

PETER BERGER QUOTATIONS

Berger, Peter (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Doubleday: Garden City, NY.

36—Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly superhuman terms. Reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will.

Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. The reified world is, by definition, a dehumanized world. It is experienced by man as a strange facticity, an opus alienum over which he has not control rather than as the opus proprium of his own productive activity.

As soon as an objective social world is established, the possibility of reification is never far away. The objectivity of the social world means that it confronts man as something outside of himself. The decisive question is whether he still retains the awareness that, however, objectivated, the social world was made by men—and, therefore, can be remade by them.

38—The basic “recipe” for reification of institution is to bestow on them an ontological status independent of human activity and signification.

52—Social order is a human product, or, more precisely, an ongoing human production. It is produced by man in the course of his ongoing externalization. Social order exists only as a product of human activity. Both in its genesis (social order is the result of past human activity) and its existence at any instant

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of time (social order exists only and insofar as human activity continues to produce it) it is a human product.

60—The institutions, as historical and objective facticities, confront the individual as undeniable facts. The institutions are there, external to him, persistent in their reality, whether he likes it or not.

60-1—The objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. The process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity is objectivation. The institutional world is objectivated human activity, and so is every single institution.

In other words, despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it. The paradox that man is capable of producing a world that he then experiences as something other than a human product will concern us later.

89—Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms. Another way of saying this is that reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. The reified world is, by definition, a dehumanized world. It is experienced by man as a strange facticity, over which he has not control.

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It will be clear from our previous discussion of objectivation that, as soon as an objective social world is established, the possibility of reification is never far away. The objectivity of the social world means that it confronts man as something outside of himself. The decisive question is whether he still retains the awareness that, however objectivated, the social world was made by men—and, therefore, can be remade by them.

102—The institutional order represents a shield against terror. To be anomic, therefore, means to be deprived of this shield and to be exposed, alone, to the onslaught of nightmare. While the horror of aloneness is probably already given in the constitutional sociality of man, it manifests itself on the level of meaning in man's incapacity to sustain a meaningful existence in isolation from the nomic constructions of society. The symbolic universe shelters the individual from ultimate terror by bestowing ultimate legitimation upon the protective structures of the institutional order.

104—As man externalizes himself, he constructs the world into which he externalizes himself. In the process of externalization, he projects his own meanings into reality.

104—Human existence is an ongoing externalization. As man externalizes himself, he constructs the world into which he externalizes himself.

The individual may dream up any number of institutional arrangements that might well be more interesting, perhaps even more functional than the institutions actually recognized in his culture. As long as these sociological dreams, so to speak, are confined to the individual's own consciousness and are not recognized by others, they will exist only as shadow like phantasmata. By contrast, the institutions of the individual's society,

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however much he may dislike them, will be real. In other words, the cultural world is not only collectively produced, but it remains real by virtue of collective recognition.

Alienation: An extreme step in objectivation where society takes on the appearance of total fixity and the human origination of society is forgotten. In alienation, objectivations are seen as the nature of thing. **Alienation:** The total world appears as something 'other' than man. **Dereification:** The remembering that society is a human enterprise. **De-reified consciousness:** Can one exist in society without the reified illusion? **Ecstasy (the breakthrough)** is a rare occurrence.

106—By the very fact that all social phenomena are constructions produced historically through human activity, no society is totally take for granted and so, a fortiori, is no symbolic universe. Every symbolic universe is incipiently problematic.

Berger, Peter (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Doubleday: Garden City, NY.

10—culture is objective in that it confronts man as an assemblage of objects in the real world existing outside his own consciousness. Culture is there. But culture is also objective in that it may be experienced and apprehended, as it were, in company. Culture is there for everybody. This means that the objectives of culture (again, both the material & non-material ones may be shared with others. This distinguishes them sharply from any constructions of the subjective consciousness of the solitary individual.

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11—Society is a product of human activity that has attained the status of objective reality. The social formations are experienced by man as elements of an objective world. Society confronts man as external, subjectively opaque and coercive facticity. Indeed, society is commonly apprehended by man as virtually equivalent to the physical universe in its objective presence—a "second nature," indeed. Society is experienced as given "out there," extraneous to subjective consciousness and not controllable by the latter.

12—No human construction can be accurately called a social phenomenon unless it has achieved that measure of objectivity that compels the individual to recognize it as real. In other words, the fundamental coerciveness of society lies not in its machineries of social control, but in its power to constitute and to impose itself as reality.

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54—A basic point must be made before one looks at the various types of theodicy. This is the point that there is a fundamental attitude, in itself quite irrational, that underlies all of them. This attitude is the surrender of self to the ordering power of society...The individual may "lose himself" in the meaning-giving nomos of his society. In consequence, the pain becomes more tolerable, the terror less overwhelming, as the sheltering canopy of the nomos extends to cover even those experiences that may reduce the individual to howling animality.

Every society entails a certain denial of the individual self & its needs, anxieties, and problems. One of the key functions of nomos is the facilitation of this denial in individual consciousness. There is also an intensification of this self-denying surrender to society and its order that is of particular interest in connection with religion. This is the attitude of masochism, that is, the attitude in which the individual reduces himself to an inert and thinglike object vis-à-vis his fellowmen, singly or in collectivities or in the nomoi established by them. In this attitude, pain itself, physical or mental, serves to ratify the denial of self to the point where it may actually be subjectively pleasurable...The key characteristic (of masochism) is the intoxication of surrender to an other—complete, self-denying, even self-destroying.