbi, but this whole austere and severe face magnificently illuminated by two deep-set eyes that had an intense and gentle power, which commanded respect, attention, even submission, and at the same time compelling one to serious simplicity and naked sincerity...One felt oneself before the judgment and already under the authority of a man who was devoted, entirely devoted, to his task, to his mission, and who, by admitting you to his side, along with his colleagues, delegated to you a part of the responsibilities he had assumed (Bourgin 1938:216-217).

This perspective was echoed also by those who were privy to Durkheim's most intimate daily life and identity. Lukes quotes Étienne Halphen, Durkheim's grandson, as describing his grandfather as a "forbidding and serious" man who spoke very little (Lukes 1973:367). His life at home was organized around his work, with a family structure and a spouse perfectly conducive to such an arrangement. Georges Davy noted the remarkable congruence between Durkheim's scholarly concern with the family as moral center and the structure of his own family life:

His own hearth was the image of that domestic ideal. To ground it, he had the good fortune to unite himself with an admirable companion who understood him, sustained him, aided him and totally and joyfully sacrificed her own life to the austere scholarly life of her husband (Davy 1919:65).¹¹

But this austerity and dedicated attitude to intellectual work are not the only components of the intellectual identity we mean to attribute to Durkheim here. Still more specifically, we can identify in Durkheim's particular understanding of the Année collective project and the nature of collective intellectual work in general elements that bear closer
comparison with the ascetic typology described by Weber. This ascetic Durkheimian type
is characterizeable as centered on a notion of intellectual labor as simultaneously sacred
object and ritualistic means to that object that is not at all unlike the notion of labor Weber
found in the Calvinist ascetics he examined. In Calvinist asceticism, Weber found the belief
in salvation stemming utterly from the grace of a completely transcendent God, having
nothing whatever to do with human effort or deeds, and the predetermination of salvation
for some and damnation for others, again divorced from any input on the part of human
action. This ferociously deterministic position led to a complete rejection of sensuous and
emotional cultural and religious elements, as these could offer no aid towards salvation, and
somewhat paradoxically to a smoothly-functioning social organization, for the Calvinist
recognized that the world and he himself existed only to demonstrate the glory of God, who
demanded order and service in His name. Thus, the Calvinist, who rejected the value of
society and other humans for their own sake utterly, was nonetheless called by his
overwhelming desire to do the work of his transcendent God to orderly social participation
in the form of work in a calling. Only through thoroughly intense worldly activity in the form
of work could the Calvinist provide for himself the sense of certainty of his own election,
though, as Weber points out, this emergence of the possibility in Calvinism after Calvin of
proof of election via empirical demonstration through work rather rubs against the notion of
grace and the knowledge of election found in Calvin himself (Weber 1930:98-128).

The understanding of the intellectual calling and work that is evident in Durkheim and in
a way slightly less pronounced in Hubert, in this regard clearly the junior member of the
cluster most like Durkheim himself in personal demeanor, can be classed as ascetic for a
number of reasons. In both, we find a calling to the intellectual task that is renunciatory,
even self-mortifying, in the extreme. For them, the collective endeavor by a small
community of committed intellectuals, while by necessity turned to some degree to the
worldly endeavor of publication and career-building (such amassing of academic credentials
and capital being the by-product of the intellectual labor), was yet an essentially quasi-
monastic activity. Durkheim’s paeans to self-sacrificing dedication to the scientific goals of
the Année, the greater good of the progressive accumulation of scientific knowledge toward
which the *Année*’s labor was directed, are echoed in Hubert’s own appraisal of the intellectual task; the latter would make explicit the parallel in a letter to Mauss:

> As for myself, *I am becoming more and more Benedictine*. I have been for several days in a period of renunciation. I feel myself incapable of happiness. I take pleasure in my old sorrows. I try to restrain myself from desiring happier days. I would be satisfied enough if I were not afflicted this week with horrible migraines. I am presently in a good disposition for work and I curse all distractions.12

Elsewhere, Hubert would speak to Mauss of the collective intellectual work of the religion cluster, and specifically of the work the two of them were engaged in, in the same explicit language of the sacred one finds in his correspondence with Durkheim:

> *Don't forget that we are called,* or at least I hope so, to have an influence, that we must stimulate work around us, that we will be influential less by the perfection of our own work than by the activity of our thought, than by the need, the desire, the *sacred fire of organized work that will emanate from us.*13

In other letters from the same period to Mauss, who had become very quickly not only an intellectual compatriot but his closest friend, Hubert makes still clearer the incompatibility in his understanding of the intellectual pursuit of the sacred between that pursuit and material, sensuous concerns in much the same renunciatory manner characteristic of Durkheim:

> I do not think of marriage as you seem to believe...I lack a bit of drive, I have too many habits that make me keep to myself and above all I grow sick of things much too easily. A relationship with a woman who could deal with me would take much too much time...I sometimes surprise myself dreaming of a certain young woman I have known for a few months. But I push far away that thought. I have too much to do already, for God’s sake.14

In short, in the existing correspondence of both Durkheim and Hubert, and in the evidence from their lives, one is struck by the tone of ascetic renunciation and denial of non-intellectual activity that reigns therein.15 There is an understanding of the collective, progressive pursuit of scientific knowledge as fundamentally more than an offering to social well-being; this pursuit is seen as perhaps the most powerful order-producing force in the actual life of the scientist and therefore as a profound psychological boon to him. Whatever
scholarly or other good that might accrue to him as a result of such activity is certainly not the object of the activity, but an inconsequential by-product, much like the economic goods produced by the Calvinist's activity. There is however still more that unites them in this conception of the intellectual pursuit of the sacred in basically ascetic terms. Their very conception of the relationship between the intellectual and the knowledge he or she produces/pursues, that is, his/her sacred object, is entirely in keeping with Weber's definition of the ascetic.

Let us recall the specifics of that distinction in Weber's definition. The ascetic is like a vehicle for God's will and presence; he/she does not directly participate in the being of the sacred, while the mystic, as a vessel of the holy, does. In both Durkheim and Hubert, a notion of intellectual knowledge production emerges that is surprisingly impersonal and disembodied, more about the production itself, in the form of published texts, and the regular, almost machine-like process by which it is produced than the producer involved in making it. In discussing their intellectual calling, both repeatedly use the language of ego-less, self-sacrificial investment in a collective project (the Année, or science more generally) that is defined by its place in a great march toward increasingly fuller and more complete knowledge of reality. Their understanding of the production of knowledge is firmly progressivist, in other words, and this contributes to their capacity to detach their own existential involvement in the process of knowledge production from their conception of that process.

More, the intellectual's pursuit of this sacred calling in knowledge production is further characterized in two important ways that Durkheim addresses directly in his essay on intellectual elites and democracy. In this intervention into political debate about the role of the intellectual, Durkheim defines the intellectual's proper involvement in political affairs as consisting of the production of "the book, the lecture, works of popular education" (Durkheim 1970:280). This is, we can see from the other evidence drawn from Durkheim's works and correspondence, a delineation also of the intellectual's personal mode of engagement with the sacred. This consists materially in the production of texts and it is at root averse to active political participation. Hubert's involvement with socialism while a
student at the École Normale Supérieure, practically de rigueur for Année collaborators among the normaliens, was nonetheless considerably more withdrawn and detached than the vastly more practically engaged socialist positions of both Mauss and Hertz, and indeed the political identities of the latter two only increased with time, while Hubert's socialism effectively faded later in his life (Charle 1994). Durkheim considered it unfruitful for the intellectual to engage actively in political fervor, save in the most demanding of circumstances (e.g., the Dreyfus Affair), and consistently made a sharp distinction between the intellectual and the 'man of action' (e.g., Durkheim 1983:80). A large number of letters between Durkheim (and Hubert) and his nephew Mauss demonstrate how strenuously he worked to convince Mauss that they should lessen their political commitment in favor of a more ascetic commitment to the scientific enterprise akin to his own (Durkheim 1998).

If this characterizes the ascetic Durkheimian perspective on the intellectual calling and engagement of the sacred, what does mystical Durkheimianism look like? How can we characterize this second kind of Durkheimian picture on intellectual pursuit of the sacred as consonant with Weber's discussion? First, we must acknowledge that the category of mysticism into which we are attempting to place this second Durkheimianism is the less thoroughly discussed in Weber's treatment, largely because he insinuates that this category, inner-worldly mysticism, is rather less consistent with the general thrust of the mystical impulse than its counterpart, other-worldly mysticism. I have already noted, though, that Weber does point to a single motive that can inform mystical action in the world: this motive is "the acosmism of the mystical feeling of love" (Weber 1963:176). This will loom very large in defining the mystical Durkheimian tradition. We can also locate in other discussions of mysticism a more thorough analysis of the character of active mysticism that will help to sketch out the category for our second group of Durkheimians.

Henri Bergson treated mysticism at great length in his major work on religion, and he there concluded, contrary to Weber, that "complete mysticism is action," that is, that the mystical disposition is fundamentally informed by a deep experience of "universal love" and that this experience logically leads, not to withdrawal from the world and intense isolated contemplation, but rather to intensely active participation in the world in the form of
charitable acts of kindness (Bergson 1977:226-227). From his evolutionary perspective, he found, again contrary to Weber, the Christian mystical tradition, as represented by Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Francis of Assisi and Joan of Arc, a fuller realization of the tenets of the mystical experience than the monastic and retreatist mysticism of Hinduism or Buddhism (Bergson 1977:225-228).

A more clearly sociological treatment of mysticism that is more consonant with Weber's but that, like Bergson's, elaborates on the idea of an active mysticism can be found in Clifford Geertz's discussion of Islamic mysticism in its Indonesian and Moroccan manifestations. Here, the central thrust of Geertz's argument is that the mystical orientation can manifest itself radically differently in different contexts, as is vividly apparent in his comparison of Indonesian Islamic mysticism, which appears in many ways closer to Indian mysticism in its valorization of yoga-like quietism, to Moroccan maraboutism, in which mystical experience translates into displays of "extraordinary physical courage...[and] ecstatic moral intensity" (Geertz 1968:33). Geertz delineates a mystical warrior type to go along with the Weberian mystical yogi.

The inner-worldly mysticism of the mystical Durkheimians is very much like the mystical attitude described by Bergson and Geertz. Here, in contrast to the ascetic Durkheimians, we find, first of all, an attitude toward renunciation on the part of the intellectual pursuing the sacred that is more complex than that of the ascetics; it is in fact often explicitly hostile to the renunciatory position. One of the clearest empirical sites for viewing this difference is in the correspondence of Durkheim and Mauss regarding Mauss's personal commitment to the ascetic scholarly worldview propagated by Durkheim himself. Philippe Besnard and Marcel Fournier have emphasized at length the importance of this theme in the internal politics of the Durkheimian school (Besnard 1987:484; Durkheim 1998:42). We can see it clearly developing very early in the scholarly career of Mauss, as Durkheim, in the dual capacity of teacher and uncle, had clearly invested much energy in attempting to turn Mauss into a loyal disciple and was troubled by the numerous occasions on which it became clear that Mauss's vision of the intellectual project and its role in his own life project was somewhat different from his own. Regarding the theme of the moral/sacred
project of the intellectual among the ascetic Durkheimians, we can find examples in Durkheim's letters to Hubert of his doubts that Mauss shared his vision, often practically manifested by Mauss's rather lackadaisical attitude to the urgencies of production and collective labor necessitated by the *Année*:

> Everything you say is quite right. It is certain that it is of great moral interest that our group continue to exist. The moment at which I am finally going to take up again sociological activity is the very moment in which our collaboration can be the most fecund...I must add that, for the *Année* as it is organized, Marcel's participation is necessary. For his cooperation is for me the occasion of moral suffering; the most unbelievable irregularities take away all security from a collaboration that must have it (Besnard 1987:53-531).

This comes at another crisis moment in the project of the *Année*, and it is not mere chance that Durkheim speaks of Mauss's lack of commitment to the project as "morally" troubling. He uses this language repeatedly in discussions with Mauss and about him with Hubert, and what might be too easily dismissed by a careless biographer as pseudo-parental concern on the part of Durkheim becomes apparent as a fundamental difference in intellectual and personal orientation because of the intensity and the frequency of disagreements of this nature. The stakes were never clearer than in a letter from Durkheim to Mauss in July of 1898, apparently in response to a letter in which Mauss voiced doubts about his desire to pursue the career of researcher prepared for him by his uncle:

> You ask that we no longer seek to remake you; but, as for us [i.e., Durkheim and Mauss's mother], you cannot ask us to remake ourselves either. For it is impossible that this idolatry for your chief fault, which is much more serious than you believe, could fail to make us suffer. Period. I add that if you do not resist the tendency that I am pointing out to you, you will cause much harm to yourself and you will suffer from it *unless you feel untouched by the opinion of those around you*. Please, don't go that way. I do not think that you can do without affection. And, as for me, it would truly break my heart if I came to feel that I cared less for you. I see enough clouds on the family horizon and do not need another. Don't think I say this frivolously. I will explain it to you verbally. You cannot fail to understand that I cannot permit a young man of your age to say tranquilly: it's true, that's how I am, I am wasteful, [frivolous?] concerning my work, but you must take me or leave me as I am. At your age,
it is not permissible to so easily renounce all effort and it is at bottom this that inspired all my preceding letters. Rather than taking pleasure in your faults, why not accept that the two of us might combat it together, on condition that I may do as much for you? Your happiness will suffer [nothing?] for it for you will be returned in a thousand ways the effort you have given (Durkheim 1998:150-151).

This moral dilemma presented to Durkheim by his nephew's insufficient attachment to his view of the intellectual calling is framed most often in the correspondence as Mauss's inability to finish book reviews and planned essays in timely fashion to meet Année deadlines, but again the implications are far more important than merely to point to Mauss's tendency to procrastination. Mauss would meditate throughout his career in his intimate correspondence with his friend Hubert about his multiple desires regarding career and personal goals. As a student, he was powerfully torn, as was Hertz, between a purely political calling and that of the intellectual life, and he also clearly had an attachment to the sensuous, aesthetic, sentimental life that was totally alien to his uncle (and, for that matter, to his friend Hubert). Mauss himself drew the line clearly on this issue in a letter to Hubert:

And then, from the point of view of our two lives, we have the most healthy influence to exercise over one another. You have to ennoble, to idealize a certain number of my material tendencies, and I have to bring you out, from time to time, of your books, of your ideas, of your physical solitude, which you involuntarily populate with dreams. We have much to learn from one another, still more of happiness than of science.¹⁷

These "material tendencies" showed themselves especially during Mauss's student trips to Holland and to England in his rather lusty appreciation of female charms,¹⁸ but more generally as well in a desire to balance the "Benedictine" tendencies of Hubert with a more clear engagement in worldly affairs. Mauss was still clearer on this in another letter to Hubert in which he compared Hubert to his uncle in his renunciatory intellectual attitude and distinguished his own position:

In fact, my uncle and you, you two have conserved the ideal of the [Ecole] Normale and of high school. Your entire life is turned toward intellectual things, it has as its goal only renunciation or the very highest pleasures, you have no middle ground. You have, my dear friend, the habits that a very
violent education imposes on you...[I]t is for this same reason that I see you two so often unhappy, I've said as much to Durkheim, I can certainly tell you, often with no reason...[Y]ou refuse yourselves those pleasures that consist of simple expansiveness, so little esthetic, in material pleasures...Oh! how much I would like to give you two my serenity. 19

In the mystic Durkheimian orientation to the intellectual project, we find a significant difference in the vision of the mode of creation of scholarly knowledge and in the relationship of the scholar to knowledge that compare well to the mystic's conception of God and his relation to him. Mauss and Hertz shared a fundamental skepticism regarding the systematic and idealist side of Durkheimian thought, distancing themselves in a number of ways from the more exaggerated manifestations of Durkheim's system-building pretensions. This distancing was part of a general stance that, in place of the notion of efficient production of knowledge by routinized workers within the scientific apparatus (wherein a certain investment of time and energy guarantees the appearance of some amount of product), viewed knowledge production as something that rather arises as the unpredictable result of collective reflection and meditation, i.e., as the outcome of face-to-face collective work rather than the more isolated notion of work we see in the model of Durkheim and Hubert. That is, whereas the collective work of the ascetic takes shape only after the individual researchers have done their task in relative isolation, the notion of intellectual work of the mystic is more fundamentally dialogic, more consistently social through and through, and more embodied. Mauss's career record is a superb indication of his preference for the seminar, the conference, the small group discussion as the chief modes of intellectual production, and of his relative aversion to the publication model favored by the ascetic Durkheimians. He published little in his lifetime, and in fact much of what we have now, besides of course the many reviews and the several essays written expressly for the Année, was compiled and published only after his death. In part, this failure to complete and publish many of the studies Mauss undertook had to do with the incredible breadth of his interests, but on several occasions he made clear his privileging of a scholarly activity along the lines we have outlined here. In response, for example, to an
interviewer's question regarding Mauss's opinion regarding the most promising contemporary (in 1934) French scholars, Mauss replied:

If our French universities have a superiority over American ones, it lies in this fact: that we have many scholars who love scholarship and do research for its own sake. They are indifferent to publication, and many have published little or nothing, but they think, and they know. Their knowledge is so profound that everyone is afraid of them (Murray 1989).

In a letter to Hubert, written during his stay in Holland, Mauss was explicit about his comparison of real intellectual production and fundamentally artistic creative originality and spontaneity, rather than simple workman-like "accuracy," negatively evaluating Dutch scholarship as too weighted toward the latter:

If I had the time, the money or an opportunity, I think I could collect some curious observations regarding Holland. One neither thinks nor invents here. Not the slightest philosophical excitement. They write in a clear style good little German dissertations; they slowly adapt their country to English utilitarianism, to European progressivism; the painters, the youth (very strong, but that's all) follow with wisdom and clarity the Impressionist movement. But, if you only knew how far one is here from that cauldron of ideas that is Paris; the great care here is to be "accurate," and to be fine, to be clear, to be complete. That's all. No preoccupation at all with the idea truly new and original...Only one class of thinkers would do well here, and that is those who truly thought but who were not Dutch, Spinoza, Descartes.21

Commentary on Mauss's seminar presence is replete with references to his amazing presence and to his guru-like character. Fournier writes that he was listened to as though he were Scheherazade (Fournier 1994:605) and Karady notes that the "rare suggestive force" and "sometimes eccentric style" of his teaching were largely responsible for his position at "the margin of the official school of sociology" (that is, the school of Durkheim) and for his tremendous reputation among the coterie of unique students he attracted (Mauss 1968a:li-lii). The metaphors of Mauss as mystical guru here recall the similar descriptions frequently made of his great teacher and friend Sylvain Lévi, the Indologist with whom Mauss studied at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and who was one of the important influences on Mauss's intellectual and personal demeanor.22 Again, in keeping with the theme of mystical
knowledge of the sacred, Mauss is here representative of a kind of intellectual production in which it is the sage himself who is the vehicle for the sacred knowledge. Much as in, for example, Hindu religious tradition it is considered insufficient to merely read sacred texts, and instead one must encounter living examples of the enactment of the sacred principles laid out in those texts, in this mystical vision of the production of the intellectual sacred, the process must take place in an embodied, dialogic manner.

Hertz provides even clearer evidence of the distinction between the ascetic and the mystic intellectual models. Like Mauss, he had an aversion for scholarly activity defined as the rapid production of published work and a preference for a more dialogic model of intellectual production. Hertz took a life-long interest in education and pedagogy, perhaps partially because this was his wife's line of work, and a constant point of emphasis for him in discussion with her and others is the need for an educational reform in France that would emphasize the practical and steer students away from the merely book-oriented, traditional intellectual model. During his time at the front during the war, he was constantly stunned by and envious of the 'field knowledge,' the ability to think practically that was evinced by most of the provincial French soldiers and that the city dwellers (himself included) and especially those who had absorbed too much of this traditional austere French education uniformly lacked. He spoke frequently in correspondence of his desire to escape the "dustiness" of the life of the researcher, and he even told his wife toward the end of his life that he was seriously considering giving up his anthropological career and thereby refusing a life dedicated to a narrowly construed scientific calling in order to turn fully to the less austere sacred object of pedagogical activism, that is, to an embodied and engaged pursuit of collective and practical knowledge (Hertz 2002:217).

We can further elaborate on Hertz's understanding of the intimate interconnection between scholarly work and engaged action that together produced the sacred object he pursued by looking more closely at his ethnographic work. Hertz was the first Durkheimian to do fieldwork, having accompanied a group of Catholic pilgrims in making the difficult climb to the shrine to Saint Besse in the mountains near Aosta in northwest Italy in the summer of 1912. The central argument of this study was to demonstrate that the Churchly,
hierarchical, literary tradition of the myth of Saint Besse actually had little relevance in the actual cult, which was derived much more from very local and pre-Christian popular legends. Thus, the study was an effort to demonstrate the power of folk religion to live on and even exercise dominance over official institutional religious myth in the actual ideas and practice of believers.

But in some ways the most compelling element of the study is the sense of Hertz's vibrant sympathy with the celebrants of the cult, not in the sense of sharing their particular faith, but in a more expanded way that is not unlike the effervescence he felt in his political activism, which he once characterized as a kind of "mysticism of the crowd" (Hertz 1999:48; Riley 1999b). His language in describing the various local legends and the passion of the celebrants reveals an empathy with the profundity of their experience that distinguishes this work from some of the other Durkheimian studies of similar phenomena generated completely from secondary sources. It is in this kind of lived experience that Hertz most fully perceived the fuzziness of the line that Durkheim readily placed between scientific knowledge and the lived personal experience of the sacred, and he was powerfully moved by the prospect of the disappearance of the cult (and of other such representatives of folk religion):

For centuries, Saint Besse has taught his faithful to raise themselves, even if only for a few moments, above the limited horizon of their daily lives--to joyfully take on their shoulders the heavy burden of the ideal--., finally to keep, even in hours of distress, "the faith and the confidence" that are stronger than evil...he made them understand, in the concrete language that only they could grasp, that each of them takes his force and his courage from a superior being, who includes all individuals present and future and who is infinitely more vast and more durable than all of them. When the holy rock becomes again a profane rock, completely naked and material, who will be there to remind the people of the valley of these truths, which are as solid as the rock from which is made the Mountain of Saint Besse? (Hertz 1970:155-156)25

Hertz was planning, at the outbreak of the war in 1914, to undertake similar research in Athens (with the help of his ENS friend Pierre Roussel, a Greek specialist) on the rock cults of Mount Olympus, and had in fact apparently written something on the topic suitable
for publication that was subsequently lost (Parkin 1996:11). This interest in the mystical properties of rocks and mountains (evident from early on in his life in his quasi-religious fascination with Alpinism and mountain-climbing) and especially his desire to pursue their study via empirical monographs, emphasizing their unique and individual character, rather than to attempt to systematize them under the aegis of a larger sociological theoretical apparatus, attracted some misgivings from his Durkheimian colleagues. The fact of the matter is that Hertz seemed increasingly drawn to such an understanding of his intellectual work in the later years of his young life, and this is consistent with his overall sense of intellectual pursuit of the sacred as expressed in his correspondence.

The distinction between ascetic and mystic Durkheimians does not of course negate the strong lines of intellectual and personal connection between the two. Their shared project in the face of radically divergent competing intellectual projects in the Third Republic was powerfully significant, not only in defining the intellectual alliances and conflicts of the period, but in shaping later interpretation and adaptation of Durkheimian thought by succeeding generations of intellectuals. But the differences we have pointed to in the mystical and ascetic Durkheimian conceptions of intellectual pursuit of the sacred are important for understanding the trajectory of Durkheimian thought after the catastrophe of the First World War, that is, post-Durkheim, and for understanding in its fullness the Durkheimian contribution to the modern intellectual identity. Elaboration of the mystic Durkheimian habitus and approach to the sacred makes more understandable, for example, the ways in which members of the radical avant-garde of the ‘30s in France such as the Collège de Sociologie could have made claims to the Durkheimian legacy at the same time as conservative academics were doing so (Riley 1999). More, when we understand the radical differences between the personal projects of Durkheim and his heir apparent, Mauss, historical details of the Durkheimian school such as e.g., the disintegration of the Année, the central institutional organ of Durkheimian sociology, and the subsequent decrease in the institutional academic prestige of Durkheimian thought after Durkheim's death make considerably more sense. Such a project fit very neatly into the project of the
ascetic Durkheim, but the mystic Mauss proved of a constitution unamenable to the continued production of this variety of intellectual project.27

REFERENCES


Marcel Mauss. 1925. "In Memoriam. L'oeuvre inédite de Durkheim et de ses collaborateurs." *L'Année sociologique* 1


NOTES

1I will thus refer to them throughout this essay as the Durkheimian religion group or cluster.

2He would also, upon the deaths of Hertz (in 1915) and Hubert (in 1925), collect their unpublished manuscripts and notes and assume responsibility for completing and then publishing substantial segments of this work. Further, he used their notes on various subjects (e.g., Hubert on the history of Celtic civilization, Hertz on sin and expiation) as a foundation for courses he gave at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and at the Collège de France.

3Mauss, in his article in memoriam of his recently deceased uncle in which he sums up the entirety of his intellectual career, writes that the two "cherished works" of the mature Durkheim were those on morality and on the family (Mauss 1969:480). All translations from French sources in the text and notes of this essay are my own.

4The introduction was published posthumously by Mauss in 1920 in the Revue philosophique, along with the outline of subsequent chapter titles, which Mauss tells us were frequently derived from course lessons Durkheim had previously given in specific areas of the subject, e.g., critique of traditional morality and the Kantian response to it, domestic and family morality, property and contract morality (Durkheim 1975:313-14). The two essays were respectively "La Détermination du fait moral," published in 1906 in the Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie, and "Jugements de valeur et jugements de réalité," published in 1911 in the Revue de métaphysique et de morale. Both were translated and published in the volume Sociology and Philosophy.


6See, for example, Besnard 1979:120-131. Among the related documents printed at the conclusion of this article is a letter from Henri Bergson to Célestin Bouglé, dated 20 January 1924, in which the former pointedly criticizes the Lapie program (Besnard 1979:132-134).

7It is rather odd that Lévi-Strauss, in reprinting the essay in 1950 for his edited collection of Mauss's work, Sociologie et anthropologie, places this crucial introduction at the conclusion of the essay, in an appendix, even though Mauss and Hubert set forth a kind of outline for their general concerns in the study of religious phenomena that indicates also how their earlier study on sacrifice should be seen in conjunction with the work on magic (Mauss 1950:138-141).
The language Hertz uses in both these essays, and particularly in the essay on death (Hertz 1960:37,50) indicates clearly that he is discussing the distinction between impure and pure sacred statuses, not that between sacred and profane. The latter is asserted by some commentators (Evans-Pritchard in Hertz 1960; Parkin 1996) largely because Hertz rather confusingly seems to equate the profane and the impure sacred in the essay on the right hand: "...in the classification which has dominated religious consciousness from the beginning and in increasing measure there is a natural affinity and almost an equivalence between the profane and the impure. The two notions are combined and, in opposition to the sacred, form the negative pole of the spiritual universe" (Hertz 1960:95).

Although some similarities will emerge here between the ascetic, scientific practice of Durkheim and that of Weber (especially as described by Goldman 1988), e.g., the scientific vocation as acceptance that one is basically an anonymous cog in the progressive march of scientific knowledge and the rigid separation of scientific and political practices, a thorough discussion of these similarities and their equally significant differences (for example, Weber's vocational model is an explicitly Protestant one) would take us quite off the track of the present discussion, so we note it only in passing. It does however merit noting that it has been argued by some that Weber’s scholarly interest in mysticism was itself a symptom of a more personal interest in the topic, even of a certain mystical predisposition, so my attempt to use his category to understand the intellectual projects of some of the Durkheimians is not so radical as it might seem to some. See Voegelin 1989:12, 112-114 and Adair-Toteff in this volume.

None of Hubert's letters to Durkheim exist today. It is most likely that Durkheim's correspondence was destroyed during the Occupation, either by his family or by Vichy authorities.

Mauss wrote of Durkheim's wife, Louise Durkheim née Dreyfus, that she "had given him the dignified and peaceful familial existence that [Durkheim] considered the best guarantee of morality and life. She kept every material care, all frivolity far from him" (Mauss 1969:523). Christophe Charle suggests that the particulars of Durkheim's marriage (and particularly the fact that his in-laws were rising members of the Jewish petite bourgeoisie) help explain his comparatively unique position among French intellectuals of the period (i.e., the rare combination of scholarly and economic capital) and even aid in the interpretation of Durkheim's complex relationship to socialism (which, Charle argues, becomes increasingly complicated after the marriage, that is, after Durkheim becomes himself allied through family ties to a particularly vigorous segment of the capitalist class) (Charle 1984).
Unpublished, undated letter from Hubert to Mauss, undoubtedly dating from 1897, Fonds Hubert-Mauss (hereafter FHM), Collège de France archives, emphasis added.

Unpublished, undated letter from Hubert to Mauss, also 1897, FHM, emphasis added.

Two unpublished, undated letters from 1897, Hubert to Mauss, FHM.

Others close to Hubert noted it as well; there is for example a telling letter from one of his mentors, Lucien Herr, to Hubert on the happy occasion of the latter's marriage in 1910 in which Herr notes "I have never been able to think without sorrow of what life has given you of vain and pointless suffering, of heartbreak, of anguish that exhausts and destroys your strength; it is a great happiness for me that you are finally freed from trouble, from the impossible, from the chimera that was devouring your life" (unpublished and undated letter, Herr to Hubert, FHM).

Eric Voegelin, who has insisted upon the importance of mysticism in philosophy and intellectual history generally, suggests that Weber himself was a kind of mystic (Voegelin 1989:12, 112-114).

Undated letter which can be tentatively placed sometime in 1898, FHM.

One of the most frequently mentioned features of Mauss's visit to Holland is his interest in "her pale women" and his efforts to pursue them. In an undated letter from early in his stay, for example, he writes to Hubert: "I chat with a little, completely useless lawyer, take from him all I can, but have not been able to get him to introduce me to one single woman" (FHM). In a still more telling passage from another undated letter to Hubert (perhaps also from Holland), Mauss makes yet more clear his position on relations with women and how different it is from that of his uncle (and that of Hubert as well):

I wrote you that I was going to take a trip of 10 days to [?]. I said that I would there send for a little woman from Paris (by way of Isabelle). I was thirsty for caresses, for a delicate skin, and for an elegant hairstyle; for night conversation. And that little one was delicious for 10 days. Don't talk to anyone about this. It is a necessary weakness that makes me blush. I believe, dear friend, that a pleasant mistress, without virtue but also without wickedness...[can?] have, without unhappiness for her or for us [?] an important element of happiness at our age, or rather instead of happiness, of health and gaiety. (FHM).
Mauss, unlike the other three religion cluster members, only married very late in life (in 1934 at age 62, to a woman fourteen years his junior) and he was known throughout his life as something of a ladies' man and a "dandy" (Fournier 1994:605, 652).

19 Unpublished letter from Mauss to Hubert, addressed from Leyden in 1898, FHM.

20 Karady (Mauss 1968a:vii) notes: "There are few sociological bodies of work that are more multiform and more difficult to delimit without ambiguity than that of Mauss."

21 Undated letter, FHM.

22 Mauss wrote an obituary for Lévi when the latter died in 1935 in which he employs a wide array of superlatives in describing him as "a great man, a sage, a good man, a strong and able man and a saint." In one stunning passage, Mauss, after naming Durkheim, Jaurès and Lévi as the three men to whom he was the most dedicated during the first and formative part of his life, distinguishes the latter from the others in calling him "the closest to the future Maitreya...the most actively human, which is rare even among the saints, among even the most saintly of the saints." (Mauss 1969:544-545).

23 Hertz's avowals of these facts are frequent in his correspondence. Two examples from letters to his friend and colleague Pierre Roussel: "The unhappy thing is that it was in vain, for I like teaching, and Science, the sacrosanct, at bottom bores me, and by the end of a few weeks in the library, I have aches in my back and elsewhere" (Hertz 1999:50), and "...the pain with which I have wrenched out this little essay. Whether because of rustiness, inexperience, or constitutional inaptitude, I have had in incredibly hard time writing this study, and above all it bored me terribly. The more interested I became in uncovering data and constructing it for myself, the more the written exposition seemed tedious to me" (Hertz 1999:52).

24 Henri Beauchat, who co-wrote with Mauss the essay "Morphologie des Esquimaux," died of hunger and exposure on Wrangel Island off the northeastern coast of Siberia in 1914 during an ethnographic trip (see Mauss 1969:489), but this was several years after Hertz's fieldwork on the Saint Besse cult.

25 Paul Alphéndery, in an obituary on Hertz written for the Revue d'histoire des religions (vol. 79, 1919) wrote the following about Hertz's work on Saint Besse: "Rarely have we been given to read pages written with such a modest and full art. Under the rigor of critical investigation, one senses that the author was happy to live in the same atmosphere that he was studying, that a sympathy that went as far as emotion united him with the simple folk whose ritual gestures he was describing."
There are numerous letters in the Fonds Robert Hertz in the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale in Paris written by Hertz to various family members and friends recounting his almost ecstatic joy during his many mountain-climbing voyages, and even several striking photos of Hertz in the mountains. This obsession seems to have been a family characteristic; Hertz's father was killed in a climbing accident when Hertz was a young man in 1899.

In 1921, Mauss, at least partially at the instigation of other members of the Année team, took it upon himself to relaunch the journal, though the first volume of the new series would not reach the press until 1925. However, it very quickly became apparent that the project would be short-lived; the second series of the Année ended in 1927 with the second, truncated volume. Mauss's sentiments about the burden of general editor of the journal are manifest in a letter to Ignace Meyerson: "I am going to emerge from the nightmare of L'Année I to enter the nightmare of L'Année II. I can't go on any longer" (cited in Fournier 1994:532).