

the elementary forms of religious life

the elementary forms of religious life stands as one of the most influential works in the sociology of religion and social science. Written by Émile Durkheim in 1912, this seminal text explores the fundamental nature, origins, and functions of religious practices within human societies. In this comprehensive article, we delve deep into the core ideas presented by Durkheim, examining the definition of religion, the social framework underpinning religious life, the role of collective consciousness, and the enduring impact of these concepts on modern thought. Readers will gain a thorough understanding of Durkheim's methodology, his analysis of totemism, the relationship between religion and society, and the legacy of "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" in contemporary scholarship. Whether you are a student, researcher, or simply curious about the sociology of religion, this guide offers valuable insights into Durkheim's groundbreaking work and its relevance today.

- Understanding The Elementary Forms of Religious Life
- Durkheim's Definition of Religion
- Totemism: The Chosen Case Study
- The Role of Collective Consciousness
- The Social Functions of Religion
- Durkheim's Methodology and Approach
- Legacy and Impact on Modern Thought

Understanding The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

"The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" by Émile Durkheim is widely regarded as a foundational text in the study of sociology and anthropology. Durkheim sought to uncover the most basic and universal features of religion by analyzing its simplest forms. He believed that by studying primitive societies, one could reveal the essential elements that constitute religious life across all cultures. The work focuses particularly on the religious practices of Australian Aboriginal tribes, viewing their rituals and beliefs as representative of humanity's earliest religious expressions.

Durkheim argued that religion is rooted in social structures and collective experiences, not merely in individual beliefs or supernatural concepts. His analysis emphasizes the interconnectedness of society, religion, and culture. By interrogating the "elementary forms," Durkheim provided a template for understanding more complex religious systems and their social significance. This approach continues to inform contemporary debates about the origins and functions of religion.

Durkheim's Definition of Religion

Durkheim's central question was: What is religion? He proposed one of the most influential definitions, asserting that religion is "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things." This system, he argued, unites individuals into a single moral community, often referred to as a church. Durkheim distinguished between the sacred and the profane, two fundamental categories shaping religious thought and behavior. The sacred refers to things set apart and forbidden, imbued with special meaning, while the profane encompasses ordinary, everyday elements of life.

According to Durkheim, the distinction between sacred and profane lies at the heart of all religious systems. Religious rituals, symbols, and ceremonies serve to reinforce this division, contributing to the cohesion and stability of society. His definition remains a cornerstone in the sociology of religion, influencing how scholars conceptualize religious phenomena and their societal roles.

Totemism: The Chosen Case Study

To investigate the elementary forms of religious life, Durkheim turned to totemism, the religious system of Australian Aboriginal tribes. Totemism provided a clear example of how religion could be understood in its simplest, most fundamental form. In these societies, the totem is an animal, plant, or object that holds special symbolic significance for a clan. The totem acts as both a symbol of the divine and a representation of the social group itself.

Durkheim's analysis revealed several key aspects of totemic religion:

- Totems serve as sacred emblems that unify clan members.
- Rituals involving the totem reinforce group solidarity and collective identity.
- The worship of the totem is, in effect, the worship of society itself.
- Totemic rites and taboos regulate behavior and reinforce social norms.

Through the study of totemism, Durkheim demonstrated how religious symbols and practices express deeper social realities. Totemism exemplifies the social origins of religious life and the functions religion serves within a community.

The Role of Collective Consciousness

A central theme in "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" is the concept of collective consciousness. Durkheim described this as the shared beliefs, values, and norms that bind members of a society together. Religion, in Durkheim's view, is both a reflection and a reinforcement of this collective consciousness. Rituals and ceremonies strengthen social bonds by bringing individuals

together in shared acts of reverence and celebration.

Durkheim emphasized that the power attributed to religious symbols and rituals is actually the power of the collective itself. When individuals participate in religious ceremonies, they experience a sense of connection and belonging that transcends their personal existence. This collective energy sustains social order and stability, making religion a vital force in human societies.

Functions of Collective Rituals

Durkheim identified several important social functions of collective rituals:

1. Fostering group cohesion and loyalty.
2. Reinforcing shared values and moral codes.
3. Providing emotional support during times of crisis.
4. Establishing social hierarchies and roles.

These functions highlight the essential role of religion in maintaining social solidarity and integrating individuals into a larger moral community.

The Social Functions of Religion

Durkheim's analysis extended beyond individual belief to explore the broader social functions of religion. He argued that religion is not merely a set of supernatural beliefs but a social institution that fulfills vital needs within a community. Among these functions are the regulation of behavior, the affirmation of group identity, and the provision of meaning and purpose.

Religious practices, according to Durkheim, legitimize social norms and values, offering a framework for moral conduct. By participating in rituals, individuals reaffirm their commitment to the group and its ideals. Religion also serves as a mechanism for coping with uncertainty, loss, and existential questions, providing comfort and guidance in times of distress.

Durkheim's Influence on Social Theory

Durkheim's functionalist perspective laid the groundwork for future studies in sociology, anthropology, and psychology. His insights into the social functions of religion continue to shape contemporary research on group dynamics, moral development, and cultural identity.

Durkheim's Methodology and Approach

Durkheim employed a rigorous scientific approach in his study of religion. He advocated for the use of empirical data, comparative analysis, and logical reasoning to uncover the universal aspects of religious life. By examining the practices of Aboriginal Australians, Durkheim sought to strip away the complexities of modern religion and focus on its elemental features.

His methodology involved:

- Systematic observation of rituals and ceremonies.
- Comparative study of different societies to identify common patterns.
- Emphasis on collective representations and social facts.
- Analysis of the relationship between religious symbols and social structure.

Durkheim's scientific approach established new standards for the study of religion, emphasizing objectivity and generalizability.

Legacy and Impact on Modern Thought

The legacy of "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" is evident across multiple disciplines. Durkheim's work revolutionized the sociology of religion, inspiring generations of scholars to explore the social origins and functions of religious belief. His concepts of the sacred, the profane, and collective consciousness remain central to contemporary debates about culture and society.

Modern research in anthropology, psychology, and philosophy continues to draw on Durkheim's insights. The idea that religion serves as a social glue, binding individuals together and affirming shared values, has proven enduring and influential. "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" remains a foundational text for understanding the interplay between religion, culture, and social organization.

As societies evolve, Durkheim's analytical framework provides a valuable lens for examining new religious movements, secularization, and the transformation of collective identities. His work underscores the enduring importance of religion as a social institution and a source of meaning in human life.

Frequently Asked Questions About The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

Q: What is the main thesis of "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life"?

A: The main thesis is that religion is fundamentally a social phenomenon, rooted in collective experiences and serving essential functions within society, rather than being solely based on individual beliefs or supernatural ideas.

Q: How did Durkheim define religion?

A: Durkheim defined religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things," which unites individuals into a single moral community.

Q: Why did Durkheim study totemism among Australian Aboriginal tribes?

A: Durkheim studied totemism because he believed it represented the most elementary and universal form of religious life, allowing for a clearer understanding of the basic components and functions of religion.

Q: What is the significance of the sacred-profane dichotomy in Durkheim's theory?

A: The sacred-profane dichotomy is central to Durkheim's theory, as it differentiates between things set apart and revered (sacred) and everyday, ordinary things (profane), forming the foundation of all religious systems.

Q: How does religion foster social cohesion according to Durkheim?

A: Religion fosters social cohesion by bringing individuals together in shared rituals and beliefs, reinforcing collective identity, and maintaining social order through common values and norms.

Q: What are collective representations in Durkheim's work?

A: Collective representations are symbols, beliefs, and practices that express and reinforce the collective consciousness of a society, such as totems, rituals, and religious ceremonies.

Q: How has Durkheim's work influenced modern sociology and anthropology?

A: Durkheim's work has profoundly shaped the study of religion, social structures, and cultural identity, providing foundational theories and methodologies for analyzing group behavior and moral development.

Q: What methodological approach did Durkheim use in "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life"?

A: Durkheim used empirical observation, comparative analysis, and logical reasoning to identify universal aspects of religious life, focusing on the simplest societies to uncover core principles.

Q: How is Durkheim's concept of collective consciousness relevant today?

A: Collective consciousness remains relevant as it explains how shared beliefs and values bind individuals together, influencing social solidarity, group identity, and cultural integration in modern societies.

Q: What is the lasting impact of "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life"?

A: The lasting impact is seen in its foundational role in sociology, anthropology, and the study of religion, with its concepts and analytical framework continuing to inform research and debate on the nature of religious life and society.

[The Elementary Forms Of Religious Life](#)

Find other PDF articles:

<https://fc1.getfilecloud.com/t5-w-m-e-07/files?ID=aUC60-3306&title=meditations-gregory-hays.pdf>

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life: A Deep Dive into Durkheim's Masterpiece

Are you fascinated by the origins of religion? Have you ever wondered how seemingly disparate belief systems across cultures share fundamental similarities? Then Émile Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is a book you need to understand. This seminal work, published in 1912, offers a groundbreaking sociological analysis of religion, moving beyond theological interpretations to explore its social functions and origins. This blog post will delve into Durkheim's key arguments, explore his methodology, and examine the lasting impact of his work on sociological and anthropological thinking. We'll unpack the core concepts, making this complex text accessible and illuminating.

Durkheim's Methodology: Studying the "Simplest" Religions

Durkheim didn't aim to analyze complex, established religions like Christianity or Islam. Instead, he strategically chose to study the religion of the Australian Aborigines, specifically focusing on the totemic system. He believed that by analyzing these "elementary" forms of religious life, he could uncover the fundamental building blocks of religious thought and practice universally applicable to all religions. His choice wasn't about judging these religions as primitive but about accessing the most basic elements of religious phenomena, stripped away from the complexities of later, more developed religious institutions. This methodological choice is crucial to understanding his conclusions.

The Significance of the Totem

Central to Durkheim's analysis is the concept of the totem. The totem, usually an animal or plant, represents the clan itself, acting as a symbol of collective identity and solidarity. The totem isn't simply a random symbol; it's imbued with a sacred quality, representing the power and mystery of the clan's collective life. Durkheim argued that the veneration of the totem is not simply the worship of a natural object but the worship of the social group itself, represented by that object.

The Sacred and the Profane: A Fundamental Distinction

Durkheim's work hinges on his distinction between the sacred and the profane. The sacred encompasses all things set apart, revered, and imbued with awe and respect. The profane, on the other hand, represents the everyday, mundane aspects of life. This dichotomy isn't inherent in the objects themselves but rather arises from the social classifications imposed upon them. It's the collective belief and practice that transforms a mundane object into something sacred.

Collective Effervescence: The Source of Religious Power

Durkheim believed that religious rituals, particularly collective ceremonies and rites, generate a powerful sense of collective effervescence. This is a state of heightened emotional intensity and social unity experienced during shared religious practices. It's during these moments of collective effervescence that the group experiences a sense of transcendence, feeling connected to something larger than themselves. This feeling, Durkheim argued, is the source of the feeling of the sacred and the foundation of religious experience. It's the feeling of collective power that solidifies social bonds and reaffirms the group's identity.

The Social Function of Religion: Maintaining Social Order

For Durkheim, religion is not simply a system of beliefs but a fundamental institution that contributes to social cohesion and order. By reinforcing shared values, beliefs, and rituals, religion provides a framework for social integration. The shared experience of the sacred strengthens social solidarity and ensures the continuation of the social group. This social function is arguably the most significant contribution of Durkheim's theory. It's less about individual salvation and more about collective survival and societal stability.

Beyond the Totem: Applications of Durkheim's Ideas

While Durkheim's analysis focused on the Australian Aborigines, his findings have far-reaching implications for understanding religion across cultures and throughout history. His concepts of the sacred and the profane, collective effervescence, and the social function of religion offer powerful tools for analyzing a wide range of religious phenomena, even those seemingly dissimilar to the totemic systems he studied. The core ideas remain relevant in analyzing modern secular institutions, examining how they create a sense of belonging and shared purpose.

Conclusion

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life is a landmark work that shifted the perspective on the study of religion. Durkheim's sociological approach moved beyond theological explanations, offering a powerful framework for understanding the social origins and functions of religious beliefs and practices. While some aspects of his work have been critiqued and refined over time, its central arguments about the social nature of religion and the importance of collective rituals continue to resonate with scholars today. The book remains a must-read for anyone interested in the sociology of religion, anthropology, and the study of social cohesion.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Is Durkheim's work considered outdated? While some specific aspects of Durkheim's methodology and interpretations might be debated by contemporary scholars, the core concepts of his work remain highly relevant and influential in the sociological and anthropological study of religion.
2. How does Durkheim's theory differ from other theories of religion? Unlike theological perspectives, Durkheim's theory focuses on the social functions of religion, rather than its supernatural aspects. It contrasts sharply with functionalist theories that might view religion

primarily as a means of social control, emphasizing instead the collective creation and experience of the sacred.

3. What are some criticisms of Durkheim's work? Critics have questioned his ethnographic methods, arguing that his interpretations of Aboriginal religion might be overly simplistic or biased. Others argue that his focus on social function neglects the individual's subjective religious experiences.

4. How can Durkheim's ideas be applied to contemporary society? Durkheim's concepts can be applied to understanding the role of secular institutions, such as nationalism or political movements, in generating collective solidarity and shared identity. The creation of "collective effervescence" in modern contexts can be observed in large-scale events or social movements.

5. What are some other works by Durkheim that relate to this topic? Durkheim's *The Division of Labor in Society* explores the relationship between social solidarity and the development of social structures, providing a broader context for understanding the social forces shaping religious beliefs and practices. His work on morality also connects to the themes explored in *Elementary Forms*.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* Émile Durkheim, 2001 Karen Fields has given us a splendid new translation of the greatest work of sociology ever written, one we will not be embarrassed to assign to our students. In addition she has written a brilliant and profound introduction. The publication of this translation is an occasion for general celebration, for a veritable 'collective effervescence.'-- Robert N. Bellah Co-author of *Habits of the Heart*, and editor of *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society* This superb new translation finally allows non-French speaking American readers fully to appreciate Durkheim's genius. It is a labor of love for which all scholars must be grateful.--Lewis A. Coser

the elementary forms of religious life: The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life Emile Durkheim, 2014-03-30 This Is A New Release Of The Original 1915 Edition.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Emile Durkheim, 2016-09-01 In this book we propose to study the most primitive and simple religion which is actually known, to make an analysis of it, and to attempt an explanation of it. A religious system may be said to be the most primitive which we can observe when it fulfils the two following conditions: in the first place, when it is found in a society whose organization is surpassed by no others in simplicity; and secondly, when it is possible to explain it without making use of any element borrowed from a previous religion. We shall set ourselves to describe the organization of this system with all the exactness and fidelity that an ethnographer or an historian could give it. But our task will not be limited to that: sociology raises other problems than history or ethnography. It does not seek to know the passed forms of civilization with the sole end of knowing them and reconstructing them. But rather, like every positive science, it has as its object the explanation of some actual reality which is near to us, and which consequently is capable of affecting our ideas and our acts: this reality is man, and more precisely, the man of to-day, for there is nothing which we are more interested in knowing. Then we are not going to study a very archaic religion simply for the pleasure of telling its peculiarities and its singularities. If we have taken it as the subject of our research, it is because it has seemed to us better adapted than any other to lead to an understanding of the religious nature of man, that is to say, to show us an essential and permanent aspect of humanity.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Émile Durkheim, 1964

the elementary forms of religious life: On Durkheim's Elementary Forms of Religious Life N.J. Allen, W.S.F. Pickering, W. Watts Miller, 2012-10-12 This is the first collection of essays to be published on Durkheim's masterpiece *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. It represents the work of the most important international Durkheim scholars from the fields of anthropology,

philosophy and sociology. The essays focus on key topics including: * the method Durkheim adopted in his study * the role of ritual and belief in society * the nature of contemporary religion The contributors also explore cutting-edge debates about the notion of the soul and collective rituals.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Emile Durkheim, 2017-12-12 *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the New Religious Life* Roy Wallis, 2019-03-19 This book, first published in 1984, examines the whole range of new religious movements which appeared in the 1960s and 1970s in the West. It develops a wide-ranging theory of these new religions which explains many of their major characteristics. Some of the movements are well-known, such as Scientology, Krishna Consciousness, and the Unification Church. Others such as the Process, Meher Baba, and 3-HO are much less known. While some became international, others remained local; in other ways, too, such as style, belief, organisation, they exhibit enormous diversity. The movements studied here are classified under three ideal types, world-rejecting, world-affirming and world-accommodating, and from here the author develops a theory of the origins, recruitment base, characteristics, and development patterns which they display. The book offers a critical exploration of the theories of the new religions and analyses the highly contentious issue of whether they reflect the process of secularisation, or whether they are a countervailing trend marking the resurgence of religion in the West.

the elementary forms of religious life: *Durkheim on Religion* Emile Durkheim, 2011-01-27 The famous French sociologist Emile Durkheim is universally recognised as one of the founding fathers of sociology as an academic discipline. He wrote on the division of labour, methodology, suicide and education, but his most prolific and influential works were his writings on religion, which culminated in his controversial book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Although his influence continued long after his death in 1917, this is the first book to provide a detailed look at the whole of his work in the field of religion. *Durkheim on Religion* is a selection of readings from Durkheim's writings on religion, presented in order of original publication, ranging from early reviews to articles and extracts from his books. Also included are detailed bibliographies and abstracts together with contributions by such writers as Van Gennep, Goldenweiser and Stanner. This book will be invaluable to those studying sociology and anthropology, but will also be of interest to those studying the history or philosophy of religion, as well as to anyone with an interest in Durkheim.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Émile Durkheim, 1954 Karen Fields has given us a splendid new translation of the greatest work of sociology ever written, one we will not be embarrassed to assign to our students. In addition she has written a brilliant and profound introduction. The publication of this translation is an occasion for general celebration, for a veritable 'collective effervescence.' -- Robert N. Bellah Co-author of *Habits of the Heart*, and editor of *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society* This superb new translation finally allows non-French speaking American readers fully to appreciate Durkheim's genius. It is a labor of love for which all scholars must be grateful. --Lewis A. Coser

the elementary forms of religious life: *Epistemology and Practice* Anne Warfield Rawls, 2005-03-03 In this original and controversial book Professor Rawls argues that Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is the crowning achievement of his sociological endeavour and that since its publication in English in 1915 it has been consistently misunderstood. Rather than a work on primitive religion or the sociology of knowledge, Rawls asserts that it is an attempt by Durkheim to establish a unique epistemological basis for the study of sociology and moral relations. By privileging social practice over beliefs and ideas, it avoids the dilemmas inherent in philosophical approaches to knowledge and morality that are based on individualism and the tendency to privilege beliefs and ideas over practices, both tendencies that dominate western thought. Based on detailed textual analysis of the primary text, this book will be an important and original contribution to contemporary debates on social theory and philosophy.

the elementary forms of religious life: *Durkheim in Dialogue* Sondra L. Hausner, 2013-11-01

One hundred years after the publication of the great sociological treatise, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, this new volume shows how aptly Durkheim's theories still resonate with the study of contemporary and historical religious societies. The volume applies the Durkheimian model to multiple cases, probing its resilience, wondering where it might be tweaked, and asking which aspects have best stood the test of time. A dialogue between theory and ethnography, this book shows how Durkheimian sociology has become a mainstay of social thought and theory, pointing to multiple ways in which Durkheim's work on religion remains relevant to our thinking about culture.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim* Jeffrey C. Alexander, Philip Smith, 2005-05-26 An authoritative and comprehensive collection of essays redefining the relevance of Durkheim to the human sciences in the twenty-first century.

the elementary forms of religious life: *Social Theory Re-Wired* Wesley Longhofer, Daniel Winchester, 2023-06-22 This third edition of *Social Theory Re-Wired* is a significantly revised edition of this leading text and its unique web learning interactive programs that allow us to go farther into theory and to build student skills than ever before, according to many teachers. Vital political and social updates are reflected both in the text and the online supplements. System updates to each section offer an expanded set of contemporary theory readings that focus on the impacts of information/digital technologies on each of the text's five big themes: 1) the Puzzles of Social Order, 2) the Social Consequences of Capitalism, 3) the Darkside of Modernity, 4) Subordinated/Alternative Knowledges, and 5) Self-Identity and Society. New to this edition: The big ideas/questions thematic structure of the text as well as the connections between classical and contemporary theorists continues to be popular with instructors. This feature is enhanced in the new edition An expanded Podcast Companions series now pairs at least one podcast to every reading in the book Many new updates to the exercise platform allow students to theorize and build theory on their own New readings excerpts include such important recent work as: Shoshana Zuboff's *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, Ruha Benjamin's *Race After Technology*, David Graeber's *Of Flying Cars and the Declining Rate of Profit*, Sherry Turkle's "Always-On/Always-on-You."

the elementary forms of religious life: *Classical Sociological Theory* Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff, Indermohan Virk, 2012-01-17 This comprehensive collection of classical sociological theory is a definitive guide to the roots of sociology from its undisciplined beginnings to its current influence on contemporary sociological debate. Explores influential works of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Mead, Simmel, Freud, Du Bois, Adorno, Marcuse, Parsons, and Merton Editorial introductions lend historical and intellectual perspective to the substantial readings Includes a new section with new readings on the immediate pre-history of sociological theory, including the Enlightenment and de Tocqueville Individual reading selections are updated throughout

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* Émile Durkheim, 1926

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* Émile Durkheim, 2008-04-17 'If religion generated everything that is essential in society, this is because the idea of society is the soul of religion.' In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), Émile Durkheim set himself the task of discovering the enduring source of human social identity. He investigated what he considered to be the simplest form of documented religion - totemism among the Aborigines of Australia. Aboriginal religion was an avenue 'to yield an understanding of the religious nature of man, by showing us an essential and permanent aspect of humanity'. The need and capacity of men and women to relate socially lies at the heart of Durkheim's exploration, in which religion embodies the beliefs that shape our moral universe. *The Elementary Forms* has been applauded and debated by sociologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, philosophers, and theologians, and continues to speak to new generations about the origin and nature of religion and society. This new, lightly abridged edition provides an excellent introduction to Durkheim's ideas. ABOUT THE SERIES: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the widest range of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to

scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, helpful notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

the elementary forms of religious life: Durkheim's Sociology of Religion WSF Pickering, 2009-05-28 Religion is central to Durkheim's theory of society, and his work laid most of the foundations of the sociology of religion. Daring and brilliant though his analysis was, its bold claims and questionable premises has made it the subject of ongoing academic debate. Durkheim's work on the subject reached a peak with the publication in 1912 of what turned out to be a classic in its field, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. No other book has explained Durkheim's views on religion using the whole corpus of his writings. Dr Pickering shows how Durkheim's position developed and explains the themes and theories that run through Durkheim's work. This includes Durkheim's attitude towards secularisation and Christian churches, as well as his notion of the contemporary cult of the individual.

the elementary forms of religious life: Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society Emile Durkheim, 1973 Selections from Durkheim's writings focus on the nature of his conception of society and its moral context.

the elementary forms of religious life: Durkheim and Foucault Mark Sydney Cladis, 1999 Education and punishment are two crucial sites of the disciplinary society, approached by Durkheim and Foucault from different perspectives, but also in a shared concern with what kind of society might constitute an emancipatory alternative. This collection of essays explores the issues that are involved and that are illuminated through a comparison and contrast of two social theorists who at first sight might seem an unlikely couple - Durkheim and Foucault.

the elementary forms of religious life: Emile Durkheim Prof Kenneth Thompson, 2003-10-04 This book examines Durkheim's considerable achievements and situates them in their social and intellectual contexts, with a concise account of the major elements of Durkheim's sociology. The book includes a critical commentary on the four main studies which exemplify Durkheim's contribution to sociology: *The Division of Labour in Society*; *Suicide*; *The Rules of Sociological Method* and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

the elementary forms of religious life: The Work of Art Michael D. Jackson, 2016-10-25 How are we to think of works of art? Rather than treat art as an expression of individual genius, market forces, or aesthetic principles, Michael Jackson focuses on how art effects transformations in our lives. Art opens up transitional, ritual, or utopian spaces that enable us to reconcile inward imperatives and outward constraints, thereby making our lives more manageable and meaningful. Art allows us to strike a balance between being actors and being acted upon. Drawing on his ethnographic fieldwork in Aboriginal Australia and West Africa, as well as insights from psychoanalysis, religious studies, literature, and the philosophy of art, Jackson deploys an extraordinary range of references—from Bruegel to Beuys, Paleolithic art to performance art, Michelangelo to Munch—to explore the symbolic labor whereby human beings make themselves, both individually and socially, out of the environmental, biographical, and physical materials that affect them: a process that connects art with gestation, storytelling, and dreaming and illuminates the elementary forms of religious life.

the elementary forms of religious life: Rethinking Durkheim and his Tradition Warren Schmaus, 2004-06-21 This book offers a reassessment of the work of Emile Durkheim in the context of a French philosophical tradition that had seriously misinterpreted Kant by interpreting his theory of the categories as psychological faculties. Durkheim's sociological theory of the categories, as revealed by Warren Schmaus, is an attempt to provide an alternative way of understanding Kant. For Durkheim the categories are necessary conditions for human society. The concepts of causality, space and time underpin the moral rules and obligations that make society possible. A particularly interesting feature of this book is its transcendence of the distinction between intellectual and social history by placing Durkheim's work in the context of the French educational establishment of the Third Republic. It does this by subjecting student notes and philosophy textbooks to the same sort of

critical analysis typically applied only to the classics of philosophy.

the elementary forms of religious life: Ritual and the Sacred Massimo Rosati, 2016-04-08
Ritual and the Sacred discusses some of the most important issues of modern socio-political life through the lens of a neo-Durkheimian perspective. Building on the main lesson of Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, this book articulates values and practices common to non-Western and religious traditions that have the capacity to shape our modern way of living. Central to this volume is the question of modernity and scepticism with regard to mainstream Western wisdom; Rosati focuses on the notion of societal self-reassessment and self-revision, illustrating a willingness to learn from 'primitive' societies. This reassessment necessitates us to rethink the central roles played by ritual and the sacred as building blocks of social and individual life, both of which remain salient features within the modern world. This title will be of key interest to sociologists of religion, philosophy politics and social theorists.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, a Study in Religious Sociology* Emile Durkheim, 2018-10-13 This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. To ensure a quality reading experience, this work has been proofread and republished using a format that seamlessly blends the original graphical elements with text in an easy-to-read typeface. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.

the elementary forms of religious life: Emile Durkheim Robert Alun Jones, 1986 This volume focuses on the four books by Durkheim which are generally accorded classic status: *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide* (1897), and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). In considering each of these works, Jones gives an account of Durkheim's intentions and beliefs, and why he held these beliefs, taking into consideration their social and historical context. In this discussion Jones also explains how Durkheim held some beliefs because he held other beliefs, in the sense that some beliefs provided his reasons for holding other beliefs. The author then follows this with a critical assessment of Durkheim's beliefs, indicating where these reasons were or were not insufficient, either by Durkheim's standards or our own. This book provides an excellent introduction to these four works in particular, and to Durkheim's sociological theories in general. It will be useful to upper-division undergraduates, as well as graduate students in sociology, philosophy, and intellectual history. Researchers and instructors will find it a valuable resource for lectures and research. A remarkable work. . . . From presuppositions to conclusions, the presentation of Durkheimian thought is exceptionally clear, concise and pertinent. Jones succeeds in avoiding the traps associated with a summary, staying true to the essential ideas of the sociologist. --Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions (Translated from French) 'Translating' Durkheim's central ideas into undeniably more accessible language. Jones always stays close to the texts, and, in tune with his first goal, his work is a relatively accurate account of Durkheim's ideas. In addition, Emile Durkheim is a helpful reference for specific points and definitions. --Contemporary Sociology.

the elementary forms of religious life: *Defining Magic* Bernd-Christian Otto, Michael Stausberg, 2014-09-11 Magic has been an important term in Western history and continues to be an essential topic in the modern academic study of religion, anthropology, sociology, and cultural history. *Defining Magic* is the first volume to assemble key texts that aim at determining the nature of magic, establish its boundaries and key features, and explain its working. The reader brings together seminal writings from antiquity to today. The texts have been selected on the strength of their success in defining magic as a category, their impact on future scholarship, and their originality. The writings are divided into chronological sections and each essay is separately

introduced for student readers. Together, these texts - from Philosophy, Theology, Religious Studies, and Anthropology - reveal the breadth of critical approaches and responses to defining what is magic. CONTRIBUTORS: Aquinas, Augustine, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Dennis Diderot, Emile Durkheim, Edward Evans-Pritchard, James Frazer, Susan Greenwood, Robin Horton, Edmund Leach, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Christopher Lehrich, Bronislaw Malinowski, Marcel Mauss, Agrippa von Nettesheim, Plato, Pliny, Plotin, Isidore of Sevilla, Jesper Sorensen, Kimberley Stratton, Randall Styers, Edward Tylor

the elementary forms of religious life: *A Communitarian Defense of Liberalism* Mark S. Cladis, 1992 In this provocative and timely reading of Emile Durkheim the author isolates the merits and liabilities of both liberal and communitarian theories and demonstrates that we need not be in the position of having to choose between them.

the elementary forms of religious life: *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer* Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard, 1965

the elementary forms of religious life: *Rules of Sociological Method* Emile Durkheim, 1982-12 First published in 1895: Emile Durkheim's masterful work on the nature and scope of sociology--now with a new introduction and improved translation by leading scholar Steven Lukes. The Rules of the Sociological Method is among the most important contributions to the field of sociology, still debated among scholars today. Through letters, arguments, and commentaries on significant debates, Durkheim confronted critics, clarified his own position, and defended the objective scientific method he applied to his study of humans. This updated edition offers an introduction and extra notes as well as a new translation to improve the clarity and accessibility of this essential work. In the introduction, Steven Lukes, author of the definitive biography *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work*, spells out Durkheim's intentions, shows the limits of Durkheim's view of sociology, and presents its political background and significance. Making use of the various texts in this volume and Durkheim's later work, Lukes discusses how Durkheim's methodology was modified or disregarded in practice--and how it is still relevant today. With substantial notes on context, this user-friendly edition will greatly ease the task of students and scholars working with Durkheim's method--a view that has been a focal point of sociology since its original publication. The Rules of the Sociological Method will engage a new generation of readers with Durkheim's rich contribution to the field.

the elementary forms of religious life: Defending the Durkheimian Tradition Jonathan S. Fish, 2017-03-02 This book provides an exciting, accessible and wide-ranging guide to the development of classical and contemporary Durkheimian thought. Jonathan Fish offers a re-reading of the writings of Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons on religion. He aims to move beyond rationalistic readings which have neglected the key significance of collective human emotion in Durkheim's accounts of the link between society, religion and morality. He goes on to look at the development of these ideas in the work of Parsons and more recent Durkheimian thinkers. Making an important contribution both to studies of Durkheim and the Durkheimian tradition and to the sociology of emotion, the book is distinctive in arguing that religion is an essential backdrop for understanding emotion. In making this claim the author provides a key to re-establishing links between the sociology of religion and the wider discipline of sociology.

the elementary forms of religious life: Religion, Emergence, and the Origins of Meaning Paul Cassell, 2015-05-12 Why is religion so important to individuals and societies? What gives religion its profound meaningfulness and longevity? Enhancing perspectives taken from sociology and ritual theory, *Religion, Emergence, and the Origins of Meaning* describes how 'emergence theory' - developed to make sense of life and mind - explains why religious communities are special when compared to ordinary human social groups. Paul Cassell argues that in religious ritual, beliefs concerning unseen divine agencies are made uniquely potent, inviting and guiding powerful, alternative experiences, and giving religious groups a form of organization distinct from ordinary human social groups. Going beyond the foundational descriptions of Émile Durkheim and Roy Rappaport, Cassell utilizes the best of 21st century emergence theory to characterize religion's

emergent dynamics.

the elementary forms of religious life: A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion Michael Lambek, 2002 A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion is a collection of some of the most significant classic and contemporary writings on the anthropology of religion. It includes both material whose theme is 'religion' in a straightforward and obvious sense, as well as material that has expanded how we might look at religion - and the horizons of what we mean by 'religion' - linking it to broader questions of culture and politics.

the elementary forms of religious life: The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion, 4 Volume Set Stewart Goetz, Charles Taliaferro, 2021-11-16 An unprecedented multi-volume reference work on philosophy of religion, providing authoritative coverage of all significant concepts, figures, and movements Unmatched in scope and depth, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion provides readers with a well-balanced understanding of philosophical thought about the nature of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and other religious traditions around the globe. Spanning across four comprehensive volumes, this groundbreaking resource contains hundreds of specially commissioned entries covering the key themes, thinkers, works, and ideas in the field. Organized alphabetically, the Encyclopedia addresses an unmatched range of both historical and contemporary topics which reflect a diversity of theoretical and cultural perspectives. The entries encompass an extraordinary range of topics, from Aquinas and Kierkegaard, to teleological and ontological arguments, to cognitive science and psychology of religion, and many more. Each peer-reviewed entry is written by an acknowledged expert on the topic and includes short bibliographies, suggestions for further reading, and extensive cross-references. Accessible to scholars and non-specialist readers alike, this invaluable reference work: Provides balanced coverage of Abrahamic religions as well as different traditions from Asia, Africa, and other geographic regions Presents more than 450 entries which have been carefully reviewed by an editorial advisory board of world-renowned scholars Explores topics in various historical contexts, such as Jewish and Islamic contributions to medieval philosophy Discusses recent developments and new approaches to the study of philosophy of religion Examines significant theories and concepts including free will, atonement, moral argument, natural law, process theology, evolutionary theory, and theism Offers a fully cross-referenced and searchable online edition; The first work of its kind, The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion is an indispensable resource for scholars and advanced students in philosophy, theology, religious studies, and relevant areas of humanities and sciences at both secular universities and theological colleges and seminaries.

the elementary forms of religious life: The Elementary Forms of Religious Life Emile Durkheim, 2019-08-23 The French Sociologist Émile Durkheim is commonly cited as the father of sociology. Principle to the work of Durkheim was his concern with regard to how modernity was effecting traditional social and religious institutions, more specifically with how societies could maintain their integrity and coherence in an era in which new social institutions were coming into being. One of his principles works, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life is a comparative theory of the religious lives of ancient and modern societies and the sociological influence of their respective religious institutions. Durkheim argues that the essence of religion is the concept of the sacred and it is this single phenomenon that is common to all religions. The work extensively discusses the concept of the sacred by examining the worship of totems in ancient religions and by arguing that modern societies have displaced this totemism by ascribing a new form of sacredness to the individual and individual rights. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life is a compelling exposition on the impact of religious institutions in ancient and modern life and a worthy read for anyone interested in religious or sociological studies. This edition is printed on premium acid-free paper.

the elementary forms of religious life: Reappraising Durkheim for the study and teaching of religion today / edited by Thomas A. Idinopulos and Brian C. Wilson. Thomas A. Idinopulos, Brian Courtney Wilson, 2002 Reappraising Durkheim for the Study and Teaching of Religion Today brings together ten new essays in which noted sociologists, psychologists,

phenomenologists, philosophers, and historians of religion grapple with the questions Durkheim raised and the solutions he proposed for the academic study of religion.

the elementary forms of religious life: Émile Durkheim and the Birth of the Gods

Alexandra Maryanski, 2018-06-13 The Birth of the Gods is dedicated to Durkheim's effort to understand the basis of social integration. Unlike most social scientists, then and now, Durkheim concluded that humans are naturally more individualistic than collectivistic, that the primal social unit for humans is the macro-level unit ('the horde'), rather than the family, and that social cohesion is easily disrupted by human self-interest. Hence, for Durkheim, one of the gravest problems facing sociology is how to mold these human proclivities to serve the collective good. The analysis of elementary religions, Durkheim believed, would allow social scientists to see the fundamental basis of solidarity in human societies, built around collective representations, totems marking sacred forces, and emotion-arousing rituals directed at these totems. The first half of the book traces the key influences and events that led Durkheim to embrace such novel generalizations. The second part makes a significant contribution to sociological theory with an analysis that essentially 'tests' Durkheim's core assumptions using cladistic analysis, social network tools and theory, and data on humans closest living relatives—the great apes. Maryanski marshals hard data from primatology, paleontology, archaeology, genetics, and neuroscience that enlightens and, surprisingly, confirms many of Durkheim's speculations. These data show that integration among both humans and great apes is not so much group or kin oriented, per se, but orientation to a community standing outside each individual that includes a sense of self, but also encompassing a cognitive awareness of a sense of community or a connectedness that transcends sensory reality and concrete social relations. This community complex, as Maryanski terms it, is what Durkheim was beginning to see, although he did not have the data to buttress his arguments as Maryanski is able to do.

the elementary forms of religious life: Negotiating an Anglophone Identity Piet Konings,

Francis Beng Nyamnjoh, 2003-01-01 This study of Cameroon captures, with fascinating detail and insight, the growing disaffection with the sterile rhetoric of nation-building that has characterised much of postcolonial African politics. It focuses on the resistance of Anglophone Cameroonians to nationhood, which is being pursued to the detriment of minority identities.

the elementary forms of religious life: Gods in the Global Village Lester R. Kurtz,

2015-04-01 In a world plagued by religious conflict, how can the various religious and secular traditions coexist peacefully on the planet? And, what role does sociology play in helping us understand the state of religious life in a globalizing world? In the Fourth Edition of Gods in the Global Village, author Lester Kurtz continues to address these questions. This text is an engaging, thought-provoking examination of the relationships among the major faith traditions that inform the thinking and ethical standards of most people in the emerging global social order. Thoroughly updated to reflect recent events, the book discusses the role of religion in our daily lives and global politics, and the ways in which religion is both an agent of, and barrier to, social change.

the elementary forms of religious life: Durkheim Kieran Allen, Brian O'Boyle, 2017 A critical introduction to the sociology and politics of Emile Durkheim.

the elementary forms of religious life: *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life - The*

Original Classic Edition Emile Durkheim, 2013-03-14 Finally available, a high quality book of the original classic edition of The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. It was previously published by other bona fide publishers, and is now, after many years, back in print. This is a new and freshly published edition of this culturally important work by Emile Durkheim, which is now, at last, again available to you. Get the PDF and EPUB NOW as well. Included in your purchase you have The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life in EPUB AND PDF format to read on any tablet, eReader, desktop, laptop or smartphone simultaneous - Get it NOW. Enjoy this classic work today. These selected paragraphs distill the contents and give you a quick look inside The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: Look inside the book: Every time that we undertake to explain something human, taken at a given moment in history—be it a religious belief, a moral precept, a legal principle, an aesthetic style or an economic system—it is necessary to commence by going back to its most

primitive and simple form, to try to account for the characteristics by which it was marked at that time, and then to show how it developed and became complicated little by little, and how it became that which it is at the moment in question. ...If we are going to look for the most primitive and simple religion which we can observe, it is necessary to begin by defining what is meant by a religion; for without this, we would run the risk of giving the name to a system of ideas and practices which has nothing at all religious about it, or else of leaving to one side many religious facts, without perceiving their true nature.

Back to Home: <https://fc1.getfilecloud.com>