Berger, Peter L. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion.* **New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967.**

Peter Berger (1929-) is an American sociologist best known for his collaboration with Thomas Luckman in writing *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. That book argues that human reality, and knowledge of it, is a social construct, emerging from the individual or group's interaction with larger social structures (institutions). Social structures, once widely adopted, lose their history as social constructions (objectivation), and come over time, by the people who live within them, to be deemed natural realities independent of human construction (reification). Berger predicted, in his later book, *The Sacred Canopy,* near-term all-encompassing secularization of religion, which prediction has proved false, especially in the third world (as Berger himself has acknowledged in his later work, *Desecularization*).

Preface. This is a book of sociology, and hence never addresses questions of ultimate, theological truth. The argument employs some philosophical rhetorical elements, but is not for that reason a philosophical exercise. The author's intent is to expose religion as the natural and historical result of human social existence. Though the author previous collaborated with Thomas Luckmann to write a book related to this one, *Sacred Canopy* is not Luckmann's work and its flaws should not be attributed to him.

I. SYSTEMATIC ELEMENTS

1. **Religion and World-Construction.** Humans fabricate the psychological universe in which the members of a society dwell [its *Weltanschauung*]. Religion plays a key role in the world-building process of society. This book is about the role of religion in mankind's social construction of reality. World-building is dialectical because the product changes its producer. Man creates society; society fashions man. This process is trifold: externalization (man projects his action and thought into the world), objectivation (human action comes to be deemed a reality independent of the humans who created it), and internalization (most individuals adopt objectivized social structures as a template for their own subjective experience of the world, calling that "reality.")

   Externalization. Humans externalize naturally; that is, people pour themselves into their environments. Humans, unlike other animals, are born incomplete. The human fetus's second year of "gestation" happens in the external environment rather than in the uterus. Humans are thoroughly non-specialized in their structures and drives. Since man is not destined for a particular environment, that environment must be created by his own actions. Social world-creation is an intrinsically human activity, necessitated by mankind's biological structure. Man's "world" is, consequently, fundamentally unstable. It exists only insofar as man goes on creating it. Man finishes fabricating himself in a particular social universe of his own manufacture. This social construct is culture. Cultures change. It is their nature. Building worlds is inevitable for mankind; keeping them stable proves difficult. Since world-building is essential to mankind, and constitutes a portion of his essence, "human nature" fundamentally shifts over time.

   Objectivation. Culture consists in man's products, both physical and mental. Society is that part of culture that governs man's relationship with other men. Man is essentially social, and so world-building is essentially collective. Society appears to us to share the immutability of nature. Family, economy, state, international relations, and so forth do not exist except insofar as individual humans act and think. Once a cultural structure is projected into the world by a group of humans, it cannot be changed at will. It has an existence more objective than mere thought, but less persistent than physical objects. Cultural objects (such as tools or ideas), once propagated attain an objectivity over against all, even their creators; they have an internal logic unique to them which may confront and alter the behavior of their users. Social constructs become objective in a sense virtually indistinguishable from physical reality. When completely objectivated, societal constructs may coerce reluctant participants. Social constructs that do not compel participants to acknowledge their reality are not completely objectivated.

   Internalization. One takes roles within the social construct, which roles are imposed and defined from outside the individual. As such, individuals deviate from those roles psychologically

to a greater or lesser extent. Each person enters an internal dialogue in which those deviations are explored as differences between an imposed social mask and the "real self," which conversation is one of the engines of socialization. Internalization is a process by which the external social constructs are adopted by individuals as the structure of their own subjective experience. The individual not only learns the social constructs, but becomes an exponent of them. Socialization succeeds to the extent its external structure corresponds to the internal structure of individual consciousness. Ultimately, the individual becomes the person whom others have assigned him to be. The dawning individual enters this conversation and the world and he himself remain real to him only insofar as the individual is able to persevere in the conversation. Since no one is perfectly socialized, due to individual uniqueness, socialization is never completed. All social worlds are fragile, dramatically dependent upon the ongoing thread of socializing conversation. Internalization of social roles is not something society does to the individual, but rather a conversation in which the individual participates actively, appropriating fragments of the conversation as his own, contributing parts in other conversations.

Nomos. Social constructs nomize reality, which means that social constructs order individual experience meaningfully. Humans lack most heritable organizing mechanisms, and so must create and impose structure. Individuals structure their experiences, and some of these catch on and reach broader consensus. The structures are named and enter the social construct, and are given a place within the encompassing structure of the language. Nomizing aims to be totalizing, that is to name and give a place to every experience. To live in a culture is to dwell in its nomos. Those experiences that have names and norms attached to them become "knowledge." By the designation "knowledge," society imposes its customary interpretation on individual experience. Knowledge has realms which are often poorly integrated, but are nevertheless shared by persons living in a common society. The future is imagined to be the present nomos projected forward in time. To share a nomos lends one a structured and meaningful social life. An individual's life can become disrupted, not only socially but also psychologically, if one is cut off from conversation with significant others. One enters "anomy" or worldlessness. Nomizing is an instinctual human enterprise. Anomy proves so painful that some seek death in preference to it. Within a nomos, death itself can prove meaningful and desirable. Marginal situations (death, spousal death, child death, divorce, psychosis and neurosis, separation from family, incarceration) threaten the nomos, because these situations lie outside the power of the social construct and interrupt it. Collapse of a social construct threatens anomy. The nomos is a patch of ordered light in a chartless dark sea of chaos. Every nomos prescribes procedures for people afflicted with marginal conditions to re-enter normalcy. The social construct aims to be invisible; it should be taken for granted. A well-internalized nomos associates its rules with those of physics. Nomos and cosmos are deemed to be extensions of one another. Whenever the nomos is projected onto the cosmos, either in the "nature of the universe" or the "nature of man," religion enters.

Religion. Religion creates a sacred cosmos. The sacral identifies power beyond human grasp which is nevertheless related to mankind. Sacral powers differ culturally, with common elements supervening. The sacral world sticks out beyond normalcy, yet includes normalcy. Its wild power can be domesticated for human purposes. The opposite of sacral is profane, but more fundamentally, the chaotic. The war of the sacred against chaos is the stuff of cosmogonic myth. Nomic constructions, projected on the universe, may become gods. Religion ultimately aims to make the entire universe a meaningful part of man's world. Human meanings are deemed to permeate existence. Secular (profane) world-building has been growing in prevalence; science is the most important of these current attempts. Before modern science, all cosmization was sacral.

2. **Religion and World-Maintenance**. Social worlds are inherently unstable. Self-interest, stupidity, forgetfulness, incapacity, and other shortcomings in a society's members erode the social construct's resilience. Socialization, to the extent it succeeds, draws boundaries to social deviation. Other props are necessary.

Legitimation. Legitimation is socially-authorized thoughts that rationalize the existing social construct, such as definitions, language categories, morality, or (less frequently) ideas. Ultimately all "knowledge" legitimates its nomos, because knowledge is authorized by the nomos. When resisters deny social legitimations, yet more powerful legitimations ensue, especially when harsh measures are employed on dissenters. Legitimations have levels. The unchallenged social

construct relies primarily upon its deemed facticity to remain stable. When challengers arise, successor legitimations emerge: a) this is how things are done, b) proverbs, c) legends and myths, d) theoretical justifications for portions of society, and e) theoretical justifications for an entire world-view. Legitimations serve to maintain social constructs; their purpose is reality-maintenance. Religion has been, historically, the most potent and effective legitimation, because religion correlates the mundane with the holy, the penultimate with the ultimate. Religion removes contingency from social constructs; the social construct imagines its foundations thrust into divine granite. The most common religious legitimation asserts that human relations mirror divine relations (which Berger calls the microcosm-macrocosm linkage). Our kin structures are those of the gods. Our king speaks for (or is) god. Israel, by conceiving Yahweh as the radically transcendent author of history, and Greece, by finding within man a divine spark, commenced paths that end in secularism. In religious legitimation, a nomos indulges cosmic bootstrapping. The nomos waxes immortal. Its thoughts become those of god himself.

Dissent. Persons who dissent from the "god-given structure of the universe" are censured, first, psychologically by their own sense of error, and, second, by society. It is forbidden to remind society that its nomos is invented. The dissenter threatens to revive anomy. Since anomy emerges from the cosmic forces of chaos, the dissenter allies himself with the devil. Social censure and ostracism make it nearly impossible for dissenters to maintain their dissident viewpoint.

Reminding. Since people forget, they need constant reminders of the nomos. Societies establish reminders to keep the conversation that is their lifeblood mumbling along. Religious ritual is a critical form of social reminder.

Integration of Marginal States. Religion serves to provide explanation for the marginal psychological states that challenge the nomos, for example, sleep and dreams, visions, disease, emotional disturbances, and, most critically, death, which exposes all business-as-usual attitudes as fluff. Entire societies may suffer marginal moments, as in war, violence, or natural disaster.

Plausibility Structures. Beneath the activity of world-maintenance lies the infrastructure necessary for that activity, which Berger calls a "plausibility structure." That structure is the underlying society, with its feeding, breeding, life-pattern, and other characteristics. Upon these structures, and legitimating them, stands the world-maintenance activity of religion. Without the plausibility structure, the legitimated nomos rapidly collapses. As a plausibility structure weakens, world-maintenance legitimations become more urgent and potent. When a nomos, especially a religious nomos, lacks an underlying societal stratum in which to flourish, it must perish or manufacture a social realm. The social engineering problems confronted by religious monopolies differ form those of religious minorities competing in pluralistic societies. Monopolies are more likely to succeed; they can isolate dissenters in ghettos, either intellectual or physical, or destroy dissenters outright. Minority religious communities struggle to maintain their plausibility structure, which is constantly eroded from without. Conversion is possible, with members abandoning the religious society for another world-view. Religions are people linked arm-in-arm walking together toward death (the ultimate marginal event). The struggle of religion is to make death meaningful in the face of doubt.

3. **The Problem of Theodicy.** Nomos-eroding anomic events provide a constant need for justifications of the social construct. In the religious realm, such justifications are simple or sophisticated forms of theodicy. Participation in a nomos is itself a theodicy; one's integration argues for the plausibility of structure into which one is integrated. The individual may be engulfed wholly by his nomos, and face death and other lashes of anomy as society asserts he should. He suffers the good death under the sacred canopy.

Masochism. Whole-hearted participation in a nomos entails social masochism. One subjects one's own experiences and choices to interpretations and programs prescribed by society. The ensuing pain can become enjoyable, if viewed as evidence confirming the societal perspective. Humans suffer when isolated and confused. Radical self-denial integrates one into a community both social and meaningful. Religious masochism annihilates the self in favor of a deemed divine embrace, even if god is somewhat sadistic. Such masochistic theodicy is pre-rational, not a finely-tuned rationale.

Meaning. Successful theodicy renders life's marginal anomic moments meaningful. For humans, meaning is often a more potent need than happiness. Theodicies explain to the poor why they are poor and why their poverty is appropriate. The same theodicy may explain and justify the rich in a sado-masochistic two-step.

Typology of Theodicies. Theodicies differ in their rationality, and therefore in their approach to anomic eruptions.

The most irrational theodicy is **utter identification** with the nomos, typical of primitive religion. The individual is largely subsumed into the collectivity, and his story is the culture's story writ small. The member's life and that of society express cosmic eurhythmy. The collectivity is subsumed into the cosmos under gods and the cycles of nature, and the member in the collectivity. Ancestors have preceded the member in this chain of events, and so remain present. This primitive model underlies all theodicies of greater complexity and rationality. Mysticism elaborates what was unspoken in utter identification theodicies. The mystic member seeks personal absorption into the divine. The empirical self dissolves into the hypostasized collectivity. Individual experience, including suffering and death, is deemed a mirage, as compared to foundational mystical union.

The most rational theodicy is the **karma-samsara** theodicy of Indian religions. All empirical perturbations to the nomos are smoothed across endless history. Ethical cause and effect work results that transcend death in multiple reincarnations, providing a seamless and rational theodicy. Conjoined with the *dharma* concept (performing one's social and caste duties improves one's next life), the karma-samsara complex creates the world's most conservative theodicy. For the successful, one is obliterated by union with *atman-brahman*, and released from the relentless wheel of reincarnation. Buddhism is a radical rationalization of the karma-samsara theodicy. Anomic events, for Buddhist theoreticians, are illusory sufferings. By rational pursuit of non-selfhood, one overcomes impermanence and sorrow, finding perfect emptiness (*nirvana*).

Intermediate theodicies employ various strategies. First, some intermediate theodicies project redress of anomic suffering into a this-worldly future, usually relying upon a devastating divine intervention. Messianic thought, millenarianism, and eschatological schemes fall into this category. Present anomy reintegrates in glorious times soon to come. A downside of such theodicies is the likelihood of empirical disconfirmation. Second, some intermediate theodicies project anomic compensation into post-death existence (immortality), thereby immunizing the theodicy from empirical disconfirmation. Both of these first two intermediate forms of theodicy are represented in the biblical traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Third, some theodicies portray human existence as a battleground between good and evil (or their surrogates), between which men must choose. Iranian religions such as Zoroastrianism and Mithraism exhibit dualistic theodicy, and within the Christian penumbra, Gnosticism is a dualistic theodicy. In Gnosticism, the world itself is anomy, created by an evil power contravening the good god. Redemption lies in release from this world to life in the realm of light, a realm of which tantalizing glimpses are available to worthy supplicants.

The Peculiar Problems of Ethical Monotheistic Theodicy. The problem of theodicy is most virulent in ethical monotheism, where anomy flies in the face of an all-good, all-powerful god. The theodical tension is resolved by catapulting god beyond comprehension. God is so utterly different that no human conceptions characterize or bind him. What man can question god (as in *Job*)? God becomes the accuser, and the question of human failure preempts insinuations concerning god's justice. Masochism becomes the rule. It is man, not god, who requires justification. The most exacting elaborations of this theodicy lie in predestinarian schemes, such as Calvinism or Islam. Christianity answers the theodical problem by incarnation. The god who inflicts suffering is the same god who suffers. This is the driving force behind orthodox Christological formulations, such as the Nicene Creed. Christ must be fully man and fully god, or the theodicy crumbles. This inverted theodicy is the fulcrum of all Christian theology. Historically, the Christian theodicy is crumbling, its "obviousness" waning.

Secularism. In post-Christian theodicy, one seeks justification for suffering not in another realm, but in humans and history. A secular approach to anomic events confronts the same problems as the religious approaches: how are death and chaotic interruptions to be integrated with our view of communal life? A nomos is humans facing death together. The effort to make sense of anomy will persist as long mankind.

4. **Religion and Alienation**. Humans externalize, that is, act in their environments, producing a world. Part of this world is their social relations. Over time, a human society deems its social world as real as physical stuff. The social world is internalized by socialization, and from that point structures the member's consciousness. Social reality requires the cooperation of its member constituents. Social reality differs from physical reality, even within a nomos, in that random physical events differ from socially dictated events. Social events have meanings. Our social roles bear for us a sense of reality that our imaginings lack.

Duplication of Consciousness. Nevertheless, socialization is never wholly successful. Every individual retains a sense of herself as independent of social roles. That socialization-resistant self lies uncomfortably alongside her "real" social self. Within individual consciousness, a conflict emerges that mirrors the external conflict. The parts of a person argue with her fractured selves. Voices of conscience speak, and a person may seem strange, even to herself, just as some of society's demands feel strange.

Alienation. The **alienated** individual ceases this conversation. The social world becomes something imposed from without, entirely apart from her participation. She is no longer a co-creator, finding meaning where it can be discovered or imputed. She sees the social world as fate or destiny, crashing heedless onward, trampling her in its haste and inexorable grinding. The alienated individual's socialization is reified. It has become a non-human thing, like a rock. Berger emphasizes three points. a) Alienation is **false consciousness**, because, though the individual believes she has no effect, she nevertheless has influence. Even her conviction that she has no influence has influence. b) Alienation is the normal human state. Where there is good movement forward, some people come to see their influence and exercise it. c) Alienation is not anomy. Anomic events destabilize and challenge the nomos. Alienation supports the nomos powerfully. What we believe we created, we are inclined to believe we can change. What we believe to be imposed and immutable, we rant against, but ultimately tolerate.

Religion and Alienation. Religions strongly support their nomoi and weaken the erosive effects of anomic events. As such, religion has historically been strongly alienating and productive of false consciousness. Religion presents the nomos as wholly Other, far beyond our capacity to influence, a thing to be feared. The religious world is not empirical, but a meaning-laden social community. Considered as a component of a social construct, perceptions of god and his demands are projections. Humans project their meanings into and upon experience. These projected meanings are deemed objective, and utterly alienated, because god is beyond human influence. The basic motif of every religion is to assert divine origins for a human-constructed nomos. Thus, religion is essentially alienating, aimed to convince members that its rules cannot be changed and do not derive from mankind. Religious assertions cannot be empirically falsified because god is not of this world. Believing man did not construct and cannot change the nomos (which is false consciousness), social structures are mystified. For example, sexual mores are historically diverse. Cultures enforce their (historically accidental) sex taboos by alleging divine sanction. Mankind can have sex, but it must be sex as the gods have sex or permit sex. Power can be exercised, but those heads roll whom god chops. So, for the alienated acolyte acting in false consciousness, **bad faith** emerges. He chooses, but claims he has no alternatives because his course is sacred and predetermined. Bad faith emerges when the internal dialogue between the socialized self and socialization-resistant self grows quiet. Identity is subsumed by role. Nothing independent remains.

Religion may not always act to alienate. In some historical, but rare, circumstances, religion may **de-alienate** and drive people toward knowledge of their capacity for new choices. Berger describes de-alienating aspects of Indian soteriologies. Mysticism may also de-alienate; it depreciates physical reality and views ordinances as accommodations to the needs of weaker men. In Judaism, Yahweh was so elevated that all human institutions were deemed merely the work of men. Thus de-alienated, kings and priests could be publicly castigated. De-alienation may lead toward revolutionary attitudes.

Sociology has nothing to say about the ontological status of gods. Ultimate answers to theological questions lie beyond empirical investigation. Sociology proceeds as though no gods exist (as does all science), seeking rather explanations that can be empirically falsified. The

ubiquitous religious enterprises of man reveal that humanity craves meaning. Humans splash their need for a meaningful world onto the broadest cosmic canvas. Consequences be damned.

II. HISTORICAL ELEMENTS

5. **The Process of Secularization**. Some sociologists deny that generalized theorizing of the sort Berger has indulged so far in this book is sociology at all. Berger hopes for a broader perspective on sociology. This second half of the book may better please his critics. Berger acknowledges the multiple uses and debates surrounding the term "secularization." Secularization is the process by which sectors of society and culture once dominated by a religious nomos cease to be dominated. In western culture, the role of the church has declined in government, arts, philosophy, literature, and the minds of most citizens. Science has arisen as a secular alternative explanatory scheme. European church influence has plummeted. In American, churches retain a higher profile, but have themselves become internally secularized. Secularization is a global phenomenon. Secularization is carried to non-secularized societies by capitalist economic tides.

   Western religion contains the seeds of secularization within its nomos. Protestants, in departing Catholicism, stripped their religion of its magisterial scope and magical mysteries. The borders of Protestant sacredness, especially Calvinist thought, lie closer to hand than the Catholic ones. All intermediaries (saints and priests and angels and Mary's celestial elevation) disappear. Magical sacraments vanish. Miracles cease. A transcendent god directly confronts a fallen human in stark disparity. The sole remaining Protestant miracle is divine grace leading to conversion. When this miracle falls into disrepute, then god is dead. So, Protestantism has proved a doorway to secularization.

   The roots of secularization also lie in ancient Israeli thought. Israel defined itself by its departures (physically and ideologically) from both Mesopotamia and Egypt. Each had a top-to-bottom nomos with no sharp lines between the divine and the mundane. Israel departed these worldviews in elevating god, taking history seriously, and making ethics rational. Yahweh is non-local, sometimes the only god, other times the only god that matters to Israel. He has no children or sycophantic pantheon. Yahweh's connection to Israel and the land is elective and ethical; he may move on or revoke Israel's status when faced with bad behavior. Yahweh contracts with Israel. Performance is required. History is drained of its mystical and magical content. The history in which Yahweh interacts with Israel is the normal, pedestrian course of human events. Ethics moves from cosmic analogies to specific obedience to clear commands. The Torah governed life. All of human life serves Yahweh. Yahweh and the Yahwist ethic survived destruction of cultic life in Israel at the hands of Babylonians and later Romans.

   Jewish secularizing influences were transmitted broadly via Christianity. Christianity regressed from the secularizing trends of Israel's prophetic voices by reintroducing intermediaries, first Jesus himself, but soon followed by saints and angels and Mary-worship. Catholicism synthesized cosmic and historical religions. Ethical absolutism is sequestered among ascetics and monasteries. Pedestrian ethics in medieval Catholic congregations is more forgiving, filled with loopholes and back doors. Still, Catholicism remained historical in its worldview. The church as a social institution dedicated to religious functions alone stands apart from most societies, in which religious symbols and functions permeate institutions broadly. Churches, by monopolizing religious functions, vacate social space for profane activity, that is, create a secular realm.

   Secularization dissolves religious nomizations, without offering any broad replacement synthesis. Meaninglessness ensues, even for normal non-intellectuals. Anomic events generate heightened anxiety in the face of worldlessness.

6. **Secularization and the Problem of Plausibility.** Western secularism entails collapse of churches as reality-definers, and collapse of the persuasive force of religious thought in the psychology of the masses. Westerners dwell in nomic pluralism, with contenders vying for attention and allegiance. People's work-a-day worlds affect society and its religious components. Dialectically, society and its religious communities affect the population's pedestrian lives. Once, however, secularism grows entrenched, the religious communities fall out of the conversation. Their secularizing tendencies lead to their demise.

Secularism first rooted in economic life, and has been slow to invade the state and family life. Although the progressive spread of secularization is not uniform, modern industrialism generally fosters secular worldviews. The state insures fair competition between competing religious communities. De-secularization is a near impossibility; it would require moving an industrial economy to a pre-industrial one. Religious enclaves solicit individual religious consumers in secularized societies. These elective religious communities, however, do not fulfill the traditional role of religions. They do not create a legitimating reality in which all of life proceeds, and to which all must submit. Religious communities create sub-realities, operative only upon their members, in a fractured universe of meaning. The problem for such religious communities remains that, because participation is voluntary, members may shuck off their sub-world as readily as they entered it. Secularization necessarily leads to religious pluralism. Berger discusses pre-pluralism Hindu India and medieval Christian Europe. Berger discusses pluralistic American denominationalism and the competition with non-religious organizations for membership. Religions must, in pluralism, market their beliefs, grow interested in results, and establish bureaucracies to track and effect those results. Pluralistic religion grows increasingly bureaucratic. Seminary training has adjusted accordingly. The pluralistic context undergirds ecumenism, since all religious purveyors face similar difficulties. The competitors may reach agreements about which territories may be evangelized without competition. Some denominations form cartels, or even merge. This competition and bureaucratic accommodation leads to "heeding the customer." Theological verities no longer necessarily rule the day. The divine message may be spun to the ear of the potential member, even when those delivering the message deny any such accommodation. For some, supernatural elements will be systematically downplayed. For others, a message consistent with secular suburban values is emphasized. The "laity" grows in importance, not for theological reasons, but because they are the consumer to whom the religious product is being sold. Consumerism also induces religious bureaucracies toward standardization with emphasis on the small differences among competitors offering largely-identical products.

As the underlying plausibility structures of religions erode, so too does religion's taken-for-granted-ness. Doubts plague not only propositions about which one is understandably uncertain, but also core issues about which one previously entertained no doubts. Religious pluralism creates a credibility crisis for members. First, supporting plausibility structures prove difficult to construct since much of society denies their utility. One can no longer keep dissenters at bay. Second, accommodation of the message to the religious audience makes the tone of religious language sound more like advertising than the voice of god. Third, religion has lost its objective plausibility. Religion in industrial pluralistic societies refers to individual psychological preference, not the cosmos and human existence. All these changes result from economic developments changing the shape of society. Adherents in pluralistic religious contexts join with societal subgroups to subsist as what Berger calls "cognitive minorities." These religious groups can either accommodate their message or retrench in a ghetto of spiritual certainty.

7. **Secularization and the Problem of Legitimation**. The crisis of the church lies in the challenges of how to accommodate the institution to the pluralistic situation or in how to retreat to a world apart from the mainstream of society. This pluralistic crisis also affects non-religious contenders such as Marxism. The Protestant experience of pluralism may be a template all others will be compelled to follow.

Within Protestantism, pietism introduced the psychological individualism of the pluralistic circumstance. Pietism (pietism proper within Lutheranism, Methodism within Anglicanism, and the American revival experience) replaced theological affirmation with subjective emotionalism as the standard by which religious experience must be judged. The Enlightenment subjected religious propositions to withering rational scrutiny, including the sacred texts in the nineteenth century within the circles of theological liberalism.

Classical theological liberalism emphasized sub-rational feeling for the divine in life, and disparaged or de-emphasized the supernatural and miraculous in religious texts. Liberals conceived religions in evolutionary terms, rising to a pinnacle in Christianity. But liberalism's Christianity lacked historical roots, and touted a wan Jesus who propagated an enduring personal ethic consistent with German society. Classical liberals debated with non-Christian skeptics, bargaining away pieces of the biblical tradition for intellectual approval. Liberalism found its

confidence in the capitalist and scientific successes of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its power crumbled with the World War I and its sequels, the Great Depression, Nazism, and World War II. Neo-orthodoxy ensued in Protestantism, whose primary exponents were Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth. Neo-orthodox reassertion of theological certainty led to a brief renaissance of the communal aspects of Christian faith. Sociologically considered, this rediscovery of the church constitutes a recreation of a Christian enclave, sheltering against the lashing storm of secularism. This is sectarianism, in which believers organize themselves to resist secular or hostile intellectual environments. Neo-orthodox sectarian communities began to spin apart as German economic conditions improved, following World War II.

Following the world wars, Bultmann and others issued a call to "demythologize" the New Testament, that is, to unearth the historical Jesus from the pious dithering that encrusts him in the church's canon. The essential movement here translates the canonical text from the realm of history to the realm of individual psychology. The resurrection is not an event, but a realization. So, religious consciousness finds a new home in the psyche. Christian thinkers accommodate their faith to the secular culture by reinterpreting it psychologically (as Kantian, Jungian, Freudian symbols systems). Existentialist reinterpretations, such as that of Tillich, also ensue. Berger thinks these radical reinterpretations of Christianity will ultimately fail for sociological reasons: they undermine the institutions they purportedly aim to legitimate. Berger asserts that both Catholicism and Judaism will have to face the pluralistic pressures in a manner similar to the Protestant denominations. Ultimately, all religions everywhere will have to deal with secularity, theological pluralism, and the advent of religious, emotional subjectivity as the core criterion for theological veracity.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Sociological Definitions of Religion. Berger reviews the sociological definitions of religion of Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Thomas Luckmann [his collaborator in writing *The Social Construction of Reality*]. Luckmann identifies religion as man's essence, in that man alone constructs morally-obligatory conceptions of the universe. Berger argues that Luckmann's definition goes too far, and reasserts his view that religion propagates a sacral worldview.

Appendix II: Sociological and Theological Perspectives. Sociology engages dialogue with theology, but answers its questions sociologically, not theologically. Sociology does not address the ultimate questions into which theology ventures. It may be the case that man projects meaning into the universe because the universe is so structured to be found meaningful and man is so structured to do the projecting. If theology can be construed as anthropology, then anthropology may find in man a theological animal. Mathematics may be analogous. In math, mankind projects his concepts upon reality, with the unlikely and startling result that the cosmos turns out to agree with man, at least mathematically. Religious faith has little to fear from sociologists. All theology seeks traction points from which to establish its evaluation of the universe and make theological assertions. Sociology gives traction, but not traction such as helps theologians. Sociology recognizes that all worldviews emerge from particular social structures, and all worldviews affect their social structures dialectically. Sociology cannot winnow true consciousness from false. Neo-orthodoxy attempts to manufacture a traction point in the preaching of the church. It fails. The path forward lies in a revised liberalism. Take religion as an historical phenomenon seriously. Re-evaluate theological propositions in light of what is known of religion empirically and sociologically. Look among religious projections for, what Berger calls, "signals of transcendence." Know that what you learn will be more about man than about god. See where this approach leads. Such a methodology will require sociological and theological partners of great courage and openness. Lacking such partners, silence is to be preferred.