taken-for-granted, matter-of-fact, "same" reality of life in society. The thought keeps suggesting itself that, perhaps, the bright reality of everyday life is but an illusion, to be swallowed up at any moment by the bounding nightmare of the other, the night-side reality.

I have said that deviance is inevitable because any attempt to impose order on the unidy phenomena of human existence will inevitably result in a certain amount of matter being out of place. I have also said that the basic chaos of human existence, of which any given anomaly is but one example, is perhaps the greatest of all threats to social order. Indeed, no social order can survive without developing mechanisms for protecting itself against the chaos that anomaly implies. Berger and Luckmann have termed these "universe-maintaining mechanisms." There are many different universe-maintaining mechanisms found in each social order. I only attempt to identify and describe the ones that are most commonly found in industrialized societies, such as our own.

One of the most elementary of all the mechanisms for maintaining a symbolic universe is misperception, by which I mean the tendency to mistake as normal and ordinary phenomena in that reality are anomalous. Kuhn has suggested that scientists sometimes fail to see in a particular datum the evidence that would destroy their theoretical paradigm. By the same token, laymen also misperceive as normal, phenomena whose existence undermines their entire world view. Do not believe that misperceptions of this kind are a question of the deliberate and conscious distortion of reality, nor do I regard them simply as psychological mechanisms of defense against a reality that is too harsh to confront. Rather, the misperception is "genuine," that is, the categories of perception that are part of our symbolic universe lead us to expect to see things in a certain way, and our resulting readiness to find the normal and the expected can cause us not to see the real nature of an event that is anomalous. A certain amount of confrontation between the symbolic universe and the surrounding chaos is avoided by this mechanism of misperception. At the same time it can only be effective as long as the anomalous events that are misperceived as normal occur only rarely. The more often such events occur, the more difficult it becomes to mistake them for things that are natural and ordinary.

A second way in which a symbolic universe can be preserved against chaos is by debunking evidence concerning the existence of phenomena that threaten it. This mechanism is probably more effective when the phenomena in question is symbolic rather than physical, since it is easier thing to persuade people that a symbolic event "never actually happened" than it is to persuade them that a physical object they can see is "not really there." To take a simple example, when a person claims that he has seen a ghost, one of our first reactions is to debunk him by trying to convince others that he is an unreliable source of information (that is, "he's under a terrible strain, you know." "He's been hitting the bottle pretty hard lately"). This reaction has its counterpart in the response of scientists to reports of experiments the results of which threaten to disconfirm the accepted theoretical paradigms. Frequently the scientists response is to replicate the experiment, allegedly in order to confirm the evidence of the experiments, but in reality in a spirit of attempting to show that the disturbing evidence is not in fact "real." As a rule, it is an easier thing to debunk such evidence when it has been advanced by a single person (witness the case the Catholic Church was able to make against Galileo), or, when several persons are involved, if their social credibility is problematic because of age, past behavior, or general status in the community. Correspondingly, this mechanism is least effective when those who provide us with reports of anomalous phenomena are respected and established citizens, or when these reports come from a large number of persons from diverse walks of life. Although some anomalies can be ignored or debunked, not all of them can be handled in this way. Each social order must therefore devise other mechanisms as well for dealing with them. One of the most interesting and effective mechanisms is normalization, which involves the effort to force anomalous events to change in such a way as to become more nearly normal. When the anomaly is physical in character, normalization usually takes the form of attempts to make it into something that corresponds more closely to the category into which it does not quite fit. When the anomaly is behavioral, then normalization involves attempts to alter a person's behavior through therapy, rehabilitation, or coercion. I can illustrate how this mechanism works with a few examples.

In our society, one of the most rigidly defined boundary lines is the one dividing men and women into distinctly different sex groups. Most of us see this demarcation line as a perfectly normal one, as "given in nature," which of course to some extent it is. The hermaphrodite or intersexed person, therefore, poses a special problem in our culture because it stands as glaring testimony to the fact that the line between the sexes is not as firm and rigid as we assume it to be. Robert Edgerton has compared the manner in which hermaphroditism is handled in different cultures. He reports that in our society intersexed people are regarded as freaks and are encouraged to assume either a male or a female role. He writes, "All concerned, from parents to physicians are enjoined to discover which of the two natural sexes the intersexed person most appropriately is, and then to help the ambiguous, incongruous and upsetting 'it' to become at least a partially acceptable 'him' or 'her'." In this particular case, the symbolic universe is protected from anomaly by physically changing the anomalous thing so that it no longer violates, or at least does not violate as sharply, our system of classification.

Other examples of efforts to normalize a physical anomaly are found among persons with certain kinds of bodily impairments. When the nature of the impairment is such as to render the body incomplete, then attempts may