

The Matheson Trust

C.G. Jung & Mircea Eliade: ‘Priests without Surplices’? Reflections on the Place of Myth, Religion and Science in Their Work

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The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not? That is the telling question of his life.

Carl Jung¹

...the history of religions reaches down and makes contact with that which is essentially human: the relation of man to the sacred. The history of religions can play an extremely important role in the crisis we are living through. The crises of modern man are to a large extent *religious* ones, insofar as they are an awakening of his awareness to an absence of meaning.

Mircea Eliade²

...the scientific pursuit of religion puts the saddle on the wrong horse, since it is the domain of religion to evaluate science, and not vice versa.

Whitall Perry³

1. The Life and Work of Mircea Eliade

The academic study of religion over the last half-century has been massively influenced by the work of Mircea Eliade. His scholarly *oeuvre* is formidable indeed, ranging from highly specialized monographs to his encyclopedic and magisterial *A History of Religious Ideas*, written in three volumes over the last decade of his life.⁴ He was recognized throughout the world, elected to many different Academies, showered with honours. Eliade’s erudition was imposing: his own library ran to something over 100,000 volumes and he was certainly not one to buy books for decorative purposes. (I’m told that it is possible in America to buy books by the yard and by colour!) Looking back we get

* First delivered as a talk to the Bendigo Jung Society, 1992.

¹ C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (London 1983), 356-7 [Hereafter MDR].

² M. Eliade, *Ordeal by Labyrinth, Conversations with Claude-Henri Rocquet* (Chicago Press 1982), 148. [Hereafter Labyrinth].

³ W. Perry, Review of N. Smart’s *The Phenomenon of Religion* in *Studies in Comparative Religion* 7:2 (1973), 127.

⁴ See list of References at the end of this paper for full details of Eliade’s works cited in this paper.

a sense, as we do with Carl Jung, of a life of intellectual heroism, of indefatigable labours and prodigious output. Both Jung and Eliade were pioneers who changed, respectively, the theoretical landscapes of psychology and comparative religion.

Eliade's attitude to autobiography was much less ambivalent than Jung's and we have to hand four volumes of personal journals and a two-volumed autobiography. With the journals particularly, one sometimes shares the sentiments of the schoolboy who opened his review of a book on elephants with the words, 'This book told me more than I wanted to know about elephants.' Eliade was born in Romania in 1907 and died in Chicago in 1986. His Romanian nationality was a decisive factor in his life and work; from an early age he felt he had one foot in the Occident, the other in the Orient, reflected in the title of the first volume of his autobiography *Journey East, Journey West*. He developed an early interest in folklore, mythology and religion, and learnt English in order to read Max Muller and J.G. Frazer. At university he mastered Hebrew, Persian and Italian and embarked on a postgraduate study of the influence of Hermeticism and the Kabbalah on Italian Renaissance philosophy. Whilst visiting Italy he read Dasgupta's famous work *The History of Indian Philosophy*. So deeply affected was he by this work that he soon left for Calcutta to study Indian philosophy and spirituality under Dasgupta. In Calcutta he immersed himself in Sanskrit and classical Indian philosophy, and developed an interest in the psycho-spiritual disciplines of yoga and tantra. He spent six months at the holy city of Rishikesh, at the foot of the Himalayas, under the guidance of Swami Shivananda. After more than three years in the sub-continent he returned to Romania where he took up teaching and writing. Apart from a shadowy interlude during the war when he carried out diplomatic work in Lisbon, Eliade devoted the rest of his life to writing and teaching about religious phenomena. After the Soviet seizure of Romania he settled in Paris and over the next decade moved from one temporary post to another, living a rather hand-to-mouth existence. The Communist takeover of Romania left him in an exile that was to be permanent. His work was denounced in Romania itself as being 'obscurantist', 'mystic' and 'fascist'.⁵ (Decoded these words might signify an interest in the past and in religion, and a hostility to Communist totalitarianism.) In the late 40s and early 50s he produced several works which quickly established his international reputation: *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* and *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. In 1956 Eliade was invited to the University of Chicago as a visiting professor. He was to remain there for the rest of his life. When he took up a chair in the History of Religions at Chicago it was one of very few such chairs; within 15 years there were at least 25 chairs in the major American universities, nearly all of them occupied by his former students.⁶ Like Jung, Eliade seems to have understood his own role in somewhat prophetic terms. From his *Journal*: 'I feel as though I am a precursor; I am aware of being somewhere in the *avant-garde* of the humanity of tomorrow or after.'⁷

2. Eliade, Jung and ERANOS

Eliade was first invited to the annual ERANOS Conferences in 1950 and attended annually until 1962, the year of Olga Froebe's death, delivering lectures at most conferences. Over the years met figures like Gershon Scholem, Louis Massignon, Raffael Pettazoni, Joachim Wach, D.T. Suzuki,

⁵ M. Eliade, *Autobiography II 1937-1960, Exile's Odyssey* (Chicago 1988), xiv-xv. In the 1970s he resisted inducements from the Romanian government to return, refusing to make any compromise with the communist dictatorship.

⁶ See *Autobiography II*, 208-9.

⁷ from M. Eliade, *No Souvenirs* (New York 1977), quoted in a review by R. P. Coomaraswamy in *Studies in Comparative Religion* 12:1-2 (1978), 123.

Guiseppe Tucci and many others in the ERANOS constellation. In his journal Eliade recounts his first meeting with Jung at a dinner in an Ascona restaurant:

...he is a captivating old gentleman, utterly without conceit, who is as happy to talk as he is to listen. What could I write down here first of this long conversation? Perhaps his bitter reproaches of ‘official science’? In university circles he is not taken seriously. ‘Scholars have no curiosity,’ he says with Anatole France. ‘Professors are satisfied with recapitulating what they learned in their youth and what does not cause any trouble...’⁸

In an interview late in his life he again recalled his first meeting with Jung:

After half an hour’s conversation I felt I was listening to a Chinese sage or an east European peasant, still rooted in the Earth Mother yet close to Heaven at the same time. I was enthralled by the wonderful simplicity of his *presence*...⁹

In 1952 Eliade conducted a lengthy interview with Jung for the Parisian magazine *Combat*, at a time when Jung’s recently published *Answer to Job* was provoking a stormy controversy.¹⁰ (We remember Gershon Scholem’s only half-jesting remark that Jung had tried to psychoanalyze Yahweh.¹¹) In the same year, Jung read Eliade’s massive work on shamanism and the two had a long and intense conversation about it. They met several times over the next few years, the last occasion being at Kusnacht in 1959 where they had a lengthy conversation in the garden, primarily about the nature of mystical experience. Eliade’s rather fragmentary remarks about this last encounter are not without interest. He tells us that Jung no longer had any interest in therapies and case studies, nor in contemporary theology, but that he retained his appetite for patristic theology. He also notes again Jung’s disenchantment with the scientific establishment:

... now and then it seemed to me that I detected a trace of bitterness. Speaking about the structures of mystical experiences, he declared the medical doctors and psychologists are ‘too stupid or too uncultivated’ to understand such phenomena.¹²

Eliade’s connections with the Jungian establishment were institutional as well as personal. In the early 50s he was awarded a special grant by the Bollingen Foundation which enabled him and his wife to escape ‘the nightmare of poverty’.¹³ Several of Eliade’s major works appeared in the Bollingen Series. In 1953 Eliade gave five two-hour lectures at the Jung Institute in Zurich.

There are a great many subjects which commanded the attention of both Jung and Eliade: mythological symbolisms; esoteric spiritual disciplines such as alchemy; the mystical literature of the East; dreams and the structures of the unconscious; the pathologies of modern civilisation, to name a few. One is constantly struck by parallels. For instance, Jung’s work on alchemy and Eliade’s on shamanism both provided a unified view of reality in which physical and psychic energy are two

⁸ *Journal I*, August 23, 1950, quoted in G. Wehr, *Jung, A Biography* (Boston 1988), 273-274. [Wehr’s biography hereafter *JB*]. In his autobiography Eliade again refers to Jung’s ‘bitter comments’ about ‘official science’. See *Autobiography II*, 147.

⁹ *Labyrinth*, 162-3

¹⁰ An edited version of this interview can be found in C. G. Jung *Speaking, Interviews and Encounters* (London, 1978), 225-234. Unfortunately Eliade’s introductory comments and his interpolations have been severely abridged in this edition. [This collection hereafter *CGJ Speaking*].

¹¹ *Autobiography II*, 162.

¹² *ibid.*, 205. See also *No Souvenirs* June 6, 1959, 41-2.

¹³ *Autobiography II*, 149.

aspects, or dimensions, of a single reality (hence the possibility of para-normal powers and the like).¹⁴ In their approach to these subjects both showed a sympathetic receptivity to the spiritual messages of the documents they were studying.

There are also obvious parallels in their biographies: academic resistance to their discoveries; the hostility of particular disciplinary coteries (the Freudians in Jung's case, the anthropologists in Eliade's); the importance of ERANOS as a forum where ideas could be ventilated and hypotheses tested amongst kindred spirits; the trips to India, Africa and America; the intrepid exploration of what Eliade calls 'foreign spiritual universes'. Consider this passage from Eliade's journal, written in 1959:

These thirty years, and more, that I've spent among exotic, barbaric, indomitable gods and goddesses, nourished on myths, obsessed by symbols, nursed and bewitched by so many images which have come down to me from those submerged worlds, today seem to me to be the stages of a long initiation. Each one of these divine figures, each of these myths or symbols, is connected to a danger that was confronted and overcome. How many times I was almost lost, gone astray in this labyrinth where I risked being killed...These were not only bits of knowledge acquired slowly and leisurely in books, but so many encounters, confrontations, and temptations. I realize perfectly well now all the dangers I skirted during this long quest, and, in the first place, the risk of forgetting that I had a goal...that I wanted to reach a 'center'.¹⁵

With a few words changed how easily this could have come from Jung! Let me now turn briefly to one of Eliade's main tasks, what he called the 'deprovincialization' of Western culture by a 'creative hermeneutics' which would bring 'foreign spiritual universes' within our purview.

3. 'Deprovincializing' European Culture in a 'Crepuscular Era'

In his autobiography Eliade says this:

...the re-entry of Asia into history and the discovery of the spirituality of archaic societies cannot be without consequence...The camouflage or even occultation of the sacred and of spiritual meanings in general characterizes all crepuscular eras. It is a matter of the larval survival of the original meaning, which in this way becomes *unrecognizable*. Hence the importance I ascribe to images, symbols and narratives, or more precisely to the hermeneutical analysis which describes their meanings and identifies their original functions.¹⁶

In his ERANOS Lectures in 1953, which were on earth symbolism in various cultures, Eliade tells us that he

...tried to show the necessity, or rather the obligation, to study and understand the spiritual creations of 'primitives' with the same zeal and hermeneutical rigor used by Western elites with respect to their own cultural traditions. I was convinced that the documents and method of the history of religions lead, more surely than any other historical discipline, to the deprovincialisation of Western cultures.¹⁷

There are many parallels here with Jung's work. For the moment, however, I would like to point out an interesting divergence in their work. For all his sympathetic inquiries into primal mythologies and Eastern spirituality, and despite the importance of his excursions into other cultures, Jung remained resolutely European in his orientation: his intellectual anchorage, so to speak, was always in Europe. This is nicely illustrated by two episodes from his visit to India: the first is his extraordinary reluctance to visit the great saint and sage of Arunacala, Ramana Maharshi, as if he were either

¹⁴ See *JB*, 254-5.

¹⁵ *No Souvenirs* November 10, 1959, 74-5.

¹⁶ *Autobiography II*, 153.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 166.

skeptical about the status of Ramana, or more likely, that he felt somewhat threatened by the spiritual force to which such a visit would expose him.¹⁸ Recall also this passage from Jung:

I had felt the impact of the dreamlike world of India...My own world of European consciousness had become peculiarly thin, like a network of telegraph wires high above the ground, stretching in straight lines all over the surface of an earth looking treacherously like a geographic globe.

He was profoundly disturbed by the thought that the world of Indian spirituality might be the real world and that the European lived in a ‘madhouse of abstractions’.¹⁹ One cannot help but feel that Jung did not fully confront or assimilate this experience, that he turned his back on India in a self-defensive reflex, so to speak.²⁰ One senses no such inhibition in Eliade’s immersion in Indian spirituality: his work ratifies his claim that his three years in India were ‘the essential ones in my life. India was my education’.²¹

Let me say a few words about what Eliade defined as his ‘essential problems: sacred space and time, the structure and function of myth, and the morphology of divine figures’.²² In Jung’s writings, the most common meaning ascribed to ‘myth’ refers to a personal, inner life, a kind of allegorical narrative embedded deep in the psyche. Nevertheless, Jung is sometimes prepared to go beyond purely psychic understandings of myth. One remembers the vivid account in his autobiography of his encounter with the Taos Pueblo Indians in 1925, and in particular, the meeting with an Indian elder named Ochwiay Biano. The elder was bewildered by the attempts of the American authorities to curtail Indian ritual life. The Indians, he claimed, performed an indispensable service for all Americans, and indeed all peoples:

After all, we are a people who live on the roof of the world; we are the sons of Father Sun, and with our religion we daily help our father to go across the sky. We do this not only for ourselves, but for the whole world. If we were to cease practicing our religion, in ten years the sun would no longer rise. Then it would be night forever.²³

Jung’s commentary on this:

If for a moment we put away all European rationalism and transport ourselves into the clear mountain air of that solitary plateau...if we also set aside our intimate knowledge of the world and exchange it for a horizon which seems immeasurable ...we will begin to achieve an inner comprehension of the Pueblo Indian’s point of view...That man feels capable of formulating valid replies to the overpowering influence of God, and that he can render back something which is essential even to God, induces pride, for it raises the human individual to the dignity of a metaphysical factor.²⁴

Jung also remarks on the way in which our scientific knowledge impoverishes rather than enriches us by cutting us from the mythic world. This anticipates in striking fashion one of the most persistent motifs in Eliade’s work on archaic cultures: the theme of archaic ontology and cosmic responsibility. Jung’s insight into the ‘cosmic meaning of consciousness’ was reinforced during his visit to the Athi

¹⁸ See *MDR*, 305. Ramana Maharshi is not mentioned by name but is clearly one of the ‘holy men’ in question. See also T. Burckhardt’s comment on this episode in ‘Cosmology and Modern Science’, in J. Needleman (ed), *The Sword of Gnosis* (Baltimore 1974), 178.

¹⁹ quoted in *JB*, 283

²⁰ Jung has similarly been criticized for his limited understanding of Chinese spirituality. One is reminded of the somewhat unkind joke, ‘What is Chinese philosophy? Well, there is yin, and yang, and then there is Jung.’

²¹ *Labyrinth*, 54. See Eliade’s remarks about his Indian experience in *Labyrinth*, 54-64.

²² *Autobiography II*, 174.

²³ *MDR*, 280.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 281.

Plains near Nairobi, where he more clearly understood man's responsibility as a 'second creator', again a theme which Eliade has pursued indefatigably.²⁵

Jung's insights into archaic mythologies and cosmologies was undoubtedly of decisive importance in Eliade's intellectual development. Clearly Eliade, like Joseph Campbell, was influenced by Jung's work which disclosed what he called a 'universal parallelism' of analogous symbolisms and motifs in mythologies from all over the world.²⁶ Eliade repeatedly acknowledges the debt. At points Jung concedes the metaphysical status of myths:

No science will ever replace myth, and a myth cannot be made out of any science. For it is not that 'God' is a myth, but that myth is the revelation of a divine life in man. It is not we who invent myth, rather it speaks to us as a Word of God.²⁷

But one finds in Jung the more or less constant attempt to bring archaic cosmology and metaphysics back into the psychic domain while Eliade is prepared to go beyond it. This can be seen in the different senses in which Jung and Eliade use the term 'archetypes': for Jung the archetypes are 'structures of the collective unconscious' while Eliade uses the term in its neoplatonic sense of exemplary and 'transhistorical' paradigms.²⁸ Jung also tended to homologize dreams and myths. In this context, Eliade's differentiation of the two is suggestive:

The resemblances between dreams and myths are obvious, but the difference between them is an essential one: there is the same gulf between the two as between an act of adultery and *Madame Bovary*; that is, between a simple experience and a creation of the human spirit.²⁹

Likewise Jung's interest in the qualitative determinations of time, most notably in his ideas about synchronicity and psychosynthesis,³⁰ remains within the psychic arena while for Eliade sacred time is itself an irreducible category and one altogether indispensable to an understanding of the archaic and mythological modes.³¹ Jung evinced much less interest in the question of sacred space which has been pivotal in Eliade's work.

The bringing of other spiritual universes within the ambit of the West was an important but subsidiary task in Jung's lifework. It has been the motive force in Eliade's work. The following passage from *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* might well stand as a epigraph for Eliade's work over half a century:

...the 'exotic' and 'primitive' peoples have now come within the orbit of history, so that Western man is obliged to enquire into their systems of values if he is to be able to establish and maintain communication with them...We have to approach the symbols, myths and rites of the Oceanians or the Africans...with the same respect and the same desire to learn that we have devoted to Western cultural creations, even when those rites and myths reveal 'strange', terrible or aberrant aspects.³²

²⁵ ibid., 284.

²⁶ See A. Jaffé, *The Myth of Meaning* (Baltimore 1975), 15.

²⁷ ibid., 373.

²⁸ *Autobiography II*, 162.

²⁹ *Labyrinth*, 162. (Clearly this formulation, a characteristic one, is open to the charge that it reduces myths to no more than cultural creations.)

³⁰ See *MDR*, 160 & *JB*, 111.

³¹ Eliade's most accessible treatment of this theme is to be found in *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York 1957).

³² M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Memories* (New York 1960), 9,10,12.

Clearly, for Eliade this was not simply a grandiose academic project but one driven by certain existential imperatives, as was the case with Jung's studies. Consider this, for instance, from Eliade's *Journal*:

...it is not some kind of infatuation with the past that makes me want to go back to the world of the Australian aborigines or the Eskimos. I want to recognize myself—in the philosophical sense—in my fellow men.³³

Eliade discerns a great divide in the human past, cutting off archaic and historical man from modern man. Archaic man lives in a world whose meaning and value is articulated symbolically, through a mythology which is enacted and re-actualized in ritual and ceremonial life. Historical man is more conscious of himself in time but his world view remains profoundly religious and spiritual. Modern man, by contrast, lives not in an ordered and meaningful cosmos but a chaotic, opaque and mute universe in which he has lost the capacity for religious experience: 'the desacralized cosmos is a recent discovery of the human spirit.'³⁴ Such is the legacy of a materialistic scientism. These differences are thrown into sharp relief in Eliade's work by his treatment of archaic and modern ways of understanding time and space.

For the traditional mentality space is not homogeneous, as it is for modern science, but is qualitatively determined. Sacred space, both natural and man-made, is ordered, meaningful and centered, while profane space is chaotic, meaningless and threatening. Sacred space is 'organized' round a centre, a point at which hierophanies occur, at which the barriers between the physical, psychic and spiritual dimensions of reality become permeable and transparent. Time too is *qualitatively* determined, and is cyclical and repeatable, or 'recoverable'. Space and time are sanctified by their relationship to that which is sacred, which is to say that which is immutable, beyond the world of flux, beyond time and space. Modern conceptions of time and space, on the other hand, are mechanistic, materialistic and one-dimensional. Furthermore, says Eliade, our encounters with other spiritual universes are urgently necessary for our own spiritual health. We must no longer regard them 'as immature episodes or as aberrations from some exemplary history of man—a history conceived, of course, only as that of Western man.'³⁵

4. Science, Religion and Personal Faith

I move now to the most problematic part of this paper, a consideration of the place of science, religion and personal faith in the work of Jung and Eliade. Shortly before their falling-out, Freud made the following plea to Jung:

My dear Jung, promise me never to abandon the sexual theory. That is the most essential thing of all. You see, we must make of it an unshakeable bulwark.

To Jung's somewhat astonished query as to what this bulwark must stand against, Freud replied, 'Against the black tide of the mud...of occultism.' In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung makes this comment:

Freud, who had always made much of his irreligiosity, had constructed a dogma; or rather, in the place of a jealous God whom he had lost, he had substituted another compelling image, that of sexuality...the 'sexual libido' took over the role of a *deus absconditus*, a hidden or concealed god...The advantage of this transformation for Freud was, apparently, that he was able to regard the new numinous principle as scientifically irreproachable and free from all religious taint. At bottom, however, the numinosity, that

³³ *Labyrinth*, 137.

³⁴ *The Sacred and the Profane*, 13.

³⁵ M. Eliade, *Australian Religions* (Ithaca, 1971), xix.

is, the psychological qualities of the two rationally incommensurable opposites—Yahweh and sexuality—remained the same...the lost god now had to be sought below, not above.³⁶

Soon after the breakdown of their relationship Freud spoke disparagingly of Jung's 'disregard for scientific logic'³⁷ to which Jung might well have replied with the maxim we find in *Memories*: 'Overvalued reason has this in common with political absolutism: under its dominion the individual is pauperised.'³⁸ The episode raises several interesting questions about the way Freud, Jung and Eliade positioned themselves in relation to the ideology of modern science and to religion.

For Freud psychoanalysis was a rigorously scientific discipline which must remain uncontaminated by all those modes of understanding which he herded together under the pejorative label of 'occultism'. Freud's views on religion are well known and need not be rehearsed here; as Jung noted in *Memories* Freud saw any expression of spirituality as a function of repressed sexuality.³⁹ Suffice it to say that Freud surrendered to a severely reductionist view altogether characteristic of the late nineteenth intellectual alienated from religious tradition.⁴⁰ For Jung the problem was much more complex. He rejected the narrow dogmatism and stifling moralism which characterized his father's faith but affirmed the richness, potency and psychologically liberating elements within Christianity and in esoteric Western traditions such as gnosticism, hermeticism and alchemy.

...all religions [wrote Jung], down to the forms of magical religion of primitives, are psychotherapies, which treat and heal the sufferings of the soul, and those of the body that come from the soul.⁴¹

On the other side, Jung rejected the rampant materialism of a profane science whilst retaining his faith in an empirical mode of inquiry. The appeal of psychiatry, he tells us, was precisely that it was a meeting ground for the biological and the spiritual:

Here was the empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where the collision of nature and spirit became a reality.⁴²

This, of course, anticipates the great Jungian theme of the reconciliation of opposites.

In Eliade's work, the opposites present themselves not as the 'biological' and the 'spiritual' but rather in terms of a set of dichotomies which structure the whole of his agenda: the sacred and the

³⁶ MDR, 174-5. To which passage Jung adds this astounding remark, 'But what difference does it make, ultimately, to the stronger agency if it is called now by one name, and now by another?' (Jung seems impervious to the very great difference made by these respective angles of approach, so to speak.)

³⁷ See JB, 22.

³⁸ MDR, 333.

³⁹ MDR, 172.

⁴⁰ For a brief but useful account of Freud's views on religion see D.W.D. Shaw, *The Dissuaders* (London, 1978). In his *Journal* Eliade dismisses Freud's extraordinary lucubrations on this subject thus: his 'explanations of religious experiences and other spiritual activities are purely and simply inept'. *Journal* 1 April 23, 1953, quoted in G. Steiner, 'Ecstasies, not arguments', review article on Eliade's *Journals*, in *Times Literary Supplement* September 28-October 4, 1990, 1015. For an interesting account of the effects of Freud's alienation from his Judaic heritage, see W. Perry, 'The Revolt Against Moses, A New Look at Psychoanalysis', *Tomorrow* 14.2 (1966), 103-119.

⁴¹ A 1935 paper on psychotherapy, quoted in JB, 293.

⁴² MDR, 130.

profane; the archaic and the modern; the mythological and the historical; the poetic and the scientific. Eliade's work as a whole can be seen as a project to recuperate the former mode from each of these pairings. For Eliade the problem of scientific materialism exerted itself largely through the reductionist models of the anthropologists. Eliade's task was to 'revalorize' manifestations of the sacred, to restore to them their experiential and ontological meanings and to resist the 'audacious and irrelevant interpretations' of reductionists of every ilk—Marxist, Freudian, Durkheimian, or whatever.⁴³

Such a demystifying attitude [he wrote] ought to be arraigned in its turn, on charges of ethnocentrism, of Western 'provincialism', and so, ultimately, be demystified itself.⁴⁴

Eliade also challenged his own colleagues:

...the majority of the historians of religion defend themselves against the messages with which their documents are filled. This caution is understandable. One does not live with impunity in intimacy with 'foreign' religious forms...But many historians of religion end by no longer taking seriously the spiritual worlds they study; they fall back on their personal religious faith, or they take refuge in a materialism or behaviourism impervious to every spiritual shock.⁴⁵

One of Eliade's most important contributions to the discipline of religious studies was his insistence on explanatory categories which are *sui generis*, peculiar to religious phenomena, which are autonomous, so to speak. Here Eliade is much closer to the great German theologian, Rudolf Otto:

...a religious phenomenon will only be recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level, that is to say, if it is studied as something religious. To try to grasp the essence of such a phenomenon by means of physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, art or any other study is false; it misses the one unique and irreducible element in it—the element of the sacred. Obviously there are no purely religious phenomena...But it would be hopeless to try and explain religion in terms of any one of these basic functions...It would be as futile as thinking you could explain *Madame Bovary* by a list of social, economic and political facts; however true, they do not effect it as a work of literature.⁴⁶

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One cannot help noticing in the autobiographical writings of both Jung and Eliade a certain reticence about their own religious beliefs and affiliations. Eliade remarked, in an interview late in his life, 'I made the decision long ago to maintain a kind of discreet silence as to what I personally believe or don't believe.'⁴⁷ One obvious possibility is that both felt that too open an affirmation of such beliefs might compromise their academic standing in a milieu which privileged the ideal of a scientific objectivity and detachment, to such an extent, indeed, that one can speak here of a kind of pseudo-cult. Professional pressures and expectations sometimes 'diluted [Jung's] most potent observations in deference to a more conventional audience'.⁴⁸ As Jung himself observed in a

⁴³ M. Eliade *The Quest, History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago 1969), 5. [Hereafter *Quest*]

⁴⁴ *Labyrinth*, 137.

⁴⁵ *Quest*, 62.

⁴⁶ M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York 1958), xiii.

⁴⁷ *Labyrinth*, 132.

⁴⁸ P Novak, 'C.G. Jung in the Light of Asian Psychology', *Religious Traditions* 14 (1991), 66-7.

frequently cited passage, ‘Today the voice of one crying in the wilderness must necessarily strike a scientific tone if the ear of the multitude is to be reached.’⁴⁹

Another possibility is that both struggled with the problems of religious faith without ever resolving the many difficult questions which were latent in Nietzsche’s famous pronouncement of ‘the death of God’. We remember the inscription over the doorway at Kusnacht, the maxim which Jung found in the writings of Erasmus: ‘Invoked or not, the god will be present.’ Jung himself said of this inscription:

It is a Delphic oracle though. It says: yes, the god will be on the spot, but in what form and to what purpose? I have put the inscription there to remind my patients and myself: *timor dei initium sapientiae* (‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ Psalm 11.10)⁵⁰

Remember also remember Jung’s famous remark, in an interview in 1955, that

All that I have learned has led me step by step to an unshakable conviction of the existence of God. I only believe in what I know. And that eliminates believing. Therefore I do not take His existence on belief—I *know* that He exists.⁵¹

There seems no doubt that Jung underwent an experience of a transcendent reality: in later life, he tells us, he became almost exclusively concerned with those events and happenings where the ‘imperishable world irrupted into the transitory one’.⁵² The problem remained: how to describe, define, conceptualize this experience and what place to give it in his professional work? The problem for us is how, precisely, we are to understand Jung’s somewhat contradictory writings about the exact nature and status of the realities he understood to be signalled by terms like ‘archetype’, ‘collective unconscious’ and, perhaps most vexingly, ‘God’. Gerhard Wehr, one of Jung’s several biographers, claims that

In Jung, as in no other psychologist of his time, the superindividual was paramount. A decisive role was played by the transpersonal, not only as a biologically and instinctually grounded driving force, but as an ‘archetype’, a physical, mental and spiritual motive power that points beyond man precisely by engaging him in a lifelong process of maturation.⁵³

This kind of formulation, it seems to me, wants to have it every which way: the ‘superindividual’ is subsumed in the term ‘archetype’ which then becomes, simultaneously, ‘a physical, mental and spiritual motive force’. This amounts to hedging one’s bets.

5. The Traditionalist Critique of Jung and Eliade

Jung’s work was attacked from the scientific side as being ‘symbolistic’, ‘mystical’, ‘occultist’ and the like, just as Eliade’s work in turn has been attacked as ‘Jungian’ and ‘Catholic’, lacking in ‘objectivity’, and motivated by ‘unscientific zeal’.⁵⁴ These kinds of criticisms are of no interest in the

⁴⁹ quoted in W. Smith, *Cosmos and Transcendence* (La Salle 1984), 127.

⁵⁰ Letter, quoted in *JB*, 93.

⁵¹ ‘Men, Women and God’, interviews with Frederick Sands, in *CGJ Speaking*, 251. Cf: ‘I find that all my thoughts circle around God like the planets round the sun, and are as irresistibly attracted by Him. I would feel it to be the grossest sin if I were to oppose any resistance to this force.’ Letter to a young clergyman, quoted in Aniela Jaffé’s Introduction to *MDR*, 13.

⁵² *JB*, 23.

⁵³ *JB*, 4.

⁵⁴ See, for example, Edmund Leach’s smug review article, ‘Sermons from a Man on a Ladder’, *New York Review of Books* October 20, 1966, 28-31.

present context. Much more disturbing, from my point of view, are the charges that have been pressed by exponents of the traditional religious outlook. The most incisive of these critics are traditionalists such as René Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Frithjof Schuon and Titus Burckhardt. I do not have time here to rehearse the premises from which such thinkers start—we may turn to this in the discussion later. Let us look briefly at a few of the criticisms that have been made. There are, it seems to me, four kinds of criticisms which deserve our attention. I shall flag these criticisms by identifying their targets: pan-psychism; the denial of metaphysics; the tyranny of the ego; the repudiation of traditional religion.

From a traditionalist perspective the first problem is that Jung's writings often seem to confound the psychic and the spiritual. In Jung's case it is a matter at times of reducing the spiritual to the level of the psychic (a form of psychologism), and at others of elevating the psychic to the level of the spiritual, or, to put the same point differently, of deifying the unconscious.⁵⁵ In *Memories* Jung states that

All comprehension and all that is comprehended is in itself psychic, and to that extent we are hopelessly cooped up in an exclusively psychic world.⁵⁶

It is difficult to find in Jung's writings a completely unequivocal affirmation of the objective and supra-psychic reality of the *numen*, to borrow a term from Otto, a figure who significantly influenced both Jung and Eliade.⁵⁷ In the interview conducted by Eliade for *Combat*, Jung does say this:

Religious experience is numinous, as Rudolf Otto calls it, and for me, as a psychologist, this experience differs from all others in the way it transcends the ordinary categories of time, space and causality.⁵⁸

However, many of his formulations on this subject are ambivalent. It is also undoubtedly true that a great many people, including Christian theologians, have used Jung's sometimes confusing ruminations as a theoretical platform for a wholesale psychologizing of religion—Don Cuppitt, to name but one popular exponent of the view that religion needs no metaphysical underpinnings.⁵⁹ This is to be guilty of what Frithjof Schuon has called the 'psychological imposture', which he castigates in these terms:

... the tendency to reduce everything to psychological factors and to call into question not only what is intellectual and spiritual...but also the human spirit as such, and therewith its capacity of adequation

⁵⁵ See René Guénon, 'The Confusion of the Psychic and the Spiritual' and 'The Misdeeds of Psychoanalysis' in *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* (Baltimore 1972).

⁵⁶ MDR, 385.

⁵⁷ The same kind of ambivalence is evident in most Jungian formulations concerning both the collective unconscious and archetypes. This, for instance, from Marie-Louise von Franz: 'Really, it is a modern, scientific expression for an inner experience that has been known to mankind from time immemorial, the experience in which strange and unknown things from our own inner world happen to us, in which influences from within can suddenly alter us, in which we have dreams and ideas which we feel as if we are not doing ourselves, but which appear in us strangely and overwhelmingly. In earlier times these influences were attributed to a divine fluid (mana), or to a god, demon, or "spirit", a fitting expression of the feeling that this influence has an objective, quite foreign and autonomous existence, as well as the sense of its being something overpowering, which has the conscious ego at its mercy.' per *JB*, 170.

⁵⁸ CGJ Speaking, 230. (Italics mine.)

⁵⁹ See the glib commentary by Cuppitt on Jung's view of 'religion', quoted in S. Segaller & M. Berger Jung, *The Wisdom of the Dream* (Chatswood 1989), 179.

and still more evidently, its inward illimitation and transcendence...Psychoanalysis is at once an endpoint and a cause, as is always the case with profane ideologies, like materialism and evolutionism, of which it is really a logical and fateful ramification and a natural ally.⁶⁰

Schuon's reference to materialism and evolutionism alert us to these two 19thC bugbears (still very much with us, alas!) which occasionally raise their ugly heads in Jung's writings. Even in the autobiography written near the end of his life, Jung is capable of a kind of scientific gobbledegook which betrays a failure to break free from the stultifying effects of these prejudices. Two examples: 'Consciousness is phylogenetically and ontogenetically a secondary phenomenon'.⁶¹ (This is a variant on the preposterous evolutionist inversion whereby the 'flesh' becomes 'word'.) Likewise in his Introduction to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, Jung descends into Darwinian hocus-pocus when he suggests that the analogical relationships of symbolic vocabularies and mythological motifs across many different cultures derives from 'the identity of cerebral structures beyond all racial differences'.⁶² Here the psychic domain seems to have itself been reduced to nothing more than an epiphenomenon of a material substrate. This is Jung at his worst, surrendering to a materialistic scientism which he elsewhere excoriates.

In *Psychology and Religion* Jung staked out his most characteristic position on metaphysics:

Psychology treats... all metaphysical... assertions as mental phenomena, and regards them as statements about the mind and its structure that derive ultimately from certain unconscious dispositions. It does not consider them to be absolutely valid or even capable of establishing metaphysical truth...Psychology therefore holds that the mind cannot establish or assert anything beyond itself.⁶³

In similar vein, this:

I am and remain a psychologist. I am not interested in anything that transcends the psychological content of human experience. I do not even ask myself whether such transcendence is possible...⁶⁴

Jung, to his credit, was not always able to hold fast to this position. In 1946, for example, he was prepared to write that 'archetypes...have a nature that cannot with certainty be designated as psychic', and that the archetype is a 'metaphysical' entity not susceptible to any unequivocal (ie. 'scientific') definition.⁶⁵ The 'status' of archetypes is a critical issue, particularly if we take the following kind of claim seriously: 'The basis of analytical psychology's significance for the psychology of

⁶⁰ F. Schuon, *Survey of Metaphysics and Esoterism* (Bloomington 1986), 195.

⁶¹ MDR, 381.

⁶² From Jung's Introduction to *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, quoted by Burckhardt in 'Cosmology and Modern Science', in *The Sword of Gnosis*, 168. (Burckhardt's essay can also be found in his *Mirror of the Intellect* Cambridge, 1987.) The traditionalist critique of Jung's thought cannot be canvassed in any detail here, though some of the comments made in this discussion clearly draw on traditionalist understandings. See also P. Sherrard, 'An Introduction to the Religious Thought of C.J. Jung', *Studies in Comparative Religion* 3:1 (1969); W. Smith, *Cosmos and Transcendence* Ch 6; and W. Perry, *The Widening Breach: Evolutionism in the Mirror of Cosmology* (Cambridge, 1995), 89. Sherrard argues that Jung's thought can best be understood as an agenda for the displacement of Christianity while Smith highlights some of the contradictions and the 'dogmatic relativism' which betrays Jung's confusion of the spiritual with the psychic. Perry notes how Jung inverts the traditional doctrine of Archetypes.

⁶³ C. G. Jung, 'Psychology and Religion', quoted in P. Novak, 68.

⁶⁴ Interview with Eliade for *Combat*, in *CGJ Speaking*, 229.

⁶⁵ C.G. Jung, 'On the Nature of the Psyche', quoted in A. Jaffé, *The Myth of Meaning*, 23.

religion...lies in C.G. Jung's discovery of how archetypal images, events and experiences, individually and in groups, are the *essential* determinants of the *religious* life in history and in the present.⁶⁶

From a traditionalist point of view there are two problems: the first is the suggestion, not hard to find in Jung's writings, that the psychic domain contains and exhausts all of supra-material reality, a view we have already designated pan-psychism. But even when Jung retreats from this position (as in the passage just cited), he still insists that the psychic is the only supra-material reality that we can explore and *know*. From the viewpoint of traditional metaphysics this amounts to nothing less than a denial of the Intellect, that faculty by which Absolute Reality can be apprehended, and to which all traditional wisdoms testify.⁶⁷

What of 'God'? Jung's position, at least as Aniela Jaffé recalls it, is subtle but clear: 'God' and 'the unconscious' are inseparable from the point of view of the subject but not identical. One of Jung's most careful formulations on the subject goes like this:

This is certainly not to say that what we call the unconscious is identical with God or set up in his place. It is simply the medium from which religious experience seems to flow.

So far so good. The problem arises in what follows: 'As to what the further cause of such experience may be, the answer to this lies beyond the range of human knowledge.'⁶⁸ Elsewhere he affirmed that, 'the transcendental reality...[beyond] the world inside and outside ourselves...is as certain as our own existence.'⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it *necessarily* remains an unfathomable mystery. In denying the possibility of intellection and of absolute certitude concerning metaphysical realities Jung again falls foul of the traditionalists. Compare Jung's notion that we 'are hopelessly cooped up in an exclusively psychic world' and that the cause of religious experience 'lies beyond human knowledge' with this kind of claim from Frithjof Schuon:

The distinctive mark of man is total intelligence, that is to say an intelligence which is objective and capable of conceiving the absolute...This objectivity...would lack any sufficient reason did it not have the capacity to conceive the absolute or infinite...⁷⁰

Or, even more succinctly,

The prerogative of the human state is objectivity, the essential content of which is the Absolute. There is no knowledge without objectivity of the intelligence...⁷¹

Furthermore,

This capacity for objectivity and absoluteness is an anticipated and existential refutation of all the ideologies of doubt: if man is able to doubt, this is because certitude exists; likewise the very notion of illusion proves that man has access to reality.⁷²

⁶⁶ *JB*, 291. [Italics mine].

⁶⁷ See P. Novak, 77. At other points Jung's philosophical position is also reminiscent of a kind of 'existentialist' relativism. Thus, '...the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.' *MDR*, 358.

⁶⁸ from 'The Undiscovered Self', in *Civilisation in Transition*, quoted in A. Jaffé, 40.

⁶⁹ from *Mysterium Coniunctionis* quoted in A. Jaffé, 42.

⁷⁰ F. Schuon, 'To be Man is to Know', *Studies in Comparative Religion* 13:1-2 (1979), 117-118.

⁷¹ F. Schuon, *Esoterism as Principle and as Way* (Bloomington 1981)15ff.

⁷² F. Schuon, *Logic and Transcendence* (New York 1975), 13.

Another stumbling block for traditionalists concerns the relationship of the empirical ego and consciousness. Ananda Coomaraswamy signals the problem when he writes,

The health envisaged by empirical psychotherapy is a freedom from *particular* pathogenic conditions; that envisaged by sacred or traditional psychology is freedom from *all* conditions and predicaments.⁷³

In other words, Jung sought to rehabilitate the empirical ego rather than to dismantle it. From a traditionalist point of view Jung hoists himself on his own petard when he writes ‘To us consciousness is inconceivable without an ego...I cannot imagine a conscious mental state that does not relate to the ego...’⁷⁴ Daniel Goleman elaborates the cardinal point:

The models of contemporary psychology... foreclose the acknowledgement or investigation of a mode of being which is the central premise and *summum bonum* of virtually every Eastern psycho-spiritual system. Called variously Enlightenment, Buddhahood...and so on, there is simply no fully equivalent category in contemporary psychology.⁷⁵

Fourthly, several traditionalists, most notably Phillip Sherrard, have argued that Jung’s covert and perhaps not fully conscious agenda was nothing less than the dethronement of Christianity in all of its traditional and institutional forms, and its replacement by a kind of quasi-religious psychology for which Jung himself was a ‘prophetic’ voice. A variant of this particular kind of argument has been elaborated by Philip Rieff and is adumbrated in the following passage:

After the failure of the Reformation, and the further fragmentation of Christianity, the search was on for those more purely symbolical authorities to which an educated Christian could transfer his loyalty from the Church. Biblicalism gave way to erudition, erudition to historical liberalism, and the latter to a variety of psychological conservatisms, of which Jung’s is potentially the most attractive for those not entirely unchurched.⁷⁶

This kind of argument would seem to have some cogency when we recall some of Jung’s many explanations of his own relationship to religion. Take this, for example, from a letter written in 1946:

I practice science, not apologetics and not philosophy...My interest is a scientific one...I proceed from a positive Christianity that is as much Catholic as Protestant, and my concern is to point out in a scientifically responsible way those empirically tangible facts which would at least make plausible the legitimacy of Christian and especially Catholic dogma.⁷⁷

The traditionalist response to this kind of claim is quite implacable. Thus Schuon:

Modern science...can neither add nor subtract anything in respect of the total truth or of mythological or other symbolism or in respect of the principles and experiences of the spiritual life...We cannot be too wary of all these attempts to reduce the values vehicled by tradition to the level of phenomena

⁷³ A.K. Coomaraswamy, ‘On the Indian and Traditional Psychology, or rather, Pneumatology’, in *Coomaraswamy, Vol 2, Selected Papers: Metaphysics* (Princeton 1977), 335. (Italics mine.) See also T. Burckhardt, ‘Cosmology and Modern Science’, 174-175.

⁷⁴ from ‘Psychology and Religion’, quoted by P. Novak, 82.

⁷⁵ quoted in P. Novak, 73. As Goleman goes on to say, ‘The paradigms of traditional Asian psychologies, however, are capable of encompassing the major categories of contemporary psychology as well as this other mode of consciousness.’ One again sees the problem in Jung’s homologizing of the psychosis of the mental patient with the ‘mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age.’ *MDR*, 213.

⁷⁶ P. Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (Harmondsworth 1973), 110.

⁷⁷ quoted in *JB*, 302.

supposed to be scientifically controllable. The spirit escapes the hold of profane science in an absolute fashion.⁷⁸

In the light of these kinds of criticisms it is not hard to see why one traditionalist has suggested that ‘In the final analysis, what Jung has to offer is a religion for atheists...’,⁷⁹ or why Rieff claims that Jung’s thought amounts to ‘a religion for heretics’.⁸⁰ In a wonderfully ambiguous phrase, a Dominican admirer of Jung called him ‘a priest without a surplice’.⁸¹ It was meant as a compliment but if we take the lack of a surplice as signifying Jung’s detachment from any religious tradition then the epithet carries a different freight. (To make the same point differently, ‘a priest without a surplice’ is no priest at all.)

On theological questions Mircea Eliade often retreats into a post-Nietzschean kind of *credo*. In 1965, for example, he wrote this;

In a ‘world’ composed of billions of galaxies...all the classical arguments for or against the existence of God seem to me naive and even childish. I do not think that, for the moment, we have the right to argue philosophically. The problem itself should be left in suspension as it is. We must content ourselves with personal certitudes, with wagers based on dreams, with divinations, ecstasies, aesthetic emotion. That also is a mode of knowing, but without arguments...⁸²

Eliade only reveals something of his personal religious beliefs in informal mode in his autobiographical writings, almost, one feels, when he is caught off guard. Like Jung he was often prepared to state things more directly face to face than he was in more professional contexts. In an interview with Claude-Henri Rocquet, Eliade put the matter quite unequivocally:

If God doesn’t exist, then everything is dust and ashes. If there is no absolute to give meaning and value to our existence, then that means that existence has no meaning. I know there are philosophers who do think precisely that; but for me, that would be not just pure despair but also a kind of betrayal. Because it isn’t true, and I know that it isn’t true.⁸³

However, Eliade’s apparent lack of any personal commitment to a religious tradition and his failure to understand the full implications of the many scriptures and sacred writings in which he immersed himself have been trenchantly criticized by traditionalists. David Lake thus: ‘One has the impression of an uprooted and genial academic busily drifting from article to article, without inward centre or the intellectual discrimination to master his prodigious mental fertility.’⁸⁴ Rama Coomaraswamy is even harsher: ‘The man is a dilettante, a mere scholar, and in outlook, a totally profane person. When I say he is a dilettante, I refer to the spiritual realm.’⁸⁵ Both reviewers accuse Eliade of a kind of psychologism but take no account of Eliade’s own exposure of psychological relativism. In *No Souvenirs*, for instance (the book under review by both Coomaraswamy and Lake) Eliade has this to say:

⁷⁸ F Schuon, ‘No Activity Without Truth’, 36-37.

⁷⁹ W. Smith, *Cosmos and Transcendence*, 130.

⁸⁰ P Rieff, 115.

⁸¹ W. Smith, 130.

⁸² *Journal II*, quoted in G. Steiner, ‘Ecstasies, not arguments’, 1015.

⁸³ *Labyrinth*, 67.

⁸⁴ D. Lake, *Review of No Souvenirs in Studies in Comparative Religion* 13:3-4 (1978), 244

⁸⁵ R.P. Coomaraswamy, *Review of No Souvenirs in Studies in Comparative Religion* 13:1-2 (1978), 123.

Psychoanalysis justifies its importance by asserting that it forces you to look to and accept reality. But what sort of reality? A reality conditioned by the materialistic and scientific ideology of psychoanalysis, that is, a historical product...⁸⁶

6. Jung and Eliade in Perspective

Where does all this leave us? Considered from the traditionalist perspective both Jung and Eliade can be accused of a kind of ‘humanism’ with quasi-religious trappings; from this point of view they are implicated in the destruction of religion begun by the materialistic and humanistic sciences of the Renaissance and more or less completed by Darwinian evolutionism and Freudian psychoanalysis. As Ananda Coomaraswamy so neatly put it, ‘While nineteenth century materialism closed the mind of man to what is above him, twentieth century psychology opened it to what is below him.’⁸⁷

Certainly I cannot accept either Jung or Eliade as sages or prophets: they both, it seems to me, exemplify some of the confusions of the age in their life and work. I am not much impressed by the ‘prophetic’ tone which each sometimes strikes in writing of their own work. Our age has not been much blessed by either sages or prophets, and it is perhaps not surprising that both Jung and Eliade have sometimes been mistaken for such. The fact that they cannot live up to the claims of their more extravagant admirers is no reason to dismiss or ignore their work which has a richness and depth not often found amongst the self-styled savants of our times. Both Jung and Eliade were profoundly concerned with man’s position in a world in which science had stripped the cosmos of meaning, apparently eroded the pillars of religious faith, and robbed man of his spiritual dignity. Whatever our views on some of the questions I have been canvassing, we should be grateful to both Jung and Eliade for rescuing their respective disciplines from the clutches of the materialists and their accomplices, and for their attempts to bridge the apparent chasm between traditional religion and modern science. They each have a great deal to say to us. Nevertheless, if we are to draw what is valuable from their work we need to maintain a sense of proportion and to apply a discernment which, I believe, can only be drawn from the treasures of metaphysical and spiritual teachings found within each of the integral religious traditions. As for Jung, I cannot improve on Philip Novak’s carefully considered judgement:

Of Jung’s enduring value, however, there can be no doubt. For modern psychotherapy and the religious quest alike, he dug a seed-bed from which much life-giving and soul-invigorating insight has sprung...But Jung yearned for absoluteness and for Truth—he so wanted to bring a saving message to man—and the clash of this yearning with his avowed vocation, that of empirical scientist and physician, created a lifelong battle of forces within his breast. These tensions spilled over to the printed page, not least when Jung had there to confront the Asian systems which adumbrated the spiritual completion of psychological man that he sought, but with doctrines and methods he could not accept.⁸⁸

The more crucial general point towards which Novak’s assessment points is one which the twentieth century is determined to ignore. It has been precisely stated by Frithjof Schuon:

Outside tradition there can assuredly be found some relative truths or views of partial realities, but outside tradition there does not exist a doctrine that catalyzes absolute truth and transmits liberating notions concerning total reality.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *No Souvenirs* October 7th, 1965, 269.

⁸⁷ A. K. Coomaraswamy, quoted in W. Perry, ‘Drug-Induced Mysticism’, *Tomorrow* 12:2 (1964), 196. (Coomaraswamy was paraphrasing René Guénon.)

⁸⁸ P. Novak, 84.

⁸⁹ F. Schuon, ‘No Activity Without Truth’, in *The Sword of Gnosis*, 36. To this might be added another passage of the most far-reaching significance (from the same essay), ‘Nothing is more misleading than to pretend, as is so glibly done in our day, that the religions have

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compromised themselves hopelessly in the course of the centuries or that they are now played out. If one knows what a religion really consists of, one also knows that the religions cannot compromise themselves and that they are independent of human doings...tradition, let it be repeated, cannot “become bankrupt”, rather it is the bankruptcy of man that one should speak, for it is he who that has lost all intuition of the supernatural. It is man who has let himself be deceived by the discoveries and inventions of a falsely totalitarian science.’ 29.