Introduction
The Lenoir-Durkheim Lecture Notes on L’enseignement de la morale
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Abstract: These are lectures on morality, attributed to Durkheim by Raymond Lenoir and given to Steven Lukes, who reproduced them in his doctoral thesis on Durkheim. They are published, here, together and in full for the first time. The first group of lectures covers the family, as well as general issues in morality and moral education. The second group of lectures, on civic ethics, covers citizenship, democracy, the state, occupational groups, law, and the idea of la patrie. The lectures conclude with a familiar discussion of discipline, and a more original discussion of duties to oneself. The editorial introduction to the lectures explains the circumstances in which they came to light, and discusses issues of authenticity but also of the general role, in Durkheimian studies, of texts variously attributed to Durkheim or based on notes by his students.

Keywords: Durkheim; morality; family; citizenship; democracy; the state

Various manuscripts and texts have continued to turn up and have been published, over recent years, which are either quite clearly by Durkheim himself, or which have been attributed to him, or which involve notes of his lectures taken by students. In view of this, it seems worth placing in the wider public domain a set of lectures that Raymond Lenoir attributed to Durkheim, on L’enseignement de la morale.

Lenoir gave a copy of what he said was his own effort to transcribe Durkheim’s manuscripts to Steven Lukes, while he was in Paris doing research for his doctoral thesis on Durkheim. Three of the lectures had already been published in different journals, and all are listed – as 1958a, 1959a and 1960a – in the bibliography in Lukes, Emile Durkheim: His Life and Work (1973). But the set of lectures as a whole was, and remains, virtually unknown. It is with the kind agreement of Steven Lukes that it has been decided to publish them together and in full, as reproduced in

The lecture on the State was published in the *Revue philosophique* in 1958, on the occasion of Durkheim’s hundredth anniversary, and complete with a facsimile of the first page of his manuscript. In an introduction, Lenoir says he thinks the manuscript of this lecture dates to between 1900 and 1905. But as he also explains more generally, on the set of manuscripts as a whole:

En 1915, à l’issue d’une réforme de guerre, une délégation pour l’enseignement de la philosophie au lycée Laval incita Emile Durkheim à nous remettre un ensemble de copies doubles d’ecolier, avec marge à fil rouge comprenant un cours de morale à l’encre violette, et, dans une couverture portant la mention ‘Enseignement de la morale’, des plans de leçons à l’encre violette et, tantôt à l’encre violette, tantôt à l’encre noire utilisée à Bordeaux, un ensemble de pages écrites à différentes époques, mais unies d’un lien logique. Méthode de la morale, morale civique, droit et devoir de voter, l’État, la Démocratie, Justice et Charité sont complètement rédigés. La rapidité de l’écriture et l’usage d’abréviations personnelles au scripteur rendent le déchiffrage de manuscrit particulièrement délicat. La sûreté et la continuité d’idées reposant, dès la première décennie dans la carrière universitaire, sur une étude comparée des faits ethniques; une indifférence complète pour les doctrines, les systèmes et la dialectique; un saint-simonisme latent attestent l’action réciproque de l’opinion et de la science pendant près de quarante-quatre ans où maîtres, étudiants, élèves et enfants ont en commun un idéal de paix et de justice. (Lenoir 1958)

In his own introduction to the lecture notes, Lukes relates them to a course often given by Durkheim over the years, on *L’enseignement de la morale à l’école primaire*, a manuscript of which was seen by Fauconnet, who refers to it both in his introduction to *Education et sociologie* (1922: 21) and in his preface to *L’éducation morale* (1925: iii). Lukes also comments on the facsimile of the first page of the lecture on the State, to say that the handwriting is unquestionably Durkheim’s, and that this was confirmed by Georges Davy. However, he goes on to say about the notes as a whole: ‘I have myself been unable to persuade M. Lenoir to allow me to see them and have therefore had to rely upon his laborious handwritten copies of them, which I have sought to reproduce as faithfully as his handwriting permits’ (Lukes 1968, II: 145). And indeed, in a personal communication he has indicated worries about this refusal of Lenoir’s, and doubts about the actual existence or authenticity of the manuscripts attributed to Durkheim.

It seems impossible to settle this question, unless – as has happened in other cases – the manuscripts have somehow survived and are some day rediscovered. In the meantime, what might now be just referred to as the Lenoir–Durkheim notes seem of sufficient interest to place in a wider public domain, to help readers make their own judgements about them.
But perhaps it is also appropriate to make a general comment, at this point, to do with the status and role of texts attributed to Durkheim or based on notes taken by his students.

Lenoir was a student of Durkheim’s at the Sorbonne. So even if we just reject his attribution of the lecture notes to Durkheim himself, they still count as evidence of how one of Durkheim’s students framed, constructed and interpreted his ideas. Moreover, this point applies across the board to a range of different cases. And let us briefly consider some of these.

(1) The Lenoir–Durkheim notes on La patrie and on Les devoirs professionnels can be compared with the notes on similar topics taken in 1908–1909 by Armand Cuvillier. These were also given to Lukes, and are reproduced in his thesis (1968 II: 287–297), as well as reprinted in Textes (1975b, III: 217–224). But any attempt to use them to test the authenticity of Lenoir’s claims is complicated by the point, inter alia, that we can’t just assume that Cuvillier’s notes are a wholly accurate record of Durkheim’s lectures, rather than, inevitably, a particular student’s interpretation of these. Instead, it might seem more useful and instructive to compare and contrast them, to get an idea of the ways in which Durkheim was being re-presented by those he was teaching. However, at least there is some actual material to compare and contrast, which of course includes all the material on the same topics in manuscripts by Durkheim in the possession of Mauss, and eventually published as Leçons de sociologie (1950a). Here, though, a further complication in a pursuit of tests of authenticity, and in a hunt for Durkheim in his own words, is the very nature of the oral lecture and its variability from performance to performance. And indeed, these lectures did in fact vary and develop over the years, according to the testimony of Mauss (1937: 501). But we have little or no record of how, apart from what might be gleaned from the Cuvillier and Lenoir notes.

(2) We have a rather different case with the Lenoir–Durkheim notes on duties to oneself. It is about the only material available to us on a key topic in ethics and on which it is known that Durkheim gave lectures. But it is open to us to try to construct a Durkheimian line on the issue. And bearing in mind his general distinction between ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ sides of morality as well as of the sacred, we need to look beyond a ‘negative’ respect for oneself as a person to ask what is its more ‘positive’ aspect. Pride is the answer in the Lenoir notes, and whether or not it is authentically Durkheim’s is anybody’s guess. It nonetheless remains of interest as one of the ways in which it is possible to construct a Durkheimian answer to what is an important issue, but where there is unfortunately also a large gap in the actual Durkheimian material on offer.

(3) We come to a different case again, with notes taken by André Lalande, and published in 2004 as Durkheim’s Philosophy Lectures: Notes from the Lycée de Sens Course, 1883–1884. These have already attracted considerable
discussion and comment, but almost wholly on the perhaps quite questionable assumption that they amount to Durkheim in his own words, rather than a re-presentation of these by one of his students. And just as it is so far impossible to compare and contrast them with notes by any other student, it is also impossible to read and interpret them in light of any relevant material by Durkheim himself at the time. Again this is so far simply not available. Indeed, the Lalande notes are invaluable precisely because there isn’t anything else to go on, to get a glimpse of Durkheim’s ideas at this very early stage of his academic career, and of where he positioned himself in the landscape of nineteenth century French philosophy.

(4) Finally, let us consider a case that takes us towards the end of his career, Armand Cuvillier’s edition of Sociologie et pragmatisme. As he goes out of his way to stress in the preface, this is a ‘reconstitution’ – or we might also say, a reconstruction – of the lecture-course of 1913–1914 (Cuvillier 1955: 8, his emphasis). What is more, it is based on the notes of two unidentified, anonymous students, that are fused together, rather than published separately, in an editorial reconstruction – perhaps we might also now say, invention – of a text. True enough, it is possible to call on some of Durkheim’s own material to check up on the general Durkheimian sound of the lecture-course’s line of argument and the general Durkheimian feel of the discourse in which it is embedded. On the other hand, this general sound and feel is exactly what is going to be involved in any competent editorial reconstruction – whether by Cuvillier or Lenoir – while it also doesn’t take us any nearer, in this case, to the particularities of what might have been Durkheim’s own actual arguments about pragmatism. And yet so much of all the discussion and comment on Sociologie et pragmatisme again seems based on the assumption, ignoring the editor’s own explicit and repeated warnings, that it amounts to Durkheim in his own words. The brute fact is, it doesn’t. The text nonetheless remains invaluable, even when recognized, as it ought to be recognized, for what it is – a reconstruction by an editor who was a student of Durkheim’s, based on interpretations in notes by other students of his, as we may at least trust the editor that they in fact were.

In sum, and to return to the Lenoir–Durkheim notes themselves, this is a plea against making everything hang on the issue of authenticity. But this is precisely why it is at once a plea for greater discrimination about the status of variously Durkheimian texts around nowadays, and for greater flexibility over their role in a range of issues to do with ‘Durkheim’ and re-presentation of his work. In a way, after all, a text is the material substratum of a work. Yet it is also in a way true, whether things are written down by the ‘teacher’ or the teacher’s interpreters – students, editors, translators or whoever – that a work is the inspiration of a text.
References