

MODERNISATION  
AND  
RELIGION

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The terms "modern man," "modern age," "modern consciousness," and "modernity" in general, in recent Christian theology at any rate, have almost become a myth. Modern man seems to be a mythical creature who seems to be haunting the imagination of Christian theologians, and I think one could make a case, certainly in the case of Protestantism for the last 200 years or so, for the major mental partner of Christian theologians' thinking as being this mythical figure of modern man. I think Catholics, for a long time, were not so much interested in talking to this mythical creature as keeping him outside the house, but since Vatican II, Catholics, at least in the United States and in a number of other countries I know, seem to have been desperately trying to follow the Protestant experience as rapidly as they possibly can, with some interesting consequences that are not my subject this afternoon. In any case, modern man has been a very important figure in recent theological thought. What I find interesting is that so many people who are theologians or who are interested in religion do not seem to be aware at all of the enormous problem that even such a phrase as "modern man" raises. What a sociologist has to do by virtue of, I suppose, professional obligation is to look at to what extent this phenomenon of modern man – modern consciousness is the term I would prefer – is at all empirically accessible, and what more specifically one may be able to say about this creature, his alleged consciousness, and then his alleged relationship to religion.

Let me say a few words in very general terms about the kind of approach that I think sociology must take to investigate these issues. Many people who are not in sociology, and even some people who are, shrink back from any discussion of phenomena of consciousness in connection with social-scientific analysis as if human behaviour were a very inaccessible thing; we can watch people, we can observe them, but anything that takes place within the mind is supposedly some sort of subjective mystery to which perhaps only poets may have access but which is not the subject matter for a social-scientific

investigation. I think that is a methodologically very false idea. I cannot develop in detail why I think this is false; in some way, it seems to me, consciousness is more readily accessible than behaviour, because behaviour does not interpret itself, while consciousness does. In other words, human beings can be *asked* what they have in mind and, while there are always problems in interpreting their answers, there is an access, a systematic access, to human consciousness. The sociologist, obviously, is not the only person who looks at phenomena of consciousness. A psychologist does. In many ways every social science does – even the economist asks questions of motive and expectation and so forth, which are things which have to do with the consciousness of the individual. What I think is peculiarly sociological is that one looks at any particular structure of consciousness in relation to specific institutional processes, and this is precisely what it seems to me the sociologist must do when he deals with the phenomena of modernity and modern consciousness.

Modernity, I would suggest to you, is an aggregate of institutional processes and processes of consciousness. Take a very simple example, an example that does not deal with religion specifically. Take the situation in this room – as good an example as any – it is always good to begin where you are. I am literally dropped into this situation from the air; I have never been in Dublin before; I did not know, I regret to say, the existence of this Institute before I was invited to speak here. Yet it is no effort whatsoever for me to immediately get up here and do my performance as if I were back home in Boston. Now why is this? Forget about the fact that this is an English-speaking country and I do not have any language difficulties. If I were in a different country, there would be a slight technical problem of translation and so forth, but I could do the same thing and I have done the same thing. I have been dropped out of the air into places like Tokyo and, although I do not speak a word of Japanese, with a translator I could immediately do the same thing. Why? How can one accomplish this extraordinary feat of travelling all across the planet and talk in such situations?

Well, of course, the institutional structure is very much the same. To use an economist's term, Fritz Machlup's term, this is an institution of the knowledge industry. That is what we make our living on. (Some of the younger people here are aspiring to be employed by the knowledge industry.) Now, the knowledge industry is a very interesting phenomenon, an international phenomenon. It is rooted in very specific institutional structures that economists, political scientists, and sociologists can spell out. I will not do it here. It has to do with, it seems to me, certain basic structural requirements of advanced industrial societies of a certain type, and these requirements are the same in many countries. It is not surprising, therefore, that people in this industry tend to think alike. There are structures of consciousness which correlate very easily from one national branch of this international industry to another, and once one is in this business, one has very little difficulty in establishing contact.

Now, modernity as a whole is such an aggregation of institutional processes and structures of consciousness. One very interesting question which is raised, to which I will come back in a moment, is to what extent these aggregates can be disassembled. Now, as to what these institutional processes are which are the carriers of modernity, the carriers of modern consciousness, there is some debate about this and different answers have been given. It seems to me that the major structures are the technologised economy and the bureaucratised state. Technology and bureaucracy, I think, are two of the major institutional forces that bring about modernisation, and both technology and bureaucracy, I think, can be shown to have features which recur in different national or cultural settings. In other words, they are international phenomena and the structures of consciousness that relate to bureaucracy and technology are also international structures in a very real sense. That this is true of technology is fairly obvious – an engineer can move around the different societies, and if they have attained a certain degree of technological development,

he can function very effectively in these societies. The bureaucrat may have a little bit more difficulty, for reasons I cannot go into now – bureaucracy has more variability than technology – but he can also manage; he has to learn a few tricks. People who, for example, work for international organisations can do this very easily, even, interestingly enough, across the capitalist/socialist divide. (In some cases this divide makes much less difference than one might think on ideological grounds.) The term “carrier,” as derived from Max Weber, suggests, I suppose, a disease. But one does not have to think of it in perjorative terms. Just as there are carriers of certain biological conditions, there are carriers of consciousness, and there are carriers of *modern* consciousness. What I have suggested a moment ago is that primary carriers of modern consciousness are technology and bureaucracy. But there are also secondary carriers; for example, new forms of urban life which are highly institutionalised and which carry with them certain structures of consciousness. There are new structures of mass communication which bring with them certain structures of consciousness, and again these are diffused around the world in different frequencies, but there are very few places left in this world where they cannot be found at all.

Let me introduce two, actually three, concepts which I find useful in talking about this: one is the concept of “package,” and the other is the notion of “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” packages. What is a package? The term was coined by Ivan Illich, but I am using it in a more precise way than he did. A package is a particular empirically available constellation of institutional and consciousness phenomena. That is, a particular institutional process and a particular form of consciousness empirically go together; when this can be established, we talk about a package. What is an extrinsic or an intrinsic package? Very simply, an intrinsic package is one where we have reason to think that the relationship between the institutional processes and the particular phenomenon of consciousness could not be different. An extrinsic one is where the relationship is a more accidental matter.

Take the example of aviation. It is apparently not a very easy thing to fly a modern aeroplane; you have to be very carefully trained. You have to be trained in certain skills. You also have to be trained in certain structures of consciousness. That is, a person who pilots a modern jet plane has to operate both behaviourally and mentally in a very particular way. I will not go into the details – it would be interesting to go into the details of it, for example, to inquire what notions of time and space are involved – but let us agree on one simple word. The person who is involved in this operation has to be very *precise* in terms of his mental operations, and training in precision is extremely important. There he sits with all these gadgets or measurements; he has to think in a certain way. I would suggest to you that this is an intrinsic package, that is, it could not be imagined any differently. Let me tell you a little episode to bring this point off. A few years ago, when I was in Africa, I took a plane very early in the morning on an African airline to a rather far away place. I was very sleepy. I got on the plane and they had fitted out the cabin to look like an African village. It was rather attractive and there were airline hostesses in very colourful garb and they were serving exotic food and on the P.A. system they were playing African music. It was very early in the morning, I was very sleepy and I was nervous, and as I walked into this “African Village”, the thought that was in my mind was: My God, who is flying this aeroplane? Now, please do not interpret my remark as being some sort of racist remark, it had nothing to do with race. I could not care less what the skin colour was of the person who was flying the aeroplane – I wanted the person who was flying the aeroplane to be like a TWA pilot, to think like a TWA pilot, and not to operate with the mental structures of an African village which operate in very different ways from the precise, quantifiable mathematical mindset of a pilot. Well, what happened was we took off and the pilot got on the P.A. system and spoke in a very clipped British voice against the background of this African music, and I was reassured that this individual either was British or, if not, had been trained in Britain. That is he probably had the

mindset of a TWA pilot or British Airways pilot or whatever – at least as long as he was flying the plane (I did not care what he did when he went home and got off the plane).

That is an intrinsic package in the sense that if you want to take that package apart, that is institutional behaviour and consciousness, you are not going to have an airline. Let me spin this out for just a moment. I mentioned the structures of time which are extremely important in analysing consciousness. I think time is one of the basic categories; modernisation among other ways can be defined rather nicely as a revolution in the human experience of time. It can also be argued that the specifically modern structure of time that goes with flying an aeroplane is inimical to many human cultures, certainly to traditional African cultures, and indeed if you talk to African writers, people who try to express an African consciousness, they will tell you that this is a very alien type of consciousness and one that in many ways they regard as a violation of their culture. Well, what can one say when one talks about aeroplanes? As a sociologist, I would say to such an African poet: "You may be perfectly right, I think what you say about the way Westerners have organised time is very accurate. I may even agree with you that it is a rather debatable way of living; it is very nervous-making, for example. But unless you have it, you are not going to have an airline, or if you have an airline, your planes are going to crash." There is no option here; it is an intrinsic package. You want an airline, you have got to have people who feel this way, at least while they fly the aeroplane. The interesting question is, how can you stop them from thinking this way all the time? But that again is a different problem.

Now, what is an extrinsic package? Let us remain with the aeroplane example. At least in the non-Soviet dominated part of the world, I think in parts even there, the language of International Civil Aviation is English (very much to the annoyance of the French). So if you have an African national train to be a pilot of an African international airline, not only does this person have to



learn how to think mathematically and technically in a certain way, but he has to learn English. For example, if he comes from a Francophone African country, he has to learn English or he cannot communicate with the control towers. That is clearly an extrinsic package. It is the result of an historical accident. I suppose the domination of early international aviation by the United States, as far as I know, is the main reason for this. English has become the *lingua franca* of international aviation. It could have been different; it could become different in the future; it could be French, or Russian, or Chinese, or even Swahili. An extrinsic package, it could be taken apart.

Why did I go into all of this longer than I had intended? It is rather simple. *Modernity has come, in most parts of the world, in a package with secularisation.* Let us use the term secularity or secularisation in as simple a form as possible. By secularisation we mean the process by which religious institutions and religious symbols have lost in importance. (Believe me, I could make this infinitely more precise, infinitely more complex, but I will not. I think "loss in importance" is good enough.) Modernity and secularity have been a package. I think one can show this historically. Why has there been this package? Why has modernisation meant secularisation? Is this package inevitable? Or is it possible to have modernisation without secularisation? The last seems to me the bottom-line question of social-scientific and historical analysis. Why modernity has been secularising has been a topic of debate for quite a while. Very few people have denied the fact. There are a few people, one whom some of you probably know, the American Catholic sociologist, Andrew Greeley. He argues that the degree of religion among human beings has not changed appreciably since the Stone Age. Very few people would agree with this; I certainly would not agree. Not only has the amount of religion, the importance of religion in the world, changed a lot since the Stone Age, but even since 100 years ago in most countries of the world. There has been general agreement that modernity has meant an increase of secularisation. There has been much less agreement as to

*why* this should be so. I am very much convinced that any complex historical phenomenon is not going to have a satisfactory monocausal explanation. I am sure there are different reasons for this. And in this case, very much in the tradition of Max Weber, I think that what happened in the West, where modernity began and modern secularity began, there was a specific confluence of historical factors. The institutional differentiation of Western society is something that Weber put a lot of attention to. The Church has been a very peculiar religious institution in human history, separate from other social institutions. And then, of course, there has been the peculiar form of Western rationality.

I suppose most people, whom you would ask, "why there is less religion today than there used to be", would answer in terms of *science*. I think this is almost certainly a mistake, for the simple reason that most people do not know a thing about science, even in the most technologically sophisticated societies there is an enormous ignorance of science. What it is is not science but a particular kind of what Max Weber called *functional rationality* which is vaguely related to science but is not science. The notions that most human problems can be solved by the application of rational measures, that the world is to be controlled by rational means, and beliefs of this sort, are *not* science but *are* operating assumptions of modernity. The spread of the highly rational structures of technology and bureaucracy, which I mentioned before, have, I think, had an important secularising effect. In other words, the man in the street was not all that wrong.

Secularisation has meant that religious institutions have lost some of the predominance they used to have in some countries and radically lost some of the social position that they had. Religion has become a specialised activity in the private lives of individuals but has been driven out of the public sphere, this is very much the case in countries such as France, for example, the Scandinavian countries, and in a somewhat different way the United States. In terms of structures of consciousness, secularisation is not just an institutional process, it is also a process within

human consciousness, which one can describe, I think, by saying that religious definitions of reality have lost in their subjective plausibility. That is, religious explanations of the world are less convincing to many people, religious symbols have lost their power to inspire or to order human life. What I am saying here is that many of the common-sense assumptions about the relationship of modernity and secularity are more or less correct. But one factor in this relationship, one factor that has produced this package of modernity and secularity, which has been much overlooked and that I have been particularly interested in, is the factor of pluralism, or more accurately, as I would prefer to call it, pluralisation. What does that mean and why is it important?

Pluralism, as far as I know, is a term that originated in the United States, and refers to the empirically obvious situation that American society has been the product of a great plurality of ethnic, racial and also religious groups. That is not the whole story, however, and I would suggest to you that pluralisation takes place in countries, even pluralisation in terms of religion, which do not at all have the kind of heterogeneity that American society has. Minimally, what pluralisation means is that people begin to have the choice as to their religious affiliation, and this happens even in countries with, on the surface, a very higher degree of religious homogeneity, Sweden for example. You have to decide whether this is true of the Republic of Ireland. Generally speaking, modernisation means that options are multiplied in human life. But to put it differently, modernisation in terms of the basic structures of human existence means *a movement from fate to choice*. This is so in terms of the elementary material structures of life. In a Stone Age society, if you will, there may be five tools that that particular society has. If there are anthropologists here, I am sure they could give a list – a certain type of hammer, a certain kind of axe, plough, cooking utensil, whatever. *Those* are the tools available. If you want to cook, you have to use this utensil, if you want to kill somebody, you have to use the axe, and there is no choice beyond that. Similarly, there are firm institutional

programmes for the main activities of human life: nutrition, sexuality, child-rearing, hunting, war, whatever the case may be. This is the way things are done; there is very little choice. Now, as modernisation proceeds, the areas of choice open up. They open up on the material level. Think of the incredible amount of gadgets and machines and technological tools which we have available. Am I going by car or by train? Am I going to take a plane, am I going to take a boat? Am I going to use this kitchen utensil or that? On the more sophisticated, or at least the more complex level, the engineer chooses the different processes that can be employed for a particular kind of production. The same is true of institutional arrangements which begin to vary greatly from case to case, and both individuals and human groups have new options. Precisely because, as a sociologist would have to insist, human consciousness is related to institutions, this opening up of choices also takes place on the level of human consciousness. And what used to be fate or destiny, now becomes increasingly a matter of choice.

I read somewhere that in Homeric Greece, if two strangers met, one asked the other: "What gods do you worship?", which was not a religious question but was an inquiry about the person's address - where do you live? Where you lived, that is where particular kinds of gods were worshipped, and if you were a Corinthian, you worshipped the gods of Corinth, if you were an Athenian, you worshipped the gods of Athens, and the idea that you might be an Athenian and *not* worship the gods of Athens was an inconceivable one - at least until Socrates, and they got rid of him in the most expeditious and logical manner. This kind of choice-making would upset the entire system. Through most of human history, religion was part of the taken-for-granted unavoidable destiny of a human being, and he or she had as little choice about the gods that one was to worship as about a hundred other areas of human life. For people in a modern society there is this enormous expansion of choice. I could make a list, incidentally, of very important things that people like. What kind of occupation am I going to follow? Whom am I going to

marry? How am I going to raise my children? And lots of other questions where through most of human history there was no choice at all. We have enormous ranges of choice. We do not all have the same. There are class differences. But still, even the poorest person in a modern society has choices which through most of human history would have been unthinkable. And we now increasingly have the choice as to which gods we worship, including the choice not to worship any of them, which is perhaps the most significant choice of all.

Now, when religion ceases to be a matter of fate and becomes a matter of choice, there are some fundamental changes in the manner in which religion is maintained in the consciousness of individuals. The United States, for historical reasons that are well known, has a certain climax of pluralism, and the American language reflects it, in a very nice way. I came to America as a young man, a very young man, and one of the first things I did was to register for college, and on one of the forms I had to fill out was the question "What is your religious preference?" My English was fairly good at that point, but I did not understand the word – religious *preference*. It is a consumer term: I prefer this kind of toothpaste as against that. I prefer Presbyterianism to Methodism. Another peculiarly American phrase: "I happen to be a Catholic," which means I could be something else, I just *happen* to be a Catholic. Or a more recent phrase, coined, as many of our best phrases in recent years in California – I am *into* Buddhism. Which implies that sooner or later I will be *out of* it. Now these are linguistic terms which are very revealing of an underlying reality which I am sure is different, at least in some ways in Ireland. But I would say that Ireland is different from the United States on some continuum of pluralism, and people in Ireland are much closer to the United States in this matter than they would be to people anywhere in the western world, say, 200 years ago, where there were very different kinds of *destiny* involved in religion (very obviously Northern Ireland is a special case, but I am not competent to discuss it).

The change can be summed up quite simply: *Religion*

*becomes a less certain matter.* As long as the gods are taken for granted, they are my destiny, just as it is my destiny to be a man rather than a woman, or to live in one place rather than another, or to be the son of a nobleman instead of the son of a serf, or the other way round. As long as my gods are destiny in this sense, they have about them a high degree of objectivity. That is, it is very unlikely that I will doubt their existence, or for that matter, their nature, the nature of the gods, as the tradition tells me. When the gods become a matter of choice, they become a much less objective reality, they become more of a subjective matter, they become a matter of taste, of opinion, of change. To put the same thing in different terms, religious certainty becomes a much harder-to-get commodity. I think that the crisis that modernity has plunged religion into, the challenge of modernity to religion, is in a very direct way related to this transition from destiny to options, from fate to choice. Let me come back to the question which I asked a little bit before: Is this particular package, the package of modernity and secularity, is it intrinsic or is it extrinsic? Can we have modernity without secularisation? Or must we assume that, as modernisation proceeds, so will secularisation? We have a body of writings in the social sciences which, perhaps, somewhat optimistically have been called secularisation theory, optimistically because the theory is not all that impressive and all that cohesive, but at least there is a body of writing which suggests that the relationship between modernity and secularisation is indeed intrinsic. For some of the reasons I have given, and some others, the two would then act together inevitably, and, therefore, one must make a certain prognosis as to the future of religion which is a negative prognosis. (Incidentally, this prognosis has nothing to do whether one is oneself religious or not. If one is religious, this would be a depressing prognosis; if one is an atheist, it would be a cheering one. But still, the prognosis would be the same.)

When I started work in sociology in the 1960s I was very much part of this consensus. In my case it was a depressing prognosis since I am (or should I say I happen to be, no, I

am) a Christian and I did not like the idea that the world would become progressively secularistic. But, nevertheless, as a sociologist, I shared this consensus of secularisation theory. There have been a number of criticisms of secularisation theory which I do not think I want to go into, but let me tell you my own view as it is now, and it has changed somewhat since the 1960s. I think, contrary to critics like Andrew Greeley, that secularisation has indeed been a concomitant of modernity; it's not an invention of some historians or social scientists. But I am less and less inclined to see secularisation as *intrinsically* linked with modernity. I think there are historical reasons, particularly in the West, in Europe and the European dependences around the world, as to why that linkage was established, and it is increasingly becoming possible, it seems to me, to see situations in which the package might be taken apart or disaggregated. My own change of mind, for whatever it is worth, was mainly brought about by three sets of data, two of which were in my own experience and one was not, but which one can read about to some extent.

One that was very much part of my own experience was the incredible religious resurgences in America, in the United States, in the last fifteen years or so. In some ways the most interesting was the one in the late 'sixties, which was very much part of the counter culture, where suddenly in the most unexpected social milieus you began to have an enormous interest in religion and, generally, a rather exotic kind of religion. Why that is so, I do not want to go into. But in elite universities and places where one would imagine the most secularised people of the society to exist, (particularly in the natural sciences, by the way) there were people who became converted to various forms of Hindu mysticism and the like. This eruption of religiosity in the most unlikely places – why? Well, since then we have had a massive religious explosion in the United States in very different milieus but of far greater significance for the society as a whole, and that is the new Protestant Evangelicalism and its explosion – there is no other way to describe it. This is an unreconstructed form of American

Protestantism which is sweeping the country with social and political consequences that are as yet unclear. In some of my early writings on the sociology of religion of American Protestantism in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, when I started to publish things, it made much more sense than to talk about secularisation in the United States as progressive and inevitable (I mean progressive in the sense of *progressing*, a *progressing* inexorable process) than it does today where we are assailed in the United States from every corner by masses of religious choruses of one sort or another.

The second set of data, which I have not myself experienced but have read about and talked about to people who have experienced it, is the Soviet case. Apparently there has been not a massive, but at any rate interesting, resurgence of religion in the Soviet Union, and again in very unexpected places. In some ways, I suppose, it is analogous to what happened in the United States and other western countries in the late 'sixties. I do not mean the survival of traditional religion in very traditional milieus in, say, far-away villages, but the upsurge of religion, to use a phrase, among the children of the commissars, the sudden attendance at Orthodox services by the most unlikely young people. The *Komsomol* and the Party being troubled by religious observances among young elite Party members, this kind of thing. Now, one has to be careful about this in a totalitarian society. Sociological research is very difficult. Some of this may be using religious symbols for what is more a cultural, a political dissidence. Still, there is enough material there to make one interested, and, of course, the basic interest here is that we have a society in which for over half a century the regime has carried on an actively anti-religious policy, at times coupled with very severe repression, and, nevertheless, in the very centre of the power structure of that society, you will find these religious resurgents.

The third set of data, which again were part of my own experience in various places, are development in the Third World. And if one talks about secularisation being



coupled with modernity, you have to forget about the majority of the human race. And if you have any experience in Asia and Africa or in Latin America (almost anywhere, choose your Third World country), you will find that some of the most dynamic and revolutionary developments taking place are religious developments. Let us not now go into the question of how one can generalise about them, but you may talk about a massive upsurge in Islam, not just in Iran, but all over the Muslim world and talk about religiously motivated movements in Latin America, the incredible upsurge of new African types of Christianity all over the African Continent. Certainly, whatever is happening in the Third World by way of modernisation does not seem to be associated with secularisation for most people, except for a very small handful of intellectuals who, of course, were trained in the West or by Westerners and confuse their own consciousness with the consciousness of their fellow citizens.

In my work on modernisation, I was compelled (I think there is no other way of putting it) to revise my views on a number of things, and one thing that I think I can say I learned (among other people, by the way, from Ivan Illich, who has influenced me quite a lot in some of my thinking about the Third World) is that modernisation cannot be understood as a unilinear development. There is what I sometimes call the electric-toothbrush theory of modernisation, which an amazing number of social scientists still seem to have. The theory can be described like this: Drop an electric toothbrush in an African village and after 30 years you get Dusseldorf, or Stockholm or, Detroit (you name your modern city of choice). In other words, there is a kind of inexorable development once you introduce one element of modernisation. They start to use electric toothbrushes and, before you know it, they are all like the Swedes, or other super-modern types. Well, this is not true. There are obviously less simplistic ways of looking at modernisation as a unilinear way, but even the less simplistic ones, I think, are not true. What in fact you find, I think, is that the historical reality is a dialectic of

modernisation and counter-modernisation. This has always been so, it is nothing new, and when you look back to the beginnings of modernity in Europe, you find the same thing.

The modernisation process produces very specific tensions, conflicts and discontents, and from the beginning there are reactions against it. Some of these have to do with class struggles, some of them have to do with the destruction of traditional forms of life, some of them are on the level of consciousness, and as modernisation proceeds, the resistances to modernisation also proceed, and you get a see-saw development of modernisation and counter-modernisation, with obviously one or the other being more prominent at a particular moment in time. Very much parallel to this, it seems to me, and relevant to a whole range of problems of the modern world, there is a dialectic of secularisation and counter-secularisation. I would now continue to say as I said 20 years ago, that modernisation is secularising, for some of the reasons I, very hastily, sketched for you. But there are also counter-secular forces in the world which sometimes attain enormous strength. In Western societies, many of these have to do with class dynamics. For example, the phenomenon I mentioned before, the upsurge of Evangelical Protestantism in America—I think much of this is, in fact, class conflict. In case there is any misunderstanding, I am in no way a Marxist, and when I say “class conflict”, I do not mean a Marxist theory of class but a *non-Marxist* theory of class. But much of what is going on, I think, in America under the banner of Evangelical Protestantism today has to do with class resentment and class conflict.

From what I have said, I think you can see why modernity poses a rather formidable challenge to any form of traditional religion and to the institutions that embody any form of traditional religion (the churches in Western Christian terms certainly). There are different ways in which these institutions can respond to that challenge. Essentially, I would say, there is a three-fold typology that one can use. Like all typologies this is

arguable, but it helps to order the data. One obviously is counter-modern resistance, the effort to keep that dynamics out as far as possible. I think it is fair to say that, certainly in the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, that was the predominant stance of the Roman Catholic Church. To me one of the most magnificent symbols of this (I am not Roman Catholic, I have no theological admiration for this, neither do most Catholic theologians today) was in 1870, a few months after the troops of Victor Emmanuel marched into Rome uniting Rome to Italy, carrying on their bayonets all the modern virtues of nineteenth century liberalism. Just a few months after that, Vatican I pronounced the infallibility of the Pope, in the teeth of the modern world. There is a certain magnificence in this even, if one does not believe that the Pope is infallible, which I do not. It is a magnificent gesture. It is a gesture, of course, of resistance, of defiance, and less grandiose institutions than the Roman Catholic Church have tried this. In the United States, a few years ago, the Missouri Synod, one of the largest Lutheran bodies in the United States, fired most of the theological faculty of their seminary. They fired the Old Testament professor because he taught that Jonah was not literally swallowed by the whale; this was about 1975. Now there is something magnificent about this, for an American church body today to fire a professor because he does not believe in such miracles. But there are technical problems with this stance, largely of a sociological sort which I could spell out. There are problems of social engineering. In order to make that kind of stance plausible you have to have a certain kind of social structure, and that is very difficult to maintain in a modern Western society.

At the opposite end of this is what one can call secularising adaptation, in which the tradition is adapted, as far as possible, to modern secularity. The terms of the tradition are translated into secular terms. Individual theologians, of course, do this. Schools of theology and, to some extent, entire denominations have done it. As far as possible they translate the traditional message into terms that would be congenial to modern man. This, I

think, is also a very difficult procedure, because essentially one does not know where to stop, and as you translate the tradition into modern terms, you find, sometimes very rapidly, that there is nothing left of the tradition, and what began as a way of making it survive, becomes a way of liquidating it. The viable choices are in between these two extremes they are, if I may use a technical term of my own, options of "cognitive bargaining," in which the tradition tries to maintain itself as the tradition that it has been but in a kind of bargaining stance *vis-à-vis* modernity. My own view is, as a sociologist, that only this third option has any chance of success, happily, this happens to agree with my theological prejudices, so I am not distressed by that conclusion.