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The Sacred and the Profane in Consumer Behavior: Theodicy on the Odyssey

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Journal of Consumer Research, Volume 16, Issue 1, 1 June 1989, Pages 1–38,
<https://doi.org/10.1086/209191>

Published: 01 June 1989 **Article history** ▼

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Abstract

Two processes at work in contemporary society are the secularization of religion and the sacralization of the secular. Consumer behavior shapes and

reflects these processes. For many, consumption has become a vehicle for experiencing the sacred. This article explores the ritual substratum of consumption and describes properties and manifestations of the sacred inherent in consumer behavior. Similarly, the processes by which consumers sacralize and desacralize dimensions of their experience are described. The naturalistic inquiry approach driving the insights in this article is advanced as a corrective to a premature narrowing of focus in consumer research.

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Online ISSN 1537-5277

Print ISSN 0093-5301

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