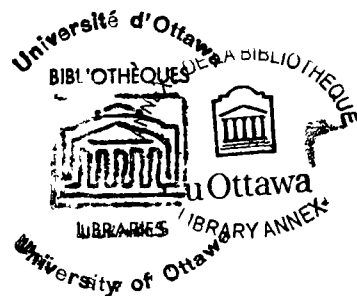


SECULARIZATION IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS:
ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR ITS RECOGNITION AND
EVALUATION

by Dennis J. Murphy

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Dennis J. Murphy was born March 24, 1935, North Bay, Ontario. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto in 1956. He received the Bachelor of Theology degree from the University of St. Michael's College in 1959. He received the Licentiate degree in Theology from the University of St. Thomas in Rome in 1956.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	v
I.- THE SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SECULARIZATION	1
1. The Importance of the Sociology of Religion	1
2. Secularization and the Sociology of Religion	7
3. The Meaning of "Religion"	9
4. Some Theories of Secularization	12
5. Secularization: a Useable Term?	43
6. Normative and Descriptive Usages	44
7. An Analysis of the Theories	47
8. Determining Criteria	56
II.- THE THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SECULARIZATION	60
1. The Theological Context of Secularization	62
2. Theology and the Roots of Secularization	67
3. The Ambiguity of Secularization	97
4. Autonomy: Relative or Absolute?	101
5. A Definition of Terms	106
6. The Theological Criteria	109
III.- SECULARIZATION IN EDUCATION: ESTABLISHING CRITERIA	114
1. A Critique of Traditional Criteria	117
2. Specifying the Descriptive Criteria for Education	121
3. Applying the Normative Criteria to Education	138
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	156
BIBLIOGRAPHY	161
Appendix	
ABSTRACT OF <u>Secularization in Education Systems: Establishing Criteria for its Recognition and Evaluation</u>	174

INTRODUCTION

Secularization eludes easy definition. Although it is rooted in the philosophical, religious and scientific traditions and development of western man, it is neither a philosophy, a religion, nor a science. Once the implacable foe, it now finds itself the darling of many theologians. Secularization is celebrated by many, analyzed by some and feared by others. It is an all-pervasive phenomenon, used, perhaps too glibly, by the historian, the social scientist, philosopher and theologian to describe very wide-ranging developments within culture and society.

In the popular mind reaction to the terms secular, secularization, or secularism is often an emotional one. Regarded by some as the negation of the divine, the phenomenon of secularization is considered as essentially anti-religious. Others more positively look upon the secularizing process as evidence of man's coming of age.

Reaction to secularization is nowhere more charged with emotion than when it is discussed in relation to education. This is hardly surprising for in our contemporary western society which is witnessing such a radical and sudden shift in values, the question of secularization in education strikes deep at the very heart of many of our most cherished beliefs and traditions. Thus the necessity for some

objective understanding of what this phenomenon involves, whether or not, and possibly how it is taking place in a particular school system. What becomes immediately evident therefore is that before any attempt to deal with the question of secularization in education we must try to clarify the nature of secularization itself.

Etymologically, the latin saeculum provides the root from which the words secular, secularism and secularization derive. It was used to translate the Greek aiōn and could refer to an age, a generation, the spirit of an age, or a considerable period of time as evidenced in the phrase per omnia saecula saeculorum. But this same saeculum, like aiōn, quite often was used to refer to the temporal world as contrasted with the Kingdom of God.¹ Thus by the time of the Vulgate, saeculum had to some extent taken on an ambiguous sense inasmuch as it could refer to the temporal world (cf. the phrase et nolite confirmare huic saeculo, Rom. 12, 2) as contrasted with the Kingdom of God, or could simply refer to a period of time. By the Middle Ages however the term seems to have lost much of the pejorative overtone associated with it and so could be applied with impunity in such notions as the "secular

¹ A. E. Leon, Secularization: Science Without God?, London, S.C.M., 1967, p. 9.

clergy".²

In the negotiations for the Peace of Westphalia (1648) the use of the term "secularization" is similar to our present usage of the word. It was used with reference to lands that were being transferred from ecclesiastical to civil control. Although understood by many churchmen as essentially evil, not all transfers were opposed by the Church. Thus the term came to be used in describing the transfer, by mutual consent or by seizure, of ecclesiastical properties, particularly monasteries, during the Reformation and the French Revolution, and their consequent conversion to profane purposes. By the time of the French Revolution the principle that all ecclesiastical property should be put at the disposition of the state had won wide acceptance in France.

The declaration of the French National Assembly, made at the instigation of Talleyrand may be taken as a convenient summary [of this development] [...]
"Tous les biens ecclésiastiques sont à la disposition de la nation".³

In the nineteenth century G. J. Holyoake and his free thinkers' organization known as the "Secular Society"

² For much of the material in this historical overview of the term, ~~which~~ indebted to Larry Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 1967, p. 207-220.

³ R. G. Smith, Secular Christianity, London, Collins, 1966, p. 148. Brackets mine.

advocated a program of secularism. This secularism was a type of philosophy which sought to interpret, explain, and organize all of reality without any reference to the transcendent or the supernatural. This movement again had influence on the evolution of meaning through which the term secularization went. Together with this latter meaning there grew up the understanding of secularism which sees it as indifference to religious practices and religion and even lack of interest or concern in matters religious.

Today "secular" may also be understood as implying no more nor less than interests and activities that are not within the realm of the "sacred", or not directly connected with institutionalized conventional religion. In this way we are often accustomed to speak of business, legal and political matters as being outside the realm of the "religious". The meaning of our term advances a step further when it implies that not only are the above-mentioned realities outside the realm of the sacred, but also that they have their own independence and autonomy and are in no way connected with or subordinated to religion.

Modern dictionary definitions⁴ of the terms secular, secularism and secularization support these last mentioned meanings but also provide added meaning which is worthy of mention here. First of all, almost without exception, the dictionary definitions of these terms seem in some way or other always to include in the many meanings of secular, secularism or secularization one meaning which relates directly to education in our society. Secondly, one dictionary adds this meaning to the term secularism:

The doctrine that morality should be based solely on regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state.

This latter is the first meaning given under the term secularism in the Oxford Universal Dictionary.

This difficulty in defining or even in completely describing this phenomenon has been further complicated by the different ways in which the historian, and more recently the theologian and the sociologist have employed the term. For not only is the term understood and used in a variety of ways by the layman, it also suffers from diverse usages

⁴ Cf. for example, The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Jess Stein (ed.), New York, Random House, 1966, xxxii-2059 p.; The Oxford Universal Dictionary, Third Edition, Oxford, Clarendon, 1955, xxii-2515 p.; Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, (College Edition), David B. Guralnik and Joseph H. Friend (eds.), New York, World Publishing, 1964, xxxvi-1724 p.

among the professionals of different disciplines. Thus the cross current of meaning that tends to render difficult any clear understanding and expression of this phenomenon.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that the term secularization, not only in the popular mind, but even for many scientists, carries with it certain value orientations which very strongly influence their definition and description of this phenomenon. Thus although the sociologist seeks and claims to use the term in a wholly descriptive manner, there often seem to be normative connotations attached to the statements he makes about secularization. On the other hand it also happens that the theologian's normative usage of the term secularization is confused with descriptive statements.

Despite the fact that there is today a considerable school of theologians who have come to accept and regard secularization as a natural consequence of the development of Christianity, there is still attached to the term much that speaks of religious indifference, anticlericalism and irreligion. As Shiner so aptly says, "The historical sediment of most of these past meanings still clings to 'secularism' and 'secularization' as they are employed today in ordinary discourse".⁵

⁵ Larry Shiner, Op. Cit., p. 208.

It is obvious from the foregoing that before speaking of secularization in education we must seek to identify and clarify the meaning of secularization itself. As we shall see, to capture the meaning of this term is no easy task. Our intention is to search out, from the welter of significance that is implied in this term, certain elements which remain constant. Particularly in the field of sociology and theology we shall be seeking certain "constants" which will provide criteria for identifying and recognizing secularization when it is present and affecting a given culture or society, and a fortiori when it is present in a given educational system. The approach taken is an interdisciplinary one. This seems necessary if we are to avoid the pitfalls already alluded to, that is of too easily transferring the sociologist's descriptive understanding of secularization into the normative realm of the theologian and philosopher, or vice versa.⁶

⁶ "One matter, however, is scarcely problematic: discussions of secularization will be far more cogent if they are conducted in more intimate relation to sociology. One could agree that theology is an isolated and independent exercise. But such a contention would be rash indeed. Christian writers use the concept of secularization as both a theological principle and a description of empirical research. The theological usage can scarcely resolve the question of its empirical accuracy. Perspectives such as sociology affords simply cannot be ignored." From the introduction to Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, James F. Childress and David B. Harned (eds.), Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970, p. 28-29. One could also add that even writers such as Shiner who have written considerably in this area seem to cross from sociology to theology and back with no notice to the reader.

As will be seen there are many profound similarities between the sociological and theological understanding of secularization. Of particular importance is the assertion by some sociologists, together with an increasing number of theologians, that the roots of secularization are to be found in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The sociologist studies these roots so as to discover what facts history reveals as to the development of certain social patterns and relationships. The theologian too looks to history, but for him it provides the context of divine action wherein he attempts to interpret the meaning and extent of divine revelation.

Our attempt will be to discern whether sociology reveals in its descriptions of secularization sufficient "constants" according to which we can establish general criteria whereby the presence of secularization can be clearly recognized. Similarly, we shall seek to determine, particularly in contemporary theological thought, whether theology offers sufficient uniformity in its analysis of secularization, to provide criteria not so much for recognizing this phenomenon as for evaluating it - and, as we shall see, in distinguishing it from secularism. In short, from sociology we shall seek descriptive criteria, from theology, normative criteria.

An important digression may be in order at this point in order to clarify two particular matters. 1) We wish to point out from the beginning that when we speak of secularization in this study, we intend to confine ourselves to the presence, development and recognition of this phenomenon as it is found in the western Christian world.⁷ 2) Obviously such a study cannot hope to treat exhaustively either the sociology concerning secularization, or the theology of secularization. Rather we shall seek in these disciplines to discover and establish suitable and valid criteria in virtue of which secularization can be recognized and evaluated and distinguished from all other phenomena.

Specifically therefore, our contention, and the hypothesis we shall be seeking to prove, is that an investigation of the phenomenon of secularization, as understood by the sociologist and the theologian, will provide certain constants which will serve as general criteria for the recognition and evaluation of secularization. Further

⁷ In this regard see N. Berkes, "Religious and Secular Institutions in Comparative Perspective", in Archives de Sociologie des Religions, Vol. 8, 1963, p. 65-72. Berkes makes very clear that nowhere outside the Christian world have religious institutions developed so clearly apart from or even before the state. Moreover he claims that in some societies religion will not be found institutionalized into a Church whereas what might be called a temporal political institution may be permeated with religious functions and values.

we propose that the general sociological criteria will furnish the basis for establishing more specific criteria which can be employed to indicate the presence or absence of secularization in the field of education, and that the theological criteria will provide a norm against which secularization if present, can be evaluated.

In the following chapters, therefore, our intention will be to grapple with the phenomenon of secularization as it is understood first of all by the sociologist (Chapter I), then by the theologian (Chapter II). From sociology we shall seek to discover some general descriptive criteria whereby we can identify the phenomenon of secularization. From theology we shall seek normative criteria according to which we can evaluate the same phenomenon. In a third Chapter we shall attempt first of all to establish more specific criteria of secularization which can be applied to one particular social institution, namely educational systems, so as to determine whether or not secularization has been taking place within a given school or educational system, and secondly to indicate how the normative criteria must be specifically applied if secularization is recognized in an educational system.

CHAPTER I

THE SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SECULARIZATION

Secularization for the sociologist generally falls within the sphere of that particular branch of sociology called the sociology of religion. The sociology of religion occasionally examines societal relationships and development within religion itself, but generally it studies the role of religion in society and seeks to discover general principles concerning the relation of religion to society. Obviously the importance of this branch of sociology is contingent upon the importance that one attaches to the role of religion in affecting the development of society and the individual's behaviour in society.

1. The Importance of the Sociology of Religion.

Perhaps it is with Karl Marx that this debate seriously begins. For him religion was simply the result of economic conditions. According to Marxian theory class stratification is caused by economic factors alone and each class consequently constructs a metaphysics and a religion that reflects and protects its existence and interests. Christianity, the dominant religion of the western world is no exception:

Christianity is then the utopian, other worldly reflection of the unorganized, wretched and hopeless proletariat of late antiquity. This purely religious and therefore powerless organization of the proletariat, which was out of step with the social evolution of the time, was soon subjugated by the ruling classes.¹

An oft-quoted passage of Karl Marx perhaps better yet elaborates his understanding of the insignificance of religion as an important element in the development of society:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political super structures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.²

1 Ernst Troeltsch, "Religion, Economics, and Society", in Sociology and Religion, Norman Birnbaum and Gertrud Lenzer (eds.), Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, 1969, p. 452.

2 Karl Marx, A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, (translated from the 2nd German edition by N. I. Stone), Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1904, p. 11-12, quoted by J. Milton Yinger, Religion in the Struggle for Power, New York, Russell & Russell, 1961, p. 12.

Over against this Marxian position Fustel de Coulanges³ had already formulated the position that the foundation of the legal and political forms of the city can be traced directly to the institutions of the patriarchal family, with the consequent family law, private property, family economy, etc., - all of which he ultimately attributes to the organizing force of the religious worship of ancestors and of the dead.

What is of greater interest for our study however is the fact that two of the "fathers of sociology", Emile Durkheim and Max Weber (both of whom were agnostics), considered religion as of central importance for the sociologist. Indeed Berger and Luckmann go so far as to say that for Weber, Durkheim, and Pareto as well, religion was the central phenomenon of social reality. Thus the former authors speak of

³ Cf. Fustel de Coulanges, La cité antique, Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1963, 480 p. "Si en remontant aux premiers âges de cette race, c'est-à-dire au temps où elle fonda ses institutions, on observe l'idée qu'elle faisait de l'être humain de la vie, de la mort, de la seconde existence, du principe divin, on aperçoit un rapport intime entre ces opinions et les règles antiques du droit privé, entre les rites qui dérivèrent de ces croyances et les institutions politiques.", p. 3.

Weber's recognition of religion as a prime factor in the historical process, Durkheim's insistence on the ultimately religious character of all human solidarity and Pareto's analysis of the place of religion in the perennial human pastime of self deception...⁴

Certainly their contention is well justified when one considers Durkheim's description of the opposition between the sacred and the secular. He speaks of these as two fundamental forces involved in the weaving of the social fabric.

Durkheim says:

Il n'existe pas dans l'histoire de la pensée humaine un autre exemple de deux catégories de choses aussi profondément différenciées, aussi radicalement opposées l'une à l'autre [...] Les énergies qui jouent dans l'un ne sont pas simplement celles qui se rencontrent dans l'autre, avec quelques degrés en plus; elles sont d'une autre nature.⁵

Max Weber's The Sociology of Religion⁶ is a treatise on the effect that religion has on social processes. However

⁴ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Knowledge", in Sociology and Social Research, Vol. 47, No. 4, July 1963, p. 419.

⁵ Emile Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse (5th edition), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968, p. 53.

⁶ Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, (trans. by Ephraim Fischhoff from the 4th German edition), Boston, Beacon, 1963, lxvii-304 p.

his most famous work⁷ directly relates the rise of the modern capitalistic spirit in western society to the religious forces prevalent in Western Society, specifically the inner worldly asceticism of Calvinism.

If these "fathers of modern sociology" ascribed a place of central significance to religion in any serious sociology, it is indeed debatable if modern social scientists do the same. For although Will Herberg⁸ claims that sociologists and anthropologists are quite unanimous in their conviction that religion is one of the primary functional prerequisites of society, this awareness does not seem to have made religion one of their more vital concerns. Indeed religion seems to have been fairly remote from their chief areas of concentration.⁹ Gerhard Lenski¹⁰ further points

7 Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, (trans. by Talcott Parsons), New York, Scribner's, 1958, xvii-292 p. Weber always stressed however that such social processes were reciprocal and that Protestant Asceticism was in turn influenced by the totality of social conditions, especially the economic ones. See p. 183.

8 Will Herberg, "Religion in a Secularized Society: The New Shape of Religion in America", in Review of Religious, Vol. 3, No. 4, Spring 1962, p. 147.

9 "For a generation it [religion] has been fairly remote from the most vital concerns of social scientists". J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, New York, Macmillan, 1957, p. xi.

10 Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor, A Sociological Study of Religion's Impact on Politics, Economics, and Family Life (revised edition), Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1963, p. 2.

out that there is at least one school of thought which considers religion as having no significant influence on other spheres of daily living. He mentions that a major leading textbook on American politics has only very scattered references to religion, thereby suggesting that religion plays little part in the choice people make. What is of even more significance according to Lenski is that none of the major reviewers of this book were particularly disturbed by such an omission. Moreover, Lenski believes that an indication of the failure to pay due attention to the sociological significance of religion is found in the fact that less systematic sociological research has been devoted to religion than to any other major institution of our society. Particularly lacking, he says, are studies of the inter-¹relations between modern religious institutions and other basic institutional systems. There seems recently, however, to be a re-awakening of the necessity for recognizing the importance of religion in sociological studies. Lenski's work itself is an indication of this as are the recent works of Glock-Stark, Greeley-Rossi and the works of such

writers as Peter Berger and Gibson Winters.¹¹

2. Secularization and the Sociology of Religion.

Secularization is one aspect or area of study in the sociology of religion which deserves more consideration, for it lies at the heart of what might be called the religious problem today. At its simplest, secularization is the phenomenon of the change of role which religion undergoes in the development of society. It is concerned to some extent with both the degree of change in the role of religion and the manner in which this change takes place. Secularization like every aspect of the sociology of religion suffers from a lack of systematic or empirical research, although a certain amount of sociological theorizing about secularization has been done. Despite widespread recognition and acceptance of the fact that secularization has advanced in various degrees within different societies, research has not yet reached the stage where accurate statements about the development of secularization can be made. As the question

¹¹ Cf. Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1965, xii-316 p.; also Patterns of Religious Commitment, Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1968, x-230 p.; Andrew M. Greeley and Peter H. Rossi, The Education of Catholic Americans, Chicago, Aldine, 1966, xxii-368 p.; Gibson Winters, Religious Identity, A Study of Religious Organization, New York, Macmillan, 1968, ix-143 p.

raised by secularization seems to be gaining in importance there remains the curious contrast of very little investigation having been done in this whole area.¹² I shall attempt to discover more of the sociological meaning of secularization by bringing together and examining at least some of the major studies that have been done in this area.

One of the first things which becomes evident in such an examination is the wide ranging and often contradictory understandings of the term held by different sociologists. If historically the terms secular and secularization have experienced a rather tortuous development, the use of the terms by sociologists has not immediately tended to rectify this situation. This science, as well, has problems in coming to agreement on what exactly is involved in the phenomenon of secularization. One sociologist, in 1932, could say, "...the denotations and connotations of the term vary widely from writer to writer; in many instances, moreover, its use by the same writer is far from being consistent".¹³ As we shall see later, the situation in 1970 has not improved considerably!

12 Leonardus Laeyendecker, "The Sociological Approach to Secularization", in Concilium, Vol. 47, New York, Paulist, 1969, p. 17-18.

13 Howard Becker, "Processes of Secularization", in Sociological Review, Vol. 24, No. 2 and No. 3, April-July and October 1932, p. 138.

3. The Meaning of "Religion".

The basis of the difficulty in defining and describing secularization related directly to the most contentious problem facing the sociology of religion, namely the definition of what religion is. If secularization in its simplest form, as we have indicated above, involves some change in the role of religion in society then obviously any understanding of secularization demands precise comprehension or definition of religion. Yinger¹⁴ points out that definitions of religion can be of many kinds. They can be: 1) valuative definitions which seek to describe what religion ought to be; 2) descriptive or substantive definitions which designate certain kinds of beliefs and practices as constituting religion. These latter, however, make no attempt to evaluate these beliefs and practices nor to indicate their function; 3) fundamental definitions which focus on process in the sense that they seek to define religion in terms of what religion in general does in a culture or society. Herberg's¹⁵ division of religion into conventional, operative, and what might be called transcendental religion has certain similarities to Yinger's division although there

¹⁴ J. Milton Yinger, Op. Cit., p. 5-13.

¹⁵ Will Herberg, Op. Cit., p. 145-146.

are obvious differences as well. Yinger eventually comes to define religion as "...a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life".¹⁶ Lenski has a similar definition: "...a system of beliefs about the nature of the force[s] ultimately shaping a man's destiny, and the practices associated therewith, shared by the members of a group".¹⁷ For Peter Berger there is no better functional definition of religion than that worked out by Luckmann who conceived of religion as "...the capacity of the human organism to transcend its biological nature through the construction of objective, morally-binding, all-embracing universes of meaning".¹⁸

However, Berger himself preferred a more substantive definition and thus defined religion as "...the human enterprise by which a sacred cosmos is established" or "...cosmization in a sacred mode".¹⁹ Among sociologists one can find almost as many definitions of religion as there are

16 J. Milton Yinger, "Pluralism, Religion, and Secularism", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1967, p. 18.

17 Gerhard Lenski, Op. Cit., p. 331.

18 Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1967, p. 177.

19 Ibid., p. 26.

sociologists. Thus the problem in the defining of secularization. For if secularization is basically a change in the role of religion then, as already pointed out, to properly define, describe and understand secularization we must first know what religion is. The confusion resulting from a lack of an adequate definition for religion has resulted in such paradoxical statements as "If our secularism has become pervasively proreligious our religion has become pervasively secularistic".²⁰ This statement, although indicative of the confusion, is not totally paradoxical since as we shall see there is no reason why religion and the secular can not develop together.

Rather than catch ourselves in the web of impossibility involved in defining religion we shall follow the lead given by J. Milton Yinger in one of his earlier works in which he suggested that trying to define religion was really not necessary if when you spoke of religion people understood what was meant by the term:

20 Will Herberg, Op. Cit., p. 154.

For our purposes, any definition we need give of religion can be very general. We are concerned with the specific problem of analyzing the social significance of certain past and present institutions and movements. That they are universally regarded to be religious institutions and movements is sufficient warrant to label this essay a study in the sociology of religion. There is no need to prove by rigorous definition that the phenomena with which we are dealing are "really" religious, for generalization within the societal context can be valid whatever the data are labelled.²¹

It is in this sense that we shall accept religion. Later we shall advert to the two basic understandings of religion that give rise to the two fundamentally different positions sociologists take in relation to secularization.

4. Some Theories of Secularization.

Much sociological theory concerning secularization can be divided into two basic positions, one of which understands secularization as the decline of religion, and the other which denies that secularization must involve the decline of religion. Two of the most eminent spokesmen for these different positions are Pitirim Sorokin and Talcott Parsons. The former looks upon secularization as the decline of religion and the latter regards this phenomenon as the institutionalization (and therefore in some way the development) of religion. Their theories obviously are basically

²¹ J. Milton Yinger, Religion in the Struggle for Power, p. 5.

at variance one with another.

We shall also deal, at some length with the theory of Peter Berger. This latter theory is of more recent vintage and sheds new light and clarification on the whole question of secularization as well as on the theories of Sorokin and Parsons. Finally we shall discuss a few other less important writings on the sociology of secularization to illustrate how they usually reflect in some way the two basic theories which we have mentioned.

a) Sorokin's Theory.- For Pitirim Sorokin²² secularization is a process of decline moving from the religiously animated Mediaeval Christian culture to a basically different secular Western human universe. His theory is based upon the supposition that society takes its final direction from vast ideological supersystems which are built upon one major premise concerning the ultimate nature of reality. All other systems of thought be they scientific, philosophical, religious or aesthetic, or whatever, take their character from the supersystem which the culture accepts as its basic ideology.

22 Pitirim A. Sorokin, "The Western Religion and Morality of Today", in International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion, Vol. II (Sociology of Religion: Theoretical Perspectives 'I'), Köln and Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1966, p. 9-10.

Among the vast ideological supersystems that are known, the vastest supersystem is built on the major premise concerning the ultimate nature of the true reality and value. Is the ultimate true reality and the true value sensory, or supersensory, or partly sensory and partly supersensory?²³

A culture which accepts all reality and values as being essentially sensory, perceivable by the senses and which admits no other basis for reality he calls a sensate ideological supersystem. Another highly integrated culture might consider the true nature of reality to be supersensory inasmuch as its ultimate values would be found in a super-rational world being. This latter ideological supersystem, Sorokin calls ideational. Finally that culture which would accept the true nature of reality as being partly sensory and partly supersensory and which would construct its supersystem upon this belief, he would call idealistic.²⁴

Sorokin²⁵ would consider early Christianity to be an example of the culture whose ideological supersystem was ideational. Mediaeval society lived within what he calls the idealistic supersystem and contemporary society he

²³ Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics, New York, Cooper Square, 1947, p. 319-320.

²⁴ Ibid.; Cf. also chapter 40-42. Sorokin treats of these three supersystems in even greater detail in chapters 2 and 3 of the first volume of his Social and Cultural Dynamics (3 vols.), New York, Bedminster, 1937, xvi-745 p.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 320-321.

claims is based on the central idea that true reality and true value is sensory and thus the supersystem dominating contemporary society must be considered a sensate one. For our purposes here it is particularly important to note that Sorokin,²⁶ for all practical purposes, equates the secular with the sensate and the sacral with the ideational. More specifically in a more recent article²⁷ Sorokin claims that the secularization of the Christian religion can be seen in the following forms: 1) the demotion of Christian dogmas, belief, rituals and moral imperatives from the status of revelations, sacred unconditional commandments and values to the status of secular and therefore questionable and fallible human beliefs and rules of conduct; 2) an evident decline in the inspirational power of Christianity in shaping and influencing the style and content of Western art; 3) the decline of the Christian religion inasmuch as its ethical ideals and values no longer have significant effect in controlling the behaviour of Western man; 4) an evident decline of the Christian churches as a social institution - and by this he means a decline in belief, church attendance, etc.

²⁶ Pitirim A. Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics (Vol. III), New York, Bedminster, 1937, p. 139-160.

²⁷ Pitirim A. Sorokin, "The Western Religion and Morality of Today", p. 10-14.

Summarily then we might say that for Sorokin secularization basically involves the decline of religion and of religious influence upon Western man. For him secularization means that the inspirational force within human life comes not directly from the supersensory (God) but from the sensory (man).

b) The Parsonian Theory.— For Talcott Parsons secularization is a process of social differentiation through which the Church has become a more specialized agency. What he means by this is that particularly in the modern Protestant denominations the last few centuries have witnessed what is basically the development of private associations which no longer have many of the earlier functions of the Mediaeval Church such as jurisdiction over the artistic, educational and familial spheres. Politics and economics, according to Parsons²⁸ had already been secularized at an earlier time, again as part of the process of social differentiation. Parsons²⁹ strongly makes the point however that this in no way implies that the Christian Church, or religion, has lost importance in modern society. Rather what it means is that although the Christian Churches do not exert an influence of

²⁸ Cf. Parsons' introduction to Max Weber's The Sociology of Religion, p. lviii.

²⁹ Talcott Parsons, Social Structure and Personality, London, Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, p. 307.

control on the society itself, which is no longer subject to them but "differentiated" from them, the Christian community through the commitments and motivations of the individuals who belong to it continues to influence all of society. They do this however by acting autonomously, on their own responsibility, and not because of any legal coercive power possessed by their church. But it is their belonging to the Christian Church which he considers as having direct influence on the orientation which is given to the secular community and culture.

It will be well to clarify here how Parsons³⁰ understands the process of differentiation. In any social system the various structural parts of the system are named and distinguished. If in the evolution of society, what was at one stage, one part, now becomes two parts, each of which has a more highly specialized role in society, then differentiation is occurring. In relation to religion he describes

30 Talcott Parsons, "Christianity and Modern Industrial Society", in Sociological Theory, Values, and Socio-cultural Change, Edward A. Tiryakian (ed.), New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1963, p. 38. Robert H. Bellah who also speaks of differentiation, but in a manner somewhat different than Parsons, notes that the sacred and secular were so intermixed in earlier civilizations that "At the primitive level religious organization as a separate social structure does not exist" (p. 28). Bellah traces the process of differentiation through the stages of primitive, archaic, early modern, and modern religion. Cf. Robert H. Bellah, Beyond Belief, Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditional World, New York, Herper & Row, 1970, p. 21-39.

this process in the following way:

I think of religion as an aspect of human action. Like all other aspects, in the course of social, cultural, and personality development it undergoes processes of differentiation in a double sense. The first of these concerns differentiation within religious systems themselves, the second the differentiation of the religious element from the nonreligious elements in the more general system of action. In the latter context the general developmental trend may be said to be from fusions of religious and nonreligious components in the same action spheres, to increasingly clear differentiation between multiple spheres of action.³¹

Parsons³² equates this whole process of differentiation with secularization and he claims that differentiation has its roots in the very beginnings of Christianity. He says that the early Christian Church was differentiated from Judaism inasmuch as it no longer constituted a people in the sense that the Jews did. The early Christian church was clearly differentiated from secular Roman society whereas for the Jews church and state were identical. He sees the early Church therefore as accepting the fundamental distinction between church and state. Further he interprets the acceptance by the Christian community of the Greco-Roman conception of natural law as implying a differentiation again between the spiritual and temporal spheres and a

31 Ibid., p. 37.

32 Ibid., p. 40-50.

relative legitimation of the temporal provided it is in accordance with this natural law. The crowning of Charlemagne by the Pope was an act by the Head of the Church legitimating secular authority. In these and similar phenomena of the first twelve to thirteen hundred years of the Christian Church Parsons recognizes not only the acceptance of, but the positive encouragement of secularization, understood as differentiation, by the Christian Church.

Thus he argues the position that there was a very clear distinction between the secular and the religious even in the Catholic Middle Ages and that the Church supported and maintained this distinction. Religious Orders provided models for social organizations in the secular sphere, celibacy broke the hereditary principle governing societal roles, the incorporation of Roman Law undergirded the whole subsequent development of Western Society. The Church's support of the secular intellectual culture of antiquity, and her role in the rise of universities were particularly significant in the continuing development of the relationship of the sacred and secular within the Western World and the Christian community.

The Reformation is understood by Parsons as the high point in this process. The removal of religious life from a position of special status was a direct consequence of the Reformation and in this Parsons recognizes the endowment of

secular callings with a new kind of religious legitimation as a field of Christian opportunity.

If the ordinary man, assumed of course to be a Church member, stood in direct relation to God and could be justified by his faith the whole person could be justified including the life he led in every day affairs.³³

Particularly in the ascetic or Calvinistic branch of the Protestant movement does Parsons see the development of a conception of secular callings as positive elements in the Divine Plan, namely callings or vocations to build the Kingdom of God on earth.³⁴

Parsons insists that the Reformation gave the individual more autonomy inasmuch as he was less under the tutelage of the Church. This, he claims, was but the natural

33 Ibid., p. 51.

34 There is no doubt that the inspiration for Parsons' whole thesis on differentiation and secularization received its initial impetus from Weber. Witness the parallel between Parsons' thinking as we have been outlining it above, and this quote from Weber's The Sociology of Religion, p. 182-183: "...only in the Protestant ethic of vocation does the world, despite all its creaturely imperfections, possess unique and religious significance as the object through which one fulfills his duties by rational behaviour according to the will of an absolutely transcendental god. When success crowns rational, sober, purposive behaviour of the sort oriented exclusively to worldly acquisition, such success is construed as a sign that god's blessing rests upon such behaviour [...]. The clear and uniform goal of this asceticism was the disciplining and methodical organization of the whole pattern of life. Its typical representative was the 'man of a vocation', and its unique result was the rational organization and institutionalization of social relationships."

development of the responsibility of the individual which really had its beginnings in the differentiation between Christianity and Judaism.

The result of all this is that Parsons does not consider the Christian Church as ever having wanted directly to subject the secular to religious law but rather he says,

It relied on the common values which bound Church and secular society together, each in its own sphere but making the Christian aspect of the secular society an autonomous responsibility of Christians in their secular roles.³⁵

Parsons rejects Ernst Troeltsch's³⁶ view that there have been only three authentic versions of Christian society in Western history, namely, the Mediaeval Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Calvinistic. He equally rejects any insinuation that there has been any decline in western Christianity since the time of the last mentioned version of Christianity. Troeltsch, along with Weber, posits the basic sect-church polarity, and claims that the last Church or Christian society is long past. Parsons claims that between the Church as a religious organization of the whole society and the sect (a more voluntary religious association) one

35 Talcott Parsons, Op. Cit., p. 58.

36 Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, Protestantism and Progress: A Historical Study of the Relation of Protestantism to the Modern World, (trans. by W. Montgomery), Boston, Beacon Hill, 1958, p. 43-57.

must also consider the denominations which both

...share with the Church the type of differentiation between religious and secular spheres of interest [...] [and] On the other hand [...] share with the sect type its character as a voluntary association where the individual member is bound only by responsible personal commitment, not by any factor of ascription.³⁷

In the denominational pluralism of the United States Parsons identifies this latter phase of the process of differentiation or secularization as coming to maturity. His contention is that this is a genuinely Christian development and in no way involves falling away from religion. As ~~we~~ I have indicated, what Parsons ultimately understands by the process of differentiation is an institutionalization of Christian values and belief whereby participants of the various Christian denominations extend into the secular realm principles of conduct and understanding which then take root within civil society. Thus secularization for him, inasmuch as it is the process he calls differentiation, can in no way be understood as a decline of religion.³⁸

³⁷ Talcott Parsons, Op. Cit., p. 61; the question of sect in relation to church and other forms of religious association and organization will be dealt with in some detail later in this chapter.

³⁸ Religion has, at least in the United States, become so institutionalized, that it has become built right into the whole social structure in some form or another. Cf. for example Robert N. Bellah's article "Civil Religion in America", in Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, James F. Childress and David B. Harned (eds.), Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970, p. 93-116.

What is clear from this brief outline of the understandings of secularization held by Solokin and Parsons is that whereas the former conceived of secularization or the secular as being a process implying the decline of religion, the latter regards it as a natural development of religion, at least of the Christian religion in the Western world. Their two theories can serve as prototypes of two basic sociological positions which disagree on the question of whether or not secularization constitutes a decline in religion. They represent what might generally be called the "decline" and the "non-decline" theories.

The differences between Sorokin and Parsons revolve, of course, around their different appreciation of what religion is. For Sorokin, religion seems to be an otherworldly type of relationship which increases or decreases according to the degree in which a man's attention and life direction are riveted upon a god who proximately directs all aspects of human activity and existence. Sorokin has a tendency to comprehend religion in terms of the degree of its inclusiveness. Parsons would certainly claim that his conception of religion is equally ascetic. However, rather than an otherworldly asceticism his understanding of religion is based more on the inner worldly asceticism described by Max Weber.³⁹

³⁹ Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, p. 168ff.

This inner worldly asceticism understands the call of God as a call to master all aspects of the human condition. Parsons' comprehension of religion is thus more in terms of extension than of inclusiveness. If Sorokin is concerned with what it is that the religious sphere includes, Parsons' concern is with how far the religious sphere extends.

c) The Bergerian Theory.- The two theories outlined above are reflected in different ways by many other sociologists. However before considering these other viewpoints in summary fashion it may prove profitable to consider somewhat more closely one other theory, namely the explanation offered by Peter Berger regarding the phenomenon of secularization. He accepts neither of the above positions completely. His explanations implicitly reject any of the idealism inherent in Sorokin's position⁴⁰ and although he may be said to accept some of the Parsonian theory, it is only with certain qualifications and strenuous objection to Parsons' rather naive mechanical causality on both the idealistic and materialistic levels.

⁴⁰ "We strongly suspect that no explanation that remains only within the framework of the history of ideas is likely to serve as an adequate means to understand the phenomenon of secularization." Peter L. Berger, "A Sociological View of the Secularization of Theology", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1967, p. 8.

Berger's conception of secularization is much more process oriented. For example, Berger⁴¹ will not accept the theory that pluralism is simply a result of, or caused by secularization. Rather he advances the theory that pluralism and secularization are in a relation of reciprocal causality, and thus bring each other into being and sustain each other in being.

It is difficult to know whether Berger would agree or disagree that secularization represents the "decline of religion", because religion according to him is capable of too many disparate definitions. He does however support the thesis that Christianity, at least in the Protestant variety of the Reformation, was a dominant factor in the "differentiation" of the sacred and the secular.

Moreover, he extends⁴² the historical roots of secularization back into the Old Testament where he recognizes a certain differentiation implicit in the totally different grasp of cosmic reality which the Israelites had from their neighbours. Berger would ~~disagree~~, ^{however,} disagree with Parsons

⁴¹ Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 134-137; cf. also Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Secularization and Pluralism", in International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion, Vol. II (Sociology of Religion: Theoretical Perspectives), Koln and Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1966, passim.

⁴² Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 113ff.

concerning the role that Mediaeval Catholic Christianity played in the continuing process of secularization. Rather than aiding this process he considers that

the form of Christianity that finally became dominant in Europe represents a retrogressive step in terms of the secularizing motifs of Old Testament religion...⁴³

More specifically, a retrogressive role with respect to these secularizing motifs of Old Testament religion, is to be attributed particularly to the incarnational aspect of Catholic Christianity-- for this is opposed to the more radical transcendence of the Old Testament. Again, Berger disagrees with Parsons' interpretation of the effects of Catholic Christianity's acceptance of the Greco-Roman conception of natural law. Far from furthering the process of secularization Berger insists that it represents a throwback to the cosmic framework of Israel's neighbours:

On the theoretical level, the Catholic view of natural law may be said to represent a 'renaturalization' of ethics - in a sense, a return to the divine-human continuity of Egyptian ma'at from which Israel went out into the desert of Yahweh.⁴⁴

This same author insists, however, that when the sociologist recognizes these historical origins of secularization he does not have to make any judgement as to whether

⁴³ Ibid., p. 121.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

this represents either a fulfillment or a degeneration of the Christian religion. Berger does not wish to restrict himself to any description of secularization which would imply that the latter was a natural, logical and intended consequence of Christian faith or doctrine.

It is one thing to maintain that there is a relationship of historical causality between Christianity and certain features of the modern world. It is an altogether different matter to say that, "therefore," the modern world, including its secular character, must be seen as some sort of logical realization of Christianity. A salutary thing to remember in this connection is that most historical relationships are ironical in character, or, to put it differently, that the course of history has little to do with the intrinsic logic of ideas that served as causal factors in it.⁴⁵

Simply what he is saying here is that even if secularization flows from the Judaeo-Christian tradition as from a cause there is no reason to say that this tradition either intended or wanted such a result.

Peter Berger's explanation of secularization as based on a double process, one a socio-cultural process of increasing autonomy for different social institutions, and the other a process of a whole cultural change in the areas of knowledge, the arts and human understanding, reflects two basic dimensions of secularization. He describes it in this way:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

By secularization we mean the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols. When we speak of society and institutions in modern Western history, of course, secularization manifests itself in the evacuation by the Christian churches of areas previously under their control or influence - as in the separation of church and state, or in the expropriations of church lands, or in the emancipation of education from ecclesiastical authority. When we speak of symbols and culture, however, we imply that secularization is more than a socio-cultural process. It affects the totality of cultural life and ideation, and may be observed in the decline of religious contents in the arts, in philosophy, in literature and, most important of all, in the rise of science as an autonomous, thoroughly secular perspective of the world.⁴⁶

Berger's⁴⁷ treatment of the legitimating role of religion and its relation to secularization is particularly enlightening in attempting to further understand the latter. Legitimation is for the social scientist the process of approbation, by some social force or instrumentality, through which social reality is maintained. Historically religion has been the most widespread and effective force of legitimation. It legitimates so effectively because "...it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality".⁴⁸ Although it is true that the area

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Sociology of Religion and Sociology of Knowledge", p. 423; also Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 29ff., 154-171 et passim.

⁴⁸ Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 32.

of legitimation is far broader than that of religion, the two are very closely related.

The present situation indicates, however, that religion is losing its legitimating role. The legitimation for so many human activities previously required from religion is received now from other social institutions, be it the state, science, a prevalent ideology, or some other legitimating agency. Secularization is thus indicated when religion loses its role of giving meaning to and thus legitimizing human activities and institutions. Another way in which Berger describes secularization is as the "...progressive autonomization of societal sectors from the domination of religious meanings and institutions".⁴⁹

d) Other Theories. - Before attempting to sift out from these three theories, along with their descriptions of the phenomenon of secularization, some constants which will serve as criteria to identify secularization, a brief survey of the understanding of secularization held by some other sociologists may prove helpful. These theories, although of relatively minor importance in comparison with the preceding, remain of interest because of their relation to these former theories and because of the further insight they provide in

⁴⁹ Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Secularization and Pluralism", p. 74.

our examination of this phenomenon.

In explaining the term "seuclar society", A Dictionary of the Social Sciences⁵⁰ refers to a society which is distinguished by its capability and readiness for growth, development and change. It is contrasted to a "sacred society" which is closed and reticent to accept and pursue the new because of its commitment to inviolate values. The basis for much of the sociological investigation into secularization which follows these lines is cast in terms of where a particular society or social group fits on what has been called the "sacred - secular continuum". Much of this thinking is based on the theory advanced by the sociologist Howard Becker.⁵¹

Becker understands the process of passing from a sacred to a secular society as fundamentally a process of moving from a vicinally, socially and mentally isolated society to a society which is not thus isolated. This involves moving from a closed and inaccessible society which is resistant and impervious to change and to what is new, towards a society which is accessible to change, growth and

⁵⁰ A Dictionary of the Social Sciences, Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (eds.), New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1969, xvi-761 p.

⁵¹ Howard Becker, Op. Cit., passim, particularly p. 140-144.

development and therefore to newness. Austin L. Porterfield supports this theory and indicates its numerous implications:

This process as Howard Becker describes it includes the lessening of the intensity of kinship bonds among a people; a loosening of friendship and neighbourhood ties and the breakdown of primary and neighbourhood groups; a reduction of the indigenous origins of regional and community populations, on the one hand, or a depletion of the local folk through migration on the other, accompanied by much institutional dislocation; and finally a breakdown of the prevailing mores -- morals, religious sanctions, class, caste, and prestige patterns -- associated with the appearance of strange ideas, strange people, and strange machines. The new community, made up of fragments of other populations, of uprooted humanity, is already secularized.⁵²

R. M. Goodridge,⁵³ still uses as a norm the vicinal, social and mental isolation of a particular society, and he agrees with Becker that secularization is a movement along the continuum away from the sacred in the direction of the secular. However, he is very hesitant to associate or equate secularization with the decline of religious practice as do Becker and Sorokin. Goodridge indeed supports the position that secularism does not involve any counter-religiousness and so is not opposed to religion but only to "...the use of religious institutions and religious motivations in the

⁵² Austin L. Porterfield, "Suicide and Crime in Folk and in Secular Society", in American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 57, No. 4, January 1952, p. 331.

⁵³ R. M. Goodridge, "Relative Secularization and Religious Practice", in Sociological Analysis, Vol. 29, No. 3, Fall 1968, p. 134.

legal, political and educative processes".⁵⁴ He views secularization more as a recognizable, historical development "...by which this legal and educative non-dependence on religion tends to be established".⁵⁵ He is therefore wary of accepting any theory which would support the position that the decline or breakdown, at least of religion practice, is a concomitant of secularization.

Another recognizable description of secularization in the sociological sphere is that advanced by Harold W. Pfautz.⁵⁶ His theory - obviously an outgrowth of Troeltsch's cult-Church concept which was further developed by Parsons to a cult-Church-denomination theory - is that religious groups or movements, inasmuch as they are mobile, progress from a cult to a sect, to what he calls an institutionalized sect, to a church and finally to a denomination. As criteria according to which this development may be measured Pfautz proposes five perspectives: (1) demography, (2) ecology (relative location), (3) association, (4) structural, (5) socio-psychological texture. J. Milton Yinger⁵⁷ proposes

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 133.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Harold W. Pfautz, "The Sociology of Secularization: Religious Groups", in American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 2, Sept. 1965, p. 121-128.

⁵⁷ J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, p. 148-155.

a six step development in the classification of religious variations. He claims that religious groups can pass through the following successive forms: 1) the Cult, 2) the Sect, 3) the Established Sect, 4) the Class Church or Denomination, 5) the Ecclesia, 6) the Universal Church.

Fundamentally Pfautz and Yinger are saying that secularization is a process whereby a simple and clearly distinct religious movement is assimilated into the civil society by a process of group rationalization. Herberg too would understand a secularized culture as one in which the conventional beliefs, practices and forms have given way to a common religion which becomes the operative religion of society. In the United States he describes⁵⁸ this common religion as "the American way of life" which provides the citizens of the United States with a common set of ideals, rituals and symbols through which they integrate their social life. Robert Bellah's concept of civil religion which he argues is, at its best, "...a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say as revealed through the experience of the American

⁵⁸ Will Herberg, Op. Cit., p. 148. This indeed is the whole thesis of Herberg's Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology, Garden, N. Y., Doubleday, 1955, 320 p.

people",⁵⁹ might also, to some extent be included under this description of secularization.

Although at first glance there may seem to be certain similarities between these theories and the theory of Parsons, they are in reality fundamentally opposed. Pfautz, Yinger, Herberg, and possibly Bellah are asserting that religious groups themselves are being secularized to such an extent that they become but one more part of civil society. They become so conformed to this world that their distinctive identity practically disappears. Parsons, on the other hand, insists that by the process of differentiation, religious groups, far from being thus assimilated into the civil or secular society, specify and clarify the religious identity of their adherents. We might also add that this theory of assimilation seems to take no real account of the dialectical process indicated by Berger-- stated crudely, if religious groups are secularized by secular society, then to some extent at least, the society itself must be "religionized".

⁵⁹ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America", in Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, James F. Childress and David B. Harned (eds.), Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970, p. 107.

Another study by Schneider and Doenbusch⁶⁰ indicates that popular religious literature reveals secularization is manifested in the devaluation of previously highly regarded religious values such as suffering. This latter and the instrumentalization of the deity as evidenced in Norman Vincent Peale's, The Power of Positive Thinking are for the authors of this study other criteria or indications of the development of secularization in society. This analysis ultimately falls among those which equate secularization with the decline of religion.

Finally and, as we shall see later, of particular interest to our discussion there are three other theories or concepts of secularization to which Shiner⁶¹ calls attention. Among other descriptions he speaks of secularization as Transposition, as Desacralization, and as Disengagement. According to Shiner these theories have not been used extensively in empirical sociological research and may have been used more by the historian and the anthropologist. They still have great sociological value however because of

60 Louis Schneider and Sander M. Dornbusch, "Inspirational Religious Literature: from Latent to Manifest Functions of Religions", in American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 62, No. 5, March 1957, p. 476-481.

61 Larry Shiner, "The Concept of Secularization in Empirical Research", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 2, Fall 1967, p. 212-216.

their unique description of what secularization involves.

Firstly there is Transposition which has been advanced as another form of secularization. It means

Knowledge, patterns of behaviour, and institutional arrangements which were once understood as grounded in divine power are transformed into phenomena of purely human creation and responsibility.⁶²

An example of what is meant here is evidenced in Max Weber's claim that the spirit of capitalism (a manifestly secular reality!) is but a secularization of the Calvinist ethic. One of the most interesting studies done in this regard is Ernest B. Koenker's, Secular Salvations, the Rites and Symbols of Political Religion.⁶³ Koenker, particularly in the context of Nazi Germany and Marxist Russia, describes the transference of Christian rites and symbols to the secular sphere of the state. Party songs became the new hymns, Lenin's tomb a national shrine, Mein Kampf and Das Kapital the new scriptures and Hitler and Lenin adopted the stance of Secular Saviours.

62 Ibid., p. 217.

63 Ernest B. Koenker, Secular Salvations, The Rites and Symbols of Political Religion, Philadelphia, Fortress, 1965, xii-220 p.

Repeatedly one finds that Christian rites and symbols are not discarded as outworn or irrelevant. Though they lose their specific Christian content they still recall the ultimate reality to which they once pointed. They live a stunted form of life. They are reinterpreted as bearers of a new reality...⁶⁴

Secondly there is that type of secularization that has been called Desacralization. It involves the world being deprived of a divine or sacred character as man by virtue of his own rationality comes to control and manipulate the natural universe. The sense of the sacred decreases and man becomes independent of religion and seeks to face life by reason alone without the aid of the supernatural. Its manifestation therefore involves the removal of the sacred or religious from social institutions and from the meanings which man gives to his life. Advocates of this position do not agree as to whether this process will ultimately mean the complete disappearance of the "sacred" or the "holy".⁶⁵ The classical statement of desacralization is to be found in Max Weber's oft quoted phrase, "the disenchantment of the world". This simply means that the world is no longer regarded as "enchanted", as abounding with and impregnated by sacred powers. The world now is simply world - a universe for man to dominate.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 55-56.

⁶⁵ Larry Shiner, Op. Cit., p. 216.

Thirdly there is the disengagement of society from religion - another description of secularization which indicates a process whereby society separates itself from the religious values and comprehension which previously were its soul, and thereby achieves its proper autonomy. Included here is a privatizing tendency as religion becomes limited to the sphere of private life. To some extent religion no longer makes any appearance outside of the religious group.

What might be called institutional secularization is part of this process and usually follows upon the rise of the secular state or the assumption by the state of the educational and welfare functions once performed by the churches. There is also disengagement on what might be called the intellectual level inasmuch as the pursuit of knowledge seeks its own autonomy unhindered by any presuppositions of faith or doctrine.

Because of certain difficulties in the disengagement theory, especially as applied to eastern religions and their relation to the secular state, Shiner prefers to use Parsons' concept of differentiation.⁶⁶ Disengagement can too easily be interpreted as the decline of religion whereas Parsons, as we have already seen at some length, suggests that secularization understood as a process of differentiation means

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 213-214.

that religion rather than declining is assuming a more specialized role. Indeed he would say that it is legitimating secular life in a new way.⁶⁷

Finally, it should be noted that there is an evident difference between the processes of transposition and differentiation. The former concerns the transfer of some reality which formerly was considered to be a wholly "sacred" reality to the sphere of the secular. The latter is rather a process of distinguishing the roles of the sacred and the secular in particular social institutions or activities. This distinction should become yet clearer in our analysis of these different theories.

e) Attempts to Synthesize.— Before concluding this section on sociological theories of secularization, some consideration should be given to certain sociological attempts to synthesize or pull together the many sociological meanings of secularization found in the different theories. These might be called "theoretical generalizations". They are of interest however since they do shed further light on how sociology views secularization.

67 "...the more important change was not the removal of religious legitimation from the special monastic life, but rather, the endowment of secular life with a new order of religious legitimation as a field of 'Christian Opportunity'." Talcott Parsons, "Christianity and Modern Industrial Society", p. 51.

David Martin,⁶⁸ for example, suggests that the term has four basic meanings, two of which are on the objective, societal or cultural levels, and two of which relate more to the subjective or individual level. Thus in speaking of secularization he says that there are four broad areas in which the phenomenon can be recognized. The first two are on the objective level, namely, 1) the sphere of social institutions and 2) the sphere of customs. The third and fourth are on the subjective level, namely, 3) the area of thought and 4) the area of attitude.

In the first group of meanings he would include any process which can be described as the decline in the power, wealth, influence, range of control and prestige of the ecclesiastical institutions and this particularly in relation to any loss of power and influence over the state and the professions. Together with this there may be the secularization or loss of church lands and buildings.

By the secularization of religious customs and practices Martin means to describe any decrease in the frequency, number and intensity of these along with a diminution of the range of context in which such religious practices and rituals are considered appropriate. As concrete examples of this he

⁶⁸ David Martin, The Religious and the Secular, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 48-57.

offers less frequent church attendance, less prayer and a decreased number of religious or ministerial personnel.

The intellectual dimension of secularization Martin sees as the adoption of an exclusively rationalistic or empiricist framework. This is particularly evidenced by a denial or at least an ignoring of the transcendental and metaphysical.

The final dimension of secularization of which Martin⁶⁹ speaks is concerned with a change in attitude. A rejection of the reverential, the awesome or numinous is implied here. Any sense of mystery and ultimate concern is destroyed, along with the dedication it implies. Again this includes the secular attitude of the supposed freeing of the psyche from any taboos of an obsessive or ritualistic nature.

Will Herberg, as well, offers three possible understandings of the term secularism which he describes as follows:

69 In at least three of the four processes which he describes Martin feels that these very same processes could equally be called desecularization inasmuch as they could be interpreted as being the proper expression of true religion.

(1) In the first place, "secular" may simply mean interests and activities that are outside the realm of sacral -- that is, outside the realm of institutionalized activities associated with religion in the first sense, with conventional religion (cf. Supra). In this usage, we speak of business, law, teaching, or warfare, for example as secular affairs, over against the "spiritual" or cultic activities of religion. (2) But, in the second place, "secularism" may also be used to express the conviction that these nonsacral interests and activities are independent and autonomous, co-existing side by side with religion, but in no sense subordinated to it, not even "spiritually". This seems to be a view widely prevalent in modern western culture. (3) Finally, "secularism" may be used as a total philosophy of life insisting on the extrusion of religion from the realm of reality, meaning and value, and the organization of life and thought on a religion-denying premise.⁷⁰

These and similar attempts⁷¹ to pull together the variety of meanings attached to the term secularization serve at least to highlight the complexity of the issue with which ~~I am~~ dealing.

⁷⁰ Will Herberg, "Religion in a Secularized Society: The New Shape of Religion in America", p. 146. Brackets mine.

⁷¹ Another list of phenomena that have been included under the rubric of secularization has been proposed by Desroche: 1) the expropriation of an ecclesiastical property, 2) the renunciation of power, 3) the declericalisation of structures, 4) the deconfessionalising of social services, 5) the desacralization of cultures, 6) the deideologising of traditions, 7) the demythologising of sources. Cf. Henri Desroche, Appendix V., in The Meaning of the Secular, a report by C. C. West on a Consultation for University Teachers, Bossey, Switzerland, September 15-20, 1959, p. 16, as quoted by Richard K. Fenn, "The Secularization of Values, An Analytical Framework for the Study of Secularization", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 112.

5. Secularization: a Usable Term?

The multitude of explanations given to the term secularization indicates, at least in part, why it is that David Martin has suggested that the term be dropped. "Secularization should be erased from the sociological dictionary".⁷² He proposes that there be a moratorium on the usage of the term because of the wide variety of meanings attached to it. These he claims render its usage meaningless in any intelligent discussion. To some extent Shiner⁷³ agrees with Martin and, as we shall see, prefers to use words such as transposition and differentiation to describe the phenomena covered by the term secularization. However, he feels that such a moratorium is unlikely to be effected and so he suggests that everyone who employs the term states clearly his intended meaning and then sticks closely to it. What Shiner is demanding is that we establish clearly recognizable criteria which will serve to identify the phenomenon of secularization.

Peter Berger, although recognizing the difficulty involved in the usage of the term, insists nonetheless that despite this difficulty and the evident confusion associated

72 David Martin, Op. Cit., p. 22.

73 Larry Shiner, Op. Cit., p. 219.

with it, the term retains much meaning:

We would not agree with this position (that the term secularization should be abandoned) [...]. The term "secularization" refers to empirically available processes of great importance in modern Western history. Whether these processes are to be deplored or welcomed is, of course, irrelevant within the universe of discourse of the historian or the sociologist. It is possible, actually without too great an effort, to describe the empirical phenomenon without taking up an evaluative stance. It is also possible to inquire into its historical origins, including its historical connection with Christianity, without asserting that this represents either a fulfillment or a degeneration of the latter.⁷⁴

Berger's statement already hints at one basic difficulty that already beclouds the whole question of secularization among sociologists. This is the fact that sociologists, as should be evidenced in our examination of their various understandings of the term, rather too quickly attach value judgements to their supposedly descriptive and disinterested stance before the phenomenon of secularization.

6. Normative and Descriptive Usages.

Richard Fenn, in an excellent article,⁷⁵ discusses how in dealing with this topic there are usually two sets of

⁷⁴ Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy, p. 106-107. Brackets mine.

⁷⁵ Richard K. Fenn, "The Secularization of Values: An Analytical Framework for the Study of Secularization", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 112-124.

phenomena which are discussed and embraced within the framework of structural-functional theory, namely descriptive and normative phenomena. Fenn claims that structural-functional theory is sufficient for analyzing secularization as it happens to social institutions. He says that structural-functional theory is appropriate to the "...analysis of secularization as a process in which cultural and social structures develop, exchange and lose functions through internal and external differentiation".⁷⁶ The problem occurs, however, when through structural-functional analysis writers mix evaluative frames of reference with descriptive ones. "Structural-functional analysis can describe change; it cannot determine the norms from which to judge 'deviation' or 'decline'."⁷⁷ As far as analyzing the development of normative orientations toward ultimate and more proximate values, Fenn claims that this can only be discussed in the framework of Action Theory.

Fenn, then, makes very clear that secularization as a phenomenon of religious change can be recognized and identified. He says at the same time, however, that using this

76 Ibid., p. 113.

77 Ibid. In this relation see also J. Milton Yinger, "A Structural Examination of Religion", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 88-99.

structural-functional theory there is no way of saying whether this involves an increase or a decrease in the importance, practice and presence of religion in a particular society. In virtue of structural-functional theory the social scientist, vis-à-vis religion, can only describe or define a specific process which we call secularization. Up to this point Fenn brings a note of clarification to our discussion. His explanation of how Action Theory evaluates the normative orientation of secularization is somewhat turgid however, as he attempts to outline the dimensions that would form the fundamental variables in any empirical study of the effects of secularization.⁷⁸ He suggests that Action Theory can provide a frame of reference for providing normative criteria for secularization. There hardly seems, however, to have been sufficient research done in sociology to provide us with such maturely developed normative criteria. For our purposes what is important in Fenn's work is that he makes the clear distinction between normative and descriptive criteria and further indicates that the structural-functional framework of most sociologists provides us with descriptive indications of secularization.

When he insists that, "The sociologist [...] is not in a position to judge between the rival cognitive claims of

78 Richard K. Fenn, Op. Cit., p. 117-124.

astrology and modern science",⁷⁹ Peter Berger is strongly emphasizing this same point that the sociologist's role is essentially a descriptive one.

7. An Analysis of the Theories.

Our analysis of the theories which were outlined in Part four of this chapter has been inspired by, and will be conducted within the general framework of the categorization and criticisms of the various theories and descriptions of secularization as advanced by Larry Shiner.⁸⁰ Shiner states that there are six fundamental types of secularization theories today. These different theories consider secularization to be: 1) the decline of religion; 2) the movement of religious groups towards conforming themselves to this world; 3) the movement away from a "sacred" towards a "secular" society as measured by an increasing readiness to accept change; 4) the transposition of religious beliefs and institutions into phenomena of purely human creation and responsibility; 5) the desacralization of the world; 6) the disengagement of society from religion.

⁷⁹ Peter Berger, "A Sociological View of the Secularization of Theology", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1967, p. 10.

⁸⁰ Larry Shiner, Op. Cit.

1) The "decline of religion" theory is used here in a much more specific sense than we have used it above and as we shall be using it again below. Here it refers to those theories advanced on the basis of so-called "fall-off" in such matters as religious practice, support for religious or ecclesiastical institutions and causes, clerical prestige, etc. It is the theory advanced not only by Sorokin but underlying the study of Schneider and Dornbusch, and such works as Glock-Stark's Religion and Society in Tension.

The chief weakness of this theory is that determining what in reality constitutes a decline in religion is extremely difficult to establish, i.e., does a drop in church attendance indicate a decline in religion? As we have indicated, Sorokin's description of contemporary society as being fundamentally sensate or secular, is based upon his understanding of religion as being a basically transcendental, formalistic and other worldly set of beliefs and practices revealed in a non-historical manner by a divinity controlling all of human activity and demanding the same human response in every period of history. If religion is not understood in this way then the use of the "decline of religion" theory breaks down. The weakness of this position will be seen more clearly in the following chapter which will indicate from a theological position how secularization need not be considered as opposed to religion.

2) The description of secularization as a process of "conformity with 'this world'" is the theory espoused in varying degrees by Pfautz, Yinger, Herberg and Bellah. At risk of oversimplifying, it describes the process whereby, through group rationalization, the prototypical religious movement (the cult) is assimilated into civil society, and, as is at least implicitly suggested, thereby loses its true religious meaning.

A criticism similar to that leveled against the first mentioned theory of secularization, can be made here. For if it is true that increasing conformity with 'this world' is an indication of more total involvement in this world, there are many, particularly among those of the Christian tradition, who would consider this as representing a deepening rather than a weakening of the religious sense. It would therefore tend to promote rather than to negate true religious meaning.

3) Secularization as a movement from a "sacred" to a "secular" society as measured by an increasing readiness to accept change, is the theory which Becker originated and which has been adopted and modified in different ways by such sociologists as Porterfield, and to a lesser extent by Goodridge. It is really a general theory of social change rather than a theory of specifically religious change. This is the basic criticism of this theory. In other words,

failure to readily accept change or newness is equally obvious in any highly structured institution and not only in religious institutions. It is perhaps significant that in a subsequent article, which is an evident re-working of his original article, Shiner omits any mention of secularization as a movement from the "sacred" to the "secular" society.⁸¹ There seems no doubt that this theory is now unacceptable or has at least fallen into disuse. It is in some ways but a variation of the "decline" theory.

4) The advantage of describing secularization as Transposition is that such a description does not become entangled in the too simple and absolute definitions of religion clearly evidenced in the first two descriptions and implicit in the third category of secularization theories. One difficulty with this theory, however, is raised by the question as to whether rites or symbols or beliefs which now seem to appear in secular trappings, did in fact originate in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, or did they possibly have a totally different origin and simply take over the role or function formerly played by the religious symbol, rite or belief. To admit this latter possibility is to accept a rather radical discontinuity in very significant areas of

⁸¹ Cf. Larry Shiner, "The Meaning of Secularization", in Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, p. 30-42.

human social growth and evolution. It is perhaps more realistic to recognize that the realities of which transposition is predicated, such as human progress and acquisitiveness, leadership need and group solidarity, are archetypal realities. It is therefore probably more true to say of them that they have but the one human origin and have in the process of transposition found a different expression (a secular one) than the religious one they formerly had. Understood in this way the process of transposition is appealing as a description of secularization since it clearly indicates areas of human activity and experience which were once seen as grounded in divine power and have now become phenomena for which man himself is responsible.

5) Although Desacralization is an apt description of what occurs in the phenomenon of secularization it is in many ways simply a negative statement of the theory of Disengagement. Also it is more easily applicable to mentalities other than those formed by the Judaeo-Christian tradition - to mentalities of the eastern religious traditions which have more of a tendency to pantheism, to seeing gods everywhere. The tradition of the western world is different, for the transcendence or "otherness" of Yahweh, the God of the Israelites, was constantly maintained by their leaders whose chief task seems to have been to call their people away from any notion of a sacralized world, abounding with

gods. This description of secularization might also be criticized on the grounds that it is more theological than sociological. Despite these reservations the description of secularization as desacralization, is a real and valid description, although a basically negative one.

6) Finally the Disengagement theory. In part four of this chapter it has been seen that because of the distinction it implies, differentiation is a better term to describe this particular theory of secularization. The description of secularization advanced by this theory, together with the transposition theory, resists the tendency to narrowly restrict the meaning of religion to certain of its external aspects which can be most easily observed. Because it sees religion in much broader perspective this theory does not describe the loss of function of religion in a particular area as necessarily indicating the decline of religion. Rather it places the whole religious phenomenon within the broader context of the general process of differentiation which has been taking place in all sectors of society. All human enterprises have tended to become more specialized and religion has been among them. What it (religion) has particularly been differentiated from is the sphere in which man's own responsibility and rationality vis-à-vis the world come into play. Thus in the process of differentiation the phenomenon of secularization can

quite exactly be recognized. However, this description too must be accepted with certain limitations and reservations. First of all Parsons tends to give this theory not only a descriptive but a normative dimension as well. He not only describes differentiation as a process whereby the role of religion as a social institution becomes more specialized, but at least implicitly indicates that this is what the Christian religion sees as a moral imperative and has intended to do in the light of its own tradition. The more hard-headed approach of Peter Berger fulfills a salutary role of tempering this theory with a healthy dose of realism. For although Berger traces the differentiating factor back further than does Parsons, namely to the particular transcendence of Yahweh which so distinguished the God and the cosmology of the Israelites from the beliefs of their neighbours, he nonetheless is extremely wary of attributing any intended cause and effect relationship between the latter phenomenon and the contemporary phenomenon of secularization.

Parsons' belief that religion has adopted a new legitimating role in society can also be seriously questioned. Again it is Berger who feels that the churches or

religion have lost much of their legitimating role. Lenski⁸² sides with Berger and claims that although religion's special function has been to legitimize the system of power and privilege which every complex political system entails, it no longer fulfills this function. What has happened is that as the state ceased to be the instrument of a small elite and more people shared in the governing process, then religious legitimation was less necessary for political leaders. Despite these reservations, however, the process of differentiation seems to be one of the most valid and accurate descriptions of the phenomenon of secularization.

In this analysis of the different theories of secularization that have been advanced, indications have been given for the reasons for coming down in favour of some of these descriptions as being more apt and legitimate descriptions of this phenomenon. Basically those theorists who were very rigid in their conception of what religion is have been severely criticized. Too often their criteria of religion are simply determined by what religion has been in the past. Probably they would be unwilling to accept such static criteria for any other social institution. The

82 Gerhard Lenski, "Religious Pluralism in Theoretical Perspective", in International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion, Vol. 1 (Religious Pluralism and Social Structure), Köln und Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1965, p. 33, cf. also p. 33-34.

descriptions which have favoured allow for considerable evolution in our understanding of the phenomenon of religion. They as well involve a much broader definition of what religion is.

If we shift our perspective for a moment and analyse the different theories of secularization according as they support either the more general "decline" or "non-decline" theories of secularization, the basis upon which our choice has been made should become clearer. It is quickly evident that not only the very specific "decline" theories such as Sorokin's and that of Schneider and Dornbusch, but also the theories that see secularization as a growing conformity of religion to secular society, or as a steady advance toward the secular along the sacred-secular continuum, can all be considered as conceiving of secularization as in some manner being essentially a decline in religion.

The contrary of this position finds its leading exponent, of course, in Parsons and his theory of differentiation. It is reinforced in different ways by people such as Goodridge and by theories which describe secularization as transposition or (in a more negative way) as desacralization, and is even supported to some extent by Peter Berger.

8. Determining Criteria.

From the foregoing there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the data furnished by sociology. It is obvious that no attempt has been made to seek out definitions of secularization. Basically this is because of the difficulty encountered in defining religion. We have rather sought descriptions of the phenomenon of secularization.

Sociology provides us with a wide ranging variety of theories of what constitutes secularization. These theories express their understanding of this phenomenon through their descriptions of what secularization is. These descriptions we hope to use as our criteria for the recognition and identification of secularization.

Our first conclusion arises from our discussion of the normative and descriptive usages of this term by the sociologist. It seems that at least for the present moment sociology can do no more than provide descriptions of the phenomenon of secularization. We shall look to the sociologist then, only for descriptive statements about secularization and not for normative ones. Consequently he can furnish us only with descriptive criteria against which to measure the phenomenon of secularization.

A second conclusion flows directly from our analysis of the different theories. On the basis of this analysis

it is evident that Parsons' description of secularization as differentiation constitutes the most valid criterion of what secularization is. With the limitations ~~we~~ I have already expressed with regard to this criterion ~~we~~ I shall accept his theory of differentiation as providing us with our primary descriptive criterion of secularization. Inasmuch as Desacralization represents the negative dimension of differentiation, it too can be accepted as a criterion, albeit a secondary one.

Together with differentiation, transposition, for the reasons already adduced, also renders an adequate description and identification of the phenomenon.

There are, therefore, different descriptions of secularization which can serve as criteria. It is important to note here that these descriptions are not mutually exclusive and do overlap. They are really complementary descriptions. They are different ways of describing or indicating the same phenomenon, or different aspects of the same phenomenon. When one is present the others usually are, but in certain areas one description fits more readily and thus provides a criterion that is more easily applied.

Our third and final conclusion in this chapter is concerned with highlighting a distinction that has been made by at least Berger, Shiner and Martin. This is the distinction between secularization as operative on what we might

call the subjective or individual level, and secularization on the objective or institutional level. Although they use somewhat different terms, and there are minor differences, these authors basically make the same distinction. The reason for highlighting this distinction is that the primary purpose in establishing general criteria has been with an ultimate view to later establishing, on the basis of these general criteria, more specific criteria which could be applied to the field of education. When speaking of education this will be as it is observable in the objective institutional sphere. Thus it will be on this level that the criteria which are established can be applied. It is not the secularization of consciousness but rather the secularization of social institutions to which these criteria shall be applied.

Summarily then this investigation of the phenomenon of secularization as understood by the sociologist reveals the following:

- 1) Sociology, at the present time, can provide us only with descriptive and not with normative criteria with which to assess the phenomenon of secularization.

- 2) The descriptions of secularization which seem best suited to serve as criteria for the recognition of this phenomenon are the processes of differentiation and transposition, and in a negative fashion the process of desacralization.

3) A distinction between secularization on the subjective or individual level, and secularization on the objective or institutional level can be clearly established.

Finally I must add that this is by no means intended as offering the final word on the sociology of secularization. The reader will notice that the thorny problem of trying to define secularization has deliberately been avoided. From the beginning ~~the~~^{the} intention has been to search out from the science of sociology certain descriptions of secularization which would serve as criteria according to which one might recognize the presence of this process of secularization. From these criteria and from those which theology will provide in the following chapter I hope to evolve more specific criteria while when applied to education will enable us to recognize and evaluate the presence of secularization in a given educational system.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SECULARIZATION

In its simplest terms sociology understands secularization as a phenomenon involving a change in the role of religion in society. This is a descriptive statement, and further than such descriptive statements the sociologist may not go. He strays beyond the bounds of his discipline if he attempts to make any judgement concerning the "goodness" or "badness" of this phenomenon. There is no intention here of entering into the debate as to whether sociology can ever be considered as a wholly descriptive science, or whether it must admit that there is often a normative dimension in the hypotheses which it formulates. For the purposes of this study only a descriptive understanding of secularization has been taken from sociology.

Theology, however, can and does bring to its consideration of secularization an essentially normative dimension. The intention in this chapter is to further determine criteria for the recognition and evaluation of secularization by examining how theology treats of and comprehends this phenomenon. From theology, criteria, which will be primarily of a normative nature, and only secondarily descriptive, shall be sought.

For the theologian secularization must be approached as an objective, historical fact or process - a fact or process which he reflects upon and evaluates in the light of the belief of the Christian community. He should not simply accept secularization as good because it is a historical phenomenon, as does the Marxist, nor should he condemn it out of hand.¹

Secularization need not be atheistic or agnostic. It can and has been positively interpreted and affirmed by Christians.² At the same time certain perversions of secularization can hardly be accepted as compatible with Christian theological tradition.

So too, although theology can make a good case for secularization as having certain Christian historical antecedents, it would none the less be foolish to claim that all the historical antecedents of secularization are of

¹ Roger Mehl, "La sécularisation de la cité", in Le problème de la civilisation chrétienne, Jean Poisset (ed.), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1961, p. 12-13.

² Cf. Edward Schillebeeckx, in The Crucial Questions, Frank Fehmers (ed.), New York, Newman, 1969, p. 50.

biblical or Christian origin.³

1. The Theological Context of Secularization.

Secularization as a contemporary phenomenon reveals more of its meaning when it is cast within the more general framework of the gradual demolition of any wholistic approach which has marked the philosophical and theological scene during the last three hundred years. In many ways our phenomenon is one facet of the perennial philosophical and theological problem of the One and the Many. It involves the loss of any one fixed frame of reference, whether this be in terms of a religious world view or in terms of a metaphysics claiming to give an explanation, purpose and meaning to all of reality.⁴

³ Cf. Hans Bornwasser, "State and Politics from the Renaissance to the French Revolution", in Concilium, Vol. 47, New York, Paulist, 1969, p. 74ff. This author demonstrates how secularization arose from a struggle for power between the supposedly "sacred" head of Christendom and some of the local princes who were seeking autonomy within the limits of their own kingdoms. Machiavelli's The Prince was a handbook for such princes in their struggle.

Enrique Dussel points out that if it was in politics that the process of secularization was initiated, it was really with the advent of modern science that a new way of thinking was firmly begun. Cf. Enrique Dussel, "From Secularization to Secularism: Science from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment", in Concilium, Vol. 47, New York, Paulist, 1969, p. 93-119.

⁴ Harry E. Smith, Secularization and the University, Richmond, Virg., Knox, 1968, p. 19.

From another viewpoint this same process of secularization reflects the constant tension between matter and spirit which always marks man's attempt to comprehend himself and his universe. It is a concrete example of the dialectic between man's sense of mystery and his respect for empiricism, which dialectic, in our present day at least, seems to have come down heavily in favour of pragmatic empiricism.

Perhaps the most adequate context within which one might consider the process of secularization is that context constituted by the polarity of immanence and transcendence. The process of secularization is a reaction against a totally transcendent world view which attributes little import to the things of this earth and makes of man an historical being whose only meaning is to be found in another world. Secularization has moved decidedly away from the pole of transcendence and has been described as tending toward "...the triumph of immanence".⁵ According to Dussel⁶ it was Spinoza who, in the seventeenth century, brought together the philosophical strands which were asserting the claim that the world was absolute and autonomous and had no need to be subservient with regard to theology. The enlightenment philosophes as popularizers of science came to

⁵ Larry Shiner, "Toward a Theology of Secularization", in The Journal of Religion, Vol. 65, No. 4, Oct. 1965, p. 285.

⁶ Enrique Dussel, Op. Cit., p. 103, 107-108.

understand the universe in terms of extent and movement and believed all reality could be reduced to mathematical terms. Thus the principle of absolute immanentism. According to this same author the Church which had been the progenitor of science (as a result of the Church's age old attempt to demythologize the world) found itself turned against science and must assume at least some responsibility for the secular being viewed as opposed to the sacred and to Christianity itself.

When seen in this much wider context it is not surprising that theologians, as we shall see later, believe they can find the roots of secularization within the Judaeo-Christian tradition itself. For if this tradition is a true reflection of the human situation and the constant search for meaning involving the One and the Many, the immanent and the transcendent, matter and spirit, etc., then man's attempts to resolve these problems should be found in the biblical tradition at least as a reflection of human problems.

Finally the question of secularization may be situated within a more specific and contemporary theological context. Thomas Ogletree⁷ describes the contemporary shift in theological reflection as a shift from a theology of limits and

⁷ Thomas W. Ogletree, "From Anxiety to Responsibility: The Shifting Focus of Theological Reflection", in New Theology No. 6, New York, Macmillan, 1969, p. 46-47 and 63-64.

frustration to a theology of responsibility. By this Ogletree means that theology has shifted from a consideration of man mired in the massive absurdity of his existence, who in his weakness and hopelessness cries out and is thus open to the Christian Gospel, to a theology which considers the strength of man. This latter theology does not reflect on man as he exists on the boundaries or limits of life but as he exists at the center of life. One result of such a theology which concerns itself with the power and magnificence of man is that the notion of God as problem-solver disappears, and along with it that belief and theology which has been built upon this latter concept. The appearance of the "death-of-God" theology was one radical departure resulting from this shift in theological perspective.⁸

Unfortunately there are often no clear lines of demarcation established between what is meant by radical theology, secularization theology, "death-of-God" theology and other developments such as the new morality. Certainly the theologizing about the phenomenon of secularization antedates by many years these more recent developments. For this reason I shall for ~~the~~^{my} purposes refer to radical theology as embracing that theology dealing with the "death-of-God"

⁸ For an excellent summary of the three leading proponents of the death-of-God school, see Thomas W. Ogletree, The Death of God Controversy, Nashville, Abingdon, 1966, 127 p.

problem, new morality, etc., and restrict ~~any~~ discussion to secularization theology. By this latter term ~~we~~ I shall mean that theology which deals particularly with the historicizing of man's understanding of himself. This involves a process whereby man no longer understands himself as being one with the world and in some way controlled by it, but clearly accepts this world as possessing its own proper laws, principles and ends and as having history only inasmuch as man himself makes this history and is thus responsible for the world.⁹ It is the theology which underlies much of the stance of responsibility for the world which so marked the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which issued from the Second Vatican Council.

The very idea that secularization should become a subject for positive theological reflection was surely undreamt of by Roman Catholic theologians less than twenty-five years ago. And earlier in the present century, Protestant theologians, even some of the so-called liberal school who were later to espouse secularization theology, thundered against anything that smacked of the Church accommodating itself to the secular. Joseph Comblin says:

⁹ Cf. Albert Dondeyne's discussion on the historical dimension, or historicity, as one of the dominant characteristics of modern man. Albert Dondeyne, "The Historicity of Man According to Modern Philosophy", in Readings in European Catechetics, Brussels, Lumen Vitae, 1962, p. 73-84.

In the pre-conciliar days of the 20th century, the popes accepted secularization as an unfortunate but indubitable fact. It was the result of errors which Satan had inspired in heretical Christianity and modern philosophy. The work of the Church, consequently, was to wage war against these forces of destruction in the hope of restoring the mediaeval order.¹⁰

Among the Protestants, Barth, Brunner and even Gogarten (who as we shall see was one of the "founding fathers" of secularization theology) lashed out at the secularization of the Protestant Church during the twenties. Today such thinking is in no way representative of modern theology. Why the shift therefore? and why is it that theologians regard secularization so differently at the present time?

2. Theology and the Roots of Secularization.

The about-face of theologians with regard to secularization was the culmination of considerable theological development. For as mankind moved beyond the period of the Middle Ages, where all was embraced under the edifice of Christendom, theologians fought a rear-guard battle. They were loath to permit philosophy to throw off the tutelage of theology, to recognize the autonomy of the natural sciences (thus the Galileo affair), and they observed the

¹⁰ Joseph Comblin, "Secularization: Myths and Real Issues", in Concilium, Vol. 47, New York, Paulist, 1969, p. 124-125.

process of the Enlightenment, the political, social, scientific and technological revolutions with a certain resentment.¹¹ It was not until the present century that all of these developments in the fields of science and politics, together with the social and technological revolutions that accompanied them, forced the theologian to examine his own suppositions.

In any event, the Christian Churches today (and not only their theologians) are recognizing in secularization, a phenomenon which need not be inimical to Christianity, but is rather a process which has its roots in, and receives its justification from, the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Many theologians argue that the roots of contemporary social change lie in Scripture itself. Even if there is no direct causal relationship in a historical sense, at least there seems to be Biblical warrant for the advocacy of secularization as congruent with Christian faith.¹²

Indeed, as we shall see, there are some who do claim that secularization has been caused - whether intended or not - by this very tradition.

The radicalness of this development is heightened by the fact that theologians insist that this evolution is not

¹¹ Cf. Johannes B. Metz, Theology of the World, New York, Herder and Herder, 1969, p. 143; also p. 39-40.

¹² James F. Childress and David B. Harned (eds.), Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970, p. 14.

the result of any face-saving accommodation of Christianity to an increasingly secular society, nor is it simply the baptizing of earthly reality so as "...to build contemporary secularism back into that immediacy to God which was current in the Mediaeval World..."¹³ Rather they claim that the Christian Church has only belatedly recognized that the roots of secularization are to be found right within the Judaeo-Christian tradition. More specifically these roots are to be discovered in the peculiarly biblical manner of viewing man, and his relation to God and to the world.¹⁴

A. Protestant Theology.

Friedrich Gogarten and Dietrich Bonhoeffer broke theological ground in this area. Both believed that a proper understanding of Luther's theory of justification by faith and works righteousness constitutes the basis for a theology of secularization. Akin to St. Paul's distinction between grace and law they envisaged the distinction between faith, by which man is saved (what God does for man) and reason by

¹³ Johannes B. Metz, Op. Cit., p. 14; cf. also R. G. Smith, Secular Christianity, London, Collins, 1966, p. 171-172 and Larry Shiner, The Secularization of History: An Introduction to the Theology of Friedrich Gogarten, Nashville, Abingdon, 1966, p. 174: "Secularization is not affirmed here out of any apologetic or mediating motives but because it is seen as the legitimate consequence of faith itself."

¹⁴ Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 25.

which man performs his works of responsibility for the world. Paul's insistence that man cannot save himself by his own power, they saw as implying in some way that secular activities are devoid of religious significance.¹⁵

Both Bonhoeffer and Gogarten were also much influenced by Karl Barth's distinction between faith and religion which in another way establishes the dichotomy between the gratuitous action of God and the response, or responsibility of man. It was within this general framework of gospel-law, faith-religion, justification-works, that Bonhoeffer and Gogarten recognized the root or origin of the distinction between God and the world, between the sacred and the secular. Both firmly believed that

...the distinction between grace and law in Pauline thought and justification by faith and works righteousness in Lutheran thought demands today recognition of the distinction between the divine reality of salvation in faith and the human acceptance and responsibility for the world through the sense of reason.¹⁶

It was this understanding of New Testament Christianity that underlies their reinterpretation of the Christian significance of secularization. Because their interpretation has won such wide acceptance in the theological world it will be

¹⁵ James F. Childress and David B. Harned, Op. Cit., p. 17.

¹⁶ Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 33, cf. also p. 4.

beneficial to examine in greater detail some of their seminal ideas.

a) Friedrich Gogarten.- The German theologian Gogarten advanced the thesis that it was through Christian faith that western man came to a new understanding of himself, particularly in terms of a newly discovered maturity. This maturity had been made possible by the entrance of God, in the person of Christ, into the human condition.

Gogarten's thought¹⁷ concerning Christian maturity is based upon and revolves around his understanding of Galatians 4, 1-11. The Christian, according to Gogarten's understanding of Galatians, is an adopted son and thus an heir, who through his faith in Jesus Christ has come to maturity. He understands Paul to be saying that from now on Christians are no longer "...slaves to the elemental principles of this world..." nor are they any longer "...enslaved to 'gods' who are not really gods at all..."¹⁸ i.e., to cosmic or world powers. They are rather heirs to the world. The first result of such a realization should be that the Christian assumes a new posture in relation to the world. No longer is he responsible to the world, but

17 Cf. Larry Shiner, The Secularization of History: An Introduction to the Theology of Friedrich Gogarten, p. 27-28 and 32-33.

18 Galatians 4, 3 and 8.

he must recognize that he is responsible for the world. The result of this is, of course, a new self-understanding and a new understanding of his relationship to God and to the world.

Secondly, and as a direct consequence of this new understanding, the Christian comprehends the meaning of history in a different manner. No longer can history be considered as the transitory way station on the road to the real and eternal life of heaven. For as man comes to determine rather than to be determined by his world, he begins to shape and form his own history. History truly becomes human existence, not as created, but as developed by man. Having been freed from the bondage of some kind of mythical unity with the world to assume a stance of responsibility for the world,¹⁹ man discovers that his history is not made through the recurring cycle of an encapsulated world, but by his own determination of at least the relative future of his world.

Gogarten admits that a much more proximate source of the phenomenon of secularization can be found in the rise of science and the spirit of individualism fostered by the Renaissance. Indeed he grants²⁰ that in many ways a very secondary and anti-clerically motivated secularization was

19 Larry Shiner, Op. Cit., p. 35.

20 Ibid., p. 35.

required to bring into effect the desacralization of the world implicit in Christian faith. However Gogarten insists that the remote and primordial root of secularization is "...the desacralization of the world through Christian faith".²¹ This was a faith which denied the heathen belief in the ubiquity of gods. From this latter point of view the Christian was considered by the pre-Christian as an atheist, in the sense that he was not beholden to a multiplicity of principalities and powers.

Shiner synthesizes the basis of Gogarten's thought in this way:

The basic notion in Gogarten's understanding of the Christian origin of secularization is that man is liberated from the encompassing power of cosmos through the restoration of his two-fold responsibility as a mature son. The "maturity" points to the fact that he exercises this responsibility in complete independence, relying solely on his own rational capacity; the "sonship" points to the fact that he exercises this responsibility in the context of receiving his being as a person in openness to God and his fellow man.²²

Gogarten claims that the Christian origin of secularization had gone unrecognized for so long initially because of the Church's fight, in the early stages of Christianity, to counteract and neutralize the powers personified in sorcery, demons and other paganisms which surrounded the early

21 Ibid., p. 27.

22 Ibid., p. 34.

Church and threatened to inundate it. In this struggle the Church lost sight of her responsibility of highlighting man's responsibility for the world. Later he claims that the Mediaeval Church was guilty of transforming Christian faith into a world view to such an extent that although a basis for a stable order was provided, the result was that the mystical body became nothing more than an all encompassing power similar to that of the pre-Christian cosmos. According to Gogarten, one of Luther's greatest contribution was to deny the Church's claim to sovereignty over the world.²³

Rether than seeing science as an enemy, Gogarten recognized that its research and theorizing have enabled it to remain free of ideological commitments. He regards it therefore as a very clear expression of the freedom from the world or cosmic powers, which freedom he believes originally was made available to mankind through Christian faith.²⁴

The task of Christianity, according to Gogarten, is to break asunder the shackles whereby man would be held responsible to any world or cosmic forces and release him with all his new-found Christian maturity to a position of responsibility for the world. Gogarten believes that the Church failed in the past not simply by neglecting to

23 Ibid., p. 36-38.

24 Ibid., p. 39.

announce this latter message but particularly because it itself attempted to become a world or cosmic power. "Religion" can too easily become another cosmic power suppressing the freedom of man. By championing the autonomy and responsibility which man has received from the Creator, secularization is consequent with the Christian tradition when it insists, in Gogarten's own words, "that in every case and in every respect and in everything that belongs to it, the world is and remains what it is - just world".²⁵

b) Dietrich Bonhoeffer.- One must approach the thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with the realization that much of his theological thinking is of a very fragmentary nature. His theological enterprise was incomplete, piecemeal and often impulsive as he sought to rid Christian thinking of a kind of religion which provided no more than a crutch to the problems of human existence. Nevertheless his thinking was seminal in the whole area of secularization.

Bonhoeffer did not use the term secularization after 1939 because he felt that too often it reflected a condescending attitude of the Church toward a whole period of history. He preferred rather to speak of a "world come of

²⁵ Friedrich Gogarten, Verhangnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit, Stuttgart, Friedrich Vorwerk Verlag, 1953, p. 7, as quoted by Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 29.

age".²⁶ In this "world come of age" science, art, philosophy, and even ethics asserted their own autonomy. As with Gogarten, man was responsible for the world. Bonhoeffer pointed out that there no longer seemed to be in the world any need for God as a working hypothesis since, as mentioned above, the many problems and needs which had occasioned man's turning to him in the past, were now within the power of man himself to solve. He expressed this conviction in what has come to be his most famous and most often misunderstood statement, when he wrote that for the Christian "...the only way to be honest is to recognize that we have to live in the world etsi deus non daretur".²⁷ Bonhoeffer was by no means advocating some kind of atheistic humanism. Rather in this "world come of age" man was simply abandoning a false conception of God so as to encounter the God of the Bible who presents himself in his powerlessness and suffering and through this

26 Cf. Eberhard Bethge, "Bonhoeffer's Christology and his 'Religionless Christianity'", in Union Seminary Quarterly Review, Vol. 23, No. 1, Fall 1967, p. 68. Hans Heinrich Brunner claims that Bonhoeffer uses this term rather than "secularization" in order to avoid any implication that the present age is any more godless than an earlier Christian one, since he feared secularization would be understood as "de-Christianization" rather than "de-religionization"; cf. "Am Ende des religiösen Zeitalters", in Reformatio, IV, issue 8 (August 1955), p. 422, as quoted in footnote 53, chapter 2 of Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 163.

27 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, London, Collins, 1964, p. 121. "...even if God were not to exist."

conquers power and space in the world.²⁸ This is the God who in the person of Jesus Christ reveals himself to the believing community, and this is the God to whom man must relate.

Bonhoeffer further developed the distinction introduced by Luther and further specified by Karl Barth - the distinction between religion and faith. Religion comes from flesh, but faith from the spirit.²⁹ He went beyond Barth however in seeming to give no place whatsoever to religion even the religion that might be purified of any charge that it was but another way for men to seek and to obtain their own justification. It was for this reason that he called for a "religionless Christianity". For him this meant a Christianity or faith which no longer had need of any metaphysical trappings. For him religion was a form of metaphysical dressings or conceptualizations which had become unwanted and unnecessary accretions of biblical faith.³⁰ Secularization for Bonhoeffer was a process of man ridding himself of these many pseudo-religious accretions.

In this sense Bonhoeffer desired secularization inasmuch as he saw in it a process of dereligionization. So

28 Ibid., p. 122.

29 Cf. Eberhard Bethge, Op. Cit., p. 66.

30 Ibid.

too, he reacted against any notion of religion which would attempt to establish a dichotomy between this world and some "religious sphere" to which man might flee as to a sanctuary. Bishop Robinson points out that religious revival can mean the increase of this latter conception of religion and secularization can mean its diminution or decline - and the Churches are supposed to be in favour of the former and against the latter. Says Robinson, "It is this assumption against which Bonhoeffer is putting his question mark".³¹ Bonhoeffer wished a return to the notion of historical redemption which is redemption this side of death as opposed to the myths of salvation which offered deliverance from death in another world. There is a question of where the emphasis is placed and although Bonhoeffer has no intention of denying his belief in the fulness of life beyond this world, he is adamant that we must not seek refuge from earthly tasks in the Eternal.

The difference between a Christian hope of resurrection and a mythological hope is that the Christian hope sends a man back to his life on earth in a wholly-new way which is even more sharply defined than it is in the Old Testament.³²

³¹ John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God, London, SCM, 1963, p. 85.

³² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Op. Cit., p. 112.

Bonhoeffer never fully answered the question as to how one speaks about God in a religionless age. He hinted however that it was to be found in some form of worldly transcendence which led him to say:

...I discovered and am still discovering up to this very moment that it is only by living completely in this world that one learns to believe [...] this is what I mean by worldliness - taking life in one's stride, with all its duties and problems, its successes and failures, its experiences and helplessness. It is in such a life that we throw ourselves utterly into the arms of God and participate in his sufferings in the world and watch with Christ in Gethsemane. That is faith, that is metanoia, and that is what makes a man a Christian...³³

This was Christianity for Bonhoeffer. Thus any process which favoured dereligionalization he saw as a process initiated by God. The "world come of age" or secularization for Bonhoeffer was inspired by God and necessary if there was to be any hope of Christians assuming their obligation of responsibility for the world.

33 Ibid., p. 125.

Ever since we worked out the evil device of being religious - yes, even Christians - at the expense of the world, we have been other worldly. Other worldliness is a very pleasant state to live in. Whenever life begins to become painful and importune, you can leap into the air and ascend unburdened and unconcerned to this so-called eternal field. You ignore the present; you despise the world because you are superior to...³⁴

It is possible, and it has happened that many of Bonhoeffer's ideas have become no more than slogans and much of their meaning has thus been lost. However his thought has served to provoke a radical re-assessment of how the Christian must understand himself in relationship to his world.

From a different vantage point and different theological antecedents than Gogarten, Bonhoeffer laid the foundation for a theology of secularization which would stress man's responsibility for a world which had come of age because man had come of age. Man's autonomy in all worldly spheres is God-given and his failure, if any, is in fleeing this responsibility. This is what secularization meant for Bonhoeffer. In many ways indeed he can be understood less as a promoter of secularization and more as a "...witness to a resolutely incarnate Christianity,

³⁴ Dein Reich Komme Furche - Burcherei, issue 146, 5f, quoted by Bethge, "The Editing and Publishing of the Bonhoeffer Papers", English translation in The Andover Newton Bulletin, Vol. 52, No. 2, December 1959, p. 23 as quoted by Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., footnote 60 of chapter 2, p. 164.

simultaneously faithful to life on earth and to that God whose transcendental holiness is revealed in his mysterious proximity to men and overwhelming love for them".³⁵

Gogarten and Bonhoeffer base the development of their theology of secularization on the Pauline distinction between faith and works as understood by Luther. Thus their understanding of this phenomenon receives its justification basically from the New Testament although Bonhoeffer did see support for his thesis in the Old Testament as well.

Other scholars, notably Van Leeuwen, insist that the theological roots should be clearly traced to the Old Testament understanding of faith. They claim that the Old Testament clearly establishes a distinction between the biblical notion of man in relation to God and the notion of man's posture of responsibility for the world. Unlike her neighbours, be they Canaanites or Greeks, Israel's world was not "filled with gods". The numinous view of the world which Israel's neighbours held, never allowed their world to become wholly secular nor did it allow God to become wholly divine. In Israel it was otherwise. As Van Leeuwen describes it:

³⁵ René Marlé, "Secularization", in Lumen Vitae, English ed., Vol. 23, No. 4, December 1968, p. 591.

Here (in Israel) is raised the protest against the religion of cosmic totality, against the sacralization of all beings, against the supremacy of faith, against the divinizing of kings and kingdoms. Here a break is made with the everlasting cycle of nature and the timeless presentness of myth. Here [...] bursts open the solid oneness of the universe. Here there is proper room for man and the taste of freedom. The world is now radically secularized...³⁶

Harvey Cox applauds the distinction Van Leeuwen makes between "ontocratic" and "theocratic" cultures and the latter's contention that only a theocratic culture is open to the process of secularization.³⁷

The popularization of the whole concept of secularization as a positive process of Christianity is due in large measure to the success of Harvey Cox's The Secular City.³⁸

His treatment of the whole problem of secularization and particularly the relationship between urbanization and secularization brought into the public forum a topic which until that time had been the preserve of theologians. The seminal work of Bonhoeffer and Gogarten, had had its effect long before the appearance of this work. What is of even more interest perhaps is the influence which their thinking had in

³⁶ A. T. Van Leeuwen, Christianity in World History, London, Edinburgh House, 1964, p. 331.

³⁷ Harvey Cox, "Afterword", in the Secular City Debate, Daniel Callahan (ed.), New York, Macmillan, 1966, p. 190-191.

³⁸ Harvey Cox, The Secular City, Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective, New York, Macmillan, 1965, viii-276 p.

the development of Catholic theology. As we shall see below, in this whole area there is today a congruence of thought between Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians.

B. Roman Catholic Theology.

If there is, among Catholic thinkers, a seminal thinker in the area of secularization it is certainly Jacques Maritain. Writing in the middle thirties Maritain³⁹ although still thinking in terms of a new Christian temporal order insisted that this order be founded on a Christian "lay" conception rather than a Christian "sacred" conception of the temporal. More strongly yet Maritain⁴⁰ objected to a conception of the temporal order whereby things temporal, or the secular, were seen as nothing more than means towards a spiritual end. They were not, he insisted, to be considered nothing more than instrumental causes, serving a ministerial function with regard to the sacred, or eternal life. The temporal, or secular according to Maritain had an autonomy of its own although it remained a relative autonomy.

Of particular interest to us here, especially in relation to the preceding chapter is Maritain's recognition of

39 Jacques Maritain, Integral Humanism: Temporal and Spiritual Problems of a New Christendom, (newly trans. by Joseph W. Evans), New York, Scribner's, 1968, p. 162.

40 Ibid., p. 149-50, 177.

a process which he calls differentiation. This process he describes as involving the secular or temporal orders in modern times establishing their proper autonomy with regard to the spiritual order. The secular order he says "has come of age".⁴¹

Although in the light of present day theology Maritain's contribution may seem insignificant, it was a long step away from the scholastic philosophy which had so dominated the Roman Catholic Church and an ocean away from the following position described by Yves Congar:

...the people of the Middle Ages strongly felt that a fixed order, ordained by divine providence, existed in society as well as in the physical universe [...]. Their dominant world view was a cosmological and a cosmocentric one rather than an historical one centered on man and his designs.⁴²

It was however only with the Second Vatican Council that Roman Catholic theology definitively endorsed the image of the new man which had been growing since the end of the Second World War. This new man formed by a multitude of causes including the discovery of atomic energy and the conquest of space not only thinks and feels and lives in a new way but has indeed "...literally become someone else

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 176-177.

⁴² Yves Congar, "The Socialization of Western Society in the Middle Ages", in Concilium, Vol. 47, New York, Paulist, 1969, p. 67.

and he scarcely recognizes himself".⁴³

It is in the documents of the Second Vatican Council that the most significant if not the clearest statement of Roman Catholic approval of the process of secularization is to be found. There is no question of the Council's adopting some of the more radical positions of people such as Bonhoeffer or Gogarten but throughout all the documents and particularly in the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World there is found clear support for the autonomy of the secular and man's responsibility for the shaping and developing of this world. It is true that statements which grant autonomy to the state in affairs pertaining to the state can be found in previous declarations of the Popes.⁴⁴ However the acknowledgment of the autonomy of the state or of any other secular institution was usually a very grudging admission. With the Second Vatican Council, however, there is an obvious shift in emphasis and in position. It is with enthusiasm and respect that the Council speaks of

⁴³ Gérard Philips, "The Church in the Modern World", in Concilium, Vol. 6, New York, Paulist, 1965, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Cf. for example Leo XIII's encyclicals Diuturnum, Sapientiae Christianae and Rerum Novarum.

...the good things of life and the prosperity of the family, culture, economic affairs, the arts and the professions, political institutions, relationships, and other matters of this kind, as well as their development and progress. All of these [...] possess their own intrinsic value.⁴⁵

Although all things are ultimately destined to God, the Council made very clear that the temporal order had its own independence, goals, laws, resources, and significance. Moreover culture itself is also understood as exercising its own independence according to its own principles and thus enjoying a certain inviolability and autonomy.⁴⁶ According to the Council not only is the Christian not deterred by the Gospel from entering into and seeking to create a better earth but he is by the very forces of the Gospel more stringently constrained to do just this.⁴⁷

Perhaps no clearer statement of the autonomy of the secular and man's responsibility for this world can be found than in paragraph 36 of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World:

⁴⁵ Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Chapter 2, No. 7.

⁴⁶ Ibid., cf. also Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Part I, Chapter 4, No. 43, and Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Chapter 4, No. 36.

⁴⁷ Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Part I, Chapter 3, No. 34.

If by the autonomy of earthly affairs we mean that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and values which must be gradually deciphered, put to use, and regulated by men, then it is entirely right to demand that autonomy.⁴⁸

Further, by saying that the Church has been given by Christ no proper mission in the political and economic or social order⁴⁹ the Council implicitly states that the solution to worldly problems is to be sought not in the spiritual or sacred spheres but in the temporal or secular order.

Thus it is with the Council that Roman Catholic theology definitively changes its appreciation of the theology of secularization. As Comblin says

Today Christian thought starts out by recognizing the world's inherent values and dynamisms. It is not just a piece of inert matter that is destined to receive its shape and form from the Church.⁵⁰

It is rather a world with its proper autonomy, a world with its own intrinsic values, its own inherent laws and principles --a world with which the Church must enter into dialogue.

Many Roman Catholic theologians have used the documents of Vatican II as a springboard for further theological development. Two of the most articulate and outstanding

48 Ibid., Part I, Chapter 3, No. 36.

49 Ibid., Part I, Chapter 4, No. 42.

50 Joseph Comblin, Op. Cit., p. 126.

spokesmen in this area are Edward Schillebeeckx and Johannes B. Metz.

It is certainly from the Council and particularly from that document to which we have so often referred above, namely, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, that Schillebeeckx⁵¹ believes we can speak of Christian secularization and even of the Church's contribution to the process of secularization. He believes that particularly in the light of this latter document the Roman Catholic Church has accepted the idea of Christian secularity and the proper autonomy of secularity. His basic understanding of secularization is that it represents a shift from a vertical to a horizontal understanding of the world. The secularized perspective then considers all of reality, the whole of life within the horizon of rational understanding.⁵² This understanding of the secular is akin to the definition given by Charles Davis who says, "The secular is that area of reality the intrinsic intelligibility of which lies within man's grasp".⁵³

51 Edward Schillebeeckx in The Crucial Questions, p. 55.

52 Ibid., p. 52-53.

53 Charles Davis, God's Grace in History, London, Collins, 1966, p. 14.

Schillebeeckx⁵⁴ distinguishes four turning points in the historical development of secularization as far as philosophical and theological reflections are concerned. Summarily these are: (1) the introduction into scholastic philosophy and theology of the idea of the natura humana with its lex naturae on the ethical plane; and the introduction of the intellectus agens as opposed to Augustine's theory of divine illumination on the level of the theory of knowledge; (2) Bellarmine's theorizing about natura pura indicating a destiny of man in this world as apart from his supernatural destiny; (3) the Reformation's notion that God cannot be talked about in a meaningful way and the resulting fideism that separated the secular from the sacred and further encouraged secularization; (4) the confirmation by Kant of the division between religion and rational activity introduced by the Reformation, and Kant's conclusion that we could neither prove nor disprove the objective reality of God by pure reason nor could we derive from empirical data any concept of God since he is a transcendental ideal.

⁵⁴ Edward Schillebeeckx, God the Future of Man, (trans. by N. D. Smith), New York, Sheed & Ward, 1968, p. 56-61. The development, causes, or turning points in the growth of secularization are explained in a variety of ways by different authors. In all of them, however, there is recognizable a basic underlying unity. Cf. W. H. van de Pol, The End of Conventional Christianity, (trans. by Theodore Zuydwijk), New York, Newman, 1968, p. 61-62; and Johannes B. Metz, Op. Cit., p. 143ff.

Although Schillebeeckx grants that modern man has dropped his idea of the God who functioned as a substitute for the things which man could not do himself, he sees no reason to believe that this means that all functions of God in relation to man are in an irreversible process of disappearance. He will grant the "death-of-God" as a cultural phenomenon but obviously not as a continuing and irreversible human phenomenon. "It is therefore impossible to avoid calling the generalized statement 'we are living in a secularized world' a modern mythology."⁵⁵

Secondly let us take a look at the theology of secularization advanced by Johannes Metz. He is perhaps the most progressive Catholic theologian in developing a theology of the world and of secularization. He states categorically:

The secularity of the world, as it has emerged in the modern process of secularization and as we see it today in a globally heightened form, has fundamentally, though not in its individual historical forms, arisen not against Christianity but through it. It is originally a Christian event and hence testifies in our world situation to the power of the "hour of Christ" at work within history.⁵⁶

Metz⁵⁷ believes that the phenomenon of secularization involves in no way the disappearance of Christianity but rather the

⁵⁵ Edward Schillebeeckx, Op. Cit., p. 176.

⁵⁶ Johannes B. Metz, Op. Cit., p. 19-20.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 35.

effective taking charge of his world and history by man. Indeed it is the entrance of Jesus Christ into our history, it is the incarnation which has bestowed upon the world secularity. The whole development of the autonomy of the secular, whether it be in the sphere of the state or in the growing independence of philosophy and the sciences, is understood by Metz⁵⁸ as arising not against but in virtue of the spirit of Christianity. In the very depths of the process of secularization he believes there is a genuine Christian impulse at work. Perhaps of all writers, it is Metz who most strongly believes that the roots of the process of secularization are understandable only as springing from the Christian tradition.

The pluralization which Metz⁵⁹ sees as resulting from the process of secularization he recognizes as a challenge to the Christian who spontaneously wishes to flee the confusion of plurality but is resolutely driven to the difficulty of worldly secularity and plurality by the Christian challenge of his responsibility for the world.

Finally, although he has not written extensively on the subject of secularization, we can add the testimony of Karl Rahner to that of those theologians who accept

58 Ibid., p. 36-41.

59 Ibid., p. 145ff.

secularization as a process compatible with a true understanding and living of Christianity. Indeed Rahner goes much beyond a simple acceptance and claims that the Christian Church must enter into a dialogue with the secular if it is to be true to itself:

For the Church neither is, nor may she be an integrist force seeking to manipulate the world; but she must, in the area here under consideration, recognize the secular world as free partner in open dialogue; she must understand herself as authentic part of this secular world, part, certainly, which from within cooperates in the history of the world sovereignly directed by God alone, but, part which cannot attribute to itself a monopoly.⁶⁰

C. Sed Contra ...

Not everyone so whole-heartedly accepts secularization as deriving its inspiration from and having its roots in the biblical and Christian tradition. It is a fair assumption nevertheless to say that the majority of theologians today accept this latter position. However, there are, even among those who accept it, certain disclaimers made regarding some aspects of secularization theology. Thus Charles Davis⁶¹ comments that although he finds the

⁶⁰ Karl Rahner, "Theological Reflections on the Problem of Secularization", in Renewal of Religious Thought, Vol. 1 (The Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada, 1867-1967), Montreal, Palm, 1968, p. 136.

⁶¹ Charles Davis, Op. Cit., p. 19.

historical thesis attractive he does not wish to argue it as he believes it requires much more thorough historical investigation. Christopher Dawson,⁶² as well, in speaking of the secularization of Western Christendom totally disregards the theological argument advanced above.

Eric Mascall argues much more vigorously against the theology of secularization. He believes⁶³ that Christian social theology has completely capitulated to the outlook of the contemporary world - the result being that it is in no position to have any criterion by which it can judge the world. Rather than a process of secularization that has come about through Christian faith, Mascall⁶⁴ speaks of the secularization of Christian faith. ~~My~~ intention is not to enter the lists against Mascall but it should be pointed out that the secularization against which he inveighs is not primarily the theology of secularization concerning the autonomy and responsibility of man in regard to the world. It is rather the theology of secularization as proposed by Paul van Buren and Bishop J. A. T. Robinson. This latter is more aptly called the "death-of-God" theology,

⁶² Christopher Dawson, The Crisis of Western Education, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1961, p. 103 and 161.

⁶³ Eric L. Mascall, The Secularization of Christianity, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

as I have defined it above, rather than the theology of secularization. He is particularly opposed to their theology inasmuch as it manifests a too facile reductionism which has its roots in the demythologization of Rudolf Bultmann. Probably his strongest reaction is against van Buren who truly does secularize Christian faith.⁶⁵ Unfortunately Mascall makes no distinction between secularism and secularization and thus, while he is damning the secularism which attacks Christian faith itself, he also seems to reject out of hand the validity or even the possibility of any secularization process which would be initiated through the process of Christian faith.⁶⁶

Peter Berger,⁶⁷ as well, takes strong issue, if not with the theology of secularization, at least with the too facile relativizing of which it is guilty. Again it might be said that Berger is attacking the radical or "death-of-God" theologians rather than those supporting the theology of secularization as I have distinguished them above.

⁶⁵ Cf. Thomas W. Ogletree, Op. Cit., p. 47-74.

⁶⁶ Thus Mascall's definition of secularization leaves no opening to the sacred. Cf. Eric L. Mascall, Op. Cit., p. 184.

⁶⁷ Peter Berger, A Rumour of Angels, Modern Society, and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural, Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1969, p. 50-51.

With much greater vehemence than Charles Davis, A. E. Leon rejects the theory that secularization has its source in the Gospel. Indeed his interpretation⁶⁸ of Romans 12, 2, is to the effect that the message of the Gospel is against any secularization process whatsoever.

One of the most recent objections to secularization theology as posed by some opponents has been well stated by Joseph Comblin.⁶⁹ He rejects the religionless Christianity of Bonhoeffer as an extreme and similarly rejects the faith without ethics of Gogarten. He insists that there has never been a completely sacralized world nor can we have a completely desacralized one --and in this the sociologists would tend to agree with him.

To these we might add those whom Shiner⁷⁰ classifies as supporting the dialectical point of view regarding secularization. The latter regard religion in its essence as fundamental to the human condition and they refuse to accept secularization as an irreversible process particularly if it is understood as desacralizing all of the reality that man can know.

68 A. E. Leon, Secularization: Science Without God?, London, SCM, 1967, particularly p. 150-155.

69 Joseph Comblin, Op. Cit., p. 126-133.

70 Larry Shiner, "Toward a Theology of Secularization", p. 281-283.

Finally among the opponents ~~we~~ might mention David Martin who with Berger strays across the boundaries of his discipline to pronounce what are properly theological judgments upon a question of secularization. In many ways Martin defines secularization in his own peculiar way, in one case as actually being most present when the Church is in its strongest position of power and influence in the society. He has a tendency to construct straw men which he then demolishes supposedly rendering the theology of secularization absurd through such a process.⁷¹

There is no doubt today that the majority of theologians, as ~~we~~ have mentioned, accept the positive value of the theology of secularization although with somewhat different understandings of this term. To a large degree those who oppose this position are rather opposed to some of the radical developments that have attended the development of the theology of secularization and as ~~I~~ have tried to indicate are not usually directly opposed to the thesis ~~we~~ have been advancing.

⁷¹ David Martin, The Religious and the Secular, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, see especially Chapter 4.

3. The Ambiguity of Secularization.

There remains ever in the phenomenon of secularization what might best be termed a constitutive ambiguity.⁷² Just as there can never be a pure faith or a pure theology nicely separated from the untidy ambiguous historical existence of man, so secularization must suffer the same fate.⁷³ The moment that secularization forgets that it is based upon the radical distinction between God and the world and begins to seek meaning of all reality only in the realm of the secular, it is tinted with a basic disorientation. Rahner claims that

...secularization as the world taking its distance from the Church and the process of secularization as the endeavour of atheistic profanity are naturally bound up with one another.⁷⁴

There is always present the danger of passing from one to the other, and this is perhaps why the Second Vatican Council treats this ambiguity under the rubric of "Human Activity as

72 Cf. René Marlé, Op. Cit., p. 589.

73 R. G. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 195. A further cause of ambiguity, of which ~~we~~ make no mention here, results from the fact that the European concept of the secular involves positive opposition to religion which is not the case on the North American scene. Cf. Peter Drucker, "Religion, State and Society", in Commonweal, Vol. 64, No. 19, August 10, 1956, p. 470.

74 Karl Rahner, Op. Cit., p. 167.

Infected by Sin".⁷⁵

A yet more disquieting question reveals the depth of the ambiguity found in secularization. The problem can be stated thus: If the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition calls man to be responsible for this world and to shape and form his own history and if at the same time the Judaeo-Christian tradition believes that ~~the~~^{its} God is to be discovered in the process of History itself, then by what kind of theological acrobatics is there any place for God at all?⁷⁶ The answer ~~is~~ to this problem is that in the call of God to shape and form history and the world and to discover his presence in history itself there is always a call to accomplish this task with an openness to the mystery of surprise which has been the hallmark of the God of the Judaeo-Christian faith. In the Christian's understanding of his world, his history, and of God himself, there must always be present an openness or a creative tension prohibiting man from ever trying to find total meaning within himself or any aspect of the world or history over which he has control.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Part 1, Chapter 3, No. 37.

⁷⁶ Essentially this is the question posed by Johannes Metz, Op. Cit., p. 17-18.

⁷⁷ For a good discussion of the development of this "creative tension" in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, see G. Ernest Wright, God Who Acts, Biblical Theology as Recital, London, SCM, 1952, 132 p.

For when the secular is thus absolutized, God disappears.

Another source of ambiguity is mentioned by F. R. Barry⁷⁸ who agrees that Christians may accept secular culture as an outgrowth of Christian culture. However he warns that in so far as secularization offers greater freedom and autonomy, it may have within it a certain in-built self-destruct mechanism. He fears that a totally secularized culture might provide no unifying bonds for members of the society and that the eventual result could be anarchy. Piet Schoonenberg⁷⁹ also wonders what will happen as the manifestations of religion such as different religious actions and structures formerly associated with certain social institutions continue to diminish while these same social institutions increasingly assert their proper autonomy and separate themselves from any sacred modalities. He allows that like every other human attitude the attitude of faith is intensified through expression of this belief. Thus as the opportunity for this self-expression decreases, he wonders about the effect that this will have on the belief of individuals in society.

⁷⁸ F. R. Barry, Secular and Supernatural, London, SCM, 1969, p. 60ff.

⁷⁹ Cf. Piet Schoonenberg, "The Task of Theology Faced with Secularization", in Lumen Vitae, (English ed.), Vol. 24, No. 2, 1969, p. 254.

One possible answer to both of these questions has been suggested by René Marlé.⁸⁰ Acknowledging that secularization understood only as a negative reality will lead ultimately to some kind of degeneration, Marlé points out that the ground for social unity and the opportunity for the manifestation of faith and religious belief is most significantly present when the Christian community offers worship. He suggests, therefore, that Christian worship must constantly reaffirm the reality, power, and holiness of God.

In other words secularization must not lead to the suppression of faith's specific manifestation, which seems to be the way some are inclined to envisage it. Nothing could be more hazardous for secularization itself. If anything, it calls for an intensifying of these manifestations, in the sense of an ever-increasing authenticity; and similarly, if they respond to the revelation of God's absolute holiness, these very "acts" of faith establish and promote a well-balanced secularization.⁸¹

There is no doubt that secularization involves risk and is ambiguous. But this, as modern Christianity is coming to realize anew, is implicit in the act of Christian faith. Harvey Cox⁸² puts the matter well, albeit in colloquial fashion, when he describes secularization in terms of a crap game-- a crap game in which secularization "raises the

⁸⁰ René Marlé, Op. Cit., p. 593.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Harvey Cox, Op. Cit., p. 192.

stakes" of the game. In a secularized world man can do more harm or more good, his mistakes will be costlier and his virtues more salutary. The ambiguity will remain, indeed be heightened by the higher stakes. However if man does not respond to the call of God to take effective control of the world then the results may be more catastrophic both for the world and for the Christian community, than ever before.

4. Autonomy: Relative or Absolute?

Throughout ~~our~~ discussion ~~we~~ have insisted that the phenomenon of secularization properly understood requires the autonomy of the secular. But as is evident from ~~the~~ discussion above, the result of this autonomy of the secular becoming absolute (which it threatens to do constantly) would be the disappearance from society of God and the Christian faith. The question must be asked as to what kind of autonomy it is that man exercises in his function of responsibility for things secular, for this world. When we say that science or art, or politics is an autonomous enterprise with its own proper laws and principles does this signify that it is beholden to no other order? Or if its autonomy is relative, then to what order is it relative and in what way?

It must be recognized that autonomy for the various worldly institutions means allowing them to be free according

to the principles inherent in their very created being. The role of Christian faith is primarily to support the freedom of these institutions to follow their own laws and principles. At the same time it is the function of Christian faith to insure that no one of these worldly or secular institutions, be it science, politics, or whatever, seeks to become totally explicative of all reality in its own right.

Despite his plea that Christians recognize the worldliness and thus the autonomy of the secular sphere, Bonhoeffer himself recognized that the autonomy of the world as demanded by Christian faith cannot understand itself unless it also recognizes the relation that it has with Christian faith.⁸³ Similarly in his reflections on Gogarten's theology Shiner warns against that secularization in which man's independence is divorced from any recognition of the divine mystery. Thus he says:

When autonomy is experienced as absolute, the world is transformed into a neutral field of objects and the person is transmuted into a world-viewing subject. In the original autonomy of man opened up in faith, independence meant the maturity of the son who bore his freedom in the knowledge of his rootedness in the mystery of his life with others in the world.⁸⁴

⁸³ R. G. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 179.

⁸⁴ Larry Shiner, The Secularization of History, p. 43.

Thus if man's mastery of the physical universe is not understood within the framework of his relationship to God the possible result will be a new form of slavery to the forces of the world. If the social and political development of mankind released by the process of secularization is not leavened by the notion of the Kingdom of God the result will be totalitarianism. Only a desperate nihilism can be the final result if the secular critique of reality refuses to be open to the mystery and possibility of the divine.⁸⁵

It is for like reasons that the Second Vatican Council while insisting on the autonomy of the new movements and dynamisms which secularization made possible, nonetheless insisted that "These movements must be penetrated by the spirit of the gospel and protected against any kind of false autonomy".⁸⁶ Likewise, throughout all its documents the Council reiterated that the autonomy of the secular order does not mean that man must be or can be conceived of as existing in total independence from his creator.

It is clear then that the autonomy exercised by the secular or temporal order must be a relative autonomy. It must in some way be related to, conditioned by and open to

⁸⁵ Cf. Lesslie Newbigin, Honest Religion for Secular Man, London, SCM, 1966, p. 38-39.

⁸⁶ Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Part 1, Chapter 4, No. 41.

the realm of the transcendent, to the reality of the divine. The question still remains however: what is the mode of the relationship of this relative autonomy to the divine? The answer to this question is nuanced differently by different theologians. To give some idea of the extent of the explanations offered we can examine two polar positions, one reflecting the thinking of Jacques Maritain and the other representing the thinking of Schillebeeckx and Metz.

For Maritain the secular or temporal orders can no longer be considered as merely means to the end of eternal life but must be regarded as intermediary or infravalent ends. They have total meaning, however, only inasmuch as they are related to the absolute or ultimate end which is God or the sacred. In Maritain's own words:

More precisely still one may say that the "good of civil life" is an ultimate end in a given order (finis ultimus secundum quid), relative itself and subordinated (and, by this title, intermediate or infravalent) to the absolute ultimate end (finis ultimus simpliciter).⁸⁷

For Maritain then, there is a clear and evident distinction between the respective autonomies of the secular and the sacred --the secular having a relative autonomy and the sacred an absolute autonomy. Schillebeeckx and Metz see the relationship between the sacred and the secular in somewhat

⁸⁷ Jacques Maritain, Op. Cit., p. 134, footnote 3.

different terms. The role of the sacred, at least as it is expressed in the Christian faith, is to criticize (both positively and negatively) secular society and to hold out ideals and directions after which the secular must strive.⁸⁸ There is no question but that these authors grant only relative autonomy to the secular. However, although they grant a correspondingly absolute autonomy to the sacred it is in terms startlingly different from those used by Maritain. For them the absolute autonomy of the sacred or of Christian faith is exercised in its role of "calling beyond" - that is to say, the role of the Church and of Christian faith is to speak a word which constantly calls man beyond his understanding of the secular situation. It is in reality this "calling beyond" that provides the ultimate criterion and in this sense establishes the absolute autonomy of the sacred.

If secularization therefore is to avoid destroying rather than developing "this world" it must be aware of its own relativity. It must be open to the transcendent mystery of God which acts as the ultimate criterion of its own validity and truth.

⁸⁸ Edward Schillebeeckx. "The Magisterium and the World of Politics", in Concilium, Vol. 36, New York, Paulist, 1968, p. 34; and Johannes B. Metz, Op. Cit., p. 107-140.

5. A Definition of Terms.

Our discussion of the ambiguity and autonomy of secularization has already given indication of the need for defining more clearly the terms involved. The ambiguity in secularization is considerably lessened if we distinguish between secularization as a historical process affirming and reinforcing the distinction between the sacred and the secular and secularism understood as the deviation of secularization into a closed system which seeks to explain all of reality in terms of the world. So too the respective autonomy of the sacred and the secular becomes much clearer when secularism is understood as the absolutizing of the relative autonomy of the secular with the consequent exclusion of any autonomy whatsoever being granted to the sacred.

Theologians seem much more fond of making the distinction between secularization and secularism than do the sociologists --which should not be surprising since what is required here is a value judgement pertaining more to the realm of theology rather than to sociology.

Secularism can take as many forms as there are 'isms which seek to explain all of reality in terms of closed world views. It may be the expression of one 'ism or a combination of many. Thus positivism, functionalism, rationalism and dialectical materialism, all attempt to give an

all inclusive answer to the meaning of man and his world. Positivism, for example, restricts any certainty in human knowledge to the realm of direct experience and its classifications. On this basis it seeks to establish itself as a guide for human life. Science commits these same faults

...when it ceases searching for meaning in its particular area and succumbs to the demand for unity by claiming ultimate wholeness or meaning on the basis of its partial truths [...]. What was a valid secular method for investigating particular truths is then turned into an ideology, scientism.⁸⁹

In a similar way every other 'ism seeks to establish absolute autonomy for its claim as a system explicative of all reality. What is involved in secularism is an attempt by man to make of himself and of what he can know the absolute criterion against which all reality is measured. The final result of such an attempt can only be that man falls back into a state of bondage to the cosmic spirits of the universe, for once again he has clothed the world with the vesture of ultimacy.

In an inverted sense secularism can also be predicated of the substitution of religious structures and authority for the Gospel. Thus clericalism and ecclesiastical triumphalism which will not allow the world or faith to exercise their proper autonomy, can equally be called a form

⁸⁹ Harry E. Smith, Op. Cit., p. 73.

of secularism.

Secularization then is the process, secularism the ideology. In Van Leeuwen's words "The first is a continuing historical process, the second a fixed and absolutized ideology with a tendency toward pagan or nihilistic totalitarianism".⁹⁰ It is this distinction which ~~we shall~~ ^{I shall} use as a working distinction throughout the rest of the study, although there are certain admitted difficulties in its application.⁹¹ Once again the basis of the distinction will be that secularization is a process which not only distinguishes the sacred from the secular but also grants the proper autonomy to both. Secularism on the other hand is the ideology that seeks to explain all of reality in terms of the secular and claims absolute autonomy for itself.

For purposes of clarification we shall henceforth use the adjective secular to refer to the process of secularization and the adjective secularist to refer to the ideology of secularism. Thus the word secular will correspond more or less to the natural, to the world enjoying its proper autonomy; and secularist to the natural or the world in various forms usurping the prerogative of total explanation.

90 A. T. Van Leeuwen, Op. Cit., p. 334.

91 One obvious difficulty is that all do not use these terms in the same sense. Another more serious problem relates to the ambiguity within the process of secularization itself.

6. The Theological Criteria.

As did the sociologists, theologians tend to divide roughly into two camps in their appreciation of secularization. The split does not seem as decisive in theology however, the reason probably being that the theological opponents of secularization are in an ever increasing minority. For if ~~the~~^{this} brief overview of theological thought reveals one thing, it is that secularization is no longer looked upon as the enemy by the majority of Christian theologians. Although there remain a few who maintain that secularization is inimical to Christianity, more and more theologians regard this phenomenon as a process rooted in Christian faith --even if a few remain somewhat dubious about the cogency of the historical argument.

Thus the theologian increasingly tends to accept secularization as intended by God and flowing from the Judaeo-Christian tradition, quite apart from whether it has been consciously intended by the faith traditions or the individual believers of both past and present.

In the broad stream of Christian theology, theologians recognize that secularization involves three new developments which affect man's understanding of himself. First of all there is man's new more historical self-understanding in which he realizes his own freedom as permitting

him to give shape and form to his future history --a history which he obviously cannot absolutely control, but a future over which he exercises at least relative control. Secondly, man sees himself in a totally new relationship with the world. Now he is responsible for the world. Too often in the past he seemed to have been responsible to the world. The powers and principles of the natural universe, once considered as sacred, have been stripped of this illusion and no longer control man but are subject to him. Finally the principle of ecclesiastical hegemony no longer holds sway. Man recognizes that different human activities and institutions possess their own autonomy, and so he no longer feels that he must be under the absolute tutelage of the Christian religion or its leaders. There has been therefore a fundamental change in man's self-understanding brought about by this process of secularization. And this new self-understanding includes within it the probability that man must reinterpret his existence again and again as he continues to discover who he is in relation to the world and to the God of Christian faith who constantly calls him beyond his present self-understanding.

The theologian then, accepts secularization as a positive process in the development of man. In short the theologian accepts secularization as basically good.

Most contemporary theology, as well, acknowledges that all "worldly enterprises", be they scientific, artistic, political, or whatever, have their own proper ends, values, laws and principles which are peculiar to them. Moreover it is according to these laws and principles that each of these enterprises must be governed in the achievement of its particular end and purpose. Thus the secular, the things of this world, have their own autonomy, albeit a relative autonomy. What is clear is that no longer can this world be

...compared to the rush baskets that the old monks of the Scythian desert wove during the day and unwove in the evening in order to pass their time without sinning while they awaited the eternity of an anticipated but as yet totally unrealized future.⁹²

Theology is also clearly conscious of the ambiguity of secularization. It recognizes the tendency of every human activity or institution to go beyond the limits of its competence and seek to absolutize its own autonomy. Almost every human activity suffers the temptation to present itself as containing all that is necessary to explain and give total meaning to all reality. Thus the temptation for secularization to degenerate into secularism.

⁹² Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the New Earth", in Knowledge and the Future of Man, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, p. 262.

It is the role of Christian faith not only to distinguish the sacred and the secular, but also to safeguard this distinction lest secularization become secularism -- lest the part become the whole, the relative adopt the guise of the absolute. Man naturally seeks wholeness and unity and all too easily attributes wholeness to a particular discipline or social institution. Faith cannot purport to offer all the answers, nor must it become an all inclusive world view --but it can and does offer to man the promise of ultimate meaning. Its task is to ensure that man does not entrap himself in any closed world view.

Summarily, then we can say that the reflection and judgement of theology on the phenomenon of secularization establishes the following criteria according to which this phenomenon can be evaluated and recognized:

- 1) The process of secularization is not simply indifferent, it is a good process initiated by God according to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.
- 2) Secular activities, enterprises and social institutions enjoy their own proper autonomy, replete with laws, principles and ends proper to themselves.
- 3) Secularization is an ambiguous process because of the tendency of secular pursuits to absolutize their relative autonomy and to become some form of secularism.

- 4) Secularization stands in constant need of the judgment of faith because of the above mentioned tendency.

These then are the basically normative criteria which theology provides for the evaluation of secularization. In a negative sense they provide a certain descriptive criterion, as well, inasmuch as in making the distinction between secularization and secularism, theology says what secularization is not.

CHAPTER III

SECULARIZATION IN EDUCATION: ESTABLISHING CRITERIA

It has already been mentioned that in their definitions of the terms secular, secularism, or secularization modern dictionaries invariably make some reference to education. Common usage of the term therefore indicates that in this area secularization has special significance.

The sociologist as well, in his treatment of secularization, often regards the institution of education as one of the central areas in society which is affected by this phenomenon. Thus Goodridge¹ claims that secularization is a historical development by which the legal and educative non-dependence on religion tends to be established. And David Martin² notes that among the areas of life in which secularization occurs one can recognize the laicization of the professions and particularly of teaching.

There is certainly no doubt but that secularization has had and continues to have a profound effect upon the development of education. This being so, a continuing study

1 R. M. Goodridge, "Relative Secularization and Religious Practice", in Sociological Analysis, Vol. 29, No. 3, Fall 1968, p. 133.

2 David Martin, The Religious and the Secular, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, p. 49.

of this phenomenon in relation to education is indicated.

As Roucek points out,

There is no question that what is taught, why it is taught and how it is taught is influenced by dynamic social forces and "study of these forces is a continuing responsibility of all educators".³

However, in order that such social forces --in this case secularization --be studied and examined there must be clearly established certain criteria whereby these forces can be recognized, identified and evaluated, not simply as general social processes, but specifically as manifested within education itself. What is surprising, when one investigates the process of secularization in education, is the looseness and lack of precision with which the term is used. For a phenomenon which is quite complicated and has had such a marked effect on education there is surprisingly little nuance given to the understanding of the term even by educators who use it quite freely. Thus we can only agree with the insistence of Glock and Stark that "The necessary starting point for studying any phenomenon is to establish criteria by which it may be identified and distinguished from all other criteria".⁴

³ Joseph S. Roucek, "The Churches and the Control of the Curriculum with Special Reference to the United States", in The World Year Book of Education 1966, London, Evans, p. 253.

⁴ Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, Religion and Society in Tension, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1965, p. 3.

The purpose of this chapter will be to demonstrate how the general criteria provided by sociology and theology can, in the case of the sociological criteria, furnish the basis for establishing more specific criteria by means of which the presence or absence of secularization in the field of education can be indicated, and in the case of the theological criteria, provide a basis upon which secularization, if present, can be evaluated.

This discussion concerning secularization in education shall deliberately prescind from the perhaps irresolvable argument concerning the nature of education and whether more properly it should be considered an art or a science. However to help dissipate some of the opaqueness which often surrounds education problems due to the complexity of this discipline, and to provide us with a model with which to work, for our purposes we shall define education in a general way as the theory and practice of learning, of school management, and human development that endeavours to understand and to implement the process of deliberate cultural transmission.⁵ Moreover, this discussion shall have reference only to formal education, that is, to social systems whose primary purpose is an educative one.

⁵ Cf. Kingsley Price, Education and Philosophical Thought, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 1967, p. 2-3.

Before any attempt to determine more specific criteria and to evaluate the processes which they indicate, an examination of some of the traditional criteria or ways of recognizing secularization in education may provide further indication of the necessity of establishing more exact criteria in this field.

1. A Critique of Traditional Criteria.

The Dictionary of Education defines secularization as "the removal of religious control from schools or religious materials from the curriculum".⁶ Implicit in this definition is the fact that it is the state which now claims responsibility for and control of education. In France this claim was put succinctly and forcefully by La Chalotais many years ago.

I claim for the nation an education dependent upon the state alone, because education belongs essentially to the state, because every nation has an inalienable and imprescriptible right to instruct its members, because in short the children of the state should be brought up by those who are members of the state.⁷

Unfortunately most authors tend to go little beyond the generalization of the above mentioned definition or claim. The

⁶ Dictionary of Education, Carter V. Good (ed.), New York, McGraw-Hill, 1959, p. 492.

⁷ As quoted by George Z. F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys (eds.), The World Year Book of Education, London, Evans, 1966, p. 6.

criterion upon which such definitions or claims are based, is the very general criterion of the degree of separation between church and state. Thus William W. Brickman⁸ in an excellent historical analysis of the secularization of the public school system in the United States of America speaks of secularization exclusively in terms of the separation of church and state and the expunging of religion from the school curriculum. More specifically, what he speaks of is the termination of the granting of public money to any school system under church auspices and control, and the removal of religious education, bible reading, prayers, hymns, and opening religious exercises from the curriculum of the school. These are his criteria for secularization in education. Brubacher too, sees secularization in terms of the exclusion of religion from the curriculum and the refusal of the state to subsidize the various church schools which had been in existence before the American Revolution and which had been supported by the particular states most often as an established religion. Commenting on the First Amendment to the Federal Constitution of the United States, Brubacher claims that "The educational counterpart of the political divorce of church and state was the exclusion of

⁸ William W. Brickman, "The History of the Secularization of the Public School in the U. S. A.", in The World Year Book of Education 1966, p. 135-139.

religion from the public school curriculum".⁹ On the Canadian scene, the works of C. E. Phillips and C. B. Sissons,¹⁰ although not referring to secularization by name, do describe a process of the declining responsibility of the church and an increasing responsibility of the state in educational matters. Phillips, as well, makes mention of the presence of religion in the public schools but says little as to its increase or decrease except in relation to periods of war.¹¹ On a more international level and in considerably more nuanced fashion, Christopher Dawson¹² describes the universalizing of education, its consequent tendency to become a state responsibility, and eventually in some way a rival of the church. He decries the rejection of religion from education which accompanied the process of secularization. Similar criteria are used by Nicholas Hans¹³ in his

9 John S. Brubacher, A History of the Problems of Education, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, p. 318.

10 Cf. Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada, Toronto, Gage, 1957, xiii-626 p., especially chapters 8 and 17; and C. B. Sissons, Church and State in Canadian Education, Toronto, Ryerson, 1959, x-417 p., passim.

11 Charles E. Phillips, Op. Cit., p. 326-333.

12 Christopher Dawson, The Crisis of Western Education, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1961, p. 101-115.

13 Cf. Nicholas Hans, "Secularism in Eastern Europe", in The World Year Book of Education 1966, p. 160-174.

description of secularism in many of the countries of Northern Europe and by Roucek¹⁴ when speaking of the relation of religion to curriculum in Latin America, Asia and the communist world. Basically as criteria of secularization in education these authors speak of the exclusion of religion from the curriculum and of increased state responsibility for and control of education occasioned particularly by dint of governmental refusal to grant public monies to church controlled schools.

One other completely different understanding of secularization advanced in educational circles should also be mentioned here. By the phrase "secularization in education", Harry E. Smith¹⁵ understands the fragmentation of knowledge and conflicting claims to absolute truth which are put forth by the different sciences and disciplines as they become more and more specialized. He identifies it with the breakdown of a metaphysical world view and with the proliferation of models or systems or, as he calls them, "truth 'stand points'".¹⁶

14 Joseph S. Roucek, Op. Cit.

15 Harry E. Smith, Secularization and the University, Richmond, Virginia, John Knox, 1968, p. 20 and 78.

16 Ibid., p. 21.

We can address ourselves immediately to Smith's understanding of secularization in education and say that properly speaking Smith is not referring to secularization in education but to secularization as it takes place in the different sciences and disciplines. When he asserts that each of the different disciplines is laying claim to absolute truth --probably in virtue of the realization that it is governed by its own laws, principles, and ends --this cannot be conceived of as secularization in the enterprise we call education as much as secularization in the particular discipline or science concerned.

The criticism which might be levelled against the criteria in virtue of which Brickman, Brubacher, Roucek, Dawson, Hans and others describe secularization, is that such criteria are in some ways too general and in other ways incomplete. They are too general in the sense that these authors do not sufficiently distinguish between the many different processes involved in the exclusion or expunging of religion from the school and the increasing control of the state over education. Perhaps the most important distinction they lack is the one between secularization and secularism. Such distinctions are necessary to truly understand the meaning of secularization in education for as we shall see below the exclusion of certain types of religious phenomena from the school may be considered secularization,

whereas the exclusion of all religious phenomena is tantamount to secularism. So too, other processes of secularization, though good in themselves, can easily become a form of secularism.

These criteria are, as well, incomplete inasmuch as they fail to include certain important dimensions of secularization in education, some of which I shall consider below. For the present I wish simply to draw attention to the process of secularization within the enterprise of the discipline itself. It is indeed ironical that this dimension of secularization seems to be totally ignored by educators when they speak of secularization and education. For this particular process of secularization arises not from the action of any agency exterior to education, such as the state, or science, or the church, but from education itself. Although it may be agreed that the increasing responsibility for education as assumed by the state is an important criterion for recognizing secularization, inasmuch as it indicates a distancing between church or religion and education, there remains this yet more radical form of secularization which seems to go unnoticed among those who speak of secularization in education. It might even be argued that in many ways the wresting-away of the control of education by the state from the church is more properly considered as a phenomenon of secularization in relation to the political rather

than the educational sphere.

What most writers have ignored when speaking of secularization in education is the fact that in its most precise sense secularization in education occurs when education itself according to its own inner principles, laws and ends, asserts its own autonomy, not only from the church but from the state as well. It is this failure to appreciate the growing autonomy of education itself that constitutes the most serious drawback in the traditional criteria that are advanced for the recognition of secularization in this field.

In the development of criteria which follows below, there is no intention of totally rejecting these traditional criteria which have been criticized. Rather, I shall be attempting to demonstrate how these traditional criteria should be made more specific and more complete and have some normative standard against which the processes they reveal can be evaluated.

Simply then, this chapter attempts to establish more exact criteria and thus go a step further in the recognition and evaluation of secularization in education.

The two preceding chapters have furnished us with criteria by which the general processes of secularization in society can be recognized and evaluated. At risk of repetition, in the next two sections of the present chapter our attempt will be first of all to find, within education

itself, more specific processes which will further particularize the general descriptive criteria already established from sociology. This will provide us with more specific descriptive criteria for recognizing the presence of secularization in a given educational system. Secondly we will show more specifically how secularization, if recognizable in a educational system, is to be evaluated according to the normative criteria which we have derived from theology.

2. Specifying the Descriptive Criteria for Education.

Sociology provides differentiation, its negative counterpart desacralization, and transposition as processes which can serve as descriptive criteria for the recognition of secularization.

a) The first question to be answered therefore is: what processes are particular manifestations of differentiation in education and can thus serve as more specific criteria for the recognition of secularization in education? Differentiation has been recognized as the process whereby the various structural parts of a social system are distinguished through specialization. In its simplest terms it describes a process whereby within one agency or society or social institution there develops recognition of different parts which gradually assume more specialized functions. To clarify this concept of differentiation and particularly

differentiation in education some brief historical context is demanded.

At the beginning of the period which we refer to as Modern History most people considered education not only to have been the responsibility of the church but also to have been monopolized by the church. This constitutes a misunderstanding of the historical context. It is too simplistic an outlook. Indeed, the same thing might equally be said of politics, or of the legal system. What must be recognized is that until the beginning of the modern period the secular and the sacred were so intertwined as to be practically inseparable. Western society was Christian society and to say in most instances whether it was the church or the state which was acting in a particular situation is extremely difficult. Most often the actor was Christian society (or in earlier times Roman or Greek or Egyptian society) where the roles of church or religion and state were not seen as clearly distinct. But as the secular state came to be recognized as distinct from the church, then many of the other institutions also became more specialized and tended to gravitate either in the direction of the state or the church.

More specifically then, as the state more clearly recognized and accepted its role of responsibility in education, it achieved increasing autonomy in the educational sphere accompanied by a corresponding decreasing autonomy

on the part of the church. In its most obvious sense therefore differentiation takes place in relation to education in that process whereby the general and nondistinguished responsibility of society for education becomes more clearly identified as a responsibility pertaining to the state and decreasingly considered as a responsibility of the church. The growing universality of education coupled with the increasing pluralism of most states has heightened the distinction of roles to be played by church and state and thus specialized or differentiated their roles vis-à-vis education.

One particular way in which the process of differentiation in education can be measured is by the respective responsibility for and control of curriculum by church and state. This control or responsibility may be totally in the hands of the state, the church having no word at all to say in the constitution and development of curriculum. A second possibility is that the church have a function of "overseeing" curricular developments and that this role be officially recognized by the state.¹⁷ A third possibility would be that the church exert influence through particular groups or religious committees bringing pressure to bear upon the state so that curriculum develops in a specific way. Each of

¹⁷ Cf. Vernon Mallinson, "Morals without Religion in Continental Western Europe", in The World Year Book of Education 1966, p. 231.

these instances indicates a different degree of responsibility for education by the church and thus varying degrees of differentiation. According as one can recognize that the state assumes more and more control and responsibility for curriculum he can recognize the presence of differentiation and thus of secularization in education.

A similar criterion could be established regarding the relation of church and state in the training of teachers, and in the field of educational research. Again another manifestation of differentiation in education would be in the realm of determination of the aims of education. To the degree that the state would increasingly give direction to the purpose of education and limit the role of the church in determining the ends of education there would be a recognizable process of differentiation and thus of secularization present.

To this point we have discussed certain processes regarding the increasing responsibility for education assumed by the state in relation to education. These certainly can be described as processes of differentiation and represent recognizable criteria for identifying the process of secularization in education. In many ways, however, it should be noted that the fundamental process herein involved is the process of the differentiation of the political sphere from the church or religious sphere. It could be said that the

above criteria primarily describe the secularization of politics and only derivatively involve the secularization of education. They do nonetheless constitute criteria for recognizing secularization in education as there is a clear distinction of roles being established.

The most radical process of differentiation in education is a process which has become visible only in recent years. It is the process of education itself becoming specialized to the extent that it is recognizing more clearly its own inherent laws, principles and ends, and is therefore beginning to assert its autonomy not only in relation to the church but in relation to the state as well. John Dewey's contention that education is a science whose proper sources are the educative processes themselves, highlights this development in modern education.¹⁸ He further contends that the education process has no end beyond itself and constitutes its own end.¹⁹ Perhaps his most forceful claim for the autonomy of education was expressed when he said:

¹⁸ Cf. John Dewey, The Sources of a Science of Education, New York, Liveright, 1929, p. 32-33.

¹⁹ John Dewey, Democracy and Education, an Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, New York, Macmillan, 1916, p. 59.

Education is autonomous and should be free to determine its own ends, its own objectives. To go outside the educational function and borrow objectives from an external source is to surrender the educational cause. Until educators get the independence and courage to insist that educational aims are to be formed as well as executed within the educative process, they will not come to consciousness of their own function.²⁰

The German scholar Otto Willmann²¹ has a similar understanding of education as a science whose object is the process of education although he does not go as far as Dewey concerning the determination of ends by education itself. I will have occasion to discuss this further in ~~the~~^{the} section dealing with normative criteria. For our purposes here it is sufficient to note that if a process is recognizable wherein education is determining its own laws, principles and aims then such provides us with a criterion for recognizing a very clear development of differentiation and thus of secularization in education.

Perhaps an example might clarify: the Province of Ontario a few years ago had a massive publicity campaign designed to keep students in school. At its best the theme of this campaign was "learn to earn". This was not unusual

²⁰ John Dewey, The Sources of a Science of Education, p. 74.

²¹ Otto Willmann. The Science of Education in its Sociological and Historical Aspects (trans. from the 5th German edition by Felix M. Kirsch), Vol. 1, Latrobe, Pa., Archabbey Press, 1930, p. 72.

as much of the educational policy formulated in recent years has been so influenced by business and industry that it has had as its aim the graduating of properly trained personnel to staff a burgeoning technological industry. Education systems have usually accepted this aim of education presented by the industrial world. To the degree that education asserts its own autonomy it certainly rejects this aim of education as proposed by the state and the commercial interests of society, and insists that training is not its role but rather the education of the whole person. This would be an example of differentiation in education, of the increasing autonomy of education in determining its own aims. It would, moreover, appear to be the kind of differentiation which will develop more and more in the future. This kind of differentiation will provide the most relevant criteria for recognizing the process of secularization in education in the future if not today.

One point that should be particularly noted in the attempt to determine more specific kinds of differentiation in education is that all of the processes which have been mentioned and which can serve as criteria for the recognition of secularization in education make no mention whatsoever of the role of religion, religious exercises, religious education, bible readings etc., in the school itself. This matter of the presence or absence of religion, religious education,

bible readings, etc., pertains to the process of desacralization. Quite simply what must be underlined here is that this process of differentiation is based upon the increasing specialization of the state and of the "science" of education, inasmuch as both increasingly take responsibility for and claim autonomy over education systems.

However, the school system which is thus "taken over" need not itself be a neutral or an areligious system but can be a Christian, Jewish, Moslem or any other kind of system. For example, in Spain where the state took over the responsibility of education which formerly had been in church hands, there was an evident process of differentiation at work and yet the education system that remained was nevertheless a totally Christian system. The responsibility and control of education is however, primarily in the hands of the state and not of the church. Similar parallels can be found in other countries today.²²

Differentiation as a criterion for the recognition of secularization in education can be specified in virtue of the different processes which we have indicated above. Each

²² Cf. Nicholas Hans, Op. Cit., p. 160-161.

Hans talks about the many meanings secularization can have in relation to education. He points out that even Gallicanism (the refusal by France to allow Rome to interfere in her internal affairs) can be considered as secularization, and that the different historical traditions of Eastern and Western Europe give different meanings to the term.

of these latter can serve as a criterion for the recognition of secularization in education. As a more general conclusion to all of these criteria we might say that if differentiation in a general way is the process whereby various structural parts of a social system are distinguished through specialization, then differentiation in education is the process whereby the educational part of a social system becomes more and more the responsibility of the state and of education itself and less and less the responsibility of the church. One result, of course, is that the respective control of church and state in education comes down ever more heavily in favour of the state. When this process is easily recognizable there is present a practical criterion for the recognition of secularization in education. The autonomy of education itself is only in its initial stages of development and is not as clearly evident as the process of differentiation between the role of the church and the state in education. It remains however a real criterion but one which is of recent vintage and therefore is less clear and more difficult to apply at the present time.

b) Desacralization constitutes the negative aspect of differentiation and in this sense it represents a criterion for the recognition of secularization. It involves a decreasing sense of the sacred as man attempts to face and master his world through the power of his unaided reason. A

particular manifestation of this process is seen in the removal of the sacred or the religious from social institutions and from the meanings that man gives to his world.

The most obvious indication of this process in the field of education relates to the teaching of religion or religious education in a particular school system. If it can be observed that there is a process of expunging religious education from the curriculum then there is present a particularization of the desacralization process, for this certainly represents a removing of the sacred from a social institution. In actual fact this process can occur in many ways but generally follows the pattern of moving from a situation where religious education involves teaching or preaching or even proselytizing, to a situation of teaching about religion and/or comparative religions, to an eventual abolition of religion as a subject in a particular school system.

A second clearly recognizable indication of desacralization which can also serve as a more specific criterion for identifying secularization in education concerns the use of religious hymns, prayers, opening exercises, bible readings, etc., within a school system. To this might be added, as well, the presence of ministers of religion within a school system either as visitors or as recognized teachers of religion. According as one can determine a decrease in

these latter expressions of religion then there is another particularized criterion for recognizing desacralization and thus the process of secularization in education. Finally, a more general (and yet perhaps the most important) sign of desacralization is when there is evidence of a recognizable change in the presence and role of religion in curriculum. By this latter term is meant

...the modern definition of curriculum as "all those activities in which children engage under the auspices of the school." This includes not only what pupils learn, but how they learn it, and how the teachers help them to learn. If pupils see and discuss a film, visit an industrial plant, compile a report on wild flowers as seen in the woods nearby, study in the library, or plan and manage a social event, they are engaged in curricular activity. And if a pupil is encouraged or discouraged by a teacher, that experience is also part of his curriculum. The traditional schools are largely concerned with what the teacher taught and how effective he was in conducting an orderly class. The modern school is more concerned with what the pupils learn, why and how they learn it, and whether they will continue to be disposed to learn. All of this, and much more is part of the school curriculum.²³

The questions which follow, then, are: Is religion an integral part of curriculum? Has its role increased or decreased over a period of time? And if in answer to these questions religion is discovered to be playing an increasingly

²³ Living and Learning, The Report of the Provincial Committee on the Aims and Objectives of Education in the Schools of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario Department of Education, Newton, 1968, p. 75.

insignificant role in curriculum development then again this is a visible process which constitutes a more particular criterion for the recognition of desacralization and thus secularization in education. As an example of the use of this criterion one might examine the reading program or social studies program over a period of years to determine whether religion was increasingly or decreasingly present in these parts of the curriculum.

These three processes then can constitute criteria which further specify desacralization and if present in an educational system indicate the process of secularization. As a summary and synthesis of these three processes, desacralization can be said to be present in an education system where there is observable a decrease in the presence of religion in, and the influence of religion on, curriculum.

c) Transposition has been described as the process whereby knowledge, behaviour patterns and other social institutions once considered as being of divine origin are transformed into phenomena of human creation and responsibility. There is one particular area in education where the process of transposition is particularly evident. This is the area of moral education and it provides a specific manifestation of transposition which can serve as a particular criterion for recognizing secularization in education. Transposition can be said to be occurring in moral education when the

basis of moral activity is no longer presented as being rooted in a divine imperative or a religious commandment or value but in values and rules of conduct discoverable by human reason, particularly through empirical science.

We are speaking here of a secularized morality --not morality, however, as secularized in the sense proposed by people such as David Little.²⁴ Little's understanding of the secularization of morality is that the Church no longer exercises coercive religious controls over the moral belief of society. But he does not believe that this constitutes any denial of the traditional notion that the basis of morality springs from religious belief itself. The secularization of morality of which it is question here is fittingly termed transposition for it indicates a process whereby moral behaviour finds its roots not in the Western Christian tradition, but in principles once considered Christian but now justified through a secular system of ethics derived either from education itself, from philosophy, or from some other science, particularly the behavioural sciences. Sorokin²⁵

²⁴ Cf. David Little, "Religion, Morality, and Secularization", in Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, Philadelphia, Westminster, 1970, p. 135-150.

²⁵ Pitirim A. Sorokin, "The Western Religion and Morality of Today", in International Year Book for the Sociology of Religion, Vol. 2, Köln und Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1966, p. 13.

gives a good description of this process. He indicates that the moral values of Christian ethics are understood as derived from God, as absolute, eternal and universal, and unconditionally binding upon everyone. They are based ultimately upon the infinite and all-forgiving love of God and are summed up in the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. However, he feels that this situation is changing and that today moral values and norms are more and more being considered as man-made conventions, relative and changeable and eventually constituting nothing more than a veneer whose function is to legitimize the drives, instincts and reflexes of power-hungry groups in society.

The general criterion of transposition is specifically recognizable in an educational system, therefore, whenever there is evidence of a process of the transformation of the foundations of moral education from a religiously oriented basis, that is, grounded in the tenets and beliefs of religion, to what might be called a rationalistically oriented basis, that is, grounded on values determined empirically. A second way in which this process occurs is when to the solution of moral problems there are brought not only principles derived from religion but newly recognized principles derived from any autonomous branch of human knowledge.

This change or transformation of the foundation or basis of moral character education will serve then as further

specification of the process of transposition and is a particular criterion indicating and identifying the process of secularization in education. As is evident, transposition is much more subject to the fundamental ambiguity ~~which~~ I have mentioned and ~~which~~ I will treat of this at some length in the following section.

3. Applying the Normative Criteria to Education.

Having further specified descriptive criteria for the identification of secularization in education it must now be demonstrated how any process of secularization in education indicated by these descriptive criteria, is to be evaluated by the normative standards provided by theology. There is no question here of attempting to establish new normative criteria which particularize the general criteria already established, as was done with the descriptive criteria. Rather it must be demonstrated here, how and with what effect the general normative criteria can be applied specifically to the phenomenon of secularization once its presence has been recognized in education. We shall, therefore, attempt to illustrate how different educational directions and processes should be evaluated according to these criteria.

Briefly to review the normative criteria: 1) The Judaeo-Christian tradition recognizes as good the process of secularization whereby human activities, enterprises and

social institutions, in virtue of the recognition of their own intrinsic rules, principles and ends, assert their proper autonomy. 2) Secularization has present within it a constitutive ambiguity since secular pursuits tend to absolutize their proper autonomy, thus becoming some form of secularism and offering total explanation of reality. 3) Thus there is need of the judgement of faith which calls man to realize that all reality must remain open to a deeper meaning than can ever be totally discovered or explained by any human meaning system.

In the light of these normative criteria which theology provides I shall basically be seeking to determine whether secularization in education, as evidenced by the three descriptive processes which specify its presence in education, remains secularization or does it develop into some form of secularism. In other words, in the process of discovering their own intrinsic principles and ends and asserting their proper autonomy is there observable in the educational world any tendency on the part of education itself, the state, or any branch of human knowledge to absolutize the autonomy that they have achieved?

Our theological criteria therefore at the simplest level should allow us to recognize whether the processes of secularization in education once they have been identified, remain on the positive side of the ambiguity involved in

secularization or whether they succumb to the temptation of secularism by attempting to absolutize their own autonomy.

Because theology recognizes that secularization in general is good, then any legitimate process of secularization in education must be recognized as essentially good. The "coming of age" of education must be considered as a positive process. Moreover, according to the theological criteria we have established, education is but asserting its proper responsibility when it discovers and implements the rules, principles, aims and ends that are proper to it and thereby asserts its autonomy. Secularization in education is good; secularism is not. Now which is which? Do the three processes of secularization in education indicated by the descriptive criteria we have established, ever become some form of secularism? And if so, how and when?

a) The preceding section has given indication that the increasing responsibility for education on the part of the state together with the consequent decreasing responsibility of the church, is a criterion which particularizes the more general criterion of differentiation and thus serves as a more specific criterion to identify and recognize the presence or process of secularization in education. This particular process labours under the constitutive ambiguity inherent in secularization of which we have spoken. It carries with it an in-built danger. A strong intimation of

this danger is revealed in Christopher Dawson's description of universal education and the ever-increasing demands which it makes upon the state. He says,

When once the state has accepted full responsibility for the education of the whole youth of the nation, it is obliged to extend its control further and further into new fields; to the physical welfare of its pupils, to their feeding and medical care [...] to their moral welfare and their psychological guidance.²⁶

What is at least suggested here is the danger of the state's assuming the role of total direction and ultimately of proposing all of the aims and goals of the educational process --in short of so interpreting its responsibility for education as to seek to control it for its own ends so that education would offer meaning only in terms of the reality of the state itself. John Dewey was very much aware of the threat which the state might pose to education and he quotes with approval Bertrand Russell's concern lest the state become so pervasive that it constitute itself a total meaning system:

²⁶ Christopher Dawson, "Education and the State", in Commonweal, Vol. 65, No. 17, Jan. 25 1957, p. 423.

The threat to intellectual freedom is greater in our day than at any since 1660; but it does not now come from the Christian Churches. It comes from governments, which, owing to the modern danger of chaos and anarchy, succeeded to the sacrosanct character formerly belonging to the ecclesiastical authorities.²⁷

Russell is giving warning against any state education system that would become closed in upon itself and restrict meaning according to its own presuppositions. Our own century has given sufficient evidence of the danger and cruelties of nationalist totalitarianism during what was supposedly an enlightened period. We have good reason to fear any kind of nationalist absolutism in education which would restrict intellectual freedom by rejecting as invalid all transcendent criteria for human living.²⁸

Just as the normative criteria of theology must constantly be brought to bear on the process of differentiation as it relates to the increasing responsibility of the state, lest the state seek to absolutize its autonomy, so too the normative criteria of theology must be applied against the increasing secularization of the "science" of education itself in the sense mentioned above. We have indicated that

²⁷ As quoted by John Dewey, Philosophy of Education (Problems of Men), Ames, Iowa, Littlefield, Adams, 1956, p. 171.

²⁸ Cf. Robert Ulich, "The Educational Issue", in Religion and the Public Schools, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1965, p. 35.

education is gradually asserting its own autonomy through the discovery of rules, principles, ends and aims, that are proper to itself. Education, too, runs the danger of closing in upon itself and seeking to find all explanation within itself. Evidence of this is visible in what has been described as "...our Pelagian faith in education..."²⁹ --our belief that proper education will solve all problems.

John Dewey's pragmatic experimental philosophy and his attempts to establish a science of education are good in themselves. They are obviously laudable attempts to have the autonomy of education asserted. They do show, however, a distinct tendency toward education's becoming a closed system claiming explanation for all reality within its own competence. ~~But~~ Although Dewey's attempts to have education assert its proper autonomy can be regarded in positive fashion, many of his other statements when measured against the normative criteria of theology indicate an absolutizing of education itself. Thus when Dewey claims

29 From the Introduction to Secularization and the Protestant Prospect, p. 25.

The full victory will not be won until every subject and lesson is taught in connection with its bearing upon creation and growth of the kind of power of observation, inquiry, reflection and testing that are the heart of scientific intelligence. Experimental philosophy is at one with the genuine spirit of scientific attitude in the endeavour to obtain for scientific method this central place in education.³⁰

one becomes a little uneasy. For whether it is to education itself or to science in general that Dewey is granting absolute autonomy he is indeed advocating some form of scientism or empiricism both of which are specific manifestations of secularism.

On the other hand it might well be argued that Dewey's rejection of any metaphysics finally prevents him from ever entertaining any idea of a complete integration of knowledge and of a closed system. His use of the dialectical method is the further evidence that he would not support any total meaning system. And yet again, although the latter may be true, Dewey speaking, half facetiously, of education as religion can say:

However much or little other religions may conflict with science, here we have a religion which can realize itself only through science: only, that is, through ways of understanding human nature in its concrete actuality and of discovering how its various factors are modified by interaction with the variety of conditions under which they operate.³¹

30 John Dewey, Op. Cit., p. 168.

31 John Dewey, "Education as a Religion", in The New Republic, Vol. 33, No. 706, Sept. 13, 1922, p. 65.

The uncertainty involved here indicates how easily differentiation in education, although a process of secularization, can become some form of secularism.

The obvious difficulty with education, the state, or for that matter any branch of science or any human enterprise assuming such autonomy is that some creation of man whether it be education or the state or technology finds itself in no way subordinate to any other human purposes. This is why the judgement of faith must be brought to bear on secularization. For faith ultimately asks "who's in charge here?" It demands that there be a criterion higher than their own intrinsic principles in terms of which both the state and education can be judged. Theologically normative criteria then must be applied to the process of differentiation as it involves the growing autonomy of both the state and education. Thus can we evaluate the process of secularization as it takes place in these two social institutions ensuring on the one hand that they do achieve their own relative autonomy but pointing out as I have indicated the ever present danger of either state or education trying to absolutize the autonomy which it realizes in the process of differentiation.

b) It is particularly in the context of the ambiguity of secularization that the normative criteria of theology must as well be applied to the other specific descriptive

criteria which serve to identify secularization in education. It has been seen that transposition as a criterion is more particularized in the field of education by our recognition of the process whereby moral education comes to be based less on divine commandments and imperatives and more on man's understanding of himself as deduced by reason, particularly through empirical science. This particular process which constitutes a descriptive criterion of transposition in education might appear at first glance to be complete and unmitigated secularism. However this would constitute too hasty a judgement.

Christian morality although based on and grounded in a Christian tradition of belief can make no claim to possess principles and commandments sufficient to be applied to each particular case. Human reason must also be brought into play. Not only science but all branches of knowledge must bring to the human understanding of a situation, information whereby, in a particular instance, a judgement can be made concerning the morality of a concrete human action. Thus it is that Karl Rahner explains that the practical and concrete application of moral principles to particular situations is beyond the capacity of the Church and so her autonomy cannot extend to every particular moral decision as if she were_x

and provided a universal conscience.³² In many situations, therefore, there must often be brought to bear principles based on human knowledge rather than on Christian belief. Another manifestation of transposition that need not be rejected as anti-Christian, but as a positive process of secularization, is the process whereby certain moral principles formerly recognized as based on and justified by revelation, are now based on and justified by human reason. In these senses, at least, transposition as we have described it in education is in accord with the normative criteria derived from theology and can be considered as a positive process and not as secularism.

The risk that transposition runs of becoming but another form of secularism lies in a somewhat different direction. It is a risk that can be very tempting for education. In the public sphere, in the hope of avoiding denominational friction, moral education can seek to draw its moral absolutes and principles totally from within its own discipline or from the discipline of some empirical science, especially from the behavioural sciences of psychology and sociology. Thus justice, community-mindedness, a spirit of

³² Karl Rahner, "Theological Reflections on the Problem of Secularization", in Renewal of Religious Thought (The Proceedings of the Congress on the Theology of the Renewal of the Church Centenary of Canada, 1867-1967), Vol. 1, Montreal, Palm, 1968, p. 171.

cooperation and communication can all too easily become the only moral absolutes, rooted in empirical science and admitting of no transcendent value which can inform them or go beyond them. If this becomes the case we have then a moral education based on the religion of ~~science~~ ^{scientism}. It is just such a danger that Roger Mehl warns against when he says,

La science comme idole devait avoir une carrière assez courte, car, à vrai dire, elle ne nous fait pas échapper à la métaphysique, elle renvoie les esprits à une notion de la vérité qui ne peut pas être empirique, qui est même forcément transcendante, et elle donne volontiers naissance à une religion assez romantique, celle qui fleurit dans l'Avenir de la Science.³³

In the case of transposition then it becomes evident how the normative criteria of theology must be applied. They can indicate whether in moral education the use of moral values and principles which are no longer considered as having Christian but purely natural human roots, and the process of looking to other branches of human knowledge and to moral

³³ Roger Mehl, "La sécularisation de la cité", in Le problème de la civilisation chrétienne, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1961, p. 17. Cf. In a more general way the same criticism has been levelled by Donald Vandenberg, "The Nature and Aim of Education", in Theory of Knowledge and Problems of Education, Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1969, p. 2, f. 1: "What appears to have happened is this: The overweening prestige of science has promoted the illusion that it could solve everything. Then when it was turned to the study of education, what was studied became more and more reduced to fit the limits of the increasingly refined and confined methods of inquiry of the behavioural science until education became lost in the shuffle because nobody noticed the reductionism involved. This forgetfulness would be more tragic were it less comic".

education itself for new principles, does or does not constitute a process that rejects all religiously based moral values and principles and attempts to be totally explicative of all moral conduct and directive of all behaviour in terms of human knowledge alone.

c) By reserving our discussions of desacralization till this point we have deliberately changed the order maintained throughout this work in treating the descriptive criteria. The reason is that desacralization, and the more specific manifestations of it as recognizable in education, are the most ambiguous of the many processes of secularization. Desacralization most easily of all, becomes secularism. I wish therefore to treat it finally and at some length.

It may be true that in the political and legal realms desacralization can clearly be recognized as the process of secularization which involves stripping the world of a false sacredness, facing it by means of natural reason, and removing the sacred or religious from what is properly the secular sphere. The whole matter is not as clearly evident however in the realm of education. David Moberg,³⁴ for example, claims that the court decisions in the United States

³⁴ David O. Moberg, "Religious Pluralism in the United States of America", in International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion, Vol. 1, (Religious Pluralism and Social Structure), Kbln und Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1965, p. 87.

concerning the use of classroom prayer can be interpreted either as the establishment of secularism as a negative form of religion or they can be seen as an extension of religious liberty rather than an encroachment upon it. It would seem however that the ambiguity which he mentions and which is involved in desacralization in education is weighted heavily towards secularism since education is more essential and more closely linked to the total life development and rhythm of growth of human beings in their most formative years than is either the political or legal sphere. At the same time educational systems are commonly considered as being open to all expressions of truth. If then, all religious influence is removed from education or from an educational system, if religion is denied access to this supposed market place of universal truth, is this not tantamount to some kind of secularism rather than evidence of a process of secularization? Before attempting to answer this question perhaps we can situate the problem yet more clearly by looking at it from the point of view of the educator, the sociologist and the theologian.

From the viewpoint of education, John S. Brubacher states the problem clearly and succinctly:

There is no gainsaying the fact that the omission of religion from the curriculum of the public school has encouraged or at least coincided with the rise of the strongly secular temper of mind. Unreminded of religious ties many people have learned to get along with few or no religious observances at all. In fact when their attention is called to religion they are inclined to turn deliberately away from it. They seem to regard their children as well adjusted when they have learned to meet the principal social and scientific demands of the everyday world about them.³⁵

Brubacher himself seems to equate such a situation with secularism or an all-inclusive view of life.³⁶

From the sociologist's point of view a pluralistic society by its very nature must have a substantial amount of common secular ground so that the different groups within the society can develop mutual cooperation and tolerance despite their religious diversity. However this very need to reduce conflict among the different groups by having common secular ground in itself creates another kind of conflict. As Yinger notes,

...if religious pluralism is not to be accompanied by high levels of conflict, by prejudice and discrimination, there must be large segments of shared secular participation. But such shared participation tends to weaken the plural identities for which it is essential.³⁷

³⁵ John S. Brubacher, Modern Philosophies of Education, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1950, p. 278-279.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 278.

³⁷ J. Milton Yinger, "Pluralism, Religion and Secularism", in Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 6, No. 1, April 1967, p. 27.

Very simply then, what this means in education is that the sharing of a totally secularized educational system from which all religion is rejected tends to have an eroding effect on the beliefs of the different groups participating in that educational system.

The theologian's perspective is somewhat different and yet the point he makes is the same. As the believer has less and less opportunity to manifest the belief which constitutes his religion then in the ordinary course of human events his belief plays less part in his life and has less meaning for him. It is a simple fact of life that

Like every human attitude, the theological attitude is intensified when it finds self-expression. In consequence, the fact of reducing religious actions and structures might diminish the theological attitude (since the latter has no other means of being integrated into man).³⁸

Desacralization as specified in education envelops processes such as the removal or expunging of religious education, religious prayers, hymns, bible reading, opening exercises, etc., from the school curriculum. And in its most complete form it involves the removal of religious influence from the curriculum of the school. These are the concrete and specific criteria whereby desacralization can

³⁸ Piet Schoonenberg, "The Tasks of Theology Faced within Secularization", in Lumen Vitae, English ed., Vol. 24, No. 2, 1969, p. 254.

be measured in the area of education. Given such criteria or processes the question can legitimately be asked as to whether an educational system in which desacralization is present in its most complete form is not guilty in practice if not in theory, of secularism - at least secularism practised in a negative fashion. By negative fashion is meant that such an educational system would be guilty of secularism not in the sense that it purports to offer a closed and total world view but in the sense that because it is recognized in society as the forum of different world views and yet prohibits one particular view, namely the religious one, then to this extent the educational system is secularist. For it seems that to exclude one meaning system which has been at the very heart of man's understanding of himself is in some way to close education off and thus make it secularist at least from this particular point of view.

It is difficult to see therefore how, within an educational system, desacralization, in its most complete form, as we have described it, can in reality amount to anything but secularism. As already noted, desacralization in a more general context and as specifically indicated in other fields such as the legal or political, can be a positive process of man's taking responsibility for his own world. If in education it simply means the removal from the science or art of education of any sacred or religious elements, it could again

be considered as secularization. However, when desacralization takes place in an educational system, in such a way as to affect the content of education to the degree that anything to do with religion is systematically eradicated from the curriculum of an educational system, then it is difficult to see how this can be anything but secularism.

Summarily then, in further specifying or particularizing the general criteria of differentiation, desacralization and transposition for the educational field, the following more specific descriptive criteria have been arrived at and should facilitate the recognition and identification of the process of secularization in a particular education system:

1) The assumption of increasing responsibility and control of education by the state and by the discipline of education itself with a corresponding decrease of church responsibility and control is in the field of education a specification of the general criterion of differentiation.

2) The removal of any religious presence from the curriculum in the senses we have described above constitutes a specification of the general criterion of desacralization.

3) The changing foundations or basis of moral education is a specification of the general criterion of transposition.

These descriptive criteria have been evaluated in the light of the normative criteria which theology furnishes. This evaluation has indicated that the processes of differentiation (relative responsibility for education) and transposition (changing basis for moral education) are basically good processes whereby the secular (particularly education and the state) asserts its proper autonomy. They can remain as legitimate forms of secularization although like any form of secularization there remains the possibility of their degenerating into secularism in the ways indicated.

As far as desacralization is concerned, although at first glance it seems to follow the same pattern as the other two criteria in the field of education, there is a basic difference. In education desacralization seems to lead inevitably to secularism. The reason for this is that education systems are becoming more and more universal and are understood and expected to provide a forum for the expression of all truth. The result is that when one particular truth or dimension of truth (i.e., religion) is excluded, then such education systems, at least in a negative way must be considered as closed systems. ~~It~~ It is difficult to see how, in the field of education, desacralization can help but be considered a negative form of secularism.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our investigation in this study has revealed that although secularization is a term which is extremely difficult to define, one can nevertheless discover certain constant uses of the term. These constant uses generally refer to particular processes and it is these processes which we have taken as constituting criteria for the recognition and evaluation of secularization. We have investigated secularization as understood by the sociologist and the theologian. In the field of sociology we have discovered certain constants which have served as general criteria for the recognition of secularization. These constants have been the processes of differentiation, of transposition and of desacralization. Theology as well has provided us with certain constants in its reflections on this phenomenon. These constants have provided us with the normative criteria by which we can evaluate the process of secularization. We have indicated that secularization according to the Christian tradition can be considered as a good; that secular realities have their own proper laws, principles, and ends and therefore enjoy their own autonomy; that secularization is always an ambiguous process inasmuch as secular pursuits tend to absolutize their relative autonomy and thus become some form of secularism; and that finally secularization stands in the

constant need of the judgement of faith so as to maintain a secular rather than a secularist situation.

The sociological investigation provided the basis for discovering more particular criteria whereby secularization in the field of education can be recognized and identified. These descriptive criteria are: 1) The assumption of increasing responsibility and control of education by the state and by the discipline of education itself with a corresponding decrease of church responsibility and control in the field of education - a specification of the general criterion of differentiation. 2) The removal of any religious presence from curriculum - a specification of the general criterion of desacralization. 3) The changing foundations of basis of moral education - a specification of the general criterion of transposition.

It has also been indicated how the general normative criteria furnished by theology can be used to evaluate the processes of secularization in education as indicated by the descriptive criteria. Our conclusion here was that although the processes of differentiation and transposition in education reflect positive processes rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition which can escape becoming some form of secularism, it is difficult to see how desacralization in its most complete form can at best be anything but a negative form of secularism.

What must be done with these criteria is to have them applied to specific educational systems, on the one hand to validate the criteria themselves through such an application and on the other to serve as the means of recognition of secularization or secularism in such educational systems.

Our treatment of criteria was not intended to be exhaustive or all-inclusive. The intention was to provide sufficient objective criteria to recognize and evaluate secularization in education.

One matter that has become increasingly clear throughout this study is a matter that is too often unrecognized not only by the lay person but by the professional as well, be he educator, sociologist, or theologian, namely, secularization is not by any means an anti-Christian phenomenon but in many ways is supported by a proper understanding of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Thus when secularization is spoken of in relation to education, hopefully we have done something towards dispelling the myth that this must always in some way mean the decline of religion.

At the same time, however, our investigation to establish criteria for the recognition and evaluation of secularization in an educational system has revealed that to be truly a secular rather than a secularist system, any educational system must not fear to live in the kind of tension demanded by a truly secular society. In our secular society

which is pluralist, with its many different groups, there must be of necessity a certain tension present. This tension is productive rather than destructive only if dialogue, trust and communication can be maintained. The temptation in education is to seek an easy solution and to reject all differences that exist and to restrict the searching and finding, of all answers to certain dimensions of knowledge, particularly the scientific or empirical dimensions. This is not only to work from a false position but it is also to deny society the possibility of enriching itself from the various beliefs and traditions of the groups from which it is constituted.

The first area of further research that suggests itself from the study we have undertaken is obviously in the application of our criteria to particular educational systems. This can be done on many different levels. That is to say the criteria of secularization in education which we have established can be applied to educational systems on at least three different levels: on the level of educational theory, or on the level of legislation and regulations concerning education in a particular society, or finally on the level of the actual educational practice which takes place within a given school system.

There is no question but that secularization is occurring and will continue to occur within our society. In

education its ramifications are of the utmost consequence. Hopefully our study will contribute in some small way to clarify an extremely complex problem which has suffered from lack of precision basically because secularization although much spoken of has never had very exact criteria against which its presence might be measured, identified and evaluated.

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APPENDIX

ABSTRACT OF

Secularization in Education Systems: Establishing Criteria for its Recognition and Evaluation¹

The purpose of this study was to establish criteria according to which the phenomenon of secularization in education could be recognized, identified and evaluated.

Chapter One and Chapter Two examined sociological and theological writing, respectively, to discern whether these disciplines provide such general criteria. It was discovered that sociology could provide general descriptive criteria and that theology provided general normative criteria. In Chapter Three the general descriptive criteria were further specified so as to be particularly applicable to education or school systems; and it was demonstrated how the general normative criteria were to be specifically applied to an education system.

It was concluded that the following descriptive criteria are indicative of a process of secularization occurring in education: 1) The assumption of increasing responsibility and control of education by the state and by

¹ Dennis J. Murphy, doctoral thesis presented to the Faculty of Education of the University of Ottawa, Ontario, 1971, xiv-175 p.

the discipline of education itself with a corresponding decrease of church responsibility and control is in the field of education a specification of the general criterion of differentiation; 2) the removal of any religious presence from curriculum - a specification of desacralization; 3) the changing foundations or basis of moral education - a specification of transposition. From a normative point of view the conclusion was that although the specifications of differentiation and transposition in education can be reflections of positive processes rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and need not degenerate into secularism, it is difficult to see how desacralization if followed to its logical conclusion can be anything but a negative form of secularism in the educational realm.