

ELIADE AND 'MYTHIC CONSCIOUSNESS'

MIRCEA ELIADE AND
THE CONCEPT OF
'MYTHIC CONSCIOUSNESS'

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: Previous considerations of Mircea Eliade have not dealt fundamentally with the important presupposition regarding the concept of 'mythic consciousness' which underlies his writings. After clearly differentiating the thought of Eliade from that of psychologist Carl Jung, a discussion of Eliade's writings on Yoga follows. The phrase 'mythic consciousness' is shown to be less than satisfactory in dealing with this presupposition in preference to Eliade's own term, the 'transconscious.'

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

I Some Previous Treatments of Eliade

Interest in the work of Mircea Eliade is presently increasing, as witness the fact that the prestigious periodical the Union Seminary Quarterly Review had contained two articles on him in succession.¹ However, most of the criticism directed against Eliade's writings stems from a false premise, as we shall show below. Up to this point no one has attempted a serious critique of the presuppositions underlying Eliade's concept of what we here designate as 'mythic consciousness' which is a central unifying element in his work. It is to such an end that this thesis is directed.

The only treatment of Eliade that is in book length is Altizer's Mircea Eliade and the dialectic of the sacred.² The second part of this volume is an

1. M.L.Ricketts, "The Nature and Extent of Eliade's Jungianism," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 25 (1970), 211-234; and R.D.Baird, "Normative Elements in Eliade's Phenomenology of Symbolism," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, 25 (1970), 505-516.

2. T.J.J.Altizer, Mircea Eliade and the dialectic of the sacred, (Philadelphia, 1963).

exposition of Altizer's own particular views on religion (that is, the phenomenon of the 'death of God') which utilizes quotes from Eliade wherever Altizer thinks it is appropriate. The first part of the book is summed up by an article in the Christian Scholar.³ Altizer stresses Eliade's background in Eastern Christianity since Eliade places emphasis on the Incarnation rather than the Resurrection. Therefore, for Altizer, Eastern orthodoxy is of extreme importance for the formulation of Eliade's entire outlook, a view which is to be challenged later since it fails to account for Eliade's interest in Yoga. Altizer also sees a major inconsistency in Eliade's use of 'time' which is more a problem of misunderstanding by Altizer than actual inconsistency on the part of Eliade. Furthermore, the attempt to 'fit' Eliade into an acceptable theological framework (Soren Kierkegaard, Neitzsche) underscores the major problem most commentators have in analyzing Eliade. Attempts such as this fail simply because too much

3. T.J.J. Altizer, "Mircea Eliade and the recovery of the sacred," Christian Scholar, 45(1962), 267-289.

emphasis is laid on similarities of language and not enough on ideational differences. For these reasons we shall have no further reference to Altizer.

Welbon's article in Acta Theologica et Philosophica⁴ is a revision of his thesis for the degree Master of Arts which was concerned with the animal-man transformation into religious man which the religious experience accomplishes. This religious experience then degenerates. The article is more theological than philosophical as attempts to discover the origin of spirituality which Welbon thinks Eliade apparently presupposes. Moreover, Welbon attempts at some length to analyze correspondences between Eliade and Rudolf Otto. Welbon clearly realizes the differences between the two but in attempting such an analysis he succumbs to the temptation of explaining by the use of similarity in wording rather than meaning. We do not receive a clear concise account of Eliade's presuppositions because of this since, as we shall show, his views on Yoga dominate his presuppositional

4. G.R. Welbon, "Some remarks on the work of Mircea Eliade," Acta Philosophica et Theologica, 2(1964), 465-492.

framework. Any attempt to explain Eliade solely within Western cultural forms is a futile task.

Rasmussen, in his article, clearly sees that the sacred is an element in the structure of consciousness rather than a moment in the history of consciousness.⁵ To have seen this is an important observation, but it is precisely the nature of consciousness that is problematic. Since Rasmussen makes a distinction between 'logical and pre-logical mentalities,'⁶ a distinction that Eliade always condemns,⁷ the article does not further our own exploration into Eliade's concept which we call mythic consciousness.

The article by Baird, "Normative Elements in Eliade's Phenomenology of Symbolism,"⁸ contains misunderstandings that point to problems that occur frequently in treatments of Eliade's works. First, the word 'ontology' is used far too loosely as it is neither

5. D.Rasmussen, "Mircea Eliade: Structural Hermeneutics and Philosophy," Philosophy Today, 12(1968), 138-147. See the preface in M. Eliade, The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion, (Chicago, 1969). (Hereafter cited as Quest).

6. ibid., 146

7. See, for example, the preface to T.N.Munson, Reflective Theology, (New Haven, 1968).

8. See note¹

defined nor critically applied to either the author's conception or Eliade's. Second, there is a virtual identification of Eliade's views with those of Jung. 'Subconscious' is used as a synonym for 'transconscious.' Baird also states that "Eliade seems to suggest that it is that subconscious of the race which explains the coherence that he finds in symbolism."⁹ The problem of such an identification will be dealt with in great detail later.

By far the most scholarly article yet to appear is by M.L.Ricketts on "The Nature and Extent of Eliade's 'Jungianism'."¹⁰ We will constantly refer to this article in the section concerned with the relationship between Eliade and Jung and the problem of reductionism. Therefore, the article will not be discussed at this point.

There have been numerous reviews and several other articles written on Eliade. The majority of the reviews in the American Anthropologist criticize Eliade

9. ibid., 511
10. See note 1

from the specialists' point of view concerning methodology. Since this is a quarrel over presuppositions using one set as absolute (that is, the anthropologists' 'behaviourism') the results of such a critique are not enlightening. The majority of the other articles either describe Eliade's work without critical comment or attempt to explain his theories through discerning similarities.

II Prefaces, Conclusions and Critiques

This section is so entitled to point to a major problem dealing with written sources. Eliade rarely systematically comments on his research within the body of his books (an exception being, of course, Cosmos and History because of the very nature of the work). For this reason his books have been compared to "sixteenth century travelogues" that are fascinated with the exotic; they only describe but do not explain. Such a comment is an oversimplification but shows the nature of the problem. While one must carefully read the body of a book for the occasional clue, it is in

introductions and conclusions that the most detailed explanations are found. Furthermore, the prefaces of the works of other authors which Eliade has written contain further hints and suggestions. Because of this situation one must carefully analyze the structural relationships between introductions and conclusions and the body of the work.

As we previously noted, several writers display the tendency to equate similarities of language with similarities of method, ideas, and intentions. A further complication of this is the tendency of Eliade to gently rebuke the works of others, rather than submit them to a rigorous critique. Examples of this tendency may be found in two articles in The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion.¹¹ Perhaps his most scathing remark is directed against Levy-Bruhl ("... no ethnologist or responsible historian of religions accepted Levy-Bruhl's hypothesis of 'pre-logical mentality' and 'mystical participation' of the primitives"¹²) although elsewhere¹³

11. M.Eliade, Quest, 12-36 (first published as an article in 1963), and 37-53 (first published as an article in 1964).

12. Munson, viii.

13. M.Eliade, Quest, 16.

he carefully notes that Levy-Bruhl rejected this theory just before his death. We may draw two conclusions from this point. First, one cannot clearly formulate Eliade's views from the remarks he makes about other scholars. To attempt to do so is to misunderstand Eliade's intention which is not to criticize but to inform the reader and draw the reader closer to Eliade's own position as being beyond the most obvious conceptual errors. Second, any attempt to reverse the critiques and find agreements due either to similarities in language or omission of critical comments likewise is unsupportable.

III Eliade qua Eliade

At this point it is clear that one of our major contentions is that Eliade should be considered as a scholar in his own right without necessarily comparing his work to others. However, there are two influential factors that are foundational in his thought: the teachings of Nae Ionescu and Yoga. It should be emphasized that we are not discussing similarities

between Eliade's work and the others' but rather the profound influence they have had in the conceptualization of his presuppositions.

Nae Ionescu (1890-1940) was a Romanian (as is Eliade) and a teacher of Eliade. Eliade attended the University of Bucharest between 1925 and 1928. Eliade's work Yoga: Immortality and Freedom¹⁴ is dedicated, in part, to Ionescu. Eliade praises Ionescu by stating that to his teaching he owes his philosophical initiation and orientation.¹⁵ Eliade has written further about Ionescu, some of which is quoted here to enable a clear apprehension of Ionescu's influence.

Ionescu's scholarly publications were few -- some articles on logic, a few prefaces, and a series of articles in the theological journal Predania (1937-1938). Nevertheless, his influence from 1922 to 1940 was enormous. His teachings and writings inspired a new interest in metaphysics and religious philosophy in Rumania. Although he was primarily a logician, he strove to understand all forms of human activity. According to Ionescu, the philosopher must take into consideration not only

14. M. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and freedom (2nd ed., New York, 1969). (Hereafter cited as Yoga).

15. M. Eliade, Yoga, xxii.

the theoretical expression of historical life -- from religions to logic and science -- but also its meaningful creations: crafts, arts, biographies, political events, and all others. He approached the history of logic, as well as the history of metaphysics and religion, as a typology of the human spirit. Such a typology he regarded as always the creation of history and ultimately of life. This seems to imply a radical historicization of the mind's activities, but God, for Nae Ionescu, is present in history through the Incarnation. On the other hand, man's mode of being is completely fulfilled only through death and death is above all transcendent.¹⁶

The effect of some of these ideas will be shown when the nature of history is defined and analyzed.

Immediately after attending the University of Bucharest Eliade received a scholarship and went to the University of Calcutta where he studied Sanskrit and Indian philosophy with Professor Surendranath Dasgupta until 1932. He also stayed for six months in the ashrams of Hardwar, Rishikesh, and Svargashram from 1930 to March 1931. Eliade translated and discussed

16. M. Eliade, "Ionescu, Nae," in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, IV (New York, 1967), 212.

all the important texts of Yoga with Professor Dasgupta.¹⁷ His thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Calcutta was entitled "Yoga: a Study on the Origins of Indian Mysticism." This was translated into Romanian and retranslated and published in 1936 under the title Yoga: Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne.¹⁸ Because of some misunderstanding due to the double translation and what Eliade terms "... faults due to youth and inexperience..."¹⁹ the book was corrected and new material added. Except for a few paragraphs the book has been entirely re-written. Part of the new book was published in 1948 under the title Techniques du Yoga.²⁰ Patanjali et Yoga²¹ is a condensation of the major work originally published in 1954 as Le Yoga. Immortalité et Liberté.²² This bibliographical tracing alone shows that Yoga is one of Eliade's major concerns and cannot be ignored in any consideration of his writings.

17. M. Eliade, Yoga, xxi.

18. M. Eliade, Yoga: essai sur les origines de la mystique Indienne, (Paris and Bucarest, 1936).

19. M. Eliade, Yoga, xx.

20. M. Eliade, Techniques du Yoga, (Paris, 1948).

21. M. Eliade, Patanjali et Yoga, (Paris, 1962).
(English edition, published by Funk & Wagnalls, 1969).

22. M. Eliade, Le Yoga: Immortalité et Liberté, (Paris, 1954).

A further insight into Eliade's presuppositions occurs where he discusses the differences between 'phenomenologists' and 'historicists,'²³ or the tension between the search for the 'essences' of religion and religion treated as a historical fact. Eliade views this tension as creative and a necessary countermeasure against dogmatism and stagnation. Eliade uses the two terms loosely and although he strives toward the discovery of 'essences,' his is not a strict philosophical phenomenology. Perhaps his most significant similarity to a strict philosophical phenomenology is the use of epoché or bracketing and suspension of judgement. This need not be a philosophical decision entailing acceptance of a complete system but rather a common-sense decision necessitated by the nature of the data being reflected upon.

One criticism, that has been part of the anthropological statement against Eliade, presents a fundamental problematic. Since the historian of religions cannot be equally conversant in all relevant

23. For example, M.Eliade, Quest, 35f., 8.

areas, the historian must inform himself of the progress made by specialists in other areas.²⁴ While Eliade wishes to force the historian to undertake a general synthesis apart from scholars in other disciplines,²⁵ the historian must still choose which authors within his own discipline to consult. Many problems exist and there are many conflicting interpretations of data. Therefore, one must always be wary of selecting only those works which tie in with one's own general theories. This dilemma has not been sufficiently emphasized by Eliade and constitutes a weakness in his theoretic development. As we are considering Eliade's theories without specific reference to others, this criticism, although valid, does not fundamentally concern us here. The objective of including the critique here is to focus attention upon it so that it will be remembered throughout the discussion to follow.

24. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," in M. Eliade and J.M. Kitagawa, eds., The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology, (Chicago, 1959), 90-91. (This article is also in M. Eliade, The Two and the One, (London, 1965) also entitled Mephistopheles and the Androgyne; studies in religious myth and symbol, (New York, 1965)). (Article hereafter cited as "Methodological Remarks.")

25. Ibid., 92 and 92n9.

IV Purpose and Nature of the Thesis

As we have repeatedly emphasized, our purpose is to discuss Eliade within the total framework of his writings, without undue reference to other scholars. We have selected one of the major presuppositions of Eliade - what we designate mythic consciousness. By this we do not mean 'myth' nor do we propose to exhaustively discuss what Eliade means when he uses the term since he clearly defines the concept several times.²⁶ Therefore, we must search behind this definition for the presupposition concerning the structure of the individual that enables one to apprehend myth as 'revealed' truth.

This exploration immediately leads to a confrontation with the thought of Jung. Before we can proceed, however, we must lay a sufficient foundation on which to build a coherent discussion. Several definitions must be examined, among which are 'myth,' 'hierophany,' 'symbol,' 'archaic,' 'modern,' 'sacred,' 'profane,' 'history.' Only then can we proceed to the central problem of reductionism.

26. See especially M.Eliade, Myth and Reality, (New York, 1963), 1-20. (Hereafter cited as MR).

After clearly stating the relationships between Eliade and Jung (which necessitates defining some Jungian terms to avoid confusion), the Yoga system of philosophy must be considered. This procedure prompts a careful analysis of the term 'transconscious.' It is only after such analysis that one can begin to understand that basic presupposition of Eliade that we call mythic consciousness and which is better explained by his term, the 'transconscious.'

CHAPTER ONE:

The Problem of Definition in Eliadé

CHAPTER ONE

I The Problem of Definition

As was initiated by our discussion of Baird's article, one primary problem in any discussion of Eliade is that of definition. Eliade himself sees such a problem in his discussion of 'archetype' in Cosmos and History and states that "...it is certainly desirable that the term 'archetype' should no longer be used in its pre-Jungian sense unless the fact is distinctly stated."²⁷ The implications of such a usage will be left for further analysis in a later chapter. What concerns us here is that such a problem of definition exists. To this end, several terms commonly employed by Eliade will be defined. When these terms are used in the body of the thesis, they are to be understood within the limits of Eliade's definitions unless it is clearly stated otherwise. These definitions are intended to be neither exhaustive nor, in general, functional but rather tools for further analysis.

27. M. Eliade, Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return, (New York, 1959), ix. (First published as Le Mythe de L'éternel retour: archétypes et répétition, (Paris, 1949). (Hereafter cited as CH).

Sacred

For Eliade the 'sacred' is the one unique and irreducible element in a religious phenomenon. Eliade goes beyond Rudolf Otto's definition by treating the sacred in all its complexity, and not only in its irrational aspect.²⁸ To further stress the irreducibility of the sacred Eliade states that "...the 'sacred' is an element in the structure of consciousness, not a stage in the history of consciousness."²⁹ The sacred is the opposite of the profane and manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities. Therefore, analogical terminology must be used to describe that which goes beyond man's natural experience.³⁰ For the man of archaic societies (see below), "the sacred is equivalent to a power, and, in the last analysis, to reality. The sacred is saturated with being (the most common definition of 'ontology' for Eliade³¹). Sacred power means reality and at the same

28. M. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, (New York, 1961), 10. (First published as Le Sacre et le Profane, (Paris, 1956).) (Hereafter cited as SP).

29. M. Eliade, Quest, "preface," n.p.

30. M. Eliade, SP, 10

31. M. Eliade, MR, 108

time enduringness and efficacy."³² The sacred is revealed to man through myths.³³

Profane

For Eliade there are only two modes of being in the world - the sacred and the profane. These correspond to the two existential situations assumed by man depending on the different positions that man has assumed in the cosmos.³⁴ "...What men do on their own initiative, what they do without a mythical model, belongs to the sphere of the profane; hence it is a vain and illusory activity, and in the last analysis, unreal."³⁵ That is to say, what is profane does not participate in 'being.' The profane may be transmuted into the sacred by 'hierophany' (see below). The reverse also occurs as the process of desacralization may change the sacred into the profane.³⁶ Therefore the polarization of sacred and profane is not absolute.

32. M. Eliade, SP, 12.

33. ibid., 96

34. ibid., 14, 15

35. Ibid., 96

36. M. Eliade, Quest, 133

Hierophany

Hierophany is a central concept in Eliade's thought. By this term he wishes to connote the actual act of the manifestation of the sacred whereby something sacred shows itself to us.³⁷ However, it is important to note that hierophany in no way interferes with the normality of sense-experience as there can be no religious experience without the intervention of the senses.³⁸ The dialectic of a hierophany does imply a clear choice of some kind in that a thing becomes sacred in so far as it embodies or reveals something other than itself.³⁹ Each society at a given time chooses objects, turning them into hierophanies. This phenomenon is not to be mis-interpreted as 'idolatry.' It is not the object itself that is worshipped. Rather the objects are worshipped because they represent hierophanies and manifest the sacred.⁴⁰ Together with the element of

37. M. Eliade, SP, 11

38. M. Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities, (New York, 1967), 74. (First published as Mythes, Rêves et Mystères, (Paris, 1957); hereafter cited as MDM).

39. M. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, (Cleveland, 1963), 13. (First published as Traité d'histoire des Religions, (Paris, 1949); hereafter cited as Patterns).

40. M. Eliade, SP. 12

choice Eliade stresses that the hierophanies are present in every area of psychological, economic, spiritual and social life. "Indeed, we cannot be sure that there is anything -- object, movement, psychological function, being or even game -- that has not at some time in human history been somewhere transformed into a hierophany."⁴¹

For our purpose, the most important element of a definition of a hierophany concerns the pointing towards a coherent system. While discussing different hierophanies of vegetation, Eliade stresses that "...all these hierophanies point to a system of coherent statements, to a theory of the sacred significance of vegetation, the more cryptic hierophanies as much as the others."⁴² The significance of the pointing towards a system becomes clearer within the context of symbol.

Symbol and Symbolism

In a short article⁴³ Eliade attempts to come to grips with this complex phenomenon in the context

41. M. Eliade, Patterns, 11

42. ibid., 9

43. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks."

of methodology. Since man may be designated as homo symbolicus, and since every religious act and every cult-object aims at a 'meta-empirical' reality, therefore all religious facts have a symbolic character. In other words, symbols point towards supernatural values or beings.⁴⁴ The symbol aims at a modality of the 'real' inaccessible to human experience. The living consciousness grasps reality through the symbol, anterior to reflection. Therefore, this grasping of reality is not a question of reflective knowledge but of immediate intuition.⁴⁵ (The problem of analyzing 'immediate intuition' will be discussed later).

The symbol carries further the dialectic of the hierophany or, in some cases, is itself a 'revelation' which cannot be expressed by any other magico-religious form. From this it follows that things not directly consecrated by a hierophany become sacred because of their participation in a symbol.⁴⁶ Moreover, symbolism offers man a permanent solidarity between himself and the sacred.⁴⁷

44. ibid., 95

45. ibid., 98ff.

46. M.Eliade, Patterns, 446,448, see also 449.

47. ibid., 447

The symbol manifests a paradoxical quality. On the one hand, the symbol must awaken the whole consciousness of man and open it to the universal.⁴⁸ That is, symbols address themselves not only to the awakened consciousness but to the totality of the psychic life.⁴⁹ On the other hand, symbolism does not depend on being thoroughly understood at any one time because it remains consistent throughout its history. The symbolism does not become invalid just because some cease to remember the meaning of the symbol or because it becomes degraded.⁵⁰ Symbols are capable of being understood on more and more elevated planes of reference. Also, "if at a certain moment in history a religious symbol has been able to express clearly a transcendent meaning, one is justified in supposing that this meaning might have been already grasped dimly at an earlier epoch."⁵¹

Eliade concludes that symbols are always consistent and systematic. Therefore, one may even speak of symbolism as a language understood within the

48. M. Eliade, MDM, 19

49. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks," 106.

50. M. Eliade, Patterns, 450

51. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks, 107.

limits of a community and unifying (but not confusing) the greatest possible number of areas of human and cosmic experience.⁵² In order to analyze Eliade's concept that we have called mythic consciousness it is important to trace the continuity of the coherence of hierophanies into the wider context of symbol.. Once this has been accomplished, the presupposition underlying such statements becomes more apparent. It is at this point, as we will show below, that the problem of a too easy identification with Jung becomes acute.

Archaic

The term 'archaic' presents some difficulties since there is some ambivalence in its usage throughout Eliade's work. The difficulty, however, appears only on the surface and makes clear one of Eliade's basic presuppositions. Archaic is sometimes used as a synonym for 'primitive' which term connotes the uncivilized people of today.⁵³ Together with the Oriental culture the primitive culture connotes non-Western cultures.⁵⁴

52. M. Eliade, Patterns, 450-453

53. Ibid., 1

54. M. Eliade, MDM, 9

Eliade groups the two (Oriental and primitive) together where he describes archaic ontology. Archaic ontology refers to the conceptions of being and reality held by the man of the pre-modern or traditional societies. These societies include both the primitive and the ancient cultures of Asia, Europe, and America.⁵⁵

For archaic man, reality is an expression of a celestial archetype.⁵⁶ That is to say, for him religious experience lays the foundation of the world. Perhaps the most important belief of archaic man is that the essential proceeds the actual condition of man. This leads to the concepts of regressus ad originem and in illo tempore which are foundational in Eliade's thought.⁵⁷

The basic presupposition alluded to above is the joining of primitive and Oriental cultures in one half of a polar situation. This allows free comparison between the cultures and is invaluable in Eliade's discussions concerning the nature of religion. The polar opposite for Eliade is the term 'modern.'

55. M. Eliade, CH, 3, see MDM, 7.

56. ibid., 5

57. See M. Eliade, MDM, 54,55.

Modern

"By the 'modern world,' we mean contemporary Western society; but also a certain state of mind which has been formed by successive deposits ever since the Renaissance and the Reformation. The active classes of the urban societies are in this sense 'modern' -- that is, the mass of mankind which has been more or less directly shaped by education and official culture."⁵⁸

A further distinction between archaic and modern will be outlined in the discussion of 'myth' and 'history' below. At this point we should intimate what Eliade thinks is the greatest difference between archaic and modern societies. "The one great difference (is) that of the presence, in the majority of the individuals who constitute societies, of a personal thinking that was absent, or almost so, among the members of traditional societies."⁵⁹ This leads directly to a discussion of myth and history.

58. ibid., 25 n1.

59. ibid., 24.

Myth

One of the most coherent statements concerning myth occurs in a section of Eliade's book The Sacred and the Profane.⁶⁰ A myth is primarily a paradigmatic model. (Eliade also defines 'archetype' in this way⁶¹). Myth relates a sacred history that took place ab initio, at the beginning of time. To relate a sacred history is to reveal a mystery because gods or culture heroes, not human beings are the subjects of myth. Since it has been told or revealed the myth establishes a truth that is absolute. One of Eliade's basic contentions is that myth is always a recital of a creation or, in other words, how something came to be. As we noted earlier this notion of 'being' Eliade expresses by the term 'ontology.' Moreover, it is the sacred that pre-eminently is the 'real' or that which participates in being is sacred. The myth describes the various irruptions of the sacred into the world. Since archaic man is concerned only with the sacred history revealed by the

60. M. Eliade, SP, 95-105.; see also M. Eliade, "The prestige of the cosmogenic myth," Diogenes, 23, (1958), 1-3, which is very similar.

61. M. Eliade, CH, ix.

myths, he becomes truly a man only by conforming to the teaching of the myths, that is, by imitating the gods. When man imitates the gods he lives in the time of origin, the time of the myths, and is unconcerned by profane time or duration.

History

It is at this juncture that the emphasis Eliade places upon Christianity, and especially the Incarnation, comes to the fore. For Eliade, Christianity is the religion of modern man and historical man -- the man who has simultaneously discovered personal freedom and continuous time or duration.⁶² It is impossible for the Christian to ignore history. "...Since the Incarnation took place in History, since the Advent of Christ marks the last and highest manifestation of the sacred in the world -- the Christian can save himself only within the concrete, historical life, the life that was chosen and lived by Christ."⁶³

62. ibid., 161

63. M. Eliade, MDM, 154; see also MDM, 125, and Patterns, 26, 448.

Although Christianity espouses a transhistorical aspect of history -- the salvation of man --- historicism can not make such a claim. Since God was incarnated, history acquires the possibility of being sanctified. Therefore, the sacred calendar rehearses the same events as having taken place ab origine. However, "...historicism arises as a decomposition product of Christianity; it accords decisive importance to the historical event (which is an idea whose origin is Christian) but to the historical event as such, that is, by denying it any possibility of revealing a transhistorical, soteriological intent."⁶⁴

Therefore, history or duration must be seen from three differing points of view: two which value it, and one point of view that denies it ultimate validity. For the Christian history has validity through the sanctification of the Incarnation. For a 'modern,' however, an empty historicism whereby history has been desacralized is predominant. For archaic man

64. M.Eliade, SP, 112; see M. Eliade, Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism, (New York, 1969), 169-172. (First published as Images et Symboles, (Paris, 1952); hereafter cited as IS).

history refers to profane time and does not therefore have ultimate validity. Whenever Eliade uses the term 'history' the text must be carefully analyzed in order to determine which thrust is more applicable.

II The Relationship Between Symbol and History

A relationship exists, for Eliade, between symbol and history that cannot be discovered strictly within the limits of defining both terms. There are differences in religious experience which may be explained by differing factors of economy, culture and social organization -- in other words, by history.⁶⁵ While historical periods provide opportunities for the manifestation of religious forms, religious reality itself transcends the plane of history.⁶⁶ However, as we noted earlier, analogical language is necessary to formulate religious experience. Therefore, we must conclude that all expressions or conceptual formulation of such religious experience takes place within a historical context.⁶⁷ The historicization of hierophanies

65. ibid., 17.

66. M. Eliade, MDM, 178.

67. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks," 88-89.

is occasioned by their being passed on and being handled.⁶⁸
 History becomes conceptually important for the historian of religions since the experience of the sacred by man takes place in a historical context.

A corollary follows from the above observation. Since the historical context may shape but not be the origin of religious phenomena, these phenomena retain a similar structure throughout their 'history.' There are countless manifestations of the sacred in the religious consciousness of a society which repeat the countless manifestations that the society knew in the course of its past.⁶⁹

Obviously, every religion that, after long processes of inner transformation, finally develops into an autonomous structure presents a 'form' that is its own and that is accepted as such in the later history of humanity. But no religion is completely 'new,' no religious message completely abolishes the past. Rather, there is a recasting, a renewal, a revalorization, an integration of the elements -- the most essential elements! -- of an immemorial religious tradition.⁷⁰

68. M. Eliade, Patterns, 462

69. M. Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, (New York, 1964), xix. (First published as Le Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase, (Paris, 1951); hereafter cited as Shamanism).

70. ibid., 11, 12.

It follows from this that there are no 'primordial' phenomena that have not been affected by history. Therefore, any speculation on the origin of religion is rendered precisely speculation because of the lack of 'pure' data.⁷¹

Since no religion is completely 'new' and since all of man's religious attitudes stem from primitive times, the structure of hierophanies remains the same. Furthermore, it is through this permanence of structure that, according to Eliade, we are able to know them.⁷²

According to Eliade, symbols do not remain entirely passive in their encounters with the processes of historicization.

...There is no religious form that does not try to get as close as possible to its true archetype, in other words, to rid itself of 'historical' accretions and deposits....We can identify a double process in the history of things religious: on the one hand, the continual brief appearance of hierophanies with the result that the manifestation of the sacred in the Universe becomes evermore fragmentary; on the other, the unification of those

71. ibid., 11, M.Eliade, Quest, 37-53 for examples.

72. M.Eliade, Patterns, 463, 462

hierophanies because of their innate tendency to embody their archetypes as perfectly as they can and thus wholly fulfil their own nature.⁷³

The above quote is of seminal importance to any discussion of Eliade's concept of what we are calling mythic consciousness. We can begin to ascertain the nature of the enquiry regarding possible connections with Jung. The implications of this quote and further analysis of it must be developed in a more appropriate section later.

III Some Relationships between Archaic Man and Modern Man

Several aspects of the relationship between archaic man and modern man were outlined in the section dealing with the definitions of 'archaic' and 'modern'. The definitions were, however, primarily concerned with differentiation and not with relationships. An example of the differentiation is the differing emphasis placed on corporate and individual thought.

The relationship between archaic man and modern man becomes most clear in a discussion of modern myths.⁷⁴

73. ibid., 462.

74. M.Eliade, MDM, 23-38

Eliade thinks that some feel that the modern world is not rich in myths. However, for Eliade, it is not the case that the modern world has completely eliminated myth and mythical behaviour. Rather, it is the field of action that has changed. At the level of individual experience myth has never completely disappeared since myth currently makes itself felt in the dreams, the fantasies and the longings of modern man. Myth has been repressed into two areas -- partly into the obscurer levels of the psyche and partly into the secondary or even irresponsible activities of society.

One reason for the continuation of myth and mythical behaviour is that the modern world or profane culture is a comparatively recent phenomenon. "The historian of religion knows that what one calls 'profane culture' is a comparatively recent manifestation in the history of the spirit. In the beginning, every cultural creation -- tools, institutions, arts, ideologies etc.-- was a religious expression or had a religious justification or source."⁷⁵ Another way ^{of} stating this

75. M. Eliade, Quest, 68

observation lies within the context of symbol.

"...Symbols bound up with the recent phases of culture are themselves constituted after the same manner as the most archaic symbols, that is, as the result of existential tensions and of ways of totally grasping the World."⁷⁶

There is a further relationship between archaic man and modern man that is similar in concept to the placing of the origin of all culture within the context of the sacred. The first historical civilizations become, for Eliade, increasingly more concerned with what happened after the creation of the cosmos, although the creative aspect is not discarded. At a certain moment in the history of these civilizations a cleavage appears -- an elite no longer believes in the myths but still believes in the divine beings portrayed in the myths. The elite attempted to go beyond mythology as divine history and to reach the primal source of the real.⁷⁷ For example, the Gnostic learns the myth in order to disassociate himself from the results. This

76. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks," 105.

77. M. Eliade, MR, 108-113.

marks the separation of soteriology and history.

Christianity reunited them, but modern man has only historicism.⁷⁸ Therefore, both archaic man and modern man attempt to disassociate themselves from history or duration as salvation is not to be found in this context. Modern man is thus attempting to return to the mythical style of life.⁷⁹ Further analysis of this relationship follows in the next section.

78. *ibid.*, 132-138, 181-184; see the discussion under the definition of 'history' above.

79. M. ELIade, *MDM*, 34-35.

CHAPTER TWO:

Eliade, Jung, and the Problem of Reductionism

CHAPTER TWO

I The Problem of Reductionism

One of Eliade's most often reiterated themes deals with the treatment by other scholars of religious phenomena as something other than what they are (spiritual creations). Eliade realizes that there exists no 'pure' religious fact. All religious facts are within historical, sociological, cultural, and psychological contexts at the very minimum. The problem of reductionism occurs where only one of these contexts "...is accepted as primary and meaningful, and the other aspects or functions are regarded as secondary or even illusory."⁸⁰ This underlies Eliade's use of the term 'sacred' as the irreducible element in a religious phenomenon.⁸¹

However, there have been attempts to link Eliade with C.G. Jung and depth psychology as there appear to be several contacts of more than a superficial nature. A recent article by M. L. Ricketts in the Union Seminary Quarterly Review and referred to in the introduction has

80. M. Eliade, Quest, 19

81. See the definition of 'sacred' above.

done much to correct this tendency and is, in my opinion, the most balanced account of the problem to date. One of his main contentions is that Eliade became decidedly more interested in Jungian thought after 1950 when Eliade became a regular participant in the Eranos conferences. However, this chapter will pursue as one point a continuity in the thought of Eliade which underlies the use that Eliade makes of the phrases of others. As Ricketts observes several times, Eliade is at times unnecessarily vague and confusing concerning connections between his own use of specific terms and the uses of those terms by other scholars -- particularly Jung. Therefore, any attempt to make use of 1950 as a pivotal date ignores the tendency of Eliade towards appropriating terminology and presupposes such a shift only through a 'reading-in' of Jungian emphases into characteristically obscure wordage. In order to develop this theme further, some Jungian definitions will be outlined later in the chapter. We are in agreement with many of Rickett's observations and our debt to his article cannot be overemphasized.

Henry Duméry has commented on Eliade and the problem of reductionism from another perspective. Duméry

strives to place religious phenomenology on a strict philosophical foundation which would preclude any reductionism, or would do so theoretically. His sympathetic comments underline the fact that Eliade is sometimes obscure and leaves himself open to misinterpretation. He states that

...nous souscrivions volontiers à la théorie de M. ELIADE, selon laquelle le symbolisme est toujours pris de même tissu imaginaire dans l'homme; nous reprocherions seulement à cet auteur de ne fournir nulle part un critère qui permette de distinguer à coup sûr l'imaginaire de l'idéal.⁸²

In order to appreciate the thrust of this comment within Duméry's own system, one may read a summary of Duméry in an article by Jean Daniélou.⁸³ It is sufficient for our purpose to note that Duméry can make such a comment.

This thesis is attempting to analyze both of the above problems. To differentiate between Eliade and

82. H. Duméry, Critique et Religion, (Paris, 1957), 192 n3.

83. J. Daniélou, "Phenomenology of Religion and Philosophy of Religion", in M. Eliade and J.M. Kitagawa, eds., The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology, (Chicago, 1959), 67-85.

Jung is essentially a negative procedure but the attempt must be made. It is only after such an analysis that we can more clearly define what we call Eliade's concept of mythic consciousness.

II Some Jungian Definitions

Archetype

Because of their very nature, archetypes are very difficult to define positively. "Archetypes are, by definition, factors and motifs that arrange the psychic elements into certain images, characterized as archetypal, but in such a way that they can be recognized only from the effects they produce. They exist preconsciously, and presumably they form the structural dominant of the psyche in general...."⁸⁴ The archetype, according to Jung, is a structural condition of the psyche and is, therefore, inherited only in the sense that the structure of the psyche embodies a universally human heritage.⁸⁵

84. J. Jacobi, Complex/Archetype/Symbol in the Psychology of C.G. Jung, (New York, 1959), 31. Italics Jacobi. A quote from C.G. Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype" ((C. W. 9, i), par. 267. C.G. Jung remarks in the foreword (xi), that this book "...spared me the labor of having constantly to refer my readers to my own writings." More significantly, Eliade, in "Methodological Remarks," 86n2, calls the book a "clear exposition." (Hereafter cited as CAS).

85. ibid., 51.

The deeper the unconscious stratum of the psyche from which the archetype stems, the more skeletal the basic design; but, the archetype will contain more possibilities of development and will be richer in meanings.⁸⁶

Since the archetype is a phenomenon of the unconscious it cannot be transmitted fundamentally by concrete, deliberate means. Yet Jung states that the archetypes are universal.

...Archetypes are not disseminated only by tradition, language, and migration, but...can rearise spontaneously, at any time, at any place, and without any outside influence... . This statement...means that there are present in every psyche forms which are unconscious but none the less active -- living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that perform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions.⁸⁷

Every archetype is capable of infinite development and differentiation. This differentiation, however, is not rendered possible while the archetypes rest in the unconscious. It is only when the archetypes come into

86. ibid., 56.

87. ibid., 36. a quote from C.G. Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," pars.153f.

contact with the conscious mind that the conscious mind differentiates them.⁸⁸

Jung was influenced in his choosing of the term 'archetype' by Augustine's definition of the ideae principalis.⁸⁹ We have already noted above that Eliade differentiates his own definition of archetype from that of Jung by reference to the "Augustinian sense."⁹⁰ The problem here is not one of definition but rather function. The Jungian archetype rests in the unconscious and stems from there. I cannot agree with the contention of Ricketts⁹¹ that the passage cited from The Sacred and The Profane demonstrates that Eliade means that the archetypes are imprinted structures of the unconscious. Eliade is referring to profane or modern man and his psyche on the one hand, and, on the other hand, he is emphasizing the religious 'aura' of the unconscious without committing himself to an identification of the

88. ibid., 51, 66.

89. Liber de diversis questionibus, XLVI, 2. See J. Jacobi, The Psychology of C. G. Jung, (7th ed.; New Haven, 1968), 39, 40. (Hereafter cited as Psychology).

90. See M. Eliade, CH, ix.

91. Ricketts, 220, 227.

religious with the unconscious. Only if such an identification is assumed can one agree with Ricketts.

Unconscious and Collective Unconscious

Jung defines the unconscious as "...the totality of all archetypes, ...the deposit of all human experience right back to the remotest beginnings."⁹² Jung differentiates between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. While the personal unconscious is an accumulation of experiences that have been repressed during the life of the individual, the collective unconscious consists entirely of elements characteristic of the human species as a whole.⁹³ The contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness and for this reason they cannot be said to have been individually acquired.⁹⁴

Symbol

Both Eliade and Jung have expressed similar views on the concept of symbol. The two scholars have therefore

92. J. Jacobi, CAS, 36; a quote from C.G. Jung, "The Structure of the Psyche," par. 339.

93. J. Jacobi Psychology, 35

94. C.G. Jung, "The Concept of the Collective Unconscious," in his The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, (New York, 1959).

been compared on this topic.⁹⁵ Later in this chapter we will demonstrate that such a comparison is too superficial and does not take into account a fundamental distinction.

As has been noted, when the archetype manifests itself in space and time it can be perceived in some form by the conscious mind. It is at this juncture that we may begin to speak, according to Jung, of symbol. Therefore, every symbol is at the same time an archetype. Conversely, every archetype is a potential symbol.⁹⁶ The conscious mind is an extremely important factor because "whether a thing is a symbol or not depends chiefly upon the attitude of the observing consciousness."⁹⁷ In other words, the apprehension of symbol depends on whether the observing consciousness can regard an object not only as a concrete manifestation but also as a token for something unknown.

Jung clearly differentiates bewteen sign, symbol, and allegory.

95. See Ricketts, 213-215.

96. See J. Jacobi, CAS, 74.

97. ibid., 82; a quote from C.G. Jung, Psychological Types, 603(modified).

Every view which interprets the symbolic expression as an abbreviated designation for a known thing is semiotic. A view which interprets the symbolic expression as the best possible formulation of a relatively unknown thing which cannot for that reason be more clearly or characteristically represented is symbolic. A view which interprets the symbolic expression as an intentional paraphrase or transfiguration of a known thing is allegoric. 98

Furthermore, for Jung symbols may degenerate into signs and signs can also be taken as symbols. This corresponds to Eliade's views on the transmuting of the profane into the sacred and the desacralization of the sacred into the profane.

Jung conceives of both individual and collective symbols. The collective symbols are far more important as is the collective unconscious as opposed to the personal unconscious. The universal archetypal pattern must become clearly manifest through the individual symbol and become accepted by the people as a whole. Only when this occurs and the symbol becomes one of the

98. ibid., 80; a quote from C.G. Jung, Psychological Types, 601 (modified).

innumerable symbols of mythology and religion can this symbol fully exert its liberating and saving effect.⁹⁹

Another similarity with Eliade is the necessity for total openness on the part of man while apprehending the symbol. "As a uniter of opposites the symbol is a totality which can never be addressed only to one faculty in man -- his reason or intellect, for example -- but always concerns our wholeness, touches and produces a resonance in all four of our functions at once."¹⁰⁰ These four functions are thought, feeling, senses, and intuition.

III Eliade and Depth Psychology

While Eliade is sympathetic to the procedure of psychologists who study the structure of symbols and myths in order to better understand the phenomenon of the unconscious, he repeatedly stresses that contact with non-European cultures takes place on a different plane.

99. ibid., 104.
100. ibid., 88

...The psychologist knows that he will not arrive at the understanding of an individual situation, and consequently cannot help his patient recover except insofar as he can succeed in disclosing a structure behind the particular set of symptoms, that is, to the extent where he will recognize the main outlines of the history of the psyche in the peculiarities of an individual history. On the other hand, the psychologist improves his means of research and rectifies his theoretical conclusions by taking into consideration the discoveries made during the process of analysis. ¹⁰¹

However, whereas the psychologist strives to understand personal situations, the historian of religions strives to understand historical situations. Eliade illustrates the tension between the two disciplines by comparing psychoanalysis and archaic and Oriental methods involving different methods of returning to the origin.¹⁰² The point that cannot be overemphasized in any discussion of Eliade and psychoanalysis is that the confrontation with non-Western cultures must be done with due consideration for those cultures and not in order to reduce these cultures to reveal modifications of the psyche.

101. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks," 95

102. M. Eliade, MR, 88ff.

Only through a proper approach to other cultures can Western consciousness be enriched.¹⁰³

By considering man as a living symbol, the history of religions could become, according to Eliade, a meta-psychoanalysis.¹⁰⁴ Eliade has in mind a more spiritual technique than the reductionist tendencies of ethnology, sociology, and depth psychology. This procedure could rescue man from his predicament of historicism. Such a statement could be made only with a careful distinction between modern or profane man and religious man. The underlying presupposition is not perceived in most comparisons of Eliade and depth psychology. Eliade states quite clearly that the unconscious for modern man plays the part of religion in that the unconscious offers him solutions for the difficulties of his own life. Those modern men who claim that they are non-religious have repressed religion and mythology in the depth of their unconscious.¹⁰⁵ Together with this observation must be added the fact that the unconscious

103. M. Eliade, The Two and the One, 13.

104. M. Eliade, IS, 35

105. M. Eliade, SP, 212, 213

has a religious aura but is not the origin of religion.

Eliade states:

...the contents and structures of the unconscious exhibit astonishing similarities to mythological images and figures. We do not mean to say that mythologies are the 'product' of the unconscious, for the mode of being of the myth is precisely that it reveals itself as myth.... The contents and structures of the unconscious are the results of immemorial existential situations, and this is why the unconscious has a religious aura. 106

Furthermore, Eliade states that the world of the unconscious along with the strange worlds of non-Western peoples can best be analyzed on the plane of religious values and behaviour.¹⁰⁷

IV Eliade's Comments on Jung

Eliade deals directly with the theories of Jung in several places. The comments vary both as to length and penetration. The most neutral discussion, apart from

106. M. Eliade, "Archaic myth and historical man," McCormick Quarterly, (Special Supplement: Myth and Modern Man), 18 (1965), 35.

107. M. Eliade, The Two and the One, 11

the ones contained in essays on the history of the scholarly activity in the field of history of religions, is in the forward to The Two and the One, written in 1960. Eliade draws an analogy between depth psychology and speleology.

By the discovery of 'living fossils' speleology has considerably advanced our knowledge of archaic forms of life. In the same way, archaic forms of psychical life, the 'living fossils' buried in the darkness of the unconscious, now become accessible to study, thanks to techniques developed by the depth psychologists.¹⁰⁸

It should be carefully noted that although Eliade accepts the existence of the collective unconscious in this passage, he does not attempt to comment on its nature or to connect the unconscious with the manifestation of the sacred.

Eliade actually makes use of a Jungian analysis of baptism in Images and Symbols in the chapter entitled "Symbolism and History." He quotes from the work of Fr. Louis Beirnaert who is a Jungian Roman Catholic.¹⁰⁹ A problem in interpretation arises because Eliade does

108. ibid., 10

109. Ricketts, 219.

not explicitly categorize Beirnaert as a Jungian. Furthermore, he freely uses certain terms ('symbol,' 'archetype') in the same section without any attempt to distinguish between differences in definition. It is not as Ricketts states,¹¹⁰ that Eliade does not consider the differences in definition to be significant. Rather, it must be remembered that Eliade is using these passages as an example and as such, feels no need to become embroiled in theoretical distinctions.

By far the most comprehensive treatment of Jung is in Note N of The Forge and the Crucible, entitled "C. G. Jung and Alchemy."¹¹¹ We will quote extensively from this passage in order to fully appreciate the thrusts of Eliade's analyses.

Eliade places Jung in proper perspective by clearly showing that Jung was aware of his own methodological limitations.

When he began his researches, Jung did not feel he had the right to step outside the strictly psychological

110. ibid., 220.

111. M. Eliade, The Forge and the Crucible, (New York, 1962), 199-204. (First published as Forgerons et Alchimistes, (Paris, 1956)). (Hereafter cited as FC). Eliade refers his readers to similar comments expressed in "Note sur Jung et l'achimie," Le Disque Vert (1959).

boundaries of the subject; he was dealing with 'psychic facts' and the relationship which he was in the process of discovering between them and certain symbols and operations in alchemy. The 'hermetists' and 'traditionalists' later reproached Jung for having translated into psychic terms, symbolisms and operations which were in their essence trans-psychic. Similar reproaches were made by theologians and philosophers. They found it difficult to forgive him for interpreting religious or metaphysical notions in terms of psychology. Jung's reply to such objections is well known. Trans-psychology is not the affair of the psychologist; every spiritual experience implies a psychic actuality and this actuality has a certain content and structure with which it is the psychologists right and duty to concern himself. 112

The laying of this foundation is extremely crucial for it points towards a fundamental difference between Eliade and Jung. Eliade first describes his own interpretation of the elements of alchemy.

...If we bear in mind that the goal of the alchemist was the Elixir Vitae and the Philosopher's Stone, that is, the conquest of immortality and absolute freedom..., it becomes clear that the process of individuation, assumed by the unconscious without the 'permission' of

112. Ibid., 200-201.

the conscious, and mostly against its will, and which leads man towards his own centre, the Self -- this process must be regarded as a pre-figuration of the opus alchymicum, or more accurately, an 'unconscious imitation' for the use of all beings, of an extremely difficult initiation process reserved only for a small spiritual elite.¹¹³

The themes of the conquest of immortality and absolute freedom are central to Eliade's view of 'mythic consciousness'. Of equal importance is the interpretation of unconscious motifs as prefigurations of something other and outside the unconscious. The full significance of these points will be elaborated in a later chapter as our present purpose is only to differentiate Jung and Eliade. Eliade continues his analysis of Jung with some comments on Jung's own interpretation of alchemical phenomena.

Jung interprets his own discoveries in another way. To him as a psychologist, alchemy with all its symbolism and operations, is a projection on to Matter, of archetypes and processes, of the collective unconscious. The opus alchymicum is in reality the process of individuation by which one becomes the Self.¹¹⁴

113. ibid., 201-202.

114. ibid., 202-203.

We may conclude this section by reiterating that the tension between the unconscious and the sacred, for Eliade, stems from the existential encounters of man. "...In so far as the unconscious is the result of countless existential experiences, it cannot but resemble the various religious universes. For religion is the paradigmatic solution for every existentialist crisis ...because it is believed to have a transcendental origin and hence is valorized as revelation received from an other transhuman world."¹¹⁵

V Hierophany and Archetype

We have already stated, in the context of an outline of Jung's definition of symbol, that comparisons between Eliade and Jung at this level are too superficial. The comparison which could be made rests on a more foundational level. We must carefully analyze the theoretical element out of which symbol arises -- for Eliade this is the concept of hierophany; for Jung this is the concept of archetype.

115. M. Eliade, SP, 210.

Before proceeding directly with this analysis, we should endeavour to ascertain whether or not Eliade's concept of archetype could be mistaken for that of Jung.

In his book Patterns in Comparative Religion Eliade makes several interesting remarks on the concept of archetypes. Religious life, for Eliade, no matter how varied the components, tends to revert towards an archetype, or original 'form.'¹¹⁶ This is consistent with his emphasis on 'Augustinian usage.' Furthermore, "...man tends, even at the lowest levels of his 'immediate' religious experience, to draw near to (an) archetype and make it present."¹¹⁷ This statement leads directly to the problem of why man exhibits this tendency. However, in the same passage, Eliade stresses the actualization of the archetype through hierophany, which takes away any Jungian inferences which might seem appropriate. For Eliade, man is a prisoner of his archetypal intuitions,¹¹⁸ a phrase which could very easily be explained in Jungian terms. In context Eliade is making reference to the debasing of an archetype formed at the moment when

116. M. Eliade, Patterns, 58-59.

117. ibid., 385.

118. ibid., 433.

man first perceived his position in the kosmos. This perception is dependent upon a hierophany and is not a function of the internalized unconscious. Eliade makes this point abundantly clear. For Eliade, "...a great many of the figments of the subconscious seem to have the characteristic of in a sense copying or imitating archetypes which seem not to proceed exclusively from the subconscious sphere."¹¹⁹ According to Eliade, the subconscious has a tendency to imitate the forms of the conscious or trans-conscious mind in its own creations.¹²⁰ We may therefore conclude that Eliade is not referring to archetypes in any Jungian sense.

Having firmly established that Eliade is not referring to the archetype in the Jungian sense, we preclude any comparison at that level. The comparison of Eliadean hierophany and Jungian archetype can only be briefly noted. For Eliade, the concept of hierophany includes a priori a manifestation of the sacred which cannot be reduced to the unconscious.¹²¹ According to

119. ibid., 454.

120. ibid., 455.

121. See, for example, M. Eliade, SP, 11.

Jung, the concept of archetype can only be defined within the limits of the concept of the collective unconscious.¹²² Any attempt at comparison on this level shows clearly the most fundamental and distinct differentiation between the thought of the two scholars.

122. See , for example, J, Jacobi, Psychology, 35.

CHAPTER THREE:

Eliade and Yoga

CHAPTER THREE

I The Importance of Yoga

In our introduction, we noted the evolution of Eliade's major work on Yoga. We also noted that he spent six months in Himalayan ashrams where he was deeply influenced by what he observed and experienced. It is our contention that Eliade's views on Yoga are of paramount importance in his theories concerning religion. Our purpose in this chapter will be to examine the comparisons which Eliade draws between Yoga and other religious phenomena and also to examine what Eliade considers to be the most significant statements of Yoga. From this twofold thrust will emerge several items of seminal importance in any consideration of Eliade's concept of 'mythic consciousness.'

II Eliade and the Indian Tradition

There are some observations by Eliade on the Indian tradition as a whole that must be examined before dealing more specifically with Yoga. These observations are based on seminal presuppositions which enable Eliade to speak of religious phenomena as a whole.

In the important essay on "Indian Symbolisms of Time and Eternity,"¹²³ Eliade clearly states his pre-suppositions concerning the use of Indian myths for comparison with other myths. "Indian myths are 'myths' before they are 'Indian;' that is to say, they form part of a particular category of archaic man's spiritual creations and may, therefore, be compared with any other group of traditional myths."¹²⁴ Here Eliade conceives of a linking of Oriental and primitive cultures in a stronger way than a linking in contradistinction to Western culture. For example, since Eliade conceives of the notion of Time as being cyclic in both primitive and Indian traditions, he undertakes to link the origin of this concept in each tradition under lunar symbolism. "For the primitive...Time is cyclic; the world is successively created and destroyed, and the lunar symbolism of 'birth-death-resurrection' is present in a great many myths and rites. It was out of such an immemorial heritage that the pan-Indian doctrine of the ages of the world and of the cosmic cycles was elaborated."¹²⁵ When Yoga

123. M. Eliade, IS, 57-91.

124. ibid, 57.

125. ibid, 72-73.

is more specifically discussed the importance of this presupposition will be more clearly discerned.

The title of Eliade's monograph on Yoga shows his theory that the two elements of immortality and freedom are seminal to Yoga. However, he also writes that the motif of immortality is important to the whole of the Indian tradition. This is clearly stated in a section dealing with aboriginal India.

The popular legends and vernacular literatures created around Gorakhnāth, the Nāthas, and the Siddhas give expression to the real spiritual longings of the superficially Hinduized masses. Now, it is noteworthy that such folkloric and literary creations were inspired precisely by tantric and alchemistic saints and masters, especially by the supposed 'inventor' of Hatha Yoga--- that is, by Siddhas who understood liberation as the conquest of immortality. We shall see the enormous importance of the motif of immortality in the folklores and literatures of the Gorakhnāthis and the Nāthas -- an importance that leads us to believe that this particular motif (which continues and completes that of jīvan-mukta, the 'liberated while living') expresses the nostalgia of the whole Indian soul. 126

This concept of the conquest of immortality will be later shown to be one of the seminal characteristics of 'mythic consciousness.'

III Yoga and Shamanism

It is important to realize that Eliade's two great monographs deal with the phenomena of Yoga and Shamanism. Before discussing the two, the essential elements peculiar to Shamanism must be listed in order to avoid possible confusion.

Among those elements that constitute and are peculiar to Shamanism, we must count as of primary importance: (1) an initiation comprising the candidate's symbolical dismemberment, death and resurrection, which among other things, implies his descent into hell and ascent to heaven; (2) the Shaman's ability to make ecstatic journeys in his role of healer and psychopompos...; (3) "mastery of fire" (the shaman touches red-hot iron, walks over burning coals, etc., without being hurt); (4) the shaman's ability to assume animal forms (he flies like the birds, etc.) and to make himself invisible. 127

127. ibid., 320.

Eliade distinguishes three spiritual positions in the Indian tradition ---"(1) the ecstasy peculiar to shamanism; (2) deliverance through samādhi, which is proper to classic Yoga; (3) jīvan-mukti, which, almost indistinguishable from 'immortality in the body', is a form peculiar to tantric and alchemistic Yoga, of particular appeal to the 'popular' imagination...."¹²⁸

While the shaman's ecstasy recovers "the primordial freedom and bliss of the ages in which, according to the myths, men could ascend to heaven and converse with the gods,"¹²⁹ Yoga results in the "...nonconditioned state of samādhi or of sahaja, in the spontaneity of the jīvan-mukta, the man 'liberated in this life.'"¹³⁰

The spontaneity of the jīvan-mukta in some manner, according to Eliade, resembles the paradisaical existence of the primordial man expressed in myths such as those surrounding shamanic ecstasy. This point becomes significant because of Eliade's stress on the 'decadence' of present-day shamanism.

...The most representative mystical experience of the archaic societies, that of shamanism, betrays the Nostalgia

128. ibid., 339.

129. ibid.

130. ibid., 339-340.

for Paradise, the desire to recover the state of freedom and beatitude before 'the Fall,' the will to restore communication between Earth and Heaven.... The shaman's ecstasy restores a great deal of the paradisiac condition: it renews the friendship with the animals; by his flight or ascension, the shaman reconnects Earth with Heaven; up there in Heaven, he once more meets the God of Heaven face to face and speaks directly to him, as man sometimes did in illo tempore.¹³¹

Eliade elsewhere bluntly contends that "...for primitive ideology present day mystical experience is inferior to the sensory experience of primordial man."¹³²

This comparison on the level of the concept of freedom and the powers of shamans and siddhis which refer to it must not be confused with the seeking of a common origin of yoga and shamanism, although there is a possibility of a common origin.¹³³ Eliade states that the developed systems are very different. "As a developed spiritual technique (we are not discussing its possible 'origins'), Yoga cannot possibly be confused with shamanism or classed among the techniques of ecstasy."¹³⁴

131. M. Eliade, MDM, 66.

132. ibid., 97.

133. M. Eliade, "Problem of the origins of Yoga," P.A.Sorokin, ed., Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth, (Boston, 1954).

134. M. Eliade, Yoga, 339; see also Shamanism, 416n188

We must, however, emphasize the stress placed upon the concept of freedom in both religious phenomena.

One further point must be established while discussing Yoga and archaic mystical techniques. Eliade states that Yoga, to use his analogy, is a fossil found through speleology.

...The absence of the Yoga complex from other Indo-European groups confirms the suppositions that this technique is a creation of the Asia continent, of the Indian soil. If we are right in connecting the origins of Yogic asceticism with the proto-historical religion of the Indus, we may justifiably conclude that in it we have an archaic form of mystical experience that disappeared everywhere else.... It represents a living fossil, a modality of archaic spirituality that has survived nowhere else. 135

While classical yoga, according to Eliade, emphasizes the concept of freedom, the jīvan-mukta emphasizes the concept of immortality which later entered into the yogic tradition. However, the jīvan-mukta is also a 'living fossil.' "There is no harm in thinking of the perfect spontaneity of the 'freed in life' as

135. ibid., 361.

representing a 'live fossil', i.e. the survival of a primordial state of consciousness more easily accessible to archaic humanity, and in our day realizable only at the cost of long and painful efforts."¹³⁶ Therefore, the two concepts of freedom and immortality represent extremely archaic elements of 'mythic consciousness' for Eliade. This will be further developed later in this chapter.

IV Yoga and Alchemy

Eliade conceives of a bond on the soteriological plane between alchemy and yoga in the Indian tradition.

The relations between Yoga and alchemy can be understood if we take into consideration the soteriological nature of the two techniques. Both experiment on the 'soul', using the human body as laboratory; the goal is 'purification,' 'bringing to perfection,' 'final transmutation.... Both oppose the purely speculative path, purely metaphysical knowledge; both work on 'living matter' to the end of transmuting it -- that is, of changing its ontological status; both pursue deliverance from the laws of

¹³⁶. M. Eliade, "Problems of the origins of Yoga," 70.

time -- seek, that is, to 'de-condition' life, to conquer freedom and bliss: in a word, 'immortality'. 137

Elsewhere, Eliade makes a more specific comparison between yoga and alchemy which clarifies his intentions in attempting such a comparison.

To reduce the fluidity of mercury is equivalent to the paradoxical transmutation of the psycho-mental flow in a 'static consciousness,' without any limit of time. In alchemical terms, to 'fix' or to 'kill' mercury is tantamount to attaining to the cittavṛttinirodha (suppression of conscious states), which is the ultimate aim in Yoga. 138

There is, therefore, a definite connection between yoga and alchemy based upon the concepts of freedom and immortality.

V Yoga: The Vāsanās and Jungian Depth Psychology

Eliade has a lasting appreciation of Eastern psychology. Far from being willing to reduce Eastern

137. M. Eliade, Yoga, 291-292.

138. M. Eliade, FC, 133.

spirituality to Western psychological terms, Eliade would rather turn the tables. "The psychological and parapsychological experience of the East in general and of yoga in particular is unchallengeably more extensive and more organized than the experience on which the Western theories of the structure of the psyche have been erected."¹³⁹

More specifically, Eliade speculates that the solution of the Samkhya and yoga philosophies to the problem of the relationship of matter and spirit provides an explanation of the collective unconscious of Jung.¹⁴⁰

"...One of the most unexpected results of this philosophic labour has been its conclusion that the Unconscious (i.e. prakriti), moving by a kind of 'teleological instinct,' imitates the behaviour of the Spirit; that the Unconscious behaves in such a way that its activity seems to prefigure the mode of being of the Spirit."¹⁴¹ In one of the articles upon which the article containing the preceding quote is based, Eliade further develops this concept of 'prefiguration.'

139. M. Eliade, Patanjali and Yoga, 58.

140. M. Eliade, MDM, 121-122

141. ibid., 122.

...Waking dreams are only a simian imitation by the unconscious of an archetypal gesture of the super-conscious. 'Simian imitation' is not used in a perjorative sense. Indeed, even 'life' and 'matter' themselves, continually imitate the gestures by which the spirit, in its carnal state, attempts to liberate itself; such imitation has perhaps sometimes been confused with prefiguration. 142

This statement is one of the most crucial in any examination of Eliade's concept of 'mythic consciousness.' When Eliade's theory of a symbol expressing a meaning which might have been grasped dimly in the past is taken into consideration¹⁴³ as well as the theory of matter-spirit, the importance of the above quoted becomes clear.

The images of 'flight' and of 'ascension', so frequently appearing in the worlds of dream and imagination, become perfectly intelligible only at the level of mysticism and metaphysics, where they clearly express the ideas of freedom and transcendence. But at all the 'lower' levels of the psychic life, these images still stand for procedures that are homologous, in their tendency, to acts of 'freedom' and 'transcendence.' 144

142. M. Eliade, "'Durohana' and the 'waking dream'", K.B.Iyer, ed., Art and Thought, (London, 1947), 213.

143. M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks," 107.

144. M. Eliade, MDM, 122

We noted, above, the emphasis that Eliade places upon freedom as a fundamental concept of Yoga. Eliade writes that the concept of transcendence within Yogic theory is analogous to attaining a new state of being beyond the realm of karma, which is fundamental to the Indian tradition.¹⁴⁵

Eliade discusses some yogic terms within the plane of Jungian depth psychology. For Indian sages, "...the great obstacles to the ascetic and contemplative life arose out of the activity of the unconscious, the samskaras and the vasanas, the 'impregnations,' 'residues,' 'latencies' that make up what depth-psychology designates by the content and structures of the unconscious."¹⁴⁶ Elsewhere Eliade writes further on the vasanas:

...the yogin is striving to 'destroy the sub-consciousness', to 'burn up' the vasanas. "The vasanas have their origin in the memory," writes Vyasa (in his commentary on the Yoga Sutra, IV, 9); and this refers not only to the individual memory, which, for the Hindu, includes both the memories of one's present existence and the karmic residues of one's innumerable past lives. The vasanas represent also the entire

145. M. Eliade, Yoga, 3.

146. M. Eliade, Patanjali and Yoga, 6.

collective memory transmitted by language and tradition; they are in a sense, the 'collective unconscious' of Professor Jung. 147

The point to be emphasized here is that the goal of yoga, from a negative point of view, is to destroy the collective unconscious. Therefore, Eliade is not only refuting Jungian psychology on this point, but is also emphasizing the theoretical superiority of yoga theory.

VI The Goal of Yoga

Before discussing the goal of Yoga, some remarks must be made concerning how this goal is realized. By this is not meant a discussion of technique but the philosophical presuppositions underlying yogic technique.

The Self is pure, eternal, free; it cannot be bound because it cannot enter into relations with anything but itself. But man believes that purusa is bound and thinks that it can be liberated. These are illusions of our psychomental life. For, in fact, 'bound' Spirit is free for all eternity.... Spirit is only spectator (sāksin), just as liberation (mukti) is only a becoming conscious of its eternal freedom. 148

147. M. Eliade, IS, 89.
148. M. Eliade, Yoga, 31.

Before confusion arises over the nature of puruṣa, we should note that both Samkhya and Yoga "...affirm that there are as many puruṣas as there are human beings. And each of these puruṣas is a monad, is completely isolated; for the Self can have no contact either with the world around it (derived from prakṛti) or with other spirits."¹⁴⁹ From this orientation we may now discuss the goal of Yoga.

Eliade uses three different terms when writing about the goal of Yoga and only one term is in Sanskrit. These terms are nunc stans, enstasis, and samādhi. The latter two are synonymous¹⁵⁰ although samādhi itself may be subdivided into different categories.

Nunc stans refers to the eternal present lived by one 'whose thought is stable'.¹⁵¹ Nunc stans refers only to one who has achieved liberation. "The yogin attains deliverance; like a dead man, he has no more relation with life; he is 'dead in life.' He is the jīvan-mukta, the 'liberated in life.' He no longer lives

149. ibid., 32.

150. See, for example, M. Eliade, Yoga, 37.

151. M. Eliade, IS, 81

in time and under the domination of time, but in an eternal present, in the nunc stans by which Boethius defined eternity."¹⁵² Although the state of jīvan-mukta may be realized by other means than those advocated by classic yoga, Eliade stresses that "...one cannot prepare oneself to obtain it except by employing the yogic disciplines of meditation and concentration."¹⁵³ This comment emphasizes the place of Yoga as foundational in Eliade's presuppositional framework.

Samādhi is a very difficult concept to understand. This is due primarily to its nature. Perhaps the first thing to clarify is that samādhi is not the same as hypnosis, which in the Indian tradition is attributed to a "...merely occasional and provisional state of concentration (vikṣipata) The state of vikṣipata is only a paralysis (emotional or volitional in origin) of the mental flux; this stoppage must not be confused with samādhi"¹⁵⁴

Eliade writes that there are three categories of states of consciousness in Patanjali's Yoga system that

152. M. Eliade, Yoga, 93-94.

153. ibid., 94n134.

154. ibid., 78, 79.

correspond to three possibilities of experience. These are: "(1) errors and illusions...; (2) the sum total of normal psychological experiences...; (3) the para-psychological experiences brought on by the yogic technique...."¹⁵⁵ With these three categories in mind we can describe the goal of Yoga.

The purpose of Patanjali's Yoga, then, is to abolish the first two categories of experience (respectively produced by logical and metaphysical error) and to replace them by an 'experience' that is enstatic, supra-sensory, and extra-rational. By virtue of samādhi, the yogin finally passes permanently beyond the human condition... and at last obtains the total freedom to which the Indian soul so ardently aspires. 156

As we noted earlier, samādhi itself may be subdivided, primarily into samprajñata samadhi and asamprajñata samadhi. While the latter is of more direct importance in our consideration of 'mythic consciousness', the former should be defined as a means of narrowing the concept of samādhi.

When samādhi is obtained with the help of an object or idea (that is, by fixing

155. ibid., 36

156. ibid., 37

one's thought on a point in space or on an idea), the stasis is called samprajñata samādhi ('enstasis with support,' or 'differentiated entasis'). When, on the other hand, samādhi is obtained apart from any 'relation' (whether external or mental) -- that is, when one obtains a 'conjunction' into which no 'otherness' enters, but which is simply a full comprehension of being-- one has realized asamprajñata samādhi ('undifferentiated stasis'). 157

However, 'undifferentiated stasis' must not be confused with emptiness. Rather the opposite is the case as the yogin is actually all Being. 158

It would be wrong to regard this mode of being of the Spirit as a simple 'trance' in which consciousness was emptied of all content. Nondifferentiated enstasis is not 'absolute emptiness.' The 'state' and the 'knowledge simultaneously expressed by this term refer to a total absence of objects in consciousness, not to a consciousness absolutely empty. For, on the contrary, at such a moment consciousness is saturated with a direct and total intuition of being.... It is the enstasis of total emptiness, without sensory content or intellectual sturture, an unconditioned state that is no longer 'experience' (for there is no further relation between consciousness and the world) but 'revelation'. Intellect(buddhi),

157. ibid., 79-80.

158. ibid., 95

having accomplished its mission,
 withdraws, detaching itself from
 the purusa and returning into prakṛti.
 The Self remains free, autonomous; it
 contemplates itself. 159

The use of the term 'revelation' is extremely important in Eliade's total theoretic outlook. In Patanjali's system the revelation is actually self-revelation due to the multiplicity of puruṣas. Since "... the object of knowledge is one's pure being, stripped of every form and every attribute, it is to assimilation with pure Being that samādhi leads. The self-revelation of the purusa is equivalent to a taking possession of being in all its completeness."¹⁶⁰ Further discussion on 'revelation' must await a more suitable context where the nature of the transconscious is analyzed.

159. ibid., 93

160. ibid., 95

CHAPTER FOUR:

Eliade and the 'Transconscious'

CHAPTER FOUR

I The Problem of the Term 'Transconscious'

The most perplexing term used by Eliade is the 'transconscious' because he nowhere explicitly states what the term refers to. Ricketts designates the transconscious as a higher mental function than those contained in the Jungian schema of the psyche.¹⁶¹ He further writes that "it appears that Eliade, by his concept of the transconscious, is trying to establish on a firmer basis the a priori category of the Holy of Rudolf Otto."¹⁶² While Ricketts has noted the few passages in which the transconscious is mentioned and endeavours to place the term within the proper context of 'genuine mysticism,' the concept of the transconscious has no actual correspondence with Otto's ideas on the Holy, since, for Eliade, the concept of the sacred, embracing both the rational and irrational aspects of the religious experience, is in a more fundamental relationship with Otto's ideas of the Holy. Apart from this reservation the scholarship of Ricketts is very illuminating on the concept of the transconscious.

161. Ricketts, 225.

162. ibid., 229

II Eliade's Use of the Term 'Transconscious'

The Transconscious and the Subconscious

For Eliade both the subconscious and the transconscious are part of the activity of man.¹⁶³ In the context of this passage Eliade wants to stress the coherence or 'logic' of symbolism, implying that magico-religious symbolism and the symbolism expressed by both the subconscious and the transconscious enable him to formulate his conception of the logic of symbols. Furthermore, Eliade elsewhere stresses that the two important points to be realized from his own analyses of religious experience are the distinction between the transconscious and the subconscious and the coherence of the Image (Image here corresponds loosely to symbol) as instrument of cognition.

...Images bring man together, however, more effectively and more genuinely than any analytical language. Indeed, if an ultimate solidarity of the whole human race does exist, it can be felt and 'activated' only at the level of the Images (we do not say 'of the subconscious' for we have no proof that there may not also be a transconscious.¹⁶⁴

163. M. Eliade, Patterns, 450.

164. M. Eliade, IS, 17.

The distinction made between the subconscious and the transconscious is, in our opinion, crucial not only in demonstrating that Eliade is not 'Jungian' but also in demonstrating that the transconscious informs the subconscious. However, the latter conclusion can only be made after discussing the remaining passages.

The Transconscious and the Logic of Symbols

The fact that certain groups of symbols can be logically connected with one another raises a problem for Eliade which again must be seen within the context of the history of religions rather than depth psychology.

Certain groups of symbols, at least, prove to be coherent, logically connected with one another; in a word, they can be systematically formulated, translated into rational terms. This internal logic of symbols raises a problem with far-reaching consequences: are certain zones of the individual or collective consciousness dominated by the logos, or are we concerned here with the manifestation of a 'transconscious'? The problem cannot be resolved by depth-psychology alone, for the symbolisms which decipher the latter are for the most part made up of scattered fragments... of a psyche in crisis.... To grasp the authentic structures and functions of symbols, one must turn to the inexhaustible indices of the history of religions.... 165

In the context of writing on the symbolism of the dream of ascension Eliade further elaborates on the transconsciousness and logic. It is important to note that Eliade gives examples of the symbolism appearing in the unconscious as dream, hallucination, or waking dream, and in the conscious as aesthetic vision, ritual, mythology, and philosophumena, yet he allows the term 'transconscious' to stand without example.¹⁶⁶ Eliade further states that he provisionally accepts "... the hypothesis that at least a certain zone of the subconscious is ruled by the archetypes which also dominate and organize conscious and ~~traa~~transconscious experience."¹⁶⁷ Before becoming confused we should reiterate that Eliade is referring to 'perfect form' when using the term 'archetype.' Eliade is here restating his conclusion that it is the logic of symbols that draw together the entire complex of human experience.

Eliade, in the section on the logic of symbols in his book Patterns in Comparative Religion,¹⁶⁸ makes several comments similar to the ones just outlined. Eliade

166. ibid., 119-120.

167. ibid., 120.

postulates the existence of the transconscious and also disagrees with any postulation of a structural difference between the creations of the conscious and subconscious mind. However, he does not elaborate further, being content to comment that the problem is a philosophical one.

In the important note on Jung and Alchemy¹⁶⁹ Eliade elaborates further on the problem of the transconscious, giving us a definite insight as to what he means by the term and clearly showing that the concept of the sacred corresponds more clearly to Otto's idea of the Holy than does the concept of the transconscious,

...(Jung's) discovery amounted in substance to this: in the very depths of the unconscious, processes occur which bear an astonishing resemblance to the stages in a spiritual operation--gnosis, mysticism, alchemy -- which does not occur in the world of profane experience, and which, on the contrary, makes a complete break with the profane world. In other words, we are in the presence of a strange solidarity of structure between the products of the 'unconscious' (dreams, awakened dreams, hallucinations, etc.) and those experiences which, by the very fact that they are outside the categories of the profane

169. M. Eliade, FC, 199-204

and desanctified world, may be considered as belonging to a 'trans-consciousness' (mystical, alchemical experiences, etc.). 170

Before commenting on the significance of this statement, Eliade's remarks on Yoga and the transconscious should be presented.

The Transconscious and Yoga

As Ricketts has pointed out, Eliade's references to the transconscious are more explicit in connection with his analysis of yogic theory.¹⁷¹ The crucial passage should be quoted at length in order to avoid possible confusion and misinterpretation.

...From time immemorial India has known the many and various trances and ecstasies obtained from intoxicants, narcotics, and all other elementary means of emptying consciousness; but any degree of methodological conscience will show us that we have no right to put samādhi among these countless varieties of spiritual escape.... The yogin works on all levels of consciousness and of the subconsciousness for the purpose of opening the way to transconsciousness (knowledge-possession of the Self, the putuṣa).... The importance that all authors ascribe to the yogic states of superconsciousness shows us that the final reintegration takes place in this direction, and not in a trance, however profound. In other

170. ibid., 201.

171. Ricketts, 228

words: the recovery, through samādhi, of the initial duality introduces a new element in comparison with the primordial situation (that which existed before the twofold division of the real into object-subject). That element is knowledge of unity and bliss. There is a 'return to beginning,' but with the difference that the man 'liberated in this life' recovers the original situation enriched by the dimensions of freedom and transconsciousness. To express it differently, he does not return automatically to a 'given' situation; he reintegrates the original completeness after having established a new and paradoxical mode of being -- consciousness of freedom, which exists nowhere in the cosmos...--which exists only in the supreme Being, Isvara. 172

III Some Comments on the Transconscious

Having examined the major passages dealing with the concept of the transconscious, some comments should be made. In general we are in agreement with Rickett's analysis.

The state of the activated trans-consciousness is that of the man who knows the supreme bliss of mystic oneness with the eternal One, an experience in which the divisions and limitations of worldly existence

are transcended. In the trans-conscious state the archetypes find their truest expression and fulfill their ultimate function: the revelation of absolute Being or pure Spirit. 173

This statement, however, is too general and fails to discern the most fundamental presuppositions of Eliade concerning the transconscious.

The major objection to be leveled against Ricketts' statement is his supposition that the transconscious is a mental structure or capacity. We have already pointed out that the jīvan-mukta has destroyed all mental structures and capacities by definition. Furthermore, not only is worldly existence transcended, but the liberated one is free from any and all limitations. For Eliade,

...the corpus of Yoga practices reproduces an initiatory pattern. Like every other initiation, Yoga ends by radically changing the existential status of him who submits to its rules. By virtue of Yoga, the ascetic abolishes the human condition (in Indian terms, the unenlightened life, the existence doomed to suffering) and

gains an unconditioned mode of being--- what the Indians call deliverance, freedom, moksha, mukti, nirvana. But to annihilate the profane human condition in order to gain absolute freedom means to die to this conditioned mode of being and to be reborn into another, a mode of being that is transcendent, unconditioned. 174

It is our contention, therefore, that Ricketts does not realize the radical nature of the change from the conditioned man to the jīvan-mukta and accordingly sees the transconscious within the context of a mental realization of mystic oneness.

Ricketts also states that in the transconscious state the archetypes fulfill their ultimate function of the revelation of absolute Being. This statement shows a misunderstanding of what Eliade means by the term 'revelation.' For Eliade, a religious experience is the same as a mythical intuition.¹⁷⁵ While commenting on the symbolism of the tree, Eliade states that an impression on religious consciousness is the same as revelation. "A tree impressed itself on the religious consciousness by its substance and by its shape, but this substance

174. M. Eliade, Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth, (New York, 1965), 106.

175. M. Eliade, Patterns, 254.

and this shape became significant just because they impressed themselves on the religious consciousness, because they were 'singled out', because, that is, they have 'revealed' themselves."¹⁷⁶ Moreover, revelation does not depend on the things or events that myth makes use of. "Myth is an autonomous act of creation by the mind: it is through that act of creation that revelation is brought about -- not through the things or events it makes use of."¹⁷⁷ It is hazardous, therefore, not to seek to define what Eliade means by revelation. Intuition or revelation depends on something being made ^{apparent} to the observer. There is a signification between the object manifesting the sacred and man. This impression, in our opinion, depends on a common analogy between man and the object -- the fact that the sacred is already present in the object and puruṣa is already present in man. What is necessary is the realization of this fact. Revelation is, for Eliade, the realization of something that is already the case.

It follows from this concept of revelation that

176. ibid., 268.

177. ibid. 426.

the transconscious is already present in man. The jīvan-
mukta knows that he is free and immortal in the state
of transconsciousness. Samādhi, therefore, is the
state of being in mystic oneness and is analogous to
transconsciousness and it is the Yogic influence which
determines the framework for his theories on religious
experience as a whole.

More specifically, Eliade writes on the content
of revelation or self-realization during samādhi in a
passage which clearly shows both his insistence on the
importance of yogic theory and an example of the separation
of the sacred from the profane, his most over-riding
presupposition.

...Samādhi is seen to be situated
on a line well known in the history
of religions and mysticism -- that
of the coincidence of opposites. It
is true that, in this case, the
coincidence is not merely symbolic,
but concrete, experiential. Through
samādhi, the yogin transcends opposites
and, in a unique experience, unites
emptiness and superabundance, life and
death, being and non-being. Nor is
this all. Like all paradoxical states,
samādhi is equivalent to a reintegration
of the different modalities of the
real in a single modality -- the un-
differentiated completeness of pre-

creation, the primordial Unity. The yogin who attains to asamprajñata samādhi also realizes a dream that has obsessed the human spirit from the beginnings of its history -- to coincide with the All, to recover Unity, to re-establish the initial non-duality, to abolish time and creation (i.e. the multiplicity and heterogeneity of the cosmos); in particular, to abolish the twofold division of the real into object-subject. 178

Yoga, therefore, culminates in a unique experience that fully manifests the sacred and completely overcomes the profane to become one with the All. For Eliade, the primordial state is a neuter and creative wholeness.¹⁷⁹

The coincidentia oppositorum is one of the most primitive ways of expressing the paradox of divine reality.... However, although this conception, in which all contraries are reconciled (or rather, transcended), constitutes what is, in fact, the most basic definition of divinity, and shows how utterly different it is from humanity, the coincidentia oppositorum becomes nevertheless an archetypal model for certain types of religious men, or for certain of the forms religious experience takes. 180

This presupposition, for Eliade, is the basis for the role of Iśvara in Patanjali's system. "Transcendence

178. M. Eliade, Yoga, 98-99.

179. M. Eliade, MDM, 179

180. M. Eliade, Patterns, 419.

of the human condition, 'deliverance,' the perfect autonomy of the purusa -- all this has its archetypal model in Iśvara." ¹⁸¹ The yogin imitates Iśvara's mode of being and "...coincidentia oppositorum is implied in jīvan-
mukta." ¹⁸² An essay in The Two and the One, "Mephistopheles and Androgyne or The Mystery of the Whole" ¹⁸³ further consolidates Eliade's speculations on this topic. We may conclude, therefore, that asamprajñata samādhi, coincidentia oppositorum, and transconsciousness are referring to the same mode of Being.

181. M. Eliade, Yoga, 68.

182. M. Eliade, Quest, 169.

183. M. Eliade, The Two and the One, 78-124.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

I Review and Summary

The major purpose of this thesis was to discuss one of the major presuppositions of Eliade, concerning what we designated as 'mythic consciousness.' This phrase has only been used sparingly by us as our first task was to lay the groundwork. A primary emphasis in this thesis is the distinguishing between the thought of Eliade and that of Jung. To this end both definitions and comparisons were necessary. Only after such a process could we begin to examine the importance of yoga within the theoretic framework used by Eliade. From this a discussion of transconsciousness naturally developed. What remains is to tie in the foregoing chapters with the concept of 'mythic consciousness.'

II The Problem of 'Mythic Consciousness'

Earlier we referred to mythic consciousness and the apprehension of myth as revealed truth. This, for

any analysis of Eliade, is only a partial step since, as we noted, there remains an acute terminological problem surrounding his concept of revelation, which can only be resolved through a consideration of revelation as self-realization within the doctrinal framework of yoga. Furthermore, myth itself must be seen as one example of an archetype, or paradigmatic model, along the lines of the use of *Īśvara* in yogic philosophy. Therefore, the phrase is far more complex than appears on the surface.

One other point concerning mythic consciousness should be analyzed. As we use the concept, we note the possibility of a dual meaning becoming attached to the usage of the phrase. Mythic consciousness may be regarded as both a 'process' and a 'state.' In other words, the concept may refer both to the growing awareness of truth and to the actual attainment of a new mode of being utilizing this growing awareness.

Both of the possible meanings of the term apply to Eliade's schema. We are equating the concept of mythic consciousness with Eliade's use of the term 'trans-consciousness.' Revelation, the growing intuition of

man as to his actual nature, is an integral part of Eliade's soteriology. The transconscious, although it is not changing in essence, is becoming aware of its true nature. The actual state of being fully aware is not a mental cognition but is completely other, corresponding, in Eliade's analysis, to asamprajñata samādhi. If one remembers the possibility of a dual function, further confusion surrounding Eliade's basic presupposition is removed.

But are we justified in making an identification between mythic consciousness and the transconscious? Let us note briefly some important elements that lend credence to such a conclusion, remembering the nature of the liberated puruṣa as portrayed in yogic doctrine. Such an identification renders intelligible Eliade's contention of the universality of symbols. All puruṣas are the same in essence and all puruṣas strive for true realization. It follows from this that symbols used by man in his religious quest would tend towards universality. Furthermore, Eliade's emphasis on the possibility of complex ideas being dimly grasped by earlier epochs illustrates both his contention concerning the universality

of symbols and his contention that the religious quest of all of mankind tends toward the same goal. Both of these elements in Eliade's thought are based upon the presupposition that the transconscious is the essential element of man and this applies equally to our use of the term mythic consciousness. However, our term is poorer semantically than Eliade's. Our term is invariably connected to a mental state or a cognitional function but it does lead to a consideration of Eliade's term. Therefore, in order to express fully the content of Eliade's presupposition, his term, transconsciousness, should be employed. The term mythic consciousness should only be employed as a probe for analytical use, to be discarded when the fulness of Eliade's term can be understood and appreciated.

APPENDIX 'A':

Eliade and the Eastern Orthodox Church

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Eliade and the Eastern Orthodox Church

Up to this point we have virtually ignored Eliade's background as a member of the Orthodox church. Partly this was due to the necessity of emphasizing the importance of Yoga (which is virtually ignored by Altizer) as against Christian theological concepts and partly to the necessity of lending a more comprehensive theoretical framework for Eliade's theories. In order to rectify this situation we will briefly note some characteristics of the Orthodox church which appear to have a direct bearing on our investigation. We may speak of the Orthodox church in general terms, as the Romanian patriarchate was not formed until 1925.

For the Orthodox church, the icon is considered to be the one element which leads to an understanding of Orthodox dogma.¹⁸⁴ Benz comments that "...we see that from the very first the Orthodox theologians did not

184. E. Benz, The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life, (Garden City, 1963), 19.

interpret icons as products of the creative imagination of a human artist. They did not consider them to be works of men at all, Rather, they regarded them as manifestations of the heavenly archetype."¹⁸⁵ Moreover,

by the very nature of the icon, any intervention of human imagination is excluded. To change an icon would be to distort the archetype, and any alteration of a celestial archetype would be heretical in the same sense as a willful alteration of ecclesiastical dogma. 186

These quotes show possible lines of influence on Eliade's thought. The irreducibility of the sacred and the structure of hierophany would seem to be informed from such theological impulses.

The Orthodox view of man is an important consideration. For the Orthodox theologian, "man is created 'in the image of God'; he carries the icon of God within himself.... Sin manifests itself as a distortion, a damaging, infecting and tainting of the image of God; but it cannot rob man of his original

185. ibid., 6.

186. ibid., 7.

nobility."¹⁸⁷ This quote points towards the similarity of Orthodox and yogic concepts concerning man. First, man is originally noble and sin, or in the case of yoga, ignorance, cannot change the essential nature of man. Second, the 'icon of God' would seem to correspond to the concept of purusa. Perhaps it is at this point that Eliade conceives of Yoga as a more comprehensive theoretical statement of man than Christian theology.

Eliade considers Jesus to be the supreme hierophany. This is in accordance with the Orthodox stress on the Incarnation.

Christ is the 'new Adam' in whom the original image of God of the old Adam is restored. The whole meaning of redemption, then, is linked with this concept of image; the image of man consists in man's being renewed in the image of Jesus Christ, incorporated into the image of Christ and thus through Jesus Christ experiencing the renewal of his status as image of God. 188

This stress reveals an interesting parallel with Yogic theory. The use of Isavara as an example of the ideal

187. ibid., 18.

188. ibid., 19.

would seem to be analogous with Jesus Christ as the true man. Also, Jesus as the true man would seem to correspond with the ideal of the jīvan-mukta. Any further analysis would depend on a more thorough investigation of possible correspondences. What we wish to emphasize is that Eliade's theoretical position does stem from an environmental situation which would tend to leave Eliade quite open to the possibilities of Yogic theory.

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