

- 8 Good examples of Wilson's approach to secularization can be found in Wilson (1969; 1982; 1998). Bruce (1996; 2002) continues the story.
- 9 Young (1997) offers an excellent introduction to the RCT literature which is developed more fully in a huge range of articles, notably in the *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion* in the last two decades. These include theoretical discussions alongside multiple empirical applications of RCT.
- 10 This is a more nuanced approach than that offered in Chapter 1; it indicates a rather different understanding of Orthodoxy and its possible futures.
- 11 Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves (1998: 129) claim that a similar tendency can be found in Britain, though the indices are lower overall. Not all European social scientists would agree.

## Chapter 4

### Variation Two: Different Intellectual Traditions

This chapter is concerned with culture rather than structures and deals with two major themes: the different understandings of the Enlightenment that can be found in Europe and in the United States, and the class of people—intellectuals—who are most responsible for the creation and transmission of ideas. The relationship between this class and the wider society is central to the discussion.

It begins with a series of references to the Enlightenment, emphasizing both commonality and difference in its various applications—an account which points immediately to a question raised in the previous chapter. Does the fault-line between Europe and America lie between the continents as such, or is this a rather more complicated alignment in which Britain at least finds itself closer to the United States than it is to Catholic, or continental, Europe? The issue cannot be avoided. Nor can the influence of the Enlightenment on the social-scientific study of religion, in the sense that this enterprise not only emerged in a particular part of the world, but is underpinned by a distinctive philosophical outlook—one, moreover, which is more rather than less hostile to religion.

The second section introduces the intellectuals of both Europe and America, probing their respective places in the societies of which they are part. Once again there are similarities as well as differences which will be illustrated with reference to both groups and individuals. There is also change. Paradoxically, as American intellectuals have become rather more like their European counterparts, some Europeans—in so far as they are beginning to “take religion seriously”—are beginning to move in the other direction. The implications of so doing will form a crucial thread in the argument. The concluding note forms a bridge to what follows; at the same time, it returns to the tension between culture and structure. The British case becomes an important example in this respect. Culturally it leans towards its Anglo-Saxon counterpart across the ocean; structurally—at least in terms of church-state relationships—it is pulled in the opposite direction, finding equivalents in the mainstream churches of continental Europe.

## Exemplifications of the Enlightenment

Both the Enlightenment as such and the vast literature that it has spawned cannot be engaged in this chapter. The essential point—that is the very different attitudes to religion that can be discovered in its different manifestations—will be illustrated with reference to three sources: Gertrude Himmelfarb's *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* (2004), Pierre Bouretz's penetrating contribution to one of the Berlin workshops that lie behind this book (2001; see also Bouretz 2000), and a fascinating vignette from Italy selected to illustrate a distinctively Catholic Enlightenment (Mazzotti 2001; 2007). The latter is important, as it reveals that the differences in question cannot simply be reduced to a Catholic–Protestant dichotomy.

### Himmelfarb's "Roads to Modernity"

*The Roads to Modernity: The British, French and American Enlightenments* was published in 2004. It is an innovative, controversial, and widely reviewed book: some like it, some do not. Himmelfarb's essential claim is the following: that the French Enlightenment (based on reason) has been vastly overrated, at the expense of the British and American variants which have much more in common. Both the British, characterized by virtue, and the American, characterized by political liberty, must be restored to their rightful position, not only in terms of the historical account but with reference to their influence on modern political thinking. One point is immediately clear: this is not a dispassionate book. In writing what she calls a "revisionist history," Himmelfarb is reclaiming the ground for a distinctively American story. She insists, more precisely, that the American Revolution owes little to its French counterpart, and—as a result—has given birth to a very different, much more positive, model of democracy.

Himmelfarb herself is a well-known neo-conservative in her own society, a fact that colors reactions to this book. Those who do not share her political views will see in her writing a markedly selective account which omits the less savoury elements of the Anglo-American story (a fuller record of the slave trade for example), whilst emphasizing the negative aspects of the French experience (the brutality of the post-revolutionary Terror). There is truth in these accusations. They do not, however, detract from the essential point which concerns the place of religion in these various configurations. If it is clear, on the one hand, that the French Enlightenment constructed itself in opposition to the Catholic Church, a formidable institution in its own right, American aspirations were very different. In the latter, the Enlightenment—and the Revolution associated with it—saw in religion (more precisely in multiple versions of voluntarist Christianity) a vehicle

for its own ideas. Multiplicities of religious organizations became an expression of political liberty, not its obverse.

Why was this so? The reasons are closely linked to David Martin's analyses of secularization, introduced in Chapter 3. To take the French case first, Martin explains in some detail both the growth and the subsequent clash of two quasi-monopolies: one Catholic and one secular. In France, as indeed in Catholic Europe as a whole, the church had resisted the Reformation, thus precluding the possibility of reform—more precisely of de-clericalization—from the inside.<sup>1</sup> As a result, opposition to Catholicism gathered outside rather than inside the church and became political rather than religious, linking arms with the currents of Enlightenment thinking already present in France. Freedom from religion—that is freedom from both beliefs and the disciplines of the Catholic Church (Voltaire's famous "*écrasez l'infâme*")—became a rallying cry of the revolutionaries. The "battle" persisted throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in a notably acrimonious separation of church and state in 1905 (Poulat 1987). Twenty-first-century commemorations of this iconic moment in the evolution of France indicate its continuing importance for French self-understanding.

The British story is quite different. It is true that the British had experienced a revolution which included regicide, but this happened more than a century earlier than it did in France. It involved, moreover, competing versions of Protestant conviction, rather than a straight religious–secular split. England had been Protestant since the Reformation, rather differently from her continental neighbours, but Protestant nonetheless. Scotland—where Calvinism rather than Anglicanism provided the cultural codes—even more so. Hence, in both cases, there was a substantially de-clericalized church, and, in consequence, a marked absence of politically motivated anti-clericalism—a concept almost unknown in Britain. What emerges is different in each of the constituent nations of the United Kingdom, but in all of them both political regime and the populace in general accepted a far greater degree of religious pluralism—and in the fullness of time, of religious toleration—than was possible in the French case. Increasingly, albeit unevenly, Britain welcomed the presence of different religious communities as an integral part of the democratic process.

How then does Himmelfarb deal with these issues? In the British case, her reading of the Enlightenment is distinctly innovative. An example can be found in her claim that John Wesley—the founder of Methodism, high Tory and fierce opponent of the American Revolution—was essentially an Enlightenment figure. In support of her position, Himmelfarb stresses both Wesley's own intellectual sensibilities and his commitment to the education of the poor. Not everyone will be convinced. Nor will all her

readers accept the inclusion of Edmund Burke within the Enlightenment frame. In this case, Himmelfarb emphasizes Burke's "powerful moral imagination" (2004: 92), his advocacy of public virtue (for her, a linking thread), and his critique of British excesses in India. All three points deserve consideration; taken together they counter at least to some extent his much better-known denunciation of the radicals across the Channel—which, according to Himmelfarb, was well justified.

Convinced or not by these inclusions, the essential question remains the same: where is the step change in this debate? Is it between France and Britain, or between Britain and the United States? Himmelfarb quite definitely locates it between France and Britain: hence her desire to rehabilitate the British Enlightenment at the expense of the French. It is equally clear, however, that you cannot simply move from Britain to the United States without appreciating the fundamentally different position of religion in American society—hence the contrasts outlined in the previous chapter. American acceptance of religion goes considerably further than the de facto toleration found in Britain. Right from the start, a "freedom to believe" becomes the motivating force of both the American Enlightenment and the American Revolution; that force, as a significant political movement, is not found in Europe.

#### *Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis: The German, French and American Enlightenments*

In many respects, Pierre Bouretz covers similar ground, but he starts from a German rather than a British perspective. Three cases are outlined in his paper: Germany, France, and the United States, each of which becomes a distinctive model of secularity. More precisely, he understands these three cases as a German thesis, a French antithesis, and an American synthesis.<sup>2</sup> As ever, a long-term historical perspective becomes the key to understanding this process. Equally important for Bouretz is a linguistic sensitivity, in the sense that the distinctiveness of each case is often captured in a particular word which is difficult to translate: cultures create words to express what is important and relevant to them.

The process begins with the Reformation—in the casting off of the authority of the church by the Protestant reformers, recognizing that the revolt against both the despotism of the church and the dogmatism of the law is not a revolt against religion as such, but a return to the sources of Christianity. Hence in the German case, the emphasis is placed both on the individual believer and on the community of which he or she is part, which is independent from civil or political society. The significance of the former is captured by one of Bouretz's key words—the German notion of "Bildung,"

meaning a process of *individual* formation through the experience of life, of which Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* offers the classic example. A particular understanding of both freedom and sovereignty follows from this: it resides in a respect for the autonomy of the individual that is both prior to and independent from political understandings the term. Hence a marked degree of hostility to the explicitly political model of the French Enlightenment.

The French process is, indeed, different. The essential point was made in the previous section: that is, the lack of a successful Reformation which leads in turn to a political revolt against religion as such. Here Himmelfarb, Bouretz, and Martin are clearly in agreement. An additional remark is however important: Bouretz emphasizes the emergence of the state as the "peacemaker par excellence" in the French case. The pre-eminence of this role dates from the seventeenth century, in so far as only the state can overcome the violence of religious conflicts.<sup>3</sup> Hence—from this moment on—the two protagonists in the struggle which dominates French history: on the one hand, an unreconstructed and hegemonic church, and on the other, a state that claims for itself moral as well a political authority. The ascendancy of one implies the decline of the other—this is a zero sum game.

Once again, an additional contrast is captured in a subtle, but crucial difference in vocabulary. In German, *Die Aufklärung* quite clearly introduces the idea of reason, but not at the expense of religious belief; the French notion of *les lumières* on the other hand, challenges not only the religious institution, but the worldview associated with it.<sup>4</sup> The radicalism of the French Enlightenment stems from this double attack. Here, moreover, is the root of a continuing ambiguity in the French case: despite—from the time of the Revolution—the recognition of religious freedom as such (a right granted to both Jews and Protestants after centuries of persecution), there is continued mistrust of religion per se. The dilemma has never been fully resolved; it can still be seen in the attitudes of the French towards less conventional forms of religion (sects and new religious movements) and in the banning of religious symbols in public life. It will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Hence a third key word: the quintessentially French notion of *laïcité*. It, more than any other, is untranslatable, the reason being that almost no other European society requires a word that underlines with such clarity the absence of religion from the public sphere. A notable exception is Turkey—itself modeled on the French case, and in which the public presence of religion also causes trouble. The fact that France opposes the entry of Turkey into the European Union with more vehemence that most

other European societies is simply one more paradoxical turn in this clearly unfinished story.

How then does Bouretz envisage the American synthesis? Here the timing is crucial: the United States of America came into being two centuries after the Reformation but at the height of the discussion about political freedom in its modern sense. As a result, the founding fathers of America—themselves Protestants—were committed to both religious and political freedom. This is distinct from the French case, in that these two ideas are seen as compatible with each other; it is distinct from the German example in the sense that privacy is given a higher status than “*Bildung*. ” The state in fact exists as much to protect privacy as it does to promote freedom. Once again this results in a continuing ambiguity best expressed as a question: how is it possible to protect the privacy of one, without—at times—jeopardizing the freedom of another (a distinctively American dilemma)? Each system, in Bouretz’s analysis, carries with it associated dangers. But for Americans the key point is clear: religious autonomy becomes the model of political citizenship. It follows that good government implies not the unified state beloved of the French, but a plurality of interests, opinions, and powers, each of which balances the others.

#### *Maria Gaetana Agnesi: Mathematics and the Catholic Enlightenment*

One thing that emerges from the previous examples is the crucial difference between a Protestant and a Catholic culture. This is hardly surprising given the consequences of the Reformation for both the beliefs and structures of the church. An institution de-clericalized from the inside found itself in a entirely different position from one that faced, two centuries later, political rather than theological opposition. It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this discussion that there were no possibilities for Enlightenment within as well as against Catholicism.

The fascinating, and at times very poignant, case of Maria Gaetana Agnesi makes this very clear. Agnesi was a distinguished eighteenth-century mathematician—the author of a widely read treatise on calculus that appeared in Milan in 1748. She was also a pious and increasingly committed Catholic, dedicating much of her life both to her own devotions and to the care of the poor. Massimo Mazzotti provides a sociological account of this story, underlining two very interesting features: first that the scientific and Catholic dimension of Agnesi’s life were by no means incompatible; and second that the explanation for this unusual mix of talents lies at least in part in the specificity of the circumstances that occurred in northern Italy in the mid-eighteenth century (Mazzotti 2001; 2007).

Here there was space not only for a Catholic intellectual as such, but also for a woman.<sup>5</sup>

Agnesi’s *Cielo Mistico* offers the key to her personal views.<sup>6</sup> For Agnesi, mystic contemplation did not imply a rejection or negation of the power of the intellect. The latter was simply the first—and in itself inadequate—stage in a continuing process. “Enlightening clarity” must give way to “burning clarity” as simple cognition cedes to love. There was, in other words, “cooperation rather than opposition between the two faculties: while ‘the human mind contemplates in marvel’ the virtues of Christ, ‘the heart imitates them with love’” (Mazzotti 2001: 673). The second point follows from this. In expressing these sentiments, Agnesi finds her place in a particular movement—one that takes place before what Mazzotti calls the “high season” of the Italian Enlightenment. Prior to the latter, a distinctive group of intellectuals gathered in Milan—a community that sought to promote modern scientific insights within, rather than in opposition to, the Catholic system of knowledge. Hence the possibility that mathematical analysis could become a tool, rather than an impediment, in the spiritual life of the believer. With this in mind, Mazzotti identifies the cluster of factors that, alongside her clearly ambitious father, explain Agnesi’s remarkable success:

A wealthy family eager for social enhancement, a Church eager for new charismatic figures, and a reformist religiosity characterized by favourable views about the education of women and intellectual achievement: these were the conditions that made it possible for Agnesi to establish herself as a legitimate author of a mathematical treatise and as an advisor to the archbishop of Milan on theological matters. (Mazzotti 2001: 683)

These conditions very largely disappeared by the end of the century. Quite apart from anything else, it was a long time before a woman, let alone an actively Catholic woman, would once again be offered a chair in a European university.

#### *The Enlightenment and Social Science*

Plainly the Enlightenment was not “one thing”; it was made up a many different contributions in several different places and over a long period of time. No doubt the pendulum will continue to swing between those who underline the essential unity of the movement and those who emphasize its diversity. That said, it is clear that some readings of the Enlightenment rather than others, furnished the philosophical foundations for the early social scientists. The point has already been made with reference to Auguste Comte (p. 33), for whom to be “modern” meant to leave both God and the

supernatural behind. These unworldly attributes are replaced by the natural and the scientific, which become the primary—indeed the definitive—modes of explanation for the modern person. Hence the emergence of a distinctive epistemology, which embodied above everything else a notion of the future that was realizable through human agency. Epistemologies, however, very frequently turn into ideologies: a mutation in which religion is seen as not only irrelevant (something to be left behind), but damaging both to modern societies themselves and to the scientific study of them.

The process should not be oversimplified. Each one of the founding fathers of sociology, for example, paid close attention to religion. They did this in very different ways, but all four—Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and Georg Simmel—recognized the significance of religion as an integral factor in the upheavals taking place in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Integral yes, but unlikely to endure, at least in its existing forms. The twin processes of industrialization and urbanization would, sooner or later, erode the power of religion—a process welcomed by Marx, rather less so by the others, who wondered what might emerge to replace this. There was no doubt, however, about the outcome: modern societies were envisaged, for good or ill, as secular societies. This assumption sinks deeply into the consciousness of European intellectuals, among them social scientists. Its consequences are both direct and indirect: among the former can be found a marked reluctance to take religion seriously (it is not worth bothering about); among the latter (when the former policy fails) a pervasive tendency to construct it as a problem—something, in other words, to be overcome.

It is precisely this combination that characterizes the present moment in Europe. The particular episodes that have demanded that, once again, we do pay attention to religion—European enlargement, the debates surrounding the preamble to the constitution, renewed discussion about the freedom of speech (the Rushdie controversy, the murders of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, and the Danish cartoons of Mohammed), the *affaire du foulard*, and the bombings in Madrid and London—will be spelled out in more detail both below and in Chapter 6. At this stage, a single remark will suffice: the re-emergence of religion in public life in Europe, and indeed anywhere else, was not anticipated. Europeans, including social scientists, did not expect this to happen; they were, therefore, ill-prepared to deal with it for the reasons set out above.

### The Place of the Intellectual in Religious Debate

Peter Berger describes the United States as “a large population of ‘Indians’ sat upon by a cultural elite of ‘Swedes’” (p. 12). How does this compare

with Europe? As ever Europe varies. In parts of the continent, prominent intellectuals continue to be lionized—most obviously in France; elsewhere very much less so. There is no room in British society, for example, for a Jean-Paul Sartre or a Pierre Bourdieu; British society is much more like America in its admiration for doers rather than thinkers. But not all intellectuals are the same. In France, for example, there is no place for a species that exists in considerable numbers in Germany—the professional theologian. Nor, with the exception of Strasbourg, is it possible to imagine in France, the faculties of theology (some denominational and some less so) that can be found in almost every other country in Europe. Indeed at a meeting of a newly constructed European network concerned with the teaching of religion in the “new Europe,”<sup>7</sup> it became clear that northern European assumptions about the non-confessional teaching of religion in higher education were not always shared by their counterparts further south. Here—quite clearly—old habits (confessional teaching in confessional institutions) die hard, the more so in those parts of Europe where the teaching of or about religion is only just emerging after several decades in the wilderness.

But in which direction is Europe moving: towards greater secularity, or not, or in more than one direction at once? The debates surrounding a reference to religion in the preamble to the proposed European Constitution (2004) provide a useful touchstone in this respect. The question was simple enough: should the preamble contain a specific reference to Christianity or was such a reference no longer appropriate in the twenty-first century? At one level, the answer is straightforward: it all depends on what you think a preamble should be. If a preamble is concerned with historical fact, then the reference must be specific—Christianity, amongst other things, has had a huge and lasting influence in the formation of Europe. It is willful to pretend otherwise. But if a preamble is an inspiration for the future, the answers might well be different—or at least there are different questions to consider. Much of the confusion surrounding this highly controversial issue lay in the fact that Europeans omitted to consider the precise nature of the preamble that they were trying to write.

Two further remarks are necessary with respect to this episode. First the fact that the dispute about the place of religion in the preamble took place at all is as significant as its eventual outcome—most Europeans did not expect a controversy such as this for the reasons discussed above. Second the “patterns” that emerged as different countries took different positions regarding the reference to Christianity in the preamble demand our close attention—new configurations appeared as the countries that became part of the European Union in May 2004, most notably Poland, began to flex their muscles. “Old Europe” conversely

was taken by surprise as the secular assumptions of France in particular were seriously challenged. In this case, the secularists “won”—there was no specific reference to Christianity in the draft agreed in 2004—but the sharpness of the opposition came as something of a surprise (Schlesinger and Foret 2006). Berger’s prediction (p. 11) that increasing secularity will follow from inclusion in the European ambit may or may not be case. Interestingly, the papers drawn together in Byrnes and Katzenstein (2006) address precisely this issue. These authors are not altogether optimistic: as the European Union extends its boundaries, they argue that religious factors are not only growing in importance but constitute stumbling blocks rather than stepping stones towards greater integration.

### *Examining Unbelief*

A related, but rather different, point requires attention: the study of religion in any given society must include the study of its secular elites. More precisely, it must look carefully at the ways in which these sections of society (the opinion-formers) respond, or fail to respond, to religious issues—the more so given the renewed prominence of religion in public debate. The need for such knowledge reveals, however, an underlying lacuna. Standard enquiries about religion have very largely omitted to include within them the study of unbelief, bearing in mind its considerable diversity. Unbelievers are not simply those who tick the “none” or “no belief” category in the questionnaire, but a complex continuum that includes at one end the convinced, articulate, and at times vehement atheist, and at the other, the mildest of agnostics. The line between agnostic indifference and believing indifference is fuzzy to say the least. Atheists, conversely, know a great deal about the God(s) in whom they do not believe: they also take on the characteristics of the society of which they are part. In western Europe, two very different European countries exemplify this tendency: the first, unsurprisingly is France; the second Norway. The situation in France has already been described: here unbelief not only becomes the alter ego of Catholicism, with its own symbols and legitimating narrative, it also sinks much deeper into the population than is the case elsewhere. In Norway, in contrast, the surprisingly large number of humanists in the population exhibit the characteristics of the majority church—paradoxically in some respects. The relatively wealthy Norwegian Humanist Association, for instance, is supported by the equivalent of “church” tax. Its members express their views firmly, but with considerable respect for others. In short, they are *Norwegian* humanists.

In eastern Europe—where atheism became part of the dominant ideology—something rather different has happened. Once again, however,

distinctive patterns emerge. In those parts of post-communist Europe dominated by Protestantism, the years under Soviet domination brought about a collapse in belief, as well as in the institutional churches. In Estonia, for example, and even more notably in the former East Germany, unbelief is now the majority position. Berger is entirely correct to designate Berlin as the capital of secularism as well as secularity.<sup>8</sup> Conversely—and for reasons that require detailed examination—the Catholic Church was much more able to resist the communist onslaught. Indeed the contrast between East Germany and Poland, two neighboring countries, is dramatic in this respect. The Orthodox world is more varied: Bulgaria and Romania, for instance, present very different cases—the first is moderately secular, the second very much less so. Nor is it easy to say how, in religious terms, these countries will develop as they begin their membership of the European Union. Only time will tell.

We can conclude this discussion with a brief comparison with the American case. Unbelief in Europe is varied, but remains a significant element in most countries; it is growing rather than shrinking. In the United States, it is also growing, but from an infinitesimally small base. Why, then, is the number of unbelievers in America so small? Might one clue lie in the relationship between the religious and the secular already described—that is, that in many respects, the secular sections of European societies take on the characteristics of the dominant church in question? But in the United States there is no dominant church. Who then constitutes the opposition, or the alter ego of the secular elite? It is clear that many Americans observe with disquiet the growing dominance of the Evangelical constituency, the more so in so far as Evangelicals, or some of them, appear to assert a political influence. It is also clear that the culture wars of modern America show no sign of diminishing. If anything the reverse is true: moral conservatives continue to oppose secular liberals on a wide range of issues. Resistance to Evangelical ideas, however, is as likely to be found in the different currents of Christianity as it is in secularism as such. Indeed the failure of the Democrats in both the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections lay as much in their inability to take religion seriously as it did in their attempts to offer a secular alternative. Hence the despairing cry of Jim Wallis, whose book became the number one best seller on Amazon even before it was published. Its title *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It* (2005) epitomizes the essential dilemma: many non-Republican Americans are looking for a religious rather than a secular alternative. It is this constituency, moreover, that the Democrats are so anxious to capture in 2008. That does not mean that secularists do not exist in America: they most certainly do, but they have a much

harder time than their European counterparts in gaining a purchase in the population as a whole.

### *Two Outspoken Secularists*

The difference can be illustrated by looking at two outspoken individuals.<sup>9</sup> The first is British—Richard Dawkins, a distinguished biologist at the University of Oxford; the second is American—Daniel Dennett, a philosopher from Tufts University in Massachusetts. Both could be described as “proselytizing” atheists.

Professor Dawkins, the holder of the Charles Simonyi Chair for the Public Understanding of Science, is widely admired for his pioneering work in evolutionary biology; his scientific views are well known both inside and outside the academy. He is a convinced Darwinian who combines the popularization of science with ever more trenchant attacks on religion. His latest book—*The God Delusion*—is concerned with the latter rather than the former. Published in 2006, it became very rapidly a best seller on both sides of the Atlantic. Both the book and its reception are central to the argument of this chapter: taken together they demonstrate a reaction in certain circles to the resurgence of religion in public discussion. Dawkins, incidentally, is genuinely perplexed by this phenomenon, noting in particular the persistence of religion in modern America—something that he cannot account for.

His response is robust to say the least. Both in the book itself and in television programs screened to coincide with publication,<sup>10</sup> the subtext (or in many places, the text) is unequivocal: the world would be a better place without religion. His argument, as a convinced and articulate atheist, deserves serious consideration; it is more than a rant against religion, though at times it comes perilously close to this. The approach, moreover, is deliberately polemical, in the sense that it often takes the form of a provocative statement, which is then corrected—by which time, of course, the damage is done. The following, frequently quoted passage is one such:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. (Dawkins 2006: 3)

A paragraph further on, Dawkins contrasts this portrait with the sentimental, largely nineteenth-century, image of a “gentle Jesus,” pointing out that neither is complete or fully representative of Christian teaching, which

must be countered in its entirety. Indeed the real question to be answered is the following: is there or is there not a superhuman intelligence that designed and created the universe, or is the latter simply the result of a long-term and continuing process of evolution? The title of Dawkins’s text supplies the answer: the notion of God is a delusion. The contents, chapter by chapter, provide the evidence.

Most interesting for a sociologist of religion is Dawkins’s attention to childhood. In his attempt to explain the persistence of religion in the modern world, Dawkins suggests that children have difficulty discriminating between the different pieces of wisdom that they hear from their parents. “Good” advice—to be careful crossing the road and so on—cannot be distinguished from what he considers much less good advice, that is the elements of religious doctrine that are passed from parent to child and so perpetuated. More than anything else, Dawkins takes exception to the idea of a “Catholic” child or a “Muslim” child—that, he feels, is an imposition on an individual who cannot yet decide for him or herself. Such labeling is effectively a curtailment of freedom.

His argument is intriguing—the more so given the number of recent studies that have emphasized not so much the perpetuation as the collapse in the religious tradition, most notably in Europe. Danièle Hervieu-Léger’s *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (2000) offers an excellent example, and for two reasons. Not only does Hervieu-Léger argue that the chain of memory is close to breaking-point at least in the French case, but she takes that idea to its logical conclusion—one that might interest Professor Dawkins. What, precisely, might emerge when the memory or tradition as we know it can no longer be sustained? It may not be the well-informed, secular rationalism so desired by Dawkins, but a much more heterogeneous, fluctuating, and at times emotional, package of religious identities—half inside and half outside the historic churches. It is this not very reassuring situation that was described in Chapter 3.

The American case is rather different; here the handing-on process—for better or worse—is noticeably more intact. And it is in this much less questioning context that we must understand the work of Daniel Dennett, who with some justification has been called the “American Dawkins.” Trained in philosophy rather than natural science, Dennett follows the same Darwinian line, in so far as he argues that humanity’s affinity for religion is a by-product of evolution. Several chapters in his most recent book, *Breaking the Spell* (2006), describe how this process takes place. The tone of his writing, however, is noticeably different from Dawkins. Dennett’s aim is to coax, rather than shock—to take his reader by the hand in order to ask questions that so far have been considered “off-limits” for many Americans. Such questions, for Dennett, go to the heart of the matter, in

that they interrogate the widely held assumption that religion is a “good” thing, which enables people to live morally upright lives. Paragraph by paragraph, such assumptions are called into question. Minds, it follows, should be open rather than closed. And with the latter in mind, the position of children arises once again, with frequent reference to Dawkins’s work. Less strident than his British equivalent, Dennett comes to a similar conclusion. He concludes: “If you have to hoodwink—or blindfold—your children to ensure that they confirm their faith when they are adults, your faith *ought* to go extinct” (2006: 328). The rights of the child to “freedom” are more important than the rights of the parent to pass on his or her belief system.

How then are these articulate and widely publicized atheists received in their respective communities? The answer is interesting. Professor Dawkins has a considerable following both in Britain and beyond—a fact that can be measured in audiences, television appearances, honorary doctorates, academic accolades, and so on. There are some, however—notably a section of the scientific community—who would prefer that Dawkins concentrated his energies on the popularization of science rather than the critique of religion. This, after all, is his primary role and a very necessary activity in a country in which the predilection of the young for studying science is diminishing rather than growing (see below). From this point of view, the continual sniping at religion is simply counterproductive. On the whole, however, Dawkins is recognized as a prominent intellectual, who is entitled both to his views on religion and to persuade others of their “delusions.” He speaks to a significant minority—among them the 25 to 30 per cent of the British population, who will declare in an opinion poll that they have no belief in God. Such people, it is worth noting, will be predominantly male; they will also be clustered in certain professions, notably the media. Here, in short, is an accepted, but not necessarily typical minority who are disproportionately able to make their voices heard. Provoked by the reappearance of religion in public debate, both in Europe and beyond, they do precisely this.

In the United States, the proportions are different: those who believe in God constitute an overwhelming majority—over 90 per cent of the population. Atheists, it follows, are a somewhat beleaguered minority, one moreover which is unlikely to prosper in the political sphere. Only 37 per cent of the American population, it seems, would even contemplate voting for an American president who did not believe in God (Adler 2006). Also different are the arguments about religion in public life. Take, for example, the debate about creationism or intelligent design and its place in the public school system. A whole series of factors come together in this controversial issue, all of them illustrative of American life. They include very different

understandings of “science,” the place of these different interpretations in the education of young people, the proscribing of religion from the public school system, the politicization of the debate, and a specifically American decision-making process. For a British observer, one point stands out: it is right and proper, surely, for young people to discuss the origins of life and the possibility or otherwise that there might be a “creator” of some kind, but not—emphatically not—in a science class. In Britain, as indeed in most of Europe, such discussions would find their place in a lesson concerned with religious studies—an impossibility in the American system. Paradoxically, it is the absence of formal teaching in religion in the school system that has led to its reintroduction in the science class and the controversies that follow from this.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, Dennett comes to the same conclusion. He is strongly in favor of teaching about religion, good points and bad, in the public schools of the United States (2006: 327).

A short post-script brings to a close this brief excursus into the teaching of religion in schools, which will be continued in Chapter 5. It concerns the educational choices of young people in Britain at the moment when they select certain subjects for specialized study. For most of the post-war period, it was widely assumed that science-based subjects would become ever more popular at the expense of religious education in its various forms. This would be the route to educational, economic, and social advancement. In the early years of the new century, such assumptions have been turned on their head—dramatically so. Both in the higher levels of the school system and at university entrance, the number of candidates seeking to do theology or religious studies is growing, if at times unevenly. Conversely, the numbers wanting to do science (particularly physics and chemistry) are falling—so much so that a significant number of science departments in public universities have been closed. Such closures are controversial, but it is no longer possible to maintain departments that are not attracting students. Why it should be so difficult to do this is not yet clear, but it is hardly evidence of secularization. The predilection for theology is equally complex. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is driven by an interest in ethics and the philosophy of religion, rather than a return to biblical studies. Quite clearly more work is required in this field.

#### *Signs of Change in Europe*

There are other signs of change in Europe, in the sense that some European intellectuals are beginning to pay attention to religion. Or to put the same point in a different way, there are signs that the “secular neutrality” of the European Union is increasingly being called into question. Two

distinguished social scientists—José Casanova and Jürgen Habermas—provide interesting illustrations of this shift.

Casanova has already been introduced as a critic of secularization (pp. 15, 32–3). In his more recent writing, often focused specifically on Europe, he approaches this topic in a rather different way. He begins by articulating the following (secularist) paradox:

In the name of freedom, individual autonomy, tolerance, and cultural pluralism, religious people—Christian, Jewish, and Muslim—are being asked to keep their religious beliefs, identities and norms “private” so that they do not disturb the project of a modern, secular, enlightened Europe. (2006: 66–7)

Such a statement quite clearly echoes the remarks made above concerning the reassessments of religion in the public life of Europe and the difficulty that European intellectuals have in dealing with these. It also builds on Casanova’s earlier thinking in his seminal book *Public Religions in the Modern World* (1994), where he argues that religions both can and should have a public role in the modern world, entering at every level into the discursive space of civil society. Indeed, as his critique of the secularization thesis develops throughout his work, Casanova poses increasingly sharp questions. One such concerns the nature of secularization in Europe: is this effectively a self-fulfilling prophecy? If it is, the secularization of western Europe is likely to have more to do with the triumph of the knowledge regime of secularism, than with structural processes of socio-economic development (Casanova 2006: 84). It is for this reason, following Casanova, that Europe should become, as rapidly as possible, post-secular. Only then will it be possible to counter the secularist assumptions of many (if not all) social and political commentators, who necessarily “turn religion into a problem”—thus precluding the resolution of religion-related challenges in a reasonable and pragmatic manner.

Habermas, perhaps the most prominent philosopher in modern Europe, pursues a strikingly similar argument. This was the theme of a lecture delivered on the occasion of the Holberg prize in 2005, and subsequently expanded into a longer article (2006). The core of the lecture resides in the following claim: secular citizens—Habermas insists—must learn, sooner rather than later, to live in a post-secular society. In so doing, they will be following the example of religious citizens, who have already come to terms with the ethical expectations of democratic citizenship, in the sense that they have adopted appropriate epistemic attitudes toward their secular environment. So far secular citizens have not been expected to make a similar effort—a situation which leads to the current “asymmetric distribution of cognitive burdens,” an imbalance which needs to be rectified sooner rather than later (Habermas 2005).

The argument can be amplified as follows. Taking as his starting point the increasing significance of religious traditions and communities in much of the modern world (Berger 1999; Jenkins 2002), Habermas addresses the debate in terms of John Rawls’s celebrated concept, the “public use of reason,” using this to invite of secular citizens, including Europeans, “a self-reflective transcending of the secularist self-understanding of Modernity” (2006: 15)—an attitude that quite clearly goes beyond “mere tolerance” in that it necessarily engenders feelings of respect for the worldview of the religious person. Hence the need, not only for a growing reciprocity in the debate (see above), but for an additional question. Are religious issues simply to be regarded as relics of a pre-modern era, or is it the duty of the more secular citizen to overcome his or her narrowly secularist consciousness in order to engage with religion in terms of “reasonably expected disagreement” (2006: 15), assuming in other words a degree of rationality on both sides? The latter appears to be the case. Habermas’s argument is challenging in every sense of the term and merits very careful reflection; it constitutes an interesting response to a changing global environment—one moreover in which the relative secularity of Europe is increasingly seen as an exceptional, rather than prototypical case.

More precisely, in the initial pages of Habermas’s article, two closely linked ideas are introduced: on the one hand the increasing isolation of Europe from the rest of the world in terms of its religious configurations, and on the other the notion of “multiple modernities.” It was exactly this combination that was developed in some detail in *Europe: The Exceptional Case* (Davie 2002). The starting point lies in reversing the “normal” question: instead of asking what Europe *is* in term of its religious existence, it asks what Europe *is not*. It is not (yet) a vibrant religious market such as that found in the United States; it is not a part of the world where Christianity is growing exponentially, very often in Pentecostal forms, as in the case in the southern hemisphere (Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Pacific Rim); it is not a part of the world dominated by faiths other than Christian, but is increasingly penetrated by these; and it is not for the most part subject to the violence often associated with religion and religious difference in other parts of the globe—the more so if religion becomes entangled in political conflict. Hence the inevitable, if at times disturbing conclusion: that the patterns of religion in modern Europe, notably its relative secularity, might be an exceptional case in global terms.

Precisely that fact has become a central feature of the debate about multiple modernities, a theme already introduced, which must now be developed in more detail. The negative aspects of this idea are unequivocally set out in the following paragraph:

The notion of “multiple modernities” denotes a certain view of the contemporary world—indeed of the history and characteristics of the modern era—that goes against the views long prevalent in scholarly and general discourse. It goes against the view of the “classical” theories of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950s, and indeed against the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim, and (to a large extent) even of Weber, at least in one reading of his work. They all assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world. (Eisenstadt 2000: 1)

Right from the start, therefore, the author—Shmuel Eisenstadt—challenges both the assumption that modernizing societies are convergent, and the notion that Europe (or indeed anywhere else) is the lead society in the modernizing process.

How then does the multiple-modernities approach develop from a positive point of view? In the introductory essay to an interesting set of comparative cases, Eisenstadt suggests that the best way to understand the modern world (in other words to grasp the history and nature of modernity) is to see this as “a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs” (2000: 2). A second point follows from this. These on-going reconstitutions do not drop from the sky; they emerge as the result of endless encounters on the part of both individuals and groups, all of whom engage in the creation and re-creation of both cultural and institutional formations, but within different economic and cultural contexts. Once this way of thinking is firmly in place it becomes easier to appreciate one of the fundamental paradoxes of Eisenstadt’s writing: namely that to engage with the Western understanding of modernity, or even to oppose it, is as indisputably modern as to embrace it. It is equally clear that the form of modernity that has emerged in Europe is only one among many; it is not necessarily the global prototype.

Such a statement is crucial with respect to religion. It goes straight to the heart of the question that lies at the center of this book: is secularization intrinsic or extrinsic to the modernization process? In other words is Europe secular because it is modern (or at least more modern than other parts of the world), or is it secular because it is European, and has developed along a distinctive pathway unlikely to be repeated elsewhere? It also gathers up a number of threads already introduced, including the notion of a “lead society,” and which one it is—Europe or the United States or neither? Equally significant is the fact that the dominant lines of thinking in modern social science—including thinking about religion—emerge from the European Enlightenment. And if the European case turns out to be exceptional rather than typical, where should

we look for conceptual tools to understand better what is happening in the rest of the world? Hence the theoretical implications of these debates, not to mention their importance for policy. Both will be re-engaged in later chapters.<sup>12</sup>

At this stage, something rather more modest is required: that is to conclude this discussion of secular elites by looking in more detail at their relationship with the wider society, both in Europe and the United States.

### **High Culture and Popular Culture**

An interesting “experiment” took place in London at Christmas 2006.<sup>13</sup> A chamber choir was sent to sing traditional carols in two rather different environments: the first—a respectable middle-class area, the second—a council estate, known for its social problems. The aim was “to test the appeal of doorstep carol-singing in modern Britain.” The result was intriguing. The middle-class estate received the visitors courteously, but with a certain *déjà vu*. This choir was but one of many who had visited the area in the previous week or so, all of them asking for money (albeit for good causes). For the residents of the council estate, this was not the case: hence a degree of excitement as the presence of the choir made itself felt among the tower blocks. A specific invitation to sing to the older people provoked enthusiastic applause. Most interesting of all, however, was the response of a Muslim family on the estate—first in affirming that *Christian* carols were an entirely appropriate activity in a so-called Christian society, but also in the most generous donation of the evening. Indeed, the novelty was such that the choir were asked to sing loud enough for an uncle in Pakistan to hear them on the telephone!

An anecdote does not constitute social-scientific evidence. It does, however, give pause for thought regarding the wisdom of both elites and their policies regarding what has become known as multi-culturalism. The notion, for example, that specifically Christian festivals offend minorities from other faith communities is widespread—but it is rarely the view of the minorities themselves, who (equally rarely) are asked for their opinion. This could in fact be called a “battering-ram” approach to policy making: secular elites make use of other faith communities in order to further their own—frequently secular—points of view. They do not always consult before doing this. Hence, for example, the well-intentioned—if rather inept—idea of Birmingham City Council in the late 1990s to use the term Winterval rather than Christmas. The word “Christmas” was felt to be excluding of other faiths. Happily, the idea was abandoned after a couple of years, though the underlying debate re-emerges repeatedly (as indeed it does in the United States). The Christmas cards of politicians, for example,

are carefully scrutinized for their political correctness. Their senders, however, find themselves between a rock and hard place: castigated by the chattering classes for specifically Christian greetings, they are taken to task by the popular press for the lack of them.

Rather more “scientific” are the data that emerged from the 2001 British Census, which for the first time in the history of the census in Britain contained a question about religion. Why this was so forms a study in its own right—admirably told by Francis (2003) and Weller (2004). In itself, it reveals a growing, though still controversial, awareness that religion should be seen as a public as well as private category in British life. Even more significant for the argument of this chapter is the fact that the driving force for the religious question in the census came from the other faith communities, notably the Muslims. In Britain, the Muslim population is diverse in terms of ethnicity and nationality. It follows that statistics based on either of these indicators disperse a purely religious identity and downplay for British Muslims what is for them the most important factor—their faith. British Muslims want to be known as Muslims in public as well as private life, in order that provision for their needs is met in these terms. Appropriate policies should be worked out on a secure statistical base (hence the demand for a specific question in the census), not on assumptions, estimates, or extrapolations from other variables.

Such a demand should be seen in a wider context. Very similar arguments, for example, can be found in a 2002 debate in the House of Lords on “Multi-Ethnicity and Multi-Culturalism,” illustrating—in terms of a methodology—an interesting complementarity of sources (in this case, written text reinforcing the demand for statistical data). The following quotations exemplify the point perfectly; they are taken from a speech by Baroness Pola Manzila Uddin (2002), who—amongst many other honors—was the first Muslim in Britain to enter the House of Lords, and who remains the only Muslim woman in Parliament. The extracts speak for themselves:

The almost total denial for decades of our identity based on our faith has been devastating psychologically, socially and culturally and its economic impact has been well demonstrated. For years Britain's 2 million or so Muslims ... have been totally bypassed even by the best-intentioned community and race relations initiatives because they have failed to take on board the fact that a major component of their identity is their faith.

Such an identity demanded more than just the stereotypical and lazy imposition of simple cultural labels based on race categorisations. British Muslims, consisting of 56 nationalities and speaking more than 1,000 languages, have never been and shall never be happy about an existence and understanding that rarely goes beyond somosas, Bollywood and bhangra. (Uddin 2002: 1423)

Bearing these “stereotypical and lazy” impositions in mind, it was hardly surprising that the question on religion in the national census proved controversial. It also produced a typically British compromise: a different question emerged in England and Wales from that which was used in Scotland,<sup>14</sup> and both were optional rather than compulsory. Interestingly, the results from the two parts of the United Kingdom were somewhat different, revealing yet again that the formulation of a question has a powerful effect on how people respond, a point underlined by Voas and Bruce (2004).

How then should the findings of the census be interpreted? The Muslim community was rewarded in so far as its relatively modest presence was recognized as such. The same was true for the other religious minorities present in Britain, revealing their very different demographic profiles and their precise geographical locations. The Jewish community, for example, is significantly different in both respects from the more recently arrived religious minorities. Even more striking however was a point already mentioned in Chapter 3: that is the number of people in both populations, but especially in England and Wales (over 70 per cent), who declared themselves Christian—this was unexpectedly strong evidence of residual attachments. What though did the category “Christian” mean for those who ticked this box? Did this imply that the individuals concerned were not secular, or did it imply that they were not Muslim (or indeed another world faith), or did it mean something different again—a marker of national identity for example, as suggested by Voas and Bruce (2004)? It is at this point that more qualitative approaches to methodology become important; or at the very least some rather more detailed questions about religion addressed to a sample of those who answered “Christian” to the question about religious belonging. Until this is done, we can only speculate about the results.<sup>15</sup>

What conclusions can we draw from these data? First it is important to appreciate that Britain is not necessarily typical of Europe. In France, for example, a question about religion in the national census would be unthinkable. Indeed the lack of a reliable statistical base for the Muslim population in France is almost government policy: the whole point is not to identify, still less reify, the minority in question. And in France such policies—captured once again in the notion of *laïcité*—are, very largely, affirmed by the population as a whole. Broadly speaking, however, the European situation could be characterized by the existence of a secular elite, overlaying a largely indifferent, but “Christian” population. If provoked, the latter will still claim allegiance to the historic churches and expect these institutions to reciprocate at the time of need. Such residual attachments do not, however, imply a continuing knowledge of the

Christian narrative—quite the opposite in fact. The norm is widespread ignorance about religion, Christianity included—a state of affairs to which the label “everyday atheism” could be applied with some accuracy. Hence the bewildered response of the young man at the reception desk in the London hotel who really did not know what the Church of England was or where to find it (p. 9).

Something rather different exists in the United States. Here Berger is right to identify what Nancy Ammerman calls “golden-rule Christianity” as the majority position of most Americans. Golden-rule Christianity, moreover, is both more Christian and more active than its European counterpart, resisting on the one hand more extreme forms of Christianity, and on the other the unbelief of the secular elite—itself very much smaller, proportionally speaking, than its European equivalents. One point, however, is clear in both cases: that is, the importance of paying attention to the middle ground in sociological analysis. Small groups of opinion informers require careful study in their own right; that is clear. What really counts however is the capacity of these groups to gain a purchase in the wider population. It is this capacity, or the lack of it, that reveals a significant difference between Europe and the United States.

### Concluding Remarks

Quite a bit of the previous section has focused on the British case, which can now be used to draw the threads of this chapter together. Here, without doubt, is a society pulled in two directions. As Himmelfarb makes abundantly clear, there is an affinity between the British and American Enlightenments—both are more pragmatic than the French example and both respect the common-sense doer rather more than the intellectual. Attitudes towards the state mirror these differences in the sense that Britain is moving steadily closer to the United States in terms of a state that regulates rather than provides. Britain, finally, acquired a relatively high degree of religious pluralism at an earlier stage than most Europeans, and learnt—though not always willingly—to tolerate religious differences at a group as well as individual level.

Britain, however, is firmly European in the sense that England and Scotland at least have a “state” church, in which the defining of territory at both national and local level is central—with all the advantages and disadvantages of this situation. The fact that the church is constitutionally different in each case does not effect the outcome<sup>16</sup>—which is a church

that continues to operate as an effective public utility in time of need, but which is unable to move fast enough to accommodate the changes of late modernity in the sense of providing numerous and flexible options for an increasingly diverse population. The result is low levels of religious activity, very similar to those in most of northern Europe. In other words, the cultural affinities between Britain and the United States are countered by the institutional structures delivered by an essentially European past. It is these structures that provide the theme of the following chapter.

### Notes

- 1 In France, in fact, the suppression of both Protestants and Protestantism had been particularly brutal, leading to widespread persecution, enforced conversions, and significant emigration among the Huguenot population.
- 2 A more detailed discussion of this approach can be found in Bouretz (2000).
- 3 In making this point, Bouretz is quite clearly following Gauchet (1985; 1999).
- 4 Interestingly, the British did not use the term “Enlightenment” at all, until well into the nineteenth century (Himmelfarb 2004: 9–11).
- 5 Agnesi was not alone in this respect. See Messbarger and Fidlen (2005) for further examples of women who excelled in the academy.
- 6 This essay on “the mystic heaven” (the full title of which is *Il cielo mistico, cioè contemplazione delle virtù, de' Misteri, e delle Eccellenze del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*), is Agnesi’s contribution to an eighteenth-century mystical trend which emphasized personal love for Christ and a focus on his death and resurrection. See Mazzotti (2001: 673).
- 7 Details of TRES (a Network on Teaching Religion in a Multicultural European Society) can be found on the following website: <http://www.student.teol.uu.se/tres/> (accessed 6 May 2008).
- 8 The reasons for East German secularity are complex; they include long-term historical developments in addition to the aggressive secularization policies of the communist government (McLeod 2000).
- 9 Dawkins and Dennett have been taken as examples. Militant atheism is a rapidly growing industry—see, for instance, the work of Sam Harris (2006; 2007) and Christopher Hitchens (2007). The sales figures for all these authors are high—something worthy of study in its own right. An excellent overview of this group and their motives can be found in Higgins (2007).
- 10 Two programs entitled “The Root of All Evil” were screened on British television’s Channel 4 on 11 and 12 May 2006.
- 11 See for example Edward Larson’s presentation to the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life on “The Biology Wars: The Religion, Science and Education Controversy” December 5, 2005, and the debate that this provoked: <http://pewforum.org/events/index.php> (accessed 6 May 2008)
- 12 They are also developed in Davie (2007b).
- 13 *The Times*, 23 Dec. 2006, “The Knowledge” section: 27.

- 14 In Scotland, the question was much more detailed regarding different types of Christianity. See the official website of the census for further details: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/census2001.asp> (accessed 6 May 2008).
- 15 An interesting start has been made in a recent doctoral thesis—see Day (2006).
- 16 An excellent source of information on church-state relationships in Europe, including the intricacies of the British case, can be found at: <http://eurel.u-strasbg.fr/EN/index.php> (accessed 6 May 2008).

## Chapter 5

### Variation Three: Institutional Carriers

Thus far we have discussed the different historical trajectories of religion in Europe and in the United States and the different understandings of the Enlightenment that underpin these stories. How, though, are these narratives both kept in place and passed on from one generation to another? What, in other words, are the institutional carriers—in addition to the churches themselves—that shape, influence, and perpetuate the patterns of religiousness in Europe and the United States respectively? The point has already been raised in passing in connection with Richard Dawkins's critique of religion; it is now time to develop it from a more positive point of view. Such an analysis builds naturally on to the approach set out in *Religion in Modern Europe* (Davie 2000), a book which envisaged religion in Europe as a form of collective memory, and then looked at the ways in which this is, or is not, perpetuated in the current situation. The results are complex to say the least. The debate, moreover, must include a normative dimension: what can or cannot be changed provokes heated discussion in any society, the more so when its core documents are under review. Hence a series of tensions that will resonate repeatedly in the pages that follow.

Clearly the state (or states in Europe) is the first place to look, a discussion that must include church-state relations. Indeed in many respects church-state relations constitute an umbrella under which the other institutions that are examined in this chapter find their place: these are the judiciary, education systems, and the providers of welfare, all of which display marked differences between Europe and the United States.<sup>1</sup> The judiciary, for example, has a very powerful role in determining the place of religion in the American public sphere. In Europe, it is primarily in national parliaments that such matters are negotiated, bearing in mind that the European Court of Human Rights is increasingly acting as a catalyst for change in this respect. Education is also different in the sense that religion is largely proscribed from the public school system in the United States, but not in Europe—with the important exception of France, where the education system quite clearly becomes the carrier of a secular ideology on behalf of the state. The provision of welfare, finally,