

## Reviews

*Theorizing About Myth.* By ROBERT A. SEGAL. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1999. 184 pages. \$50.00 (\$15.95 paper).

This book would seem to be a natural for readers of *Zygon*. Robert Segal is an advocate of an anthropological or social science approach to religion who has established himself over the past two decades as our most scholarly and systematic student of theories of myth. This book is especially welcome because it gathers and arranges ten of his essays, nearly all published during the nineties, so that they constitute a coherent study of many of the major theorists and types of theory of the century between Tylor (1871) and Blumenberg (1979).

Segal's primary goal, as he tells us in his pithy introduction, is to compare these theories so as "to work out the distinctiveness of each" (p. 1). In a few paragraphs, invaluable to any student of the subject, he reviews the methodological difficulties of making such comparisons. "Theories of myth are always theories about something broader that is applied to the case of myth," and one is consequently obliged to deal with assumptions about these larger categories—"the physical world, the mind, society, culture, literature and religion" (p. 1). Comparisons based on pigeonholing by discipline often prove slippery. Comparisons of positions held on key issues, such as the relationship of myth to religion or "the dispensability of myth" (p. 2), turn out to be far from universally applicable. "A sturdier way" (p. 2) is to ask what a given theory has to offer about the origin, function, and subject matter of myth, but the questioner discovers that relatively few theorists attend to all three matters; some even confine themselves to one. This particular strategy happens to be one that Segal has made distinctively his own in the past, but he prefers to employ in this book what he calls an "argumentative" method, "determining whom each theorist is arguing against" (p. 3). In practice this procedure creates what might be called a diacritical economy; differences are defined by relative contrasts among the members of the group, and the power to discriminate accurately increases as the distinctions accumulate. The method enables both the reappearance of important theorists in successive recontextualizations and the relatively brief clustering, around this core group, of various others introduced for the sake of whetting comparisons. According to my informal count, some forty-three theorists thus come in for some degree of significant definition. Segal does not confine himself, though, to his argumentative method. He is too much the wily veteran to throw away any tool that affords some leverage; he uses in one context or another each approach he has reviewed, especially his quondam favorite, the comparison of assumptions about origin, function, and subject matter.

It is not accidental that Segal promptly identifies one of the “key issues in the study of myth” as its “dispensability.” He is one of those searchers for whom the question of whether myth can and does survive in the modern world is not a matter of indifference. E. B. Tylor’s view of myth, epitomized in the title of the magisterial opening chapter, “Tylor’s Theory of Myth as Primitive Science,” presents scientism’s direct challenge to such a hope. He believes that, even if myth does survive, it is an atavism that ought to be eliminated in the progress of rational thought. This is why Segal positions his second chapter apart from the general chronological sequence in order to address its plangent question, “Does Myth Have a Future?” His answer is that this “depends on its capacity to meet the challenge posed by modern science” (p. 19). He tests four theories, those of Mircea Eliade, Rudolph Bultmann, Hans Jonas, and C. G. Jung, that make the attempt. None survives this frank inquisition unscathed, though Segal finds most promising Jung’s assertion of a function as well as subject matter for myth that are compatible with science.

The third essay, “The Myth and Ritual Theory,” appeared originally as an historically oriented introduction to Segal’s excellent anthology *The Myth and Ritual Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). It tracks, through a series of thinkers, the career of the next important theory of myth to arise after Tylor—the hypothesis that myth appears to be most closely related to ritual. The essay details with masterly compression how this claim has been modified by its principal adherents, while the fourth chapter, “The Grail Tradition as Frazerian Myth and Ritual,” supplements its predecessor by zeroing in on a particular segment of this history. This is the impact of James Frazer’s influential version on Jessie Weston’s application of it to literature in her popular treatment of Arthurian legend *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1920).

Segal’s fifth chapter, “Fairy Tales Sí, Myths No: Bruno Bettelheim’s Antithesis,” introduces a focus on psychological theories that extends through his final chapter. In his popular book, *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Vintage, 1977), the Freudian child psychologist promotes a contrast between fairy tales, whose scary plots but happy endings help children mature, and myths, whose exalted events and tragic endings have a contrary effect. Bettelheim’s valorizing of tale at the expense of myth actually represents a fairly widespread body of opinion, expressed most famously, perhaps, in Walter Benjamin’s essay “The Storyteller” (see *Illuminations* [New York: Schocken Books, 1955], 102). It would be interesting to see someone get a fix on the intellectual sources and political orientation of this notion. Segal, though, pursues a different tack. Encouraged in part by folklorist Alan Dundes’s demonstration that Bettelheim has mishandled his early Freudian sources, Segal shows how he has also neglected later, revisionist ones. On the negative side the indictment is devastating, while on the positive side it enables Segal to draw proper attention to the contributions of the Freudian anthropologist Géza Róheim and of ego psychologists such as Jacob Arlow.

With the sixth chapter, “Jung on Mythology,” we reach the heart of Segal’s work on psychological theories. The degree to which he values Jung is apparent in “Does Myth Have a Future?” but “Jung on Mythology,” originally written as the introduction to Segal’s anthology of the same name (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press; London: Routledge, 1998), presents a full-scale analysis. It is by far the longest essay in the collection. The first third of the piece justifies very persuasively

sively Segal's claim that Jung's theory "is one of the few that answer fully all three questions" (p. 68) about the origin, function, and subject matter of myth. Its subject matter, as quoted in Jung's own phrase, is "involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings" (p. 67), and myth originates and functions, in Segal's words, "to satisfy the psychological need for contact with the unconscious" (p. 67). Not content that he has done justice to Jung under these three rubrics, Segal considers his work in the latter two-thirds of the essay from a number of different perspectives, such as "Myth as a Way of Thinking," "Kinds of Myths," "Myth and Religion," and "Developments in Jungian Theory." It is not feasible to attempt a summary of the rich contents here. I will only say, as one who has struggled with the maddening inconsistencies of Jung's use of words like *archetype*, *symbol*, *myth*, and *primordial image*, that the section titled "Terms" is worth by itself the price of admission. Indeed, the essay as a whole is without rival as an exposition of Jung on myth. The combination of the essay and the anthology it introduces raises treatment of the subject to a new level.

The seventh and eighth chapters sustain the most brilliant part of the run, displaying new ways of grouping theories for comparison. Chapter 7, "Adonis: A Greek Eternal Child," is not concerned wholly with psychological theories. It contemplates the myth of Adonis first as interpreted by Frazer's myth and ritual approach in *The Golden Bough* and second as decoded by Marcel Detienne's Lévi-Straussian structuralist method in *The Gardens of Adonis*. Only then does Segal juxtapose his own eloquent elaboration of Jung's identification of Adonis as an instance of the eternal youth (*puer aeternus*) archetype. But the sequence celebrates the superior applicability of the psychological reading by demonstrating that only it can explain the connection the Greeks appear to have made between the *puer* type of personality and lack of concern for the polis. For Frazer, Adonis merely symbolizes the fate of vegetation; for Detienne he is at least a human agent, though structurally presented as an overbold one; but only for Jung can he be an instance of the eternal adolescent who never becomes a responsible citizen. The chapter is ingenious and illuminating in focalizing its triple comparison of theories through the myth of Adonis. It is also witty in its imitation of the kind of argument by association typical of the cultural studies approach favored by Detienne and other members of the Paris school of classicists, such as Pierre Vidal-Naquet (whose model "Black Hunter" essay appears here in a supporting role). But arguments of this sort are always shaky. Jung declares Adonis an instance of the *puer*, and Segal proves very learnedly that the Greeks connected this type with social irresponsibility. Because no direct evidence exists, however, that the Greeks themselves perceived Adonis in this fashion, their political take on this specific myth remains an intriguing but unprovable hypothesis.

Chapter 8, "In Quest of the Hero," again exhibits for comparison a trio of theorists. Otto Rank's Freudian hero of the first half of life in *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (1909) is compared with Joseph Campbell's Jungian exemplar of the second half of life in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Both are compared with Lord Raglan's Frazerian, ritual-bound protagonist in *The Hero* (1936). This chapter, too, was originally an introduction to a Segal anthology, with the same title (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990), and I recall how eye-opening it was to read it at the time. Hero myths, of course, abound, and even formal theorizing about them goes back at least to Tylor. But this essay, centered on its

three theorists, historicizes and organizes what had previously been an inchoate topic. It is surely one of Segal's major contributions to the field.

Segal's ninth chapter, "The Romantic Appeal of Joseph Campbell," constitutes the last and fullest of Campbell's numerous appearances. This essay is something of an epitome of Segal's book first issued as *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1987). But its particular thesis that "Campbell's appeal derives from the unashamed romanticism of his theory" (p. 136) does allow Segal the opportunity, by focusing on the guru's ahistorical, salvific claims, to characterize the transcendentalism of romantic theory of myth in general.

In the tenth and last chapter, "Hans Blumenberg as Theorist of Myth," Segal takes on the German philosopher's hulking tome *Work on Myth* (trans. R. Wallace [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985]). Blumenberg's interest in charting a middle course between Enlightenment rationalism and Romantic transcendentalism permits Segal's analysis of his argument to become a grand reprise of the polar struggle between science and mysticism, Tylor and Campbell. The essence of Blumenberg's theory might be said to be that the work of myth has been, time out of mind, to interpose a veil of merciful rationalization between humankind and its dread of the cosmic unknown. As culture replaces instinct as the instrument of survival, however, the work *of* myth is always already work *on* myth, the ever finer but endless reweaving of the culturally enshrined accounts. Segal's interrogation of this theory is characteristically acute in what gets said, but it seems to me to ignore, very uncharacteristically, some of the theory's intellectual origins, central features, and significant implications. The essay is the earliest in the collection (1987); I hope it is someday recast in more comprehensive terms.

Even as it stands, however, this tenth chapter is an impressive culminating exhibit of the benefits of Segal's classificatory methods. The linking of his assembled essays in *Theorizing About Myth* should make it clearer than ever that, in a field where such theories have often been regarded as dazedly as if they were winged Garudas or fabled phoenixes, Segal, with his sharp eye and concern for precise discrimination, is our ornithologist.

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*God, Humanity and the Cosmos: A Textbook in Science and Religion.* Edited by CHRISTOPHER SOUTHGATE, CELIA DEANE-DRUMMOND, PAUL D. MURRAY, MICHAEL ROBERT NEGUS, LAWRENCE OSBORN, MICHAEL POOLE, JACQUI STEWART, and FRASER WATTS. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999. 449 pages. £17.50.

The widespread and growing interest in the relation between science and religion and the proliferation of university courses in this subject ensure a ready welcome for textbooks that provide a reliable introduction to the subject. The field is so vast, embracing so many scientific specialties, that it is desirable to enlist the cooperation of specialists in many branches of science. The authors of this volume are trained, respectively, in biochemistry, plant physiology, philosophy, biology (with computer science and Islamic studies), astronomy, education, genetics, and applied psychology, and all of them either lecture in theology or have studied it intensively. Each chapter was originally drafted by one or more authors and then subjected to general discussion and criticism, with the help of outside experts.

The text is divided into five books. The first book provides an introduction to the debate between science and religion. Several views of the relationship are discussed, with sections on the metaphor of the maps, critical realism in science and theology, and the contribution of religion to the rise of science. Three examples of tensions between science and theology are discussed: Copernicanism and the Galileo affair, Darwinism, and Big Bang cosmology. Another section considers key principles for developing theology in the light of science. Among the subjects discussed are causation and explanation; determinism, indeterminism, and their implications; and the interdependence of different aspects of a model.

The next section is devoted to discussions of truth and reason in science and theology in the twentieth century. The earlier decades were dominated by logical positivism, with the verificationist criterion of meaning, leading to noncognitive accounts of religious belief or to Christian existentialism, and the Barthian emphasis on the primacy of God's self-revealed word. By mid-century positivism was unraveling, and studies were directed toward the problem of induction and Popperian falsificationalism. Toward the end of the century Thomas Kuhn's revolutionary account of scientific change and Paul Feyerabend's anarchism became influential. The work of Imre Lakatos on scientific methodology was applied to theology by Nancey Murphy, and Nicholas Rescher gave a pragmatic idealist account of human rationality and its theological significance.

The second book contains sections on theology in relation to the new physics, to evolutionary biology, and to psychology. The first section begins with classical physics and the Newtonian worldview. Problems of change and continuity came to the fore, and in the twentieth century a new understanding of space and time was provided by Einstein's theory of relativity. The role of time in causality and determinism assumed new importance and was related to theology. Quantum theory brought with it many problems of interpretation such as the wave-particle duality, the collapse of the wavefunction, the role of the observer, and quantum consciousness. The increasing knowledge of the evolution of the universe from the primeval Big Bang prompted questions relating it to the moment of creation. The realization that our very existence—indeed the existence of carbon atoms,

essential for life as we know it—depends on several apparently very unlikely coincidences suggested the weak and the strong anthropic principles. Finally, returning to Newtonian physics, the discovery of chaotic systems has implications for the philosophy of science.

The second section, on theology and evolutionary biology, begins with an account of Darwin's theory and the theological response, followed by Mendelian genetics and neo-Darwinism. The importance of DNA is described, and recent debates about punctuated equilibrium and radical contingency are discussed. The reductionist views of Jacques Monod, Richard Dawkins, and E. O. Wilson are shown to pose a challenge to religious belief. A final section is devoted to an account of human evolution and its relation to religious beliefs about humanity and in particular the doctrine of the Fall.

The last section, on theology and psychology, begins with a discussion of human nature, brain and consciousness, artificial intelligence, and theological concerns about neuroscience. Sigmund Freud's critique of religion and other psychoanalytic approaches to religious experience are also considered.

The third book is devoted to models of God in an ecological age, and the discussions cover process thought, ecological theology, and reason versus pragmatism. Reference is made to the work of Michael Pailin, Sallie McFague, Jürgen Moltmann, Paul Fiddes, and Keith Ward, among others. Concepts of God in Hindu metaphysics and Buddhism, together with the Gaia hypothesis and deep ecology, are also discussed. Much attention is now directed toward God's action in the world, divine providence, miracles, and the mind-body problem, and several views are classified and compared. There is further discussion of the Big Bang, the origin of life and its evolutionary development, and the anthropic principle.

Book 4 is on a variety of topics: science and education, Islam and science, technology and Christianity, and biotechnology. Education at all levels is of critical importance to the religion-science debate. A knowledge of the content of science, its applications, how it operates as a social activity, and the relation between science and values should form part of the curriculum. Islam played a vital role in the development of science by preserving the works of the ancient Greeks, and in some respects Islamic views of science are similar to those of Christians. The wide influence of Islam at the present time makes it opportune to examine Islamic views concerning science. It is through technology that science has its greatest effects on our lives, and because these effects can be for good and for evil they have engaged the attention of moral theologians, including Lewis Mumford, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jacques Ellul, William Temple, and Ian Barbour. The information revolution is of particular concern at the present time, together with biotechnology, which presents a new challenge to theology and to ethics. Genetic engineering and the possibility of human cloning raise urgent moral problems.

The fifth and last book takes a look at the future, with sections on the implications of the new genetics, the status of animals, the science and theology of consciousness, and the integration of science, technology, and ethics. There is a note for teachers, a comprehensive though somewhat selective bibliography, and an index.

From this summary it is apparent that the main concern of the book is the contemporary dialogue between science and religion, with emphasis on the debates that are taking place in English-speaking countries. This dialogue, however, is the outcome of centuries of scientific development and theological reflection

and can be fully understood only in that context. It is a long and complex story, and it is understandable that it is not told in the same volume. It would, however, be helpful to students to refer them to other books where the historical development is described, such as *The Relevance of Physics, Science and Creation*, and *The Road of Science and the Ways to God*, by S. L. Jaki. Of particular importance are the reasons why science as we know it developed only once in human history, in Western Europe during the High Middle Ages, and not in any of the great civilizations of antiquity. This can be traced to the Christian beliefs that the material world is good, rational, orderly, and open to the human mind. Thus, modern science, far from being some alien system of thought that has to be reconciled with religion, has its roots in the Judaeo-Christian faith. There is indeed a brief reference to this connection in section 1.11, but it surely deserves further emphasis. It is particularly surprising that so little mention is made of the work of Jean Buridan and Nicholas Oresme in the Middle Ages and the discovery of their works by Pierre Duhem, and subsequent studies by Alasdair Crombie, Annaliese Maier, Edward Grant, Ernest Moody, and Marshall Clagett. Crombie's book *Augustine to Galileo: The History of Science AD 400–1650*, his biography of Robert Grosseteste, founder of experimental science, and the works of D. J. O'Connor and Francis Oakley, Reijer Hooykaas, and T. E. Huff also deserve mention.

It would have been appropriate to mention the connection between the life and teaching of Christ and the birth of science. By his incarnation Christ ennobled matter and decisively broke the belief in the Great Year or the eternal return, a cyclic view of time that inhibited the rise of science in all ancient cultures. The christological beliefs expressed in the Nicene creed, particularly the beliefs that only Christ is begotten, which excluded pantheism, and in creation only through Christ, which excluded dualism, were also vital for the development of science.

The section on the Galileo case is well done, though there is no mention of Martin Luther's dismissal of Copernicus as a fool or of the criticism by Philip Melanchthon. Kepler was condemned in 1596 by the Protestant Faculty of Tübingen for supporting the Copernican theory and took refuge with the Jesuits. The book on Galileo by Michael Sharratt deserves mention. The story about Laplace and Napoleon on page 41 is very instructive and deserves to be told at greater length. There is extensive discussion of miracles in the context of God's action in the world. It would be helpful to add some empirical evidence concerning actual miracles, such as those at Lourdes and Fatima.

I conclude with specific comments on the second book, which deals with theology and the new physics, the area most familiar to the reviewer.

When considering this subject, it is essential to distinguish between the experimental results and their philosophical interpretation. It is not sufficient to quote general statements by scientists, however eminent, as these all too frequently contain implicit philosophical assumptions that need to be examined. In the section on relativity, it is not clear why the change from the Galilean to the Lorentz transformation should have had such profound philosophical consequences. Space and time remain different: one can move in all directions in space but not in time. Relativity has not abolished absolute space and time. Louis de Broglie was a theoretician and did not make the two-slit experiment (p. 110); this was done by C. Jonsson in 1961. The statement that "explaining this in classical terms is



impossible" should take account of the suggested explanations by Karl Popper and by Thomas Brody. The picture on page 111 should show a diffraction pattern for the single slit, and there is no evidence that the particle in the two-slit experiment "divides itself" to give the wave behavior. The obvious fallacy in the idea that Heisenberg's uncertainty principle implies radical uncertainty is that it does not follow from our inability to measure a variable exactly that the variable does not have an exact value. Concerning the argument about the EPR experiment on page 113, it is conceivable that each proton contains hidden variables that retain a memory of the spins at the moment of separation, so that the determination of the direction of spin of one of them automatically tells us the direction of the spin of the other, without any need for instantaneous transmission of information (which is incompatible with special relativity). Because all derivations of the Bell inequalities assume joint measurability, and this is contrary to quantum mechanics, it is not surprising that they are violated, so this has no profound philosophical implication. One of the essential differences between the interpretations of Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein is that Bohr's Copenhagen interpretation claims to be the end of the road, so that no further advances are possible, whereas Einstein's leaves open the possibility of a more detailed deterministic theory being found in the future. Thus, the pilot wave theory of David Bohm is not the only hidden-variable theory; there are several others, among which stochastic electrodynamics, recently described in detail by Luis de la Pena and Anna Maria Cetto, is physically the most attractive. Wavefunctions correspond to probabilities, so to speak about their collapse is a category confusion.

I found the sections on evolutionary biology and on psychology and theology particularly valuable, although I am not able to assess them critically.

The book as a whole is well presented, and provided its scope is borne in mind it gives a clear and comprehensive summary of some current discussions that will be of great value to students and indeed to all those concerned with the relation between religion and science.

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*Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion.* By BRYAN S. RENNIE. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1996. xii + 293 pages. \$59.50 (\$19.95 paper).

Zygon's approach to religion is best characterized as scientific. Most scholars concerned with the scientific analysis of religion have been critical of Mircea Eliade's scholarship. Typically, Eliade's history and phenomenology of religion are criticized as unscientific: lacking methodological rigor, subjective, revealing uncritical unverifiable generalizations, and containing unjustified theological or other normative assumptions and judgments.

Several of Eliade's supporters have gone on the counterattack. They defend Eliade's scholarship and attack his "scientific" critics. Mac Linscott Ricketts's *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots, 1907–1945* (2 vols., Boulder, Colo.: East European Monographs, No. 248, 1988) was followed by Carl Olson's *The Theology and Philosophy of Eliade: A Search for the Centre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) and David Cave's *Mircea Eliade's Vision for a New Humanism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1993).

Bryan Rennie, Associate Professor in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, formulates the most comprehensive defense of Eliade's scholarship and the strongest attack on his critics in his *Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion*. In his laudatory foreword, Ricketts, Eliade's most prolific defender, praises Rennie for most clearly seeing what Eliade meant to say. Ricketts applauds Rennie for his significant contributions to understanding Eliade's scholarship and for his persuasive replies to Eliade's critics, whose objections he says arise from basic misunderstandings or from personal prejudices (p. x).

*Reconstructing Eliade* is divided into three parts. The first part (pp. 1–117), entitled "The Implicit Meaning of Religion," consists of ten chapters, with the focus on key "concepts" in Eliade's understanding of religion: hierophany, the sacred, the dialectic of the sacred and the profane, the *coincidentia oppositorum* (coincidence of opposites), *homo religiosus* (humanity in its religious mode), symbols and symbolism, myths and mythology, *illud tempus* ("that time," the sacred mythic time of origins), and history and the historical. This impressive attempt to elucidate Eliade's basic concepts, and especially to show how these concepts fit together to form a coherent systematic theory of religion, is the most significant contribution of this book.

Rennie correctly maintains that most scholars have not recognized that there is a complex, coherent, implicit theoretical system at the foundation of Eliade's approach to religion. Eliade tends to resist clear definition, and he never attempts an overall systematization of his own thought. But Rennie is correct in contending that "Eliade's thought *is* systematic, its internal elements referring to, supported by, and reciprocally supporting its other elements" (p. 3). Without attempting to reconstruct Eliade's implicit system, often functioning on the level of the pre-reflective, one cannot comprehend his approach to myth and religion (pp. 1–6).

The second part (pp. 119–212), entitled "Previous and Potential Criticisms," consists of five chapters, with the focus on relativism, commitment, Eliade's political involvement, and criticisms of Eliade. This treatment is less expository and

far more controversial than part 1. In general terms, Rennie is determined to defend Eliade, arguing for the adequacy of Eliade's positions and the misunderstandings, lack of rigorous analysis, hidden agendas, and blatant prejudices on the part of critics.

The third part (pp. 213–59), entitled "Beyond Eliade," focuses on such contemporary concerns as religion in the modern world and similarities between Eliade's approach and postmodernist scholarship. Rather than being dismissed as inadequate, Eliade's approach to religion can be reconstructed in ways that provide a creative understanding of religious realities in the contemporary world and offer a model for future scholarship of religion. This third section, although it provides several challenging insights, is in my opinion the weakest part of the book.

Among the most valuable, controversial, and challenging contributions made by Rennie in this book are the following four claims: (1) that interpreters have misunderstood the nature and significance of history and the historical in Eliade's scholarship, (2) that critics have unfairly attacked Eliade's alleged political commitments and the political nature of his scholarship, (3) that English translations have conveyed a false impression of Eliade's analysis of the basic sacred manifestation, and (4) that common claims and attacks on Eliade for assuming an ontological status of the sacred and for making various normative ontological judgments are unjustified.

Social scientists and other critics often fault Eliade's methodological approach and interpretations of religion as nonhistorical or even antihistorical. The claim by historians and other scholars of religion that Eliade does not do justice to the historical dimension of his data is one of the major attacks on his scholarship for lacking methodological rigor.

Rennie counters with a bold interpretation in which he contends that scholars have not appreciated that Eliade has a personal idiosyncratic meaning of *history* that he equates with personal actually lived experience, and that Eliade is anti-historicist, not antihistorical. He says that what Eliade opposes are narrow, modern, reductionist, historicist explanations that attempt to reduce the whole meaning and significance of the sacred, ideals, norms, the imagination, dreams, and so forth, to physical determinants within a narrowly defined historical-temporal-spatial reality (pp. 89–108, 110–11).

It is true that Eliade sometimes uses the term *history* to refer to personal actually lived experience, but he usually focuses on the nonhistorical dimension of such experience and the experiential need to escape history. Eliade provides an antihistorical emphasis in his interpretations of religious data and his hopes for cultural and spiritual renewal. It is also true that historicism, characterized in narrow reductionist terms, is one of Eliade's major targets. But Eliade's theory of religion and his methodological approach reveal a much broader and more radical antihistorical orientation than such a critique of historicism. Many scholars are critical of extreme historicist explanations, but they see value in various modern historical interpretations and explanations that Eliade devalues and often dismisses.

Much of the attention devoted to Eliade in recent years has involved charges and countercharges about his political life and views, especially his political involvement in fascist Romania. Several critics, including Adriana Berger, have contended that Eliade's alleged political commitments are integrally related to the reactionary nature of his scholarship on religion.

Rennie counters with what is probably the strongest attack on Berger's interpretation in particular and on critics of Eliade's political approach in general (pp. 143–77). He not only defends Eliade against misunderstandings and misinterpretations, but he also accuses critics of unworthy personal motives and hidden agendas:

Yet, in conclusion, it has to be said that there is to date no evidence of actual membership, of active services rendered, or of any real involvement with fascist or totalitarian movements or ideals. Nor is there any evidence of continued support for nationalist separatist ideals after their inherently violent nature was revealed, nor of the imprint of such ideals in Eliade's scholarship. On the other hand, there is clear evidence that those scholars who have published their suspicions of Eliade have pursued their own agendas with little regard for the integrity of their textual sources. (p. 177)

Rennie has made a valuable contribution to the political-spiritual debate by offering a strong defense of Eliade, but he employs a double standard. On the one hand, he is too apologetic and uncritical in defending Eliade. One cannot always defend Eliade by claiming that his political formulations refer only to attitudes and beliefs of religious believers and do not reflect his own position. Rennie is too uncritical in overlooking potentially damaging passages, in asserting Eliade's innocence, and in providing alternative pro-Eliade readings of the material. On the other hand, although many scholars who attack Eliade on political grounds deserve to be criticized, Rennie is too suspicious of motives and hidden agendas and too easily dismisses objections and interpretations raised by them.

Eliade writes of hierophanies, in particular, and the process of sacralization, in general, in such terms as “the sacred shows (manifests, reveals) itself to us.” Rennie contends that such formulations, based on misleading translations, have led to serious misinterpretations. “An acceptable alternative translation of the original ‘le sacré se manifeste,’ is ‘*the sacred is manifested,*’ rather than ‘the sacred manifests itself.’ The former permits an implication of the sacred as the object of the phrase, rather than as the active subject” (pp. 13–15, 19, 69, 194). On the one hand, “the sacred is manifested” allows Rennie to emphasize an active constructivist attitude on the part of religious persons. In his theory of religion, Eliade emphasizes the awareness and the perception of the sacred. On the other hand, the misleading “the sacred manifests itself” can give a false sense of passivity on the part of *homo religiosus*, and it has contributed to the many false interpretations that attribute to Eliade some ontology of the sacred. According to Rennie, Eliade is presenting a psychological-phenomenological account free from normative judgments and ontological commitments.

Rennie's original interpretation has the advantage of guarding against many approaches that transform *homo religiosus* into some passive receptor and that focus exclusively on objective structures of the sacred. There is no experience without the active participation of perceiving, imagining, and constituting subjects. However, I have three main reservations regarding Rennie's thesis. First, Eliade was fluent in English, and it would be incredible if he had allowed thousands of such false or misleading formulations to appear in his works. Even late in his life, Eliade himself continued to use such formulations as “the sacred manifests itself.” Second, the more passive construction does in fact get at a key phenomenological point. Many existential phenomenologists present an analysis of

experience as revealing an initial sense of passive givenness. As Martin Heidegger maintains in *Being and Time* (1927; trans. Joan Stambaugh [Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1996]), a phenomenon is not something that is a product of consciousness but rather something that exhibits itself, shows itself, to human consciousness. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Ricoeur, and others maintain that we experience a world of given structures and meanings revealed to us, but a world that is always unfinished and given to us in ways that require our participation as active constituting subjects. What emerges is a radical intentionality of human consciousness: universal structures are given but are always experienced as given for the perceiving consciousness. Third, although I also maintain that most of Eliade's formulations of the sacred should be taken as phenomenological descriptions and interpretations, I do not agree that he is free from normative judgments and ontological assumptions and claims.

Finally, Rennie attacks interpreters for falsely claiming that Eliade assumes an ontological status for the reality of the sacred and makes normative ontological judgments about religious and nonreligious reality. Rennie counters that Eliade is not committed to some metaphysical or ontological position endorsing the ultimate reality of the transcendent sacred. "Eliade is not discussing an ontological substratum, like Aristotle's *hyle* or Kant's noumenal, but the psycho-phenomenological real—that which is *apprehended* as real by the consciousness of the aware, experiencing subject." Eliade does not "assume an ontological category existing *independently* of human involvement," a metaphysical referent corresponding to "the sacred." "Eliade's sacred is a systematic rather than an ontological proposition." By "the sacred," he is simply indicating what religious persons have perceived and considered "the real" in the history of religions (pp. 20–24).

Rennie's interpretation is valuable in countering the tendency of scholars to attribute to Eliade a metaphysical and ontological position whenever he uses the category of the sacred, a tendency that leads to a misinterpretation of Eliade's approach to religion and his specific descriptions and interpretations. However, Rennie goes too far in his reconstruction and defense of Eliade to the extent that he claims that there is only one point in the entire structure of Eliade's thought in which Eliade makes a real ontological assumption (p. 40). But Eliade does not always restrict his scholarship, including many references to ontology, to the actual perceptions and awareness of religious people. He makes ontological assumptions and judgments in his formulations of universal structures of the dialectic of the sacred, symbolism, and myth; in his claims about sacred structures as being constitutive of the human condition as such; in his judgments about the primacy of nonhistorical structures; and in his critique of the modern mode of being as inhuman and incapable of solving existential crises.

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