THE CONCEPT OF THE

COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORUM

IN THE THOUGHT OF MIRCEA ELIADE

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My interest in Mircea Eliade developed in the fall of 1977 when I was engaged in graduate studies at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. I was greatly impressed with his approach to the wide range of religious phenomena, and his efforts to uncover a common pattern of unity in the religious behaviour of humankind. His works deal with the all-pervasive sacred reality which confronts humankind at the various levels of its historical development. He senses that humankind's efforts to relate to the sacred is determined to a large extent by a historical socio-cultural conditioning. Yet, Eliade realizes that the common element in humankind's religious behaviour is the desire to relate to a "Being" greater than itself.

I realized early that if a study is to be made of the history of religions, it is necessary at some point to deal with the thought of Eliade. His understanding and scope have been so immense that few have been able to duplicate them. For these reasons, I decided to spend the better part of a year studying the works and thought of this great scholar and prolific writer. What follows is my attempt to understand Eliade's methodological approach to the phenomena of religion.
The research and writing of this thesis proved to be a very important experience in terms of personal academic development. It also provided a rare opportunity to engage in fruitful dialogue with committed scholars in the communal academic setting of the Institute for Christian Studies. In that regard, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the students and professors of this school for their support and encouragement throughout the duration of my study, and to all those who have made the existence of this academic institution a reality with their generous donation of time, energy and financial support.

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INTRODUCTION

Mircea Eliade, through his numerous and illuminating writings, has become a renowned historian of religion. He was born in Bucharest, Romania in 1907. His higher education included several years of research at the University of Calcutta and at the University of Bucharest where he obtained his doctoral degree. He taught at the Sorbonne in Paris before coming in 1956 to the United States to take a position in the department of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago.

Eliade is best known for his many writings on various religious patterns of the world, both past and present. His researches have dealt with primitive and archaic religious behaviours, major Eastern religions, and Judaeo-Christianity. Characteristic of Eliade's writings is the attempt to trace certain common themes of the experience of the sacred and its relation to being and meaning in the various religions he encounters.

Eliade's earliest written work, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, published 1936, emerged from three years of doctoral research (1928-31) at the University of Calcutta. It underwent major revisions before being published again in a more complete version in 1954. During this period of
time, Eliade published some of his best known works — *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1948), *Cosmos and History* (1949), and *Images and Symbols* (1951).\(^1\)

Since Eliade has produced so many written works relevant to the theme of the sacred and profane, it is impossible to deal adequately with the material discussed in all of them in the scope of this thesis. As a result, I have chosen to concentrate upon five of his basic books — *Patterns in Comparative Religions*, *Cosmos and History*, *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957), *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne* (1962), and *Images and Symbols*. I feel that his thought is revealed most adequately in these books, all of which appeared within a span of about fifteen years. Most of my references will be to these works, with only supporting references to some of his other published works.

Eliade is a historian of religions, and he quite readily confesses that he makes no attempt to act as a philosopher. Not surprisingly, then, he gives us little indepth elaboration of what he believes a suitable cosmology may be. We do not find in his writings any lengthy philosophical analysis of the structure of reality. What he offers is presented largely as a description of human religious behaviour. Nonetheless, it is my contention that a careful reading allows us to discover his own philosophical framework as it operates in the analysis he presents.
In his descriptions of the way the various religions understand the essential structure of reality, Eliade employs a certain fixed set of concepts. These key concepts — the sacred and profane, paradox, *coïncidentia oppositorum* -- which are the focus of this thesis, do not as such explicitly appear in the religious language of the peoples he analyzes. Eliade readily admits that they are not to be found in the ancient traditions he describes:

> Obviously, the metaphysical concepts of the archaic world were not always formulated in theoretical language... It is useless to search archaic languages for the terms so labouriously created by the great philosophical traditions: there is every likelihood that such words as "being", "non-being", "real", "unreal", "becoming", "illusory", are not to be found in the language of the Australians or of the ancient Mesopotamians. But if the word is lacking, the thing is present; only it is "said" -- that is, revealed in a coherent fashion -- through symbols and myths.  

These concepts and terms also do not explicitly derive from the spiritual traditions of the East. However, the notion of paradox in Eastern thought is understood by Eliade "to be situated on a line well known in the history of religion and mysticism -- that of the coinciding of opposites." And, although the concept of the *coïncidentia oppositorum* is not explicitly found in the numerous Eastern texts which he cites, analogous concepts were known, and evidence suggests that it was extant as a symbolic expression. The fact that these terms are not explicitly used in various traditions is, thus, relatively immaterial for Eliade:
"The thing is present" -- and that ultimately is what is important.

This assertion, however, often causes scholars to struggle with Eliade's entire corpus. The question frequently arises as to whether, in fact, he imposes his own terms and concepts on the various traditions he analyses, and, therefore, whether he reads into the cultures from his own view of the structures of reality.4

Although this is a concern that can legitimately be put before Eliade, I have chosen instead to concentrate on his use of paradox and the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum. I shall uncover how he uses these terms, and where he finds their meanings apparent in the various religious traditions he analyzes.

The sacred and the profane are realities encountered within existence which have been apprehended, described and analysed in various ways in the history of thought and religion. These two terms have sometimes become synonymous with notions such as Good and Evil, spirit and matter, and eternity and temporality. Theoretically, these terms have commonly been approached in ways that can be described either as dualistic, where reality, including mankind, is described fundamentally -- in principle and in origin -- as two; or as monistic, where reality is seen as fundamentally one.5 The overall problem, with whichever position is
taken, has been that of relating whatever is conceived of as the sacred with that which is conceived of as the profane.

One of the primary theses of this paper is that Eliade handles the problem of the relation of the sacred and profane by regarding them as contradictory essences which co-exist in a paradoxical manner. He frequently identifies this coming together into a unity of opposites by using the expression *coincidentia oppositorum*. He believes that the principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum* reflects the way religions, as evidenced in their symbolic expressions, view the structure of reality. The term, in general, refers to the coinciding of opposites in the divinity and the co-existence of contradictory essences in human reality. Eliade asserts that this theme emerges in virtually all religious patterns. It is my thesis that Eliade discovers the principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in greater or lesser degree in every religion because it is also the key to the structure of his own thought and the means by which he interprets the religious behaviour of mankind. This thesis will investigate and explore the nature and function of this key concept as it emerges in his writings.

In chapter I, I shall begin by presenting Eliade's definition of the sacred and profane, and how they are used to describe the existence of contradictory essences within created reality. Chapter II will deal with Eliade's use of the *coincidentia oppositorum* to interpret religious
phenomena. I shall attempt to show that this concept is not only a heuristic tool used by Eliade, but seems also to be a major component of his own view of reality.

Chapter III will serve as the conclusion for my argument. I will investigate how mankind's historical existence is understood by Eliade. According to him, mankind's individual subjective condition, subjected to time and history, must be transcended in order to experience the reality of the sacred. This reveals an ambivalence in Eliade's thought, for on the one hand the sacred can only be experienced in mankind's individual historical condition, while at the same time a full experience of the sacred requires an abolishing of time and history. This ambivalence is, I suggest, not an inconsistency or contradiction within his system, but is inherent in the notion of the paradoxical relation of sacred and profane realities.

I shall also attempt to show at the same time, that Eliade's ambivalent view of history causes certain tensions to arise in his thought. This results from the influence of Indian spiritualism on his own Eastern Orthodox Romanian tradition. Eliade admits quite freely the effect of Oriental thought on his own thinking:

My encounter with this tradition-laden culture at an age when spiritual discoveries can still enrich and transform one's own personality has had important consequences over and beyond my work as an Indian scholar. Indeed, the understanding of religious symbolism as it is lived at the level of the people has helped me to grasp
the symbolism still alive in my own tradition, that of an Eastern European people.6

The overwhelming influence becomes evident when Eliade reveals a certain attitude towards history which is also central to the thought of Eastern spiritualism: "My essential pre-occupation is precisely the means of escaping History, of saving myself through symbol, myth, rites, and archetypes."7 This admission reveals Eliade's fears that the multiplicity and diversity brought on by the forward movement of history will prevent modern mankind from experiencing the coincidentia oppositorum, even though, according to his own view of the paradox, the coinciding of the opposites can occur at any time and place in history by means of the religious ritual.
NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

1 The dates mentioned here refer specifically to the original French publications. The English translations often occurred years later.


4 Martin Marty refers to the notion that Eliade goes beyond mere description in a review of Eliade's most recent work. Here Marty states that: "In order to join together such desperate materials, the Romanian-born scholar has imposed his own beliefs and ideas about religiousness." Mircea Eliade, review of A History of Religious Ideas, by Martin E. Marty, in New York Times, 15 April 1979, p. 15. Allen goes into more detail concerning this point. He states that "all of Eliade's evaluations of religious phenomena are (not) on the same 'level' of analysis, nor that all can be subsumed under the classification of 'descriptive analysis'." Douglas Allen, Structure and Creativity in Religion. (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), p. 204.


7 Dudley, Religion on Trial, p. 105.
CHAPTER I
THE MEANING OF THE SACRED AND PROFANE

The Sacred as Irreducible

We are confronted with two basic terms in Eliade's numerous writings. These are the sacred and the profane. From his observations and interpretations of various religious patterns, Eliade concludes that the religious people of all societies view reality as composed of these two essences.

Implied in the word essence is the notion of something that is irreducible. One of Eliade's prime assertions is that the sacred is irreducible. He believes that religious phenomena can be fully understood and recognized as such, if they are grasped and studied as something religious:

I do not mean to deny the usefulness of approaching the religious phenomenon from various different angles; but it must be looked at first of all in itself, in that which belongs to it alone and can be explained in no other terms.¹

Although Eliade grants original ontological status to the sacred, the sacred nowhere exists in a pure state. Therefore, it is difficult to view the sacred "in itself". The sacred always exists "in situation"; it is "enmeshed
in a labyrinth of historically conditioned circumstances."2 Understanding the sacred as irreducible, maintains Eliade, is closely associated with understanding the intentionality or the meaning of the sacred. This approach forbids imposing external norms which are foreign to the phenomena undergoing interpretation.

Eliade is consciously opposed to any approach to the interpretation of religious phenomena which reduces them to some other basic human function. The tendency in reductionistic positions has been to explain religious phenomena in terms of other disciplines. For instance, there have been attempts to grasp the essence of religion by means of sociology, psychology, economics or physiology. Eliade insists that this procedure "misses the one unique and irreducible element in it -- the element of the sacred."3

Eliade states that Durkheim is a typical example of one who adopted a reductionistic position. Durkheim regarded religion primarily as a sociological phenomenon. Eliade raises this point:

For Durkheim, religion was a projection of the social experience ... He concluded that sacredness (or God) and the social group are one and the same thing.4

Eliade notices a similar tendency in a Freudian explanation. Freud's method assumed that sacred phenomena could only be understood properly when reduced to psychic phenomena. For Freud, Totemism became the underlying psychic explanation implicit in his analysis. However,
although in basic disagreement with Freud's fundamental position, Eliade nonetheless sees much validity in certain of his theories, and in fact, agrees that indeed the sacred has psychological significance. But the disagreement surfaces when Freud contends that all religious phenomena can be understood only in terms of a psychological analysis.

The Nature of the Sacred and the Profane

The clear delineation between the sacred religious life and the profane secular life is, according to Eliade, characteristic of all definitions of religion. The sacred and the profane are terms used to designate that which manifests itself as something religious and that which does not. Eliade defines the sacred by contrasting it with the profane; the sacred is "opposite of the profane." For him, this is the first possible definition of the sacred.

According to Eliade, the people of the primitive and archaic societies attempted to associate themselves as much as possible with the sacred. For them it was equivalent to a power; to "reality". It was saturated with being. It means "reality", enduringness and efficacy. The sacred reveals absolute being, eternity and absolute reality. The profane on the other hand is understood as all that which does not possess the sacred within it. It is considered to be the relative, historical and 'natural' world of 'ordinary' experience.
According to Eliade, mankind becomes aware of the sacred because it reveals itself. It manifests itself as something that is wholly different from the profane. He designates the term 'hierophany' as indicating "the act of manifestation of the sacred." This term is meant to imply nothing more than the simple fact that something sacred reveals or shows itself to mankind. The hierophany is a manifestation of a wholly different reality in an empirical and historical mode. Mankind apprehends the sacred because it reveals itself as something different from the immediate reality surrounding it. The sacred is interpreted as "a reality that does not belong to our world, manifested in objects that are an integral part of our natural "profane" world." The sacred is a reality that transcends this world, and it is this transcendent reality which makes the world real. Eliade asserts that the belief in this absolute reality is common to all religious people:

Whatever the historical context in which he is placed, homo religiousus always believes that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying it and making it real.

Eliade gives numerous examples to illustrate the contrast between the sacred and the profane. Using the example of space, Eliade states that "for the religious man, space is not homogeneous, he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others." When the sacred manifests itself
there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the nonreality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world.\textsuperscript{14}

The sacred reveals a fixed point within the homogeneity of profane space; it provides an orientation in the chaos of homogeneity.

Profane experience of space maintains the homogeneity and relativity of space; space is neutral, it is all the same:

...no break qualitatively differentiates the various parts of its mass. Geometrical space can be cut and delimited in any direction; but no qualitative differentiation and, hence, no orientation are given by virtue of its inherent structure...it appears and disappears in accordance with the needs of the day. Properly speaking, there is no longer any world, there are only fragments of a shattered universe, an amorphous mass consisting of an infinite number of more or less neutral places in which man moves, governed and driven by the obligations of an existence incorporated into an industrial society.\textsuperscript{15}

Eliade makes a similar point in regard to the experience of time. According to his interpretations, religious mankind

...experiences intervals of time that are 'sacred', that have no part in temporal duration that precedes and follows them, that have a wholly different structure and origin.\textsuperscript{16}

This is an experience of liturgical time which is not experienced by the nonreligious peoples. The profane experience, on the other hand, lacks that "mystery". Life is rooted entirely in time:
...for him, time constitutes man's deepest existential dimension; it is linked to his own life, hence it has a beginning and an end, which is death, the annihilation of his life.17

We find another example of contrast between the sacred and the profane in Eliade's discussion of alchemy. In *The Forge and the Crucible*, he states that alchemy was regarded as a sacred science and not an empirical science or rudimentary chemistry. Although chemistry originated in alchemy, it departed from alchemy when it no longer regarded its substances as possessing sacred attributes. Eliade admits that the history of science can find no absolute break between the two; both are recognized as dealing with the same substances and apparatus. According to his view, however, there is a significant difference.

If we view it from the standpoint of the history of the human spirit we see the matter quite differently. Alchemy posed as a sacred science, whereas chemistry came into its own when substances had shed their sacred attributes. Now there must, of necessity, be a break of continuity between the sacred and the profane plane of experience.18

Chemistry is regarded as a profane endeavor for the simple reason that chemists did not apprehend the sacred in the chemical substances. Alchemy, on the other hand, while dealing with the same materials, saw the sacred and mystical both in the materials and in its experimental techniques. It dealt with the substances on a completely different, sacred "level".
The Paradoxical Relation between
the Sacred and the Profane

According to Eliade the sacred and profane are two contradictory essences which coexist in a paradoxical relationship. It is the hierophany which reveals the "paradoxical coming together of the sacred and profane, being and non-being, absolute and relative, the eternal and the becoming. ...every hierophany shows, makes manifest, the coexistence of contradictory essences." The sacred and profane are not two essences which are conceived of in a dualistic manner, that is, as dual essences eternally opposed and eternally distinct. Their relationship is paradoxical. The sacred, which is real and eternal, manifests itself paradoxically in the profane which is temporal and changing.

Eliade uses the notion of paradox to indicate that things which belong to this world of change and becoming (the profane) manage to convey, in some manner, ultimate truth which is unchanging, absolute and "other-worldly" (the sacred). The sacred is somehow revealed in and through profane existence, but it remains at the same time transcendent. What is paradoxical, according to Eliade, is that the absolute and eternal can be revealed in and through something that is relative, temporal and limited: "in fact, what is paradoxical, what is beyond our understanding, is not that the sacred can be manifested in
stones or in trees, but that it can be manifested at all, that it can thus become limited and relative. 21

The essential nature of the sacred is beyond human comprehension. The use of paradox enables Eliade to formulate thoughts about the absolute and eternal, and the finite and temporal, which transcend proper logical expression. Finite human reason cannot grasp conceptually the coexistence of essences that are of a contradictory nature. Language at this point fails us: it can only be expressed as a paradox. 22

Eliade explains the paradoxical coming together of the sacred and profane by means of the dialectic of the sacred and the hierophany. The dialectic of the sacred is a corollary of Eliade's notion of hierophany, meaning that Ultimate Reality is not disclosed to mankind by logic and reason. The sacred is perceived as a revelation: the sacred shows itself to mankind. The dialectic of the sacred implies that "the sacred expresses itself through something other than itself; it appears in things, myths or symbols, but never wholly or directly. 24 The sacred nowhere exists in a "pure" state, but appears mediated through the very structures of the cosmos. The sacred reveals itself through heavenly bodies, plants, animals, rivers, rocks and seasons. 25 The world is transparent; nature reveals the existence of the sacred. Profane reality acts as a "screen", hence the sacred always appears limited and incarnate. 26 By the very fact that the sacred appears in
phenomena, implies that it is shaped by the empirical and historical context out of which it arises.\textsuperscript{27} According to Eliade, the dialectic of the sacred is a universal religious phenomena:

This dialectic of the sacred belongs to all religions, not only to the supposedly "primitive" forms. It is expressed as much in the worship of stones and trees, as in the theology of Indian avatars, or the supreme mystery of the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{28}

Eliade explains the result of the paradox by giving the example of an object apprehended as manifesting the sacred. The result is that any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality.\textsuperscript{29}

In this passage taken from The Sacred and the Profane he emphasizes that the object continued to remain itself. However, in one of his earlier writings, Patterns in Comparative Religion, Eliade states the nature of the paradox differently. By means of a hierophany, an object "ceases to be itself, as a natural object, though in appearance it remains unchanged."\textsuperscript{30} Here he speaks of the object as ceasing to be itself. Although these passages seem to contradict one another, they point instead to Eliade's use of the paradoxical nature of a hierophany. When the sacred is revealed through an object, the object takes on a different reality while
continuing to remain exactly what it is. This reality is the sacred. But the sacred does not change the natural structure of the object. It remains the same. The appearance of the object is not changed. However, when the object reveals the sacred, it ceases to be itself in the sense that it is not just a natural object anymore. This is the essence of the paradox: the profane medium does remain itself while conveying sacrality. The one does not cancel out the other.

When the natural object takes on the reality of the sacred it is given meaning and value. As a symbolic object, it takes on a meaning and value which differentiates and distinguishes it from its surrounding milieu. Again, this reveals the paradoxical nature of the symbolic object. The object ceases to be what it was before, yet it is not basically changed. It remains itself. Eliade concludes that

If we observe the general behavior of archaic man, we are struck by the following fact: neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them.

According to Eliade, when the sacred reveals itself through the structures of the world, it manifests certain of its characteristics; that is, it reveals its modalities. In Patterns of Comparative Religion, Eliade uses the example of the stone to illustrate this point. Through the
paradoxical nature of a hierophany, objects manifest "something" that is regarded as being of the sacred. Because the sacred and profane coexist paradoxically, the religious person apprehends "something" more than is perceived in the "ordinary" mode of manifestation:

The hardness, ruggedness, and permanence of matter was itself a hierophany in the religious consciousness of the primitive. And nothing was more direct and autonomous in the completeness of its strength, nothing more noble or awe-inspiring, than a majestic rock, or a boldly-standing block of granite. Above all, stone is. It always remains itself, and exists of itself; and, important still, it strikes. Before he even takes it up to strike, man finds in it an obstacle — if not to his body, at least to his gaze — and ascertains its hardness, its roughness, its power. Rock shows him something that transcends the precariousness of his humanity: an absolute mode of being. Its strength, its motionlessness, its size and its strange outlines are none of the human; they indicate the presence of something that fascinates, terrifies, attracts and threatens, all at once. In its grandeur, its hardness, its shape and its colour, man is faced with a reality and a force that belongs to some world other than the profane world of which he is himself a part.33

Eliade becomes more specific in The Sacred and the Profane and clarifies his interpretation of the implication of cosmic hierophanies in primitive religions:

Each of these groups of cosmic hierophanies reveals a particular structure of the sacrality of nature; or, more precisely, a modality of the sacred expressed through a specific mode of existence in the cosmos.34

Then in reference to a stone, he states,

The hierophany of a stone is pre-eminently an ontophany; above all, the stone is, it always remains itself, it does not change — and it strikes man by what it possesses of irreducibility and absoluteness and, in so doing, reveals to him by
analogy the irreducibility and absoluteness of being. Perceived by virtue of a religious experience, the specific mode of existence of the stone reveals to man the nature of an absolute existence, beyond time, invulnerable to becoming.35

It becomes clear from Eliade's interpretations, that certain qualities apprehended in various objects are attributed to the sacred. These objects then become 'special'; they are differentiated from their surroundings. They manifest qualities which other objects lack; thereby attaining certain meaning and value. However, Eliade points out that it is not the object in itself that is venerated. It is the sacred, manifested through the object, that is worshiped. The object provides the means through which the sacred can both be manifested and apprehended. Yet at the same time the object's immediate existence is not undervalued when it becomes a hierophany. This again reflects, rather clearly, the paradoxical relation between the sacred and the profane. An object remains itself, while at the same time revealing the sacred.

According to Eliade, not only does an object receive meaning and value from the sacred, but the object's true essence lies in the sacred. "It is the sacrality manifested through the mode of being of the object that reveals its true essence."36 This, of course, is understood only by the religious person. An object, apprehended as manifesting the sacred, becomes a symbolic object. The symbolic object is "opened up"; it reveals "something" more, even
though it may participate meaningfully in its natural surroundings.

Symbolism adds a new value to an object or an activity without any prejudice to its own immediate value. In application to objects or actions, symbolism renders them "open"; symbolic thinking "breaks open" the immediate reality without any minimizing or undervaluing of it. 37

According to Eliade, what is ultimately important is the transcendent reality which is revealed when an object becomes symbolic, not its normal participation in its surroundings. When it is regarded as symbolic, the emphasis shifts to the eternal nature of the sacred manifested through the temporal structure of the object. Its temporal aspects become overshadowed by the sacred.

**The Structure of Man Expressed as Paradoxical**

Mankind's existence in the world is also expressed by Eliade as a paradox. As people are faced with the reality of their own concrete situation, they discover the sacred as it is manifested. The awareness of a world that is real and meaningful is intimately related to the discovery of the sacred:

Through the experience of the sacred, the human mind grasped the difference between that which reveals itself as real, powerful, rich and meaningful, and that which does not -- i.e., the chaotic and dangerous flux of things, their fortuitous, meaningless appearances and disappearances. 38

Life consists of 'ordinary' existence in all its functionality -- described generally as profane -- together with some form of a transcendent sacred existence:
Clearly, his life has an additional dimension; it is not merely human, it is at the same time cosmic, since it has a transhuman structure. It could easily be termed an open existence, for it is not strictly confined to man's mode of being. (Underlinings mine)

Here we could easily read Eliade as inferring a dualistic relationship between the sacred and the profane modes of existence. The sacred mode is not an additional dimension in the sense that it is added on to or exists side by side with mankind's normal mode of existence. Mankind's sacredness is not to be seen as divorced or separated from the normal day-to-day existence within the world. The sacred "world" is not to be seen as distinct from, and totally unrelated to, mankind's existential mode of being in the world. Instead, the sacred and profane modes of existence in the world are to be seen as a paradoxical relationship: life is not merely human, it is at the same time cosmic. Mankind has its ordinary human structure, and at the same time it has a transhuman structure. Eliade becomes more specific as to the nature of the relationship between this 'additional dimension' and mankind's 'ordinary' mode of existence.

The sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of his history... In the last analysis, the sacred and profane modes of being depend upon the different positions that man has conquered in the cosmos.

According to Eliade, archaic mankind's openness to the world is the openness to the sacred. Religious persons find their lives homologized to that of the cosmos; part of the cosmos
lives in them. By allowing oneself to be open to the sac-
rality of the cosmos, a person becomes more aware of one-
self, because the cosmos is the model of human existence.42
On the other hand, life is also lived in its 'ordinary'
mode of existence. Thus, according to Eliade, in the case
of archaic mankind, "life is lived on a two-fold plane; it
takes its course as human existence and, at the same time,
shares in a transhuman life, that of the cosmos or the
gods."43

Eliade finds similar evidence within Indian spirit-
uality. According to the spiritual tradition of the East,
mankind's physiological acts become mystical rites. Ord-
inary activity takes on a religious dimension, with all
activities potentially capable of being transformed into
religious acts.

In other words, "he who knows" has at his command an
entirely different experience from that of the profane
man. This is as much as to say that every human ex-
perience is capable of being transfigured, lived on
a different, a transhuman plane.44

The sacred and the profane are not two levels or realms
of being, but two modes or ways of being in the world. Al-
though it is possible to speak of the sacred mode in dis-
tinction from the profane mode, in concrete existence these
two modes are always experienced simultaneously. They are
experienced as a paradoxical relationship. Eliade describes
the perspective of archaic mankind in this manner.
Human existence therefore takes place simultaneously upon two parallel planes; that of the temporal, of change and of illusion and that of eternity, of substance and of reality. (Underlinings mine)

The Nature of the Paradoxical Relationship

The question which now remains is how we are best to understand Eliade's notion of the paradoxical relationship of the sacred and profane. He states that the paradox is the coexistence of the sacred and profane as contradictory essences. On the one hand, the sacred and profane are mutually exclusive and logically contradictory. Sacred reality contradicts profane reality -- eternal and temporal, being and non-being, absolute and relative. The sacred is infinitely greater than profane reality. These two essences are infinitely differentiated from each other. On the other hand, the sacred also needs the profane in order to be revealed and apprehended. The sacred cannot do without the profane, nor can the profane do without the sacred if it is to be fully "opened up". The sacred and profane are mutually complementary.

In the hierophany, the sacred and profane occur simultaneously. The sacred and profane are both contradictory and complementary. They are simultaneously, mutually exclusive and logically contradictory, and mutually complementary. This is the essence of the paradox.

Thomas Altizer interprets Eliade as saying that the sacred and profane are two essences which are mutually
exclusive and logically contradictory; the sacred negates the profane. "The sacred and profane are related by a negative dialectic, a single moment cannot be profane and sacred at once." However, Altizer's "negative dialectic" does not fully take into account Eliade's insistence that the sacred and profane coexist as contradictory essences; that the immediate reality of the object is not abolished nor neglected when the sacred is manifested. Eliade stresses that it is the very characteristic of the object which enables it to manifest the sacred, and allows it to become a hierophany in the first place.

Altizer is correct in emphasizing that the sacred and profane are mutually exclusive and logically contradictory. However, he excludes the mutual complementary aspect of the sacred-profane relationship. Robert Avens interprets Eliade in a manner similar to Altizer: "the sacred tends to obliterate the reality of the profane." This implies that the sacred erases, removes or cancels the reality of the profane:

... the two opposites, the sacred and the profane, cannot really coexist without negating each other, the reality of the one tends to exclude the other.

It seems that both Altizer and Avens emphasize one pole of the paradox at the expense of the other in stressing the "meaning" aspect of the sacred. According to Douglas Allen,
... this interpretation destroys the dialectical complexity of the religious mode of manifestation and leads to an oversimplification and distortion of Eliade's phenomenological method.

In terms of uncovering Eliade's view of reality, I feel that it is necessary to retain both sides of the paradox; the simultaneous contradictory and mutual complementary aspects of the sacred-profane relation. This is best understood by means of the principle of the coincidentia oppositorum.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


3 Patterns, p. xiii.


6 The Quest, p. 21.

7 Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), p. 10. In Patterns, Eliade states that definitions which have previously been given of religious phenomena have one thing in common, "each has its own way of showing that the sacred and the religious life are the opposite of the profane and the secular life." p. 1.

8 Ibid., p. 22.

9 It was Rudolf Otto who spoke of the sacred as something "wholly other", as the numinous which reveals itself to mankind as something basically and totally different. See Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Eliade notes Otto's concern for determining the content and specific characteristics of religious exper-
ience. He passed over the rational and speculative side of religion, and concentrated chiefly on its irrational aspect. Eliade, on the other hand, proposes to present "the phenomena of the sacred in all its complexity, and not only in so far as it is irrational." The Sacred and Profane, pp. 8-10.

10 The Sacred and Profane, p. 11.

11 Ibid., p. 11. Cf. p. 27.


13 Ibid., p. 20. Jonathan Smith points out that according to Eliade, the major problem which has confronted mankind in all ages -- but particularly in the modern age -- has been that of subjectivism and relativism. For Eliade, the two categories that have been conceived of as relative and subjective sans paroi are space and time. But he has revalued them. The sacred is manifested in space and in time. Sacred space is experienced because it irrupts ordinary homogeneous space. Mankind experiences sacred time by participating in the ritual. The religious person experiences both space and time as non-homogeneous. "Hence both reflect the experience of a breakthrough of the normal ontological levels, and this break allows the possibility of participation in Reality -- of reifying or sacralizing the profane." Jonathan Z. Smith, "The Wobbling Pivot", Journal of Religion 52 (April 1972):140.

14 The Sacred and Profane, p. 21.

15 Ibid., pp. 22-24.

16 Ibid., p. 71.

17 Ibid., p. 71.


19 Patterns, p. 29.

The paradox which Robert Slater points to in Buddhism is a case in point, and helps to cast light on the meaning of paradox in Eliade. The supreme paradox in Buddhism is the reconciling of a belief in Nirvana with the apparent denial of a belief in the soul: that is, a reconciling of the positive and negative statements concerning Nirvana. Nirvana, etymologically, signifies dying out, cessation and extinction. This, however, contradicts the notion of Nirvana as being the unconditioned reality, purity of life, and the flowering of personality. Therefore, whether it is said that Nirvana signifies extinction of life or continuance of life, one is faced with difficult and awkward questions. It appears that what is left is "the contradiction of a Great Peace to be enjoyed forever--and nobody to enjoy it." pp. 78-79. This example clearly points to the essence of the paradox. See Paradox and Nirvana (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp. 65-111. A paradoxical relationship is the coinciding of what logically appear to be contradictory essences or states of being. In the case of Eliade's intended use, the paradox defines the coinciding of the sacred and profane.

The paradox in Meister Eckhart's mysticism is another case in point. Eckhart, who speaks of the possibility of a mystical knowledge of God, states that "nothing is so close to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to my own self." Ibid., p. 110. However, this positive and direct affirmation is quickly contradicted by an emphatic negation; "No man knows what God is. ... Nothing we can say of God is true." Ibid.

This notion of paradox is constituted by positive and negative statements of the relationship to God. Similarly in Eliade's use, the paradoxical relationship is understood as the abiding presence of absolute reality, yet this absolute reality is not capable of being fully understood by mankind's finite and limited understanding.

Patterns, pp. 26, 31. Eliade often interchanges "dialectic of the sacred" with "dialectic of hierophany". See pp. 12, 13, 29, 30.


Myth and Reality, p. 143.


28 Patterns, p. 30.

29 The Sacred and Profane, p. 12. See also pp. 155-156.

30 Patterns, p. 30.

31 The reverse is also true. When the sacred reveals itself, its own mode of being is not annulled nor negated; the sacred paradoxically coincides "with the profane without nullifying its own mode of being." Ibid., p. 28.

32 Cosmos and History, pp. 3-4.

33 Patterns, p. 216.

34 The Sacred and Profane, p. 155.


36 Ibid., p. 118.

37 Images and Symbols, pp. 177-178.

38 The Quest, p.i.

39 The Sacred and Profane, p. 165.

40 In the context of a discussion on symbolism, Eliade states that archaic mankind did not make a separation between the "spiritual" and the "material". According to him, these "two planes are complementary". Images and Symbols, p. 177.

41 The Sacred and Profane, pp. 14-15. Eliade states that mankind's existence is always an existence "in situation". Yet, this situation is not conditioned solely by the contemporaneous historical moment. Mankind is aware of other situations over and above its historical conditioning. Its authentic existence is the existence which it assumes, and because the sacred mode of existence is also a human existence, it is necessarily conditioned by all that which works together to make a human individual what it is, from its anatomy and physiology to language itself. A sacred mode of existence presupposes the whole human being -- the social,
economic, aesthetic, ethical aspects etc. Yet, its aspects do not of themselves constitute the whole. *Images and Symbols*, pp. 32-33.


Seymour Cain points out that in Eliade's usage, "trans-historical" or the sacred mode, "does not refer simply to a supramundane realm, but also to human nature as distinguished from human history." Seymour Cain, "Mircea Eliade: Attitudes Toward History" *Religious Studies Review* 6 (January 1980):15.

42 The Sacred and Profane, p. 165.
43 Ibid., p. 167.
44 Ibid., p. 171.
45 *Patterns*, p. 460.
48 Ibid., pp. 52, 70.
50 Ibid., p. 126.
CHAPTER II

COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORUM:

THE STRUCTURE OF REALITY

A HEURISTIC DEVICE

Eliade's notion of the paradox is best explained and reflected in the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum. In this chapter I shall, firstly, indicate where Eliade discovers this concept, and how he uses it as a heuristic device to interpret the religious phenomena of various religious traditions. Secondly, I shall attempt to unfold his meaning of the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum, and show that it is central to his thinking.

According to Eliade, the coincidentia oppositorum is reflected in the symbolisms, theories and beliefs of many different religious traditions. It is reflected especially in the vast scope of religious acts and phenomena which are concerned with ultimate reality and the explanations of the origin of the Creation:

The coincidentia oppositorum or the mystery of the totality can as easily be found in the symbolism, theories and beliefs concerned with the ultimate reality, the divine Grund, as in cosmogonies explaining the Creation as the fragmentation of a primordial unity. It is to be seen in orgiastic rituals aimed at the reversal of human behavior and the confusion of values, in the mystical techniques for the union of contraries, in the myth of the androgyne and the rites of androgynization etc.
These myths, beliefs and rites reveal that the sacred, ultimate reality or the divine cannot be rationally comprehended, but can only be grasped as a paradox. They

... teach men that the best way of apprehending God or the ultimate reality is to cease, if only for a few seconds, considering and imagining divinity in terms of immediate experience; such an experience could only perceive fragments and tensions.

Although stating that the *coincidentia oppositorum* is to be found in these symbolisms, theories and beliefs, Eliade stresses that one is not always necessarily aware "of the act one is performing in a ritual or the thought behind one's myth." That is, the religious person is not always aware of the implications of the *coincidentia oppositorum* in the myth or ritual. According to Eliade, "in certain cultures, at certain moments of history, and for certain categories of men, the metaphysical implications of the *coincidentia oppositorum* are clearly understood and accepted." But this is not the case with all religious people. The fundamental doctrines, contained in the myths and legends which reflect the *coincidentia oppositorum*, have their source in learned men trained in theology and philosophy, yet these myths and legends "have met with enormous success among the common people."

An initial point to be made here is that Eliade himself states that most cultures do not consciously apply the principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. A vast scope of religious acts and phenomena "concerned with
ultimate reality" and with explaining the Creation, use the principle of the coincidentia oppositorum even if they do not realize it. This gives us the initial indication that the principle of the coincidentia oppositorum, used as a heuristic device, enables Eliade to use a concept which, though often more abstract than the actual intention of certain particular cases, is nonetheless, consistently applicable, in his opinion, to the various, and often quite diverse, religious traditions.

Eliade describes Indian Spirituality in terms of the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum:

The Indian thinker's ideal is ... the jivan-mukti, the man "liberated while living", that is to say someone who, while living in the world, is not conditioned by the structure of the world, someone who is no longer "fixed in place" but, as the texts put it, "free to move at will" (Kamacarin). The jivan-mukti is simultaneously in time and in eternity; his existence is a paradox in the sense that it constitutes a coincidentia oppositorum beyond the understanding or the imagination.

The paradoxical relation between the sacred and profane, as described in Indian spirituality by Eliade, takes place in the actual human situation. Time and eternity coincide; they occur simultaneously in the human condition. The contradictory essences coincide, existing mutually in a relation that can only be described as paradoxical.

In Indian spirituality, the human individual existence is described as profane; it is "made up of pairs of opposites." Mankind is able to transcend these opposites. In doing so
the religious person leaves the immediate subjective and personal situation and is raised "to a supra-subjective viewpoint." Metaphysical knowledge is thereby attained. All this is done through various techniques, with the result that the religious person "succeeds in rising above duality; that is to say, in realizing the coincidentia oppositorum in his own body and his own spirit." According to Eliade, the myths, rites and beliefs of Indian spirituality have one essential feature in common:

They compel a man to behave otherwise than he spontaneously would, to contradict by thought what immediate experience and elementary knowledge show him; in fact, to become what he is not - what he cannot be - in his profane, unenlightened state, in the human condition... Now (particularly) the Indian myths of the coincidentia oppositorum help anyone who meditates on them to transcend the level of immediate experiences and uncover the secret dimension of reality. Eliade's use of the coincidentia oppositorum in terms of Indian spirituality, reveals the two-fold implication of the paradox. The first implication consists of two parts. First, in Indian spirituality, the human condition is described as profane. It is made up of opposites with the absence of unity. The non-religious person is destined to such a profane existence; forever confronted with the tensions between the opposites inherent in the human condition. Second, the religious person, however, is aware of "another dimension" of reality. In the religious experience the religious person is confronted with both the profane and sacred modes of being; the two contra-
dictory essences.

The second implication consists of the nature of the paradoxical relationship between the two modes of being. Through the various techniques, the religious person 'rises' above the opposites and dualities of the human condition. That is, the person now experiences a unity; the tensions coincide. It must be understood, according to Eliade's interpretation, that the same oppositions are still experienced, but they are no longer experienced as such. The unity of the sacred is experienced instead. The two modes of being exist paradoxically. The concept of the coincidentia oppositorum, according to Eliade, is the best way to describe the mutual coexistence of the opposites. The wholeness of the sacred is experienced in the temporal human condition.

Although Eliade uses terms to describe Indian spirituality which are not typically Eastern in origin, he, none-theless, sees elements in their religious consciousness which are consistent with the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum. He discovers that the meanings of this concept consistently describe the intentions of Eastern spirituality.

Eliade also describes the mythical theme of the androgyne, in the history of religions, in terms of the
concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. This ancient theme has been operative in numerous "Western" spiritual traditions. Eliade traces the appearance of this theme in the various works of 19th century European literature, through the Middle Ages to Plato and the Classical Greek Mythology, and to archaic mythology. He states that, in European literature of the 19th century, the androgyne is understood by "decadent" French and English writers simply as a hermaphrodite. The androgyne is perceived as the anatomical and physiological existence of both sexes in one body; as a superabundance of erotic possibilities. For Eliade this representation is an irresponsible reduction in contrast to earlier conceptions which perceived the androgyne as the appearance of a new type of humanity in which the fusion of both sexes produced a new unpolarized consciousness.

According to Eliade, the idea of the androgyne throws light on the concept of totality. The idea of universal bi-sexuality, he states, is a "necessary consequence of the idea of bi-sexual divinity as model and principle of all existence." Implied in the conception of the androgyne is,

the idea that perfection, and therefore Being, ultimately consists of a unity-totality. Everything that exists must therefore be a totality, carrying the *coincidentia oppositorum* to all levels and applying it to all contexts.
The theme of the androgyne reflects the idea of opposites coexisting harmoniously in one being. This also implies that male and female are 'particulars' within immediate existence, naturally opposed and in tension. On the philosophical level, the case of the mythical androgyne reflects cosmologically the unification of the opposites inherent within reality. According to Eliade, this clearly exemplifies the notions implicit in the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum.

Eliade states that there exists a structural resemblance between "the myth of the primordial Androgyne, the Ancestor of humanity, and the creation myths", all of which are concerned with the "beginnings". However, this obsession with beginnings, both on the cosmic and anthropological scale, is also to be interpreted in another context, that is, as "the tendency towards unification and totality," Although this is expressed in different ways and serves different purposes, Eliade observes that,

"... at the obscure level of ritual orgy or androgynization or the return to the Chaos before the Creation, we are confronted with tendencies towards reunion and unification structurally comparable with the tendency of the Spirit to return to the Unity-Totality."  

Eliade's point here is that the myths dealing with the primordial totality and the rituals which correspond to them speak of a Unity-Totality. However, the Unity-Totality is not the same in each case. Nonetheless, Eliade states that "these myths, rites and mystical techniques imply
the absolute coincidentia oppositorum. Here again we observe that Eliade discovers the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum, and, according to him, it serves to illustrate the implicit understanding of paradox in the various religious contexts.

Eliade also discovers the implications of this concept in Tantric yoga. He feels that the coincidentia oppositorum illustrates the notion of the paradox as it is conceived in Tantrism. According to him, Tantric yoga is capable of achieving the coincidentia oppositorum "on all levels of Life and Consciousness."

Creation represents the explosion of the primal unity and the separation of two contrary principles incarnate in Shiva and Shakti. All relative existence implies a state of duality, and consequently implies suffering, illusion and "slavery". The final goal of the Tantricist is to unite the two contrary principles -- Shiva and Shakti -- in his own body.

The concept of the coincidentia oppositorum illustrates the union of the opposites where "the experience of duality is abolished and the phenomenal world is transcended."

The yogin achieves the paradoxical experience of perfect unity.

We find still another case when Eliade discovers the implications of the coincidentia oppositorum. In alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone, an essence eluding precise identification, is the end point of an operation beginning with the materia prima -- prime matter consisting
of primordial homogeneous substances. According to Eliade's interpretation, many alchemists equate the procuring of the Philosopher's Stone with the attaining of a perfect knowledge of God. At the same time it also reveals and makes apparent the opposites existent within reality. Eliade concludes that:

We are here face to face with the very old symbolism of the coincidentia oppositorum, universally widespread, well attested in primitive stages of culture, and which served more or less to define both the fundamental reality (the Ungrund), and the paradoxical state of the totality, the perfection and consequently the sacredness of God.\textsuperscript{21}

The Central Significance of Coincidentia Oppositorum to Eliade's Thought

In his various writings, Eliade presents a whole class of phenomena in which he discovers the meanings implicit in the concept of the Coincidentia Oppositorum. He feels that this concept incorporates the essential meaning of the paradoxical relation between the sacred and profane. His frequent use of this concept to describe and illuminate the notion of paradox, draws attention to the fact that he discovers an element that is widespread in religious consciousness. At the same time, attention is also drawn to the fact that this concept is central to the way in which he views the structure of reality.

An importance evidence that the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum is central to Eliade's own think-
ing, is the way he spots the history of this concept emerging in a Western philosophical system. According to him, it is in the philosophy of Heraclitus that the notion of the *coincidentia oppositorum* first receives philosophical elaboration. Heraclitus' philosophical elaboration strikes Eliade as most telling, and his own framework is in its main lines faithful to Heraclitus. Heraclitus attempted to penetrate behind the flux of daily life to see what could be responsible for the tensions and struggles of human activities. He speculated that

\[
\text{God is day and night, winter and summer, war peace, satiety hunger - all the opposites, this is the meaning.}
\]

Eliade senses that Heraclitus developed a view based on a reconciliation of opposites which, once accepted, made sense of archaic mythologies and Indian spiritualism.

Eliade discovers a similar pattern of thought in Meister Eckhart. Eckhart, the Rhineland mystic, taught that the regenerated person blends with God into the Godhead when the divisive life, consisting of contraries, tensions and oppositions, is forsaken. The believer then becomes singlemindedly alive in Being, in the eternal Being where the person was before his or her creation.\(^{23}\) In Eckhart's mysticism, the Godhead becomes the conjunction of the opposites. It reconciles the paradoxical relationship between God (the sacred) and the sinful creatures (the profane). At the same time, the Godhead also recon-
ciles the contraries, tensions and oppositions extant and experienced within created reality.

It was Nicholas of Cusa who called the union of contraries and the mystery of the totality the *coincidentia oppositorum*. Eliade states "It is well known that for Nicholas of Cusa the *coincidentia oppositorum* was the least imperfect definition of God." Nicholas demonstrated, by means of mathematical illustration, the presence of the infinite in all finite reality (the *coincidentia oppositorum*). He understood that reason was aware of the absolute reality, though this absolute reality could not be expressed in terms of rational knowledge (ignorance). To understand and acknowledge the limitation of rationality led to real knowledge (learned). Thus, learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*) indicated humankind's inability to grasp the infinite by means of the categories of the finite. This did not, however, prevent the possibility of a mystical union with the eternal and absolute (God). Nicholas was important for Eliade because he was able to ground the infinite distinction between God (the sacred) and all things finite (the profane) metaphysically, precisely in the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

According to Eliade, numerous mythical modes of experience reveal these patterns of thought. This leads him to conclude that
... it enters into almost all the religious experience of mankind, even within as strict a tradition as the Judaeo-Christian. Yahweh is both kind and wrathful; the God of the Christian mystics and theologians is terrible and gentle at once and it is this *coincidentia oppositorum* which is the starting point for the boldest speculations of such men as the pseudo-Dionysius, Meister Eckhardt, and Nicholas of Cusa.26

The main thrust of Eliade's basic conceptual pattern is similar to the tradition of these theologian-philosophers. His conclusions that the *coincidentia oppositorum* shows up in so many diverse cultures and situations is strong evidence that this conception is central to his own view.

It is in Eliade's discussions of religious symbolism that we receive the clearest notion that the *coincidentia oppositorum* is central to his basic framework. A symbol is by definition, for Eliade, the clearest mode of expressing the *coincidentia oppositorum*: it is abundantly and simply expressed by symbols.27 According to his view, it is the characteristic of the symbol to express the paradoxical nature of ultimate reality. It expresses not only the "absolute", but also the paradoxical coexistence of contradictory essences:

Perhaps the most important function of religious symbolism ... is its capacity for expressing paradoxical situations or certain patterns of ultimate reality that can be expressed in no other way.28

In the final chapter of *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, Eliade states that the first observation a historian of religions must make is that "the World "speaks"
in symbols, "reveals" itself through them. ... A symbol is not a replica of objective reality. It reveals something deeper and more fundamental.\textsuperscript{29} Eliade's first observation is that:

Symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a condition of the World which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.\textsuperscript{30}

Symbols reveal a deeper meaning to life which cannot be grasped by everyday experience. "They reveal the miraculous, inexplicable side of Life, and at the same time the sacramental dimension of human existence."\textsuperscript{31}

Eliade's second observation follows from his first: "for primitives, symbols are always religious, ... (they) imply an ontology, ... (which expresses) a judgement both of the world and of human existence ... which is not formulated in concepts and which cannot always be translated into concepts."\textsuperscript{32}

Thirdly, Eliade observes that the symbol has the capacity of revealing numerous meanings which are structurally united:

An essential characteristic of religious symbolism is its multivalence, its capacity to express simultaneously several meanings the unity between which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience.\textsuperscript{33}

This capacity results in the consequence that,

the symbol is capable of revealing a perspective in which diverse realities can be fitted together or even integrated into a "system".\textsuperscript{34}
The ability of the symbol "to express the contradictory aspects of ultimate reality,"35 according to Eliade, played an important role in later philosophical speculations:

Nicholas Cusanus considered the *coincidentia oppositorum* as the most suitable definition of God's nature. Now, this symbol has long ago been used to signify not only what we call the "totality" or the "absolute" but the paradoxical coexistence in the divinity of the opposite and antagonistic principles.36

The full reality of the complexity of the *coincidentia oppositorum* only comes to the fore when we consider the important role Eliade gives to the symbol. In Eliade's thought, symbols are essential in revealing the *coincidentia oppositorum*:

Although the concepts of polarity and the *coincidentia oppositorum* have been used systematically since the beginnings of philosophical speculation, the symbols which have obscurely revealed them have not been the product of critical reflection but the result of an existential tension. Assuming its presence in the World, man found himself facing the "cipher" or "word" of the world and this led him to confront the mystery of the contradictory aspects of a reality or sacrality which he was tempted to consider as single and homogeneous. One of the greatest discoveries of the human spirit was naively anticipated on the day when, by certain religious symbols, man guessed that oppositions and antagonisms can be fitted and integrated into a unity. From then onwards the negative and sinister aspects of the Cosmos and the Gods not only found a justification but revealed themselves as an integral part of all reality or sacrality.37

It is clear from the above that the symbol evokes in Eliade's thought a view of the nature and structure of reality where the oppositions and tensions of reality harmonize into a unity or a "mystery of totality". The
symbol more than anything else, pictures reality as the coexistence of contradictory essences which relate paradoxically. 38

Another indication of the central significance of this principle to Eliade's thinking is his treatment of the religious ritual. The ritual for him is by definition the mode of expressing that which is experienced in the *coincidentia oppositorum*. According to him, it becomes the "archetypal model for certain types of religious men, or for certain of the forms religious experience takes."

The *coincidentia oppositorum* or transcending of all attributes can be achieved by all men in all sorts of ways. At the most elementary level of religious life there is the orgy: for it symbolizes a return to the amorphous and the indistinct, to a state in which all attributes disappear and contraries are merged. But exactly the same doctrine can also be discerned in the highest ideas of the Eastern saga and ascetic, whose contemplative methods and techniques are aimed at transcending all attributes of every kind.

The ritual or the cosmic myth opens up to primitive mankind the vast wealth of information about the nature of reality which is incomprehensible on any other level of perception, including the rational. By means of the ritual, myth and symbol, life becomes comprehensible on all levels:

The cosmic myths and the whole world of ritual thus appear as existential experiences to primitive man: he does not lose himself, he does not forget his own
existence when he fulfils a myth or takes part in a ritual; quite the reverse: he finds himself and comes to understand himself, because those myths and rituals express cosmic realities which ultimately he is aware of as realities in his own being. The fact that Eliade zeroes in on rituals and symbols in all religions is not incidental. It is necessary, according to him, to have a certain kind of experience in which the religious dimension of reality is realized in its opposition to, and yet in harmony with, profane existence. This explains his emphasis, for example, on the forge and crucible, and his predilection for rope analogies.

The example of the rope-trick serves to illustrate how Eliade interprets what certain ancient and Oriental peoples experience in this ritual. In many respects, according to him, this ritual has been desacralized. However, it has a history, and "by taking into account the religious rites, symbols and beliefs of archaic peoples," it is possible to elucidate this history.

The first element of this ritual -- the dismemberment of the pupil -- characterizes the theme of "a symbolic death ... followed by a renewal of the organs and the resurrection of the initiate." The second element, the ascent into the sky by means of a rope, characterizes the theme that mankind had easy access to heaven in mythical times. As a result of a catastrophic event, the rope was cut and communication was broken. This drastically changed
the structure of the Cosmos and the human condition; mankind became mortal — he knew the separation of body and soul. Nonetheless, privileged beings were able to ascend into heaven, and this was done symbolically by means of a rope:

The rope is considered the best means of reaching Heaven in order to meet the Gods. But it is no longer a possession common to humanity: it is only available to a limited number of the "elect".44

The numerous rope analogies have a certain theme in common:

the rope is not only the exemplary means of communication between Sky and Earth; it is also a key image, employed in speculations concerning Cosmic Life, human existence and destiny, metaphysical knowledge and, by extension, occult sciences and magic powers.45

By participation in this ritual, the people were able to experience the coinciding of the opposites; their chaotic profane existence became ordered, chaos became cosmos.

In regard to Eastern spirituality, Eliade states that,

the paradox is implied in the very function of Indian ritual (as, of course, in every other ritual); for, by the power of the ritual, some ordinary object incorporates the divinity, a "fragment" ... coincides with the "Whole", ... nonbeing with Being.46

Here the coinciding of opposites is not merely symbolic, but also concrete and experiential.

In the tantric rituals, the two opposing partners and their various activities come to represent the two contrary principles, Sīva and Sakti. These two principles refer to and have precise meanings in varying contexts:
"in the vocabulary of Indian mystical eroticism." Nonetheless,

The chief consideration here is the "rupture of plane," the unification of the two polar principles (Siva and Sakti), the transcending of all opposites, obtainable through a highly secret erotic practice. Tantrism is a ritual in which "the reunion of the two polar principles within the disciple's own body" is realized.

Eliade states that Eastern spirituality has a term which describes the paradox. The term samadhi, according to him, describes the coinciding of the opposites. He feels that it illustrates what is experienced in the coincidentia oppositorum.

Eliade also speaks of a certain Yoga practice which relates inhalation and exhalation to the cosmic cycles. Through the yogin's respiratory rhythm, the cosmic Great Time, the periodical creations and the destructions of the universe are relived. By arresting his breathing, the yogin symbolically transcends the phenomenal world, and enters a non-conditioned and timeless state. According to Eliade's interpretation, this ritual serves to coincide the opposites:

It is the coincidence of time and eternity, ... on the purely "human" plane, it is the recognition of the primordial androgyne, the conjunction, in one's own being, of male and female -- in a word, the reconquest of the completeness that precedes all creation.

In short, this nostalgia for the primordial com-
pleteness and bliss is what animates and informs all the techniques that lead to the coincidentia oppositorum in one's own body. ... Most of the excesses, cruelties, and aberrations referred to as "tantric orgies" spring, in the last analysis, from the same traditional metaphysics, which refused to define ultimate reality otherwise than as the coincidentia oppositorum.

The religious ritual, rightly understood, is the only way of maintaining contact with the sacred. It is the moment of transformation in which one realizes the effulgence of meaning in the plurality of common life; in short, one experiences the coincidentia oppositorum. The expressions of the religious rituals reveal the participants experience of the cosmos, and the attitude displayed towards time and history. Some rituals find their concentration in history; in the events of history themselves. This is the case, particularly, with the Judaeo-Christian tradition. The closeness of God is experienced and maintained by the performance of certain rituals which have become important due to past historical events. An example of this is the celebration of the Passover feast in the Hebrew tradition, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the Christian tradition. Other rituals concentrate on pre-historical events, as in Indian spirituality.

Rituals are not possible without symbols. Every ritual is loaded with symbols; they are the heart of the ritual. The religious ritual is the ceremonial acting out of the symbols and myths. The religious re-enactment
of the symbols and myths allows one to apprehend the sacred;
to ground his or her being. By means of the ritual life has
meaning. The cosmos is ordered, chaos becomes cosmos, the
opposites are united.

In the foregoing instances, we are faced with the
fact that in virtually every case he discusses, Eliade uses
the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum both implicitly
and explicitly. His way of explaining the paradoxical rela-
tion between the sacred and profane is only fully under-
stood when he is interpreted as relying on this concept.

Guilford Dudley makes the point that it is only by
means of a thorough understanding of the principles of yoga
in Indian thought, that one is able to understand Eliade's
ontology. Dudley states that

in nearly all his books, illustrations drawn from
Indian thought are used to drive home the philoso-
phical distinctions implicit in archaic myth and
ritual. ...without a knowledge of yoga, it is dif-
ficult to understand the kind of unity that under-
lies Eliade's ontology.52

Dudley raises an important point. It is difficult
to fully understand Eliade's writings unless we are able
to uncover an underlying framework. However, it is not
the principles of yoga, as such, which are central to
Eliade's thought; it is the pattern which yoga instan-
tiates that is basic to his framework. It is the coinci-
dentia oppositorum as exemplified in yoga which is basic
to Eliade's framework. Without a thorough understanding of this concept, it is difficult to grasp the unity and consistency of Eliade's thought.

Eliade's interpretation of history is also further evidence that the coincidentia oppositorum is his view. However, this deserves more expansive consideration, and will be the subject of the next chapter.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II


2 Ibid., p. 82.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., pp. 94-95. See also *Yoga*, p. 363.

7 Ibid., p. 95. See also *Yoga*, pp. 5, 10, 18, 54, 66, 98-100.

8 Ibid., p. 95.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., p. 96.

11 Ibid., p. 100.

12 Ibid., p. 108.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 114.

15 Ibid., p. 115.


17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 118.

19 Ibid., p. 117. See also *Yoga*, p. 206.
For Heraclitus, reality, as directly experienced, was overcome with constant struggles and tensions. All things flowed and changed, even in the stillest of matter. Cosmic history ran in repetitious cycles, beginning and ending in fire. In this state of constant change, flux and movement there was only one thing which remained constant; this was law, the Universal Logos. One could be contradictorily transmuted or transformed from the individual mode of tension, struggles and warring contrasts, by affixing oneself to the Universal Logos; a move into the Universal Fire of constant contradictory harmony. For a more detailed discussion of Heraclitus, see C.G. Seerveld, "The Pedagogical Strength of Christian Methodology", Social Theory and Practice: Koers 40, (nr. 4,5, and 6, 1975). Seerveld describes the position of Heraclitus as one of a Universalistic Contradictory Monist. Universalistic Contradictory Monism is an anthropological typology which Seerveld also finds surfacing in the tradition of Meister Eckhart, Machiavelli, Cassirer and Nicholas Cusanus. This anthropological typology has its roots in D.H. Th. Vollenhoven's Problem-Historical Method, an approach which classifies according to the various patterned ways philosophers answer recurrent problems. I have found this approach helpful in uncovering Eliade's basic anthropology and cosmology. For a discussion of Vollenhoven's methodology and typology, see B.J. van der Walt, Historiography of Philosophy: The Consistent Problem-Historic Method (Pittsburg: Christian Educational Services reprint, 1972, Mimeoographed). For a bibliography of Vollenhoven's works and a further discussion of his methodology, see A. Wolters, "On Vollenhoven's Problem-Historical Method" (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1975, Mimeoographed), and J.H. Olthuis, "Models of Man" (Toronto: Institute for Christian Studies, 1978, Mimeoographed).

Eliade also mentions the pre-Socratic philosophers Anaximander and Empedocles in this context. Of Empedocles, he states: "Empedocles conceives of the alternate supremacy of the two opposing principles philia and neikos as explaining the eternal creations and destructions of the cosmos." Cosmos and History, p. 120. See also, Myth and Reality, p. 64.

24Mephistopheles and the Androgyne, pp. 80-81, 205-206.

25Nicholas demonstrated that maximum must coincide with minimum, for maximum is the extreme of greatness and minimum is the extreme of littleness. In this way, maximum no longer remained opposite of minimum, but rather conjoins with its opposite in the incomprehensible unity of the whole. In using mathematics as a medium, Nicholas was able to achieve a union of comprehension with a certain perceptive on God's infinite being.

Nicholas' line of reasoning manages to achieve a form of union between the "scholastic" and the "mystical". However, it must be remembered that the coincidencia oppositorum remains binding only as long as it is understood as emerging out of the docta ignorantia. Coincidencia oppositorum cannot be comprehended dialectically, for at the ultimate level of comprehension, it can only be understood as the incomprehensible. See K.H. Volkmann-Schluck, "Coincidentia Oppositorum" Lexikon fur Theologie und Kirche, Vol. II, p. 1252, Nicholas Cusanus, Of Learned Ignorance, trans. Fr. Germain Heron (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954) and Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), Vol. I, pp. 81-82.

26Patterns, p. 419.

27Images and Symbols, p. 177.


29Ibid., p. 201. Eliade has found Paul Tillich's view of symbolism particularly helpful and instructive at this point. In a footnote he mentions Tillich's statements on symbolism: "this is the great function of symbols: to point beyond themselves, in the power of that to which they point, to open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed, and to open up levels of the human mind of which we otherwise are not aware." Paul Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism", Religious Symbolism, F. Ernest Johnson, ed., (New York: Kennikat Press, 1955), p. 109.
Ibid., pp. 202-203.

32 Ibid., pp. 202-203.

33 Ibid., p. 203.

34 Ibid.


36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., pp. 205-206. See also *Images and Symbols*, p. 177. In stating that the symbol expresses the meaning of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, Eliade's notion of this concept now takes on further meaning. The *coincidentia oppositorum* is the reconciliation of all essences that are not only opposed, but are contradictory as well. Initially, therefore, it reconciles the juxtaposed sacred and profane; infinite and finite reality. But finite reality also consists of oppositions, tensions and contraries. Things exist in forms of tension and opposition: hot-cold, good-bad, male-female, black-white, etc. Moreover, reality consists of more than just contraries and oppositions. It is also diversified, that is, it consists of individuality, particularities and levels of differentiation, which cannot be defined as existing merely in tension and opposition. The *coincidentia oppositorum*, which is revealed in the symbol, is understood, therefore, as reconciling or conjoining not only the juxtaposed sacred and profane, but also all that which constitutes finite, profane reality, into a unity or mystery of totality.

39 *Patterns*, p. 419.

40 Ibid., pp. 419-420.

41 Ibid., pp. 455-456.

42 *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, p. 164.

43 Ibid., p. 165.

44 Ibid., p. 167.

46 *Yoga*, p. 98.


48 Ibid., pp. 135, 206, 219, 243. See also *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, pp. 95, 117-118.

49 Ibid., p. 206. See also *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, pp. 117-118.

50 Ibid., pp. 98-99.

51 Ibid., p. 272. See also *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, p. 118.

It has become clear that Eliade interprets the historical, temporal condition, with its constant change and flux, as profane in contrast to the eternal, universal and absolute character of the sacred. These two distinct ontological realities, the sacred and the profane, comprise the nature and structure of cosmic reality, co-existing as contradictory essences in paradox.

Eliade consistently interprets history in such a way that his own view of reality as paradoxical is evident. Eliade is ambivalent toward history. On the one hand, he recognizes that the profane historical condition is necessary in revealing the sacred, yet on the other, he concludes that full experience of the sacred entails abolishing profane existence. His attitude toward history includes both rejection and affirmation. The coincidéntia oppositorum is the theoretically deepened concept which best identifies Eliade's own paradoxical interpretation of the place and importance of history.

I shall attempt to show in this chapter how Eliade uses the concept of the coincidéntia oppositorum to des-
cribe the attitude various religious traditions display towards history. Secondly, I shall indicate that his ambivalence to history stems from the way he interprets mankind's intentionality towards the sacred; an intentionality which has been displayed, in the history of religions, in terms of both positive and negative attitudes towards the unfolding of time and history.

Mankind's Self-Contradictory Attitude

Eliade's use of the paradox can be seen in his discussion of mankind's ambivalence towards the sacred. According to his interpretation, there exists a "self-contradictory attitude" in mankind's approach to sacred reality.

Eliade states that, on the one hand, mankind is attracted to the sacred. The individual strives to have full contact with the sacred because "in this way he hopes to secure and strengthen his own reality." On the other hand, there is a repulsion or resistance to the sacred. Mankind is in fear of being completely absorbed in the sacred which results in the loss of one's own individuality. The individual "fears he may lose it completely if he is totally lifted to a plane of being higher than his natural profane state; he longs to go beyond it and yet cannot wholly leave it." This attitude, states Eliade, occurs in all religions, "even in the most developed forms."

This ambivalent attitude, according to Eliade, reflects a reluctance on the part of religious mankind
to completely disregard any value which history may attain:

These instances of resistance ... indicate to some extent the growing awareness of the essential part played by "history", the growing importance which the values of human life tend to attain, particularly in the more developed religions, chief among them that life's capacity to have its being in history and to make history.

In his companion volume to Patterns -- Cosmos and History -- Eliade sets out to explore religious mankind's historical existence in its relation to the cosmic and universal process. His main concern is to examine how far "'history' is capable of being seen as a part of the sacred process and how far religious values have been created or developed by the historical process."7

Archaic Mankind's Rejection of History

Eliade interprets archaic mankind's attitude towards history using his basic framework. His interpretation of archaic ontology as archetypal reflects his use of the coincidentia oppositorum.

The archetypal "lifestyle" of the archaic people implied basically the rejection of all that was profane. This included time and history. Archaic mankind's tendency to be archetypal is interpreted by Eliade as a tendency to be anti-historical.

This attitude existed for the reason that meaning for the archaic peoples resided not in history but in
the atemporal, mythical period which preceded history. The myths revealed paradigms and archetypes from which religious mankind modelled its behavior. This identification with archetypes reflected the fact that,

The models for his institutions and the norms for his various categories of behaviours are believed to have been "revealed" at the beginning of time, that, consequently, they are regarded as having a superhuman and "transcendental" origin.

For primitive mankind, the myths revealed knowledge of the sacred; not historical events nor the process of history. Meaning was derived from the myths. What became meaningful and "real" for the primitive people was the repetition and imitation of the primordial events. Thus, all that lacked an exemplary model was considered "meaningless" because it lacked the "reality" of the archetypes.  

This archetypal tendency is interpreted by Eliade as indicating the desire to abolish time and history:

... insofar as an act (or an object) acquires a certain reality through the repetition of certain paradigmatic gestures, and acquires it through that alone, there is an implicit abolition of profane time, of duration, of "history"; and he who reproduces the exemplary gesture thus finds himself transported into the mythical epoch in which its revelation took place.  

Primitive mankind tolerated history with difficulty. The attempt was to record time only biologically. The recording of events that were irreversible, that is, personal events, was deplored. Personal events, taken
collectively, constituted history, and because these events had no archetypes, they were considered profane. Mankind desired to free itself from the recollection of these personal events. Archaic mankind's thirst for the ontic, the desire "to be after the fashion of the archetypal beings," reflected the desire to escape concrete time and history. According to Eliade,

... if viewed in its proper perspective, the life of archaic man, although it takes place in time, does not bear the burden of time, does not record time's irreversibility; in other words, completely ignores what is especially characteristic and decisive in a consciousness of time. Like the mystic, like the religious man in general, the primitive lives in a continual present.

Archaic mankind experienced the union with the sacred when the religious rituals were performed. Through the ritual, the coincidentia oppositorum was experienced. The union with the sacred was experienced in the individual's historical situation; the sacred was experienced in concrete time and history. However, this is interpreted by Eliade as resulting in the individual being "moved" out of history. The individual is ritually "removed" from history, transcending the individual historical situation and experiencing the universal transhistorical sacred reality. By means of the ritual, the paradoxical coinciding of opposites takes place. The rest of the religious person's life "is passed in profane time, which is without meaning: in a state of 'becoming'.”
The desire to abolish time and history, according to Eliade, reflects a "nostalgia for paradise"; a nostalgia for that primordial situation, that mythological era, where mankind had full contact with the sacred. By means of the ritual, mankind is able to achieve the nostalgic situation; the lost paradise can be realized. The coincidentia oppositorum reflects the nostalgic paradisiac state:

From a certain point of view one may say that many beliefs implying the coincidentia oppositorum reveal a nostalgia for a lost Paradise, a nostalgia for a paradoxical state in which the contraries exist side by side without conflict and the multiplications form aspects of a mysterious Unity.15

Eliade interprets archaic mankind's "nostalgia for paradise" as anti-historical. Mankind's existence in the course of history is, at best, tolerated, with the constant need to maintain contact with primordial reality. According to Eliade, this need for periodic regeneration indicates that mankind cannot perpetually maintain its desired position in the "paradise of archetypes", and is thus confronted with the burden of profane existence in time and history. This leads him to state that "among primitive peoples too, the existence of man in the cosmos is regarded as a fall."16 This anti-historical attitude which Eliade sees emerging from archaic mankind's religious behaviour causes him to proclaim the essential "ahistoricity of religious life", and to state that "all history is in some measure a fall of the sacred, a limitation and diminution."17 Here Eliade re-
Eliade's Ambivalent Interpretation
of the Hebrew View of History

Eliade's ambivalent attitude toward history becomes clearer in his interpretations of the Hebrew view of history. Here again, we see him describe history using his basic framework.

According to his interpretation, the Hebrews introduced a significant change by regarding history as an object of knowledge of the sacred. The historical event became a theophany because the sacred revealed itself in history. History became a dimension of the sacred. There was meaning in history; God revealed himself in history, through events that were historical in character. Each historical event was a further revelation of God, and as a result, was irreversible:

They (historical events) not only acquired a meaning but they also revealed their hidden coherence by proving to be the concrete expression of the same single divine will. Thus for the first time, the prophets placed a value on history, succeeded in transforming the traditional vision of the cycle, and discovered a one-way time. ... It may, then, be said with truth that the Hebrews were the first to discover the meaning of history as the epiphany of God.18

It was Abraham's act of faith which brought about the beginning of a new religious experience.19 The linear concept of time and history represented a further "development" of mankind's position in regard to the sacred. The
movement of time and history had a value because of God's personal dealings with his people in the form of historical events. Thus the idea that history was a cycle that repeated itself ad infinitum was transcended. Here lay the significance of the Hebrew change.

The significant change is interpreted by Eliade as a positive step. The apprehension of God's revelation in history was a unique position undertaken by the Hebrew people. This gave meaning and value to history and historical events. Mankind was able to advance its knowledge and experience of the sacred through history. Here Eliade reflects a pro-historical tendency.

On the other hand, however, Eliade also points to an anti-historical tendency in the Hebrew view of history. Although he states that the Hebrew concept of the linear movement of time was unique, it was not entirely successful in transcending the cyclical pattern. The idea of the cycle was retained because the linear view included both a beginning and an end, even though an end had been put to the repetition of archetypes and periodic regeneration. History was regarded as a temporary situation and the Hebrews longed for its end. It was tolerated because it was known that it would one day cease. According to Eliade, the Hebrews placed the "paradisial state" at the beginning and at the end of the historical period. The promised future
Messianic triumph would "save" the world once and for all, and history would cease. History is placed between two atemporal eternities.

Eliade's ambivalent attitude toward the unique position of history in the Hebrew view reflects the two sides of the paradox. On the one hand, he points to the fact that history for the Hebrews becomes an object of knowledge of the sacred; God reveals himself in history. Time and history have a meaning. On the other hand, however, he points to the anti-historical attitude displayed by the Hebrews:

Messianic beliefs in a final regeneration of the world themselves also indicate an anti-historical attitude. Since he can no longer ignore or periodically abolish history, the Hebrew tolerates it in hope that it will finally end, at some more or less distant future moment. The irreversibility of historical events and of time is compensated by the limitation of history to time.

History was to be tolerated because it had an eschatological function; it is to be abolished in the future. History is to be abolished because it is regarded as profane.

Another example of Eliade's ambivalent attitude arises when he states that it was the peace and prosperity in history which caused the Hebrew people to turn away from their God:

Each time that history gave them the opportunity, each time that they enjoyed a period of comparative peace and economic prosperity, the Hebrews turned from Yahweh and to the Baals and Astartes of their neighbours. Only historical catastrophes brought them back to the right road by forcing them to look toward the true God.
However, history also serves a positive function. The terrors of history blind mankind in the sense that the sacred cannot be found in history any longer. Thus, it causes mankind to seek meaning in the transhistorical. The terrors are needed so that mankind will seek the transhistorical. In history mankind becomes aware of the need for the transcendent.

A further example of Eliade's use of the *coincidentia oppositorum* is reflected in his interpretation of the Hebrew desire for the end of history. According to him, this also indicates a "nostalgia for paradise" attitude. The paradisial state that was known to have existed in the beginning is to return in the eschatological future: "in the eschatology of the prophets, the restoration of Israel by Yahweh was taken to be a New Creation that implied a sort of return to Paradise." The final coinciding of opposites is, therefore, only to occur at the end of the historical process, when the opposites and tensions now experienced will become reconciled.

The Place of Christianity in Eliade's Thought

It is in his interpretation of Christianity that Eliade's ambivalent attitude toward history becomes the clearest. His interpretation of the Christ event in history reflects the paradox in his framework.

To begin with, Eliade interprets Christianity as
introducing a further change from that of the Hebrews. Christianity held the belief, according to him, that the Kingdom of God was attainable at any moment and was not just a future possibility:

In Christianity, the evangelical tradition itself implies that the Kingdom of God is already present "among" those who believe, and that the illud tempus is eternally of the present and accessible to anyone, at any moment, through metanoia.

The coinciding of opposites — the Kingdom of God and mankind's human historical condition — was accessible to anyone at any time.

Christianity also differed significantly from the archaic tradition because, by means of the experience of faith, it translated "the periodic regeneration of the world into a regeneration of the human individual." The emphasis now lay on the individual believer and his conversion. Nonetheless, despite this significant change, Eliade states that the same basic attitude toward history exists in both traditions:

But for him who shares in this eternal nunc of the reign of God, history ceases as totally as it does for the man of the archaic cultures, who abolishes it periodically. Consequently, for the Christian too, history can be regenerated, by and through each individual believer, even before the Savior's second coming, when it will utterly cease for all Creation.

For Eliade, the Kingdom of God implies the end of time and history, that is, the end of profane existence. In concluding in Cosmos and History that the Judaeo-Christian
tradition still retains "certain traces of the ancient doctrine of the periodic regeneration of history,\textsuperscript{30} Eliade emphasizes primarily only one side of the paradox. He emphasizes the negative aspect of history.

Eliade's more lengthy discussion on the significance and innovativeness of Christianity in his later book \textit{Images and Symbols}, indicates his clear use of the concept of the \textit{coincidentia oppositorum}. On the one hand, his emphasis on the negative aspect of history basically does not change from his earlier position in \textit{Cosmos and History}. On the other hand, however, he also emphasizes the other side of the paradox; we observe a more pro-historical tendency.

The most striking innovation of Christianity, according to Eliade, is its valorization of time. The divine reveals itself in concrete, historical time through the person of Jesus Christ, thereby making this particular historical event sacred. This is the most striking innovation "in relation to all previous religious life:"\textsuperscript{31}

The most striking innovation ... is its valorization of Time -- in the final reckoning, its redemption of Time and of History. ... Time itself is ontologized: Time is made to be, which means that it ceases to become, it transforms itself into eternity.\textsuperscript{32}

Time becomes a value because God reveals himself through time. However, the unique element of Christianity is not simply the "hierophanising"\textsuperscript{33} of Time. There is something more, according to Eliade, since sacred time
is familiar to all religions. Its uniqueness rather, lies in the way it valorizes time:

... it is the historical event as such which displays the maximum of trans-historicity, God not only intervenes in history, as in the case of Judaism; he is incarnated in a historic being, in order to undergo a historically conditioned existence.  

The divine completely conceals itself in History. Eliade states that there is "nothing about the physiology, psychology or "culture" of Jesus" which allows mankind to "see" God. But it is this "historical event" which is a total theophany. The incarnation of Christ is the attempt to "save the historical event in itself, by endowing it with the maximum of being."

This does not lead to historicism, but to a theology of History: "it is not for its own sake that an event is valued, but only for the sake of the revelation it embodies -- a revelation that precedes and transcends it." It is the trans-historical reality of the historical event that must be regarded for its significance. History itself, however, is still important:

Christianity strives to save history; first, because it accords a value to historic time; and also because, for the Christian, the historical event, while remaining just what it is, becomes capable of transmitting a trans-historical message.

The Christian is to seek God not only in the Cosmos -- through hierophanies, images and symbols -- but also in historical events, according to Eliade. History may conceal new interventions of God, and, in this sense, "historical life itself can become glorious."
We detect here, a development in Eliade's attitude toward history. He reflects a pro-historical tendency. He emphasizes that history is capable of becoming quite significant because mankind can now look towards history for the interventions of God. Time, thus, becomes a value because of these interventions; time and history are endowed with being. History becomes a means by which mankind is able to seek God. Christianity saved history by seeing its trans-historicity; its transcendent, trans-historical norm. History is filled with trans-historical meaning.

All of the foregoing discussion illustrates only one aspect of Eliade's use of the concept of the *coincidentia oppositorum*; the positive aspect of history and the innovativeness of Christianity's ontologization of time and history. However, Eliade emphasizes also the other side of the paradox. He interprets Christianity as displaying an anti-historical attitude. In this dual attitude, Eliade's own ambivalent attitude concerning the importance of history surfaces.

According to Eliade, God's intervention in history also has a soteriological intention. However, God's intention for mankind's salvation is interpreted as being unrelated to history itself:

> With each new intervention of God in history, has there not always been a question of the salvation of man -- that is, of something which has nothing to do with history?
Eliade's interpretation of the mystical experience of the Christian, highlights an anti-historical tendency. According to him, it "implies the recovery of the primordial paradisiac condition."42 This return to paradise, as we have seen, is not unique to Christianity alone; "it is a universal human "dictum" of incontestable antiquity."43 Eliade's interpretation of the place of history in relation to the mystical experiences of either Christianity or of the archaic tradition, essentially remains the same:

The "intervention of God in history", that is, the divine revelation vouchsafed in Time, renews and confirms a "non-temporal situation". The revelation that Judaeo-Christianity alone received in a historical time which is never repeated, and which issues in the making of an irreversible history, was already preserved by archaic humanity in the mythic form; nevertheless, the mystical experience of the "primitives" as well as the mystical life of Christians expresses itself through this same archetype — the re-entry into the original Paradise. We can clearly see that history — in this case, Sacred History — has brought no innovation. Among the primitives as among Christians, it is always a paradoxical return in illud tempus, a "leap backwards" abolishing time and history, that constitutes the mystical re-entry into Paradise.44

From this Eliade concludes that,

Christianity entered into History in order to abolish it: the greatest hope of the Christian is the second coming of Christ, which is to put an end to all History.45

Here the paradox surfaces again. The Christ event which has redeemed history, has, in fact, ultimately abolished it. Eliade, here, is emphasizing in a heightened way the coincidentia oppositorum, the coinciding of eternity
and temporality. The emphasis is on the coinciding of the opposites within the human condition, within history and temporality. Concretely the valorization of time is its abolition. Here, according to Eliade, the uniqueness of Christianity surfaces. For Christianity, time and history are redeemed. When mankind experiences the "favourable moment" in time and history, time is paradoxically transformed into eternity. The opposites are reconciled. This complete abolishing of time and history is its fulfillment.

The Place of Time and History in Indian Spirituality

Eliade's paradoxical framework also surfaces in his interpretation of Indian spirituality. Here again, the emphasis tends to be on only one side of the paradox. Eliade brings out the negative aspect of time and history and equates them with the profane.

According to his interpretation of Indian spirituality, it is the temporal profane world, the world of becoming, that is to be rejected:

This world is rejected, this life is depreciated, because it is known that something else exists, beyond becoming, beyond temporality, beyond suffering. In religious terms, it could almost be said that India rejects the profane cosmos and profane life, because it thirsts for a sacred world and a sacred mode of being.

It is the soul which must be liberated from the profane conditions. It is the temporal, historical and human
condition that must be rejected. According to Eliade's interpretations, the repeated thesis in Indian texts is:

... that the cause of the soul's "enslavement" and, consequently, the source of its endless sufferings lie in man's solidarity with the cosmos, in his participation, active or passive, direct and indirect, in nature.48

Since nature has no true ontological reality in Indian spirituality, according to Eliade,49 it remains universal becoming, filled with opposites and tensions. Because the human condition is also defined as such, mankind constantly seeks to liberate itself from this condition within time and history. The liberation from the human condition is equivalent to attaining "a non-conditioned state in which the opposites coincide."50 This non-conditioned state is the "ideal" which the religious person strives for. The "ideal" is attained by an initiatory death to this life, and a rebirth to another life which is sacred. Thus anyone who desires to attain the sacred mode of being must

... "die" to this life and sacrifice the "personality" that has issued from temporality, that has been created by history (personality being above all memory of our own history). The ideal of Yoga, the state of jivan-mukti, is to live in an "eternal present," outside of time. "Liberated in life", the jivan-mukti no longer possesses a personal consciousness — that is, a consciousness nourished on his own history — but a witnessing consciousness, which is pure lucidity and spontaneity.51

The "ideal" is attained in history. It entails an anticipatory death "in order to ensure rebirth in a sanctified life — that is, a life made real by the incorporation of
the sacred."\(^{52}\) This symbolism of initiation in Yoga, "finds its place in a universal tradition of the religious history of mankind."\(^{53}\)

In this way, the paradoxical transformation of time and eternity is not the exclusive property of Christianity alone. According to Eliade, it is also found in Indian spirituality. He states that both speak of a "favourable moment" when the coincidentia oppositorum is experienced. "Ksana corresponds to Kairo; the one like the other may become the "favourable moment" through which one passes out of time and rejoins eternity."\(^{54}\) Yoga exercises attempt to achieve the transformation of the conditions of time and history into that of the non-conditioned state of eternity. The yogin, thus, through various stages of ritual exercise, dissociates himself from the conditions of the profane state. All these exercises, according to Eliade, emphasize the same thing; "they pursue the same goal, which is to abolish multiplicity and fragmentation, to reintegrate, to unify, to make whole."\(^{55}\) The human condition, temporality and history are understood in terms of multiplicity and fragmentation. The time process entails continual multiplicity, diversity and fragmentation in the human condition. Therefore, time and history must be abolished in order to achieve the original unity. The "ideal" condition, which achieved a liberation in this life, is understood in terms of symbolically having abolished time, history and the
individual human condition. This paradoxical condition, the realization of the coincidentia oppositorum, is, according to Eliade, impossible to describe because it "cannot be reduced to our categories." 56

**Continuity and Innovation**

Thus far we have seen Eliade's ambivalent view of history surface in his various analyses. He is able to applaud the advancement of Christianity, with its emphasis on the importance of history. At the same time, he senses that in the archaic and Eastern religious view freedom comes from liberation from time and history. This ambivalence indicates Eliade's often uncomfortable feelings with history. On the one hand, history provides the possibility for further and fuller revelations of the sacred. On the other hand, however, further historical unfolding tends to threaten mankind's struggle to assume a sanctified mode of being.

Christianity, in Eliade's view, understands that existence in history is redeemed through the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. Mankind is able, as a result, to seek continuing revelations of the sacred in the movement of time and history. It is able to experience the reality of the sacred in a more heightened way than was possible in previous stages of mankind's history. This is due to the ever-increasing innovations of religious activities and the constantly new religious experiences resulting from continued
multiplicity and diversity in mankind's existence in historical, temporal reality. In this sense, a more heightened experience of the coincidentia oppositorum becomes possible with the movement of time and history. Although it may often be somewhat more difficult to "see" the unity of the sacred in the multiplicity and diversity, nonetheless, when the coincidentia oppositorum is experienced, it is experienced as having been "raised" to a newer and more "complete" level. The experience becomes even greater.

Eliade acknowledges that for modern mankind the sacred, by and large, has become lost or meaningless. Modern mankind is all too often "swallowed up" by the multiplicity and diversity of human unfolding in time and history. Eliade is afraid that mankind has become lost in history. He feels that it sees only fragmentations, and is no longer able to see transhistorical meaning in historical events. The terrors of history become overwhelming. It is here that Eliade displays his negative attitudes towards historical existence, and we detect his own affinity towards those religious attitudes which reflect a "nostalgia for paradise". This leaves us with the impression that he is more interested in the repetition of traditional patterns of religious behaviour.

Although it is possible for mankind to become epistemologically lost in the multiplicity and diversity of history, this ultimately should be of little concern, because
through faith, mankind should be able to experience the *coincidentia oppositorum*. Eliade's concept illustrates that mankind's experience of the coinciding of opposites is possible anytime by means of the ritual. How this occurs is mysterious; what is important is that it is possible.

The primitive people perhaps led less diverse lives, and may have had a clearer image of the original unity. Nonetheless, they had to exert all their energies in the rituals in order to achieve the unity. This, emphasizes Eliade, is not so for modern mankind. Now mankind is able to perceive the sacred on many more levels of existence. It is able to relate in many more ways, and, therefore, does not have to return to the old ways. The *coincidentia oppositorum* ought to work for modern mankind in another way. However, Eliade is plagued by the fear that modern mankind will lead mankind astray, preventing it from returning to the unity; history offers too many distractions. 57

These fears are well founded. Secular Western mankind has rejected a transhistorical meaning to historical existence. Modern historicism is a clear example of this rejection. Eliade regards modern historicism as the product of the decomposition of Christianity, and its appearance on the scene of world history is clearly the result of the decline of spirituality in the modern world: "it could only have come about insofar as we had lost faith in the
transhistorical reality of the historical event."^58 Historicism, according to the various historicist and existentialist currents of thought, tends to reduce authentic human existence to "the awakened consciousness of its historic moment."^59

This tendency of limiting mankind's being to the historic moment is completely rejected by Eliade. He sees certain creative possibilities in Eastern spirituality which offer a much greater alternative.

Only the East does not accept the destiny of the human being as final and irreducible. Oriental techniques attempt above all to annul or transcend the human condition. In this respect, it is justifiable to speak not only of freedom (in the positive sense) or deliverance (in the negative sense) but actually of creation; for what is involved is creating a new man and creating him on a super-human plane, a man-god, such as the imagination of historical man has never dreamed it possible to create.60

On the other hand, Eliade realizes that Christianity too provides a promise of freedom. It allows for the possibility of a sanctified, future historical condition for mankind through faith. But a philosophy of freedom which must include God,^61 entails for Eliade, a certain move "beyond Christianity", an expanded Christianity. Nonetheless, it is the category of faith that makes this a real possibility, for, as he states, "if Abraham's faith can be defined as "for God everything is possible," the faith of Christianity implies that everything is also possible for man:"^62
Faith... means absolute emancipation from any kind of natural "law" and hence the highest freedom that man can imagine: freedom to intervene even in the ontological constitution of the universe. It is, consequently, a pre-eminently creative freedom. In other words, it constitutes a new formula for man's collaboration with the creation...

Mankind's new sanctified mode of being unfolds within the human condition; within historical reality. Eliade's interpretation of this possible future condition demonstrates his use of the concept of the coincidentia oppositorum.

Eliade senses that the study of the history of religions can play a significant role in realizing a heightened coincidentia oppositorum. According to him, a deeper knowledge of mankind can be derived from this study, and "it is on the basis of such a knowledge that a new humanism on a world-wide scale, could develop." This will give mankind the clue to recovering "the symbolism of his own body, which is anthropoeosmic:"

By regaining awareness of his own anthropoeosmic symbolism... modern man will obtain a new existential dimension, totally unknown to present-day existentialism and historicism: this is an authentic and major mode of being, which defends man from nihilism and historical relativism without thereby taking him out of history. For history itself will one day be able to find its true meaning: that of the epiphany of a glorious and absolute human condition. We have only to recall the value attached to historical existence by Judaeo-Christianity, to realize how, and in what sense, history might become "glorious" and even "absolute".

In this context, Eliade concludes with an emphasis on the positive role of history. Here, consistent with his basic
However, after the publication of both *Cosmos and History* and *Images and Symbols*, we discover Eliade stating in a published letter dated June 1954 that, "my essential preoccupation is precisely the means of escaping History, of saving myself through symbol, myth, rites, and archetypes."67 It appears that, for Eliade, escaping history is a matter of salvation. Here particularly, it becomes evident that the influence of Indian spiritualism on Eliade's own Eastern Orthodox tradition causes a certain tension in his thought that is not completely resolved.

Eliade's most recent book, however, does shed certain light on his ambivalent view of history, and provides a partial explanation of his intent. In this new work, he restates his insistence on the unity of perspective and repetition of religious patterns in the history of religions. At the same time, he also stresses genuine innovations and new patterns of religious experience and expression occurring in a matrix of material, political-social and spiritual conditions. Seymour Cain points out that Eliade "sees the human spirit responding to crises and catastrophes with new religio-cultural creations -- the specific response to the environmental condition."68 This is, in fact the essential message of his new work: "I have emphasized the crisis in
depth, and above all, the creative moments of the different traditions ... for it is because of crises in depth and the creations that result from them that religious traditions are able to renew themselves. Eliade's stress here is on continuity and innovation: "For continuous reading reveals above all the fundamental unity of religious phenomena and at the same time the inexorable newness of their expressions."70

Eliade's ambivalence to history is understandable when his emphasis on both continuity and innovation in mankind's religious behaviour is brought to light. Certain revolutionary changes which have occurred in human history, have resulted in new and creative religious patterns. However, according to Eliade, it is not possible to take particular religious patterns and attempt to express the phases and processes of all reality in terms of them. Therefore, negative attitudes towards history which are prevalent in certain religious patterns cannot be used to explain the nature of reality as a whole, nor, for that matter, can the positive attitudes. To account for changes, fluctuations and innovations in the history of mankind's attitude to its existence in created reality necessitates the examination of the nature of the human as a religious being with a central intentionality toward the sacred reality. In terms of Eliade's investigations of the history of religions, an
ambivalent attitude towards history emerges in his writings because, from his paradoxical framework, this is what the historical pattern of mankind's intentionality towards the sacred has demonstrated.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1Cain also feels that Eliade's attitude towards history is ambivalent, but he spots his ambivalence in terms of his method. He points out that Eliade initially emphasizes the specific historical-cultural phenomena, but later appeals to a general structure when attempting to discern the meanings of the phenomena. The historical actuality and the living context of the religious phenomena was initially cogently emphasized, but now appears "to be dismissed as banally meaningless, a mere naught besides the "transhistorical" intentionality of the specific manifestations of the sacred in symbols, rites, myths, etc." "Mircea Eliade: Attitudes toward History", p. 14.

2Patterns, p. 17, 463.
3Ibid., p. 17.
5Ibid., p. 18.
6Ibid., p. 461.
7Ibid., p. 461.
8Cosmos and History, p. viii.
9Ibid., p. 34.
10Ibid., p. 35.
11Ibid., p. 74. In his analysis of the various cultures and religions, Eliade speaks of two basic attitudes toward time: cyclical and linear. Archaic mankind, according to Eliade, adheres to a cyclical pattern. This view, theoretically formulated first by Heraclitus, reflects the explicit desire to live in an eternal present. Time and history for the primitive people, therefore, had only a biological meaning. A linear pattern was displayed by Ancient Near Eastern thought, Judaeo-Christianity and the later Western philosophy of history beginning from St. Augustine. According to Eliade's interpretation, archaic mankind's cyclical conception of time and history reflected

12Ibid., p. 91.
13Ibid., p. 86.
14Ibid., p. 35.
15Mephistopheles and the Androgyne, p. 122.
16Cosmos and History, p. 75.
17Shamanism, p. xix. Cf. Cosmos and History, p. 158. Douglas Allen states that when Eliade speaks of history as a "fall", he is simply reflecting archaic mankind's view, and is by no means including his own. (Allen, p. 129ff). Seymour Cain doubts, however, that Eliade is merely reflecting the view of archaic mankind, and wonders whether his own view is not implicit in most of the cases he interprets. Cain also states that Allen too recognizes this in Eliade's writings. (Ibid., p. 223). Cain stresses that Eliade's attitude towards history is ambivalent. See Cain, pp. 14-16.
18Cosmos and History, p. 104.
20Ibid., pp. 102-112.
21Ibid., p. 107. According to Eliade's interpretations, history was seen as a series of theophanies because of God's dealings (positive or negative) with his people. However, the military defeats of Israel are interpreted by Eliade as referring back to an archetype: Yahweh's wrath. Nonetheless, he states that there is a difference: "each of these defeats, though basically a repetition of the same archetype, nevertheless, acquires a coefficient of irreversibility: Yahweh's personal intervention."
22Ibid., p. 111.
23Ibid., p. 111.
24Ibid., pp. 111-112.
25Ibid., p. 103.
26Myth and Reality, p. 49.
27Cosmos and History, p. 129.
28Ibid., pp. 111, 129.
29Ibid., pp. 129-130.
30Ibid., p. 130.
31Images and Symbols, p. 169.
32Ibid., p. 169.
33Ibid., p. 170.
34Ibid., p. 170.
36Ibid., p. 170.
37Ibid., p. 170.
38Ibid., p. 170.
39Ibid., p. 170.
40Ibid., p. 171.
41Ibid., p. 169.
42Ibid., p. 168.
43Ibid., p. 168.
44Ibid., p. 168.
46Ibid., p. 172.
47Yoga, p. 10.
48Ibid., p. 10.
49Ibid., p. 10.
50Images and Symbols, p. 84. See also Yoga, pp. 95-100.
51 Yoga, p. 363.
52 Ibid., p. 363.
53 Ibid., p. 363.
54 Images and Symbols, p. 172.
55 Yoga, p. 97.
56 Ibid., p. 363.
57 Eliade in this instance indicates a desire to stop the process of history because it offers too many diversities. For Pannenberg and Hegel, in contrast, the opposite tendency exists. Their position advocates continual diversity and multiplicity. In their view, it is with continual diversity that mankind realizes that a fulfillment must come. The future eschaton is the fulfillment of the present diversity.
In consideration of mankind's place within creational reality, both the origin and the future of the cosmos are important. For Pannenberg and Hegel, the emphasis is on the eschaton; the continual unfolding of history and the final realization of the potentials of created reality. For Eliade, on the other hand, the emphasis often lies on the origin; the return to the original unity. Hence, we discover a strong "nostalgia for paradise" tendency.
58 Images and Symbols, p. 170.
59 Ibid., p. 171, fn. 13. Eliade rejects this assertion on the grounds that one cannot regard as inauthentic, experiences such as love, anxiety, joy, melancholy, etc., "Each of these makes use of a temporal rhythm proper to itself, and all combine to constitute what might be called the integral man, who neither denies himself to his historic moment, nor consents to be identified with it." (p. 171, fn.13).
60 Cosmos and History, pp. 158-159.
61 Ibid., p. 160.
62 Ibid., p. 160.
63 Ibid., pp. 160-161.
64 The Quest, p. 3.
65 Images and Symbols, p. 36.
66Ibid., p. 36.

67Religion on Trial, p. 29.

68Cain, p. 16.


70Ibid.
CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Eliade's position, as illustrated in his numerous examples and countless descriptions, reflects his attempts to retain the awareness and experience of the sacred in mankind's existential reality. He decries the loss of the spiritual in the Western world, and has discovered that the loss of this spirituality is a betrayal of mankind's very humanity, of mankind's very creaturely existence.

Eliade is very much aware of the importance of the religious dimension in human existence. In fact, his studies have been invaluable in presenting overwhelming evidence that the basic role of the religious dimension is constant and universal, in spite of the idiosyncrasies of cultures and diversities of religions. Eliade has helped advance our understanding of the spiritual as an integral dimension of reality. He struggles heroically with the fact that the sacred is the ground of the natural, that it does not abolish the natural, and that it is not ontologically separate from the natural.

It is an evident advance in the discussion to speak of profane in terms of an unfulfilled natural existence. Nonetheless, it raises the question whether the fulfilling of the natural, and its grounding in the sacred must go by
way of the invalidation of the natural. Even as he maintains that the sacred is necessary to make sense of the natural, it results in the overshadowing of the natural. When an object is apprehended as manifesting the sacred reality, its natural mode of existence is no longer of essential importance. Emphasis, instead, is shifted towards the absolute and eternal which is thought to reside in it. Thus, in terms of the sacred, profane reality is regarded as unessential and unimportant. Though Eliade is emphatically clear that profane reality is not negated when the sacred is manifested, a clear contrast is always maintained between these two realities, with a tendency to regard the natural state as lacking in its entirety. This view hides within it the supposition that the natural, qua natural, is anti-sacred, or at best, neutral. At this point, it is necessary to question the very nature of Eliade's notion of the paradox.

Eliade's use of the paradox implies that the manifestation of the sacred is never complete. Mankind's position within an historical mode of existence prevents the full apprehension of the sacred. The sacred will always appear limited and relative. Although he speaks of the future possibility of a "new humanism" in which the sacred will be apprehended on "newer" and "higher" levels, this new existence will always be faced with the same paradoxical, and hence limited, revelation of sacred reality. The paradox
implies that the sacred is never fully revealed, nor is the profane ever completely transformed into the sacred: the profane never becomes the sacred.

Eliade's use of the paradox leads him to seek authentic existence in the transcendent at the expense, though not the negation, of the historical, natural mode. One could ask, as an arguable alternative, whether the sacred mode of being is not that of living out one's creaturely existence, and not one of diminishing this very historical mode of existence.

It is debatable whether Eliade's approach adequately accounts for mankind's creaturely situation. The profane does not refer to a category of natural or material things, nor does the sacred merely refer to spiritual things. Rather, the profane refers more to the brokenness of life: evil is the profane tendency. The sacred tendency, on the other hand, is the restored creatureliness; the redemption we feel in our lives. Something does not become sacred. Something is not sacred as opposed to something profane.

For studies in the phenomenology of religion, Eliade certainly has given us evidence of the commonality of mankind's search for the sacred. Though we may question his description of the dynamics of mankind's spiritual and historical modes of existence, he has clearly pointed to the fact that the human is by nature a creature that believes.
This has been shown most adequately in his numerous and striking descriptions of archaic and modern mankind's religious behaviours and patterns. Henceforth, religion can no longer be conceived of as anti-natural or anti-creaturely. Religion is an integral dimension of mankind's existence in a reality that bespeaks of the absolute and the transcendent.
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