By setting up an ideal and static vision of past communities with fixed economic roles for the individual, where satisfaction was derived from a communal identity reinforced by face-to-face interaction, the author paints a picture of social breakdown by technology.

These communities sit within a postbellum past, never historically located, yet pictured as small villages where everyone walks, talks, exchanges goods in a local economy. The past of small communities is theoretically validated by Durkheim's "collective conscience", as the interest of the individual and the group are aligned and merged through shared representations and a united moral vision. The communal processes that reinforce the "collective conscience" are those of the village:

> *The collective conscience reflects the relations among individuals. Therefore, social relations are created through the development of a collective conscience; the collective conscience is then the instrument of social relationships.*

Durkheim's theory of community is summarised and defines the historical collectives that are portrayed as the victims of technology.

The three technologies that cause the social breakdown are the automobile, air conditioning and television. All three have a commonality of effect: that is, they reduce face-to-face interaction and remodel local spaces: a vicious cycle that accentuates their impact upon economic and social relations. Cars make suburbs; air conditioning

empties porches and television destroys the dining room. All of these technologies are attacked as undermining the moral economy of the local community. As such, the moral purpose of the author and paper are at one.

In his Introduction, the author kindly quotes Amitai Etzioni for portraying modern social structures. Without providing any formal correspondence between the paper and the society we actually live in, the author sketches a quick sociological history. Communities are rolled up into the "larger society". Their economy, morals and behaviour are all determined by the wider society:

> These reservoirs of labor are fed, clothed, sheltered and nurtured from outside. Food, clothing, shelter and therapies are generated from without the communities. The communities no longer generate their rules, no longer do they actively maintain the norms. When norms are broken, the infractions are reported to agencies of the greater social order.

The norms of behavior and agreed moral rules are the processes by which a living community refreshed and reproduced itself. In turn, these communities were the pulse of morality, and ensured that individual actions were guided in a moral direction through membership and identification with the collective.

The silencing of Etzioni's 'moral voices' is the cri de coeur that the author wishes to raise. Durkheim's theory of community becomes an explanatory tool to explain how this has been achieved. As modern society lacks communities, it has lost moral vision. This is described as a "deplorable situation" and, by attacking progress, the paper is presents a counter-teleology, a description of a process of the social impact of technology, that proves moral descent outweighs technological ascent. By analyzing the path from there to here, the agenda is clear: understanding community is a precursor to returning to this idealized state.

All three technologies have the same destructive effect, yet we can concentrate upon one to draw out the flaws within this methodology. Air conditioning provides the clearest connection between the relationship of the individual to the collective conscious, and reveals the need for these envisioned communities to submit to traditional notions of the natural. As we see, the moral community required an umbilical connection with nature, in this instance, the weather, to justify and police its morals:

> It used to be that people could not live in their houses when it was hot and they could not live out of doors when it was cold. When it was hot, people lived on their porches or in their yards under shade trees and when it was cold they gathered around the stove and lived the highly interactive life that they lived on porches and under the shade of trees when it was hot.

The author proceeds to narrate the interaction of the community that the inclement weather engenders. Individuals would talk, swap stories, reinforce the collective memory and gossip if they did not "recognize the walk of a passer-by". The conformist nature of the community is clearly delineated, and the stranger or the deviant is a subject of, at least, discussion, and maybe more.

The patterns of the community are defined by Durkheim's theory and never formally transposed into the historical continuum. The author does not identify an actual community destroyed by the malignant effects of these technologies. Histories are cited as a resource for the substantiation of the author's thesis, with the proviso, in one reference, that the historian "failed to observe….. how air conditioning changed a whole way of life throughout the world". This bizarre claim of globalisation for the ideal community demonstrates the paucity of empirical evidence for the author's assertions. The dependence upon community theory without historical substantiation leaves the narratives open to multiple interpretations. The story of social breakdown and communal destruction can be rewritten with the roles of the automobile, air conditioning and television, replaced by war, urbanisation and the expanding role of the state.

By ignoring the local rigours of the historical discipline and the wider processes of modernity, the author's 'grand theory' of communal breakdown lacks correspondence with stories of the world as it was. Moreover, the moral agenda requires Durkheim's 'collective conscious' to provide a theoretical foundation, but reliance upon a single mode of communication, face to face interaction, denies the complexity of human life, then and now. Villages could have telegraphs too!

To conclude, the author has not embedded his analysis of these technologies within a wider social or historical framework. The article may prove a cultural resource for those who support the 'relinquishment theory', such as Bill McKibbin, the environmentalist. However, the ethical and philosophical sources deployed in the article do not tap the detailed traditions of Durkheim's sociological heirs or the communitarians. Without a greater acknowledgement of its contribution to these debates, the article remains a curio for applying the sociological observations of the French peasantry to the supposed problems of contemporary morality.