

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE WOBBLING PIVOT<sup>1</sup>

In the course of a recent conversation, Professor Eliade reminisced about a French publisher who invited Eliade to contribute a book to a series he was editing. When Eliade asked him what the subject of his book should be the publisher responded, "On anything except sacred time or space." While this may well be the reaction to a paper which seeks to comment on aspects of Eliade's contribution to research on these two problems, it is also eloquent testimony to the centrality of these patterns in Eliade's thought and to the frequency with which he has returned to them in his published writings.

Certainly the three books which made Eliade's reputation in this country—*The Myth of the Eternal Return*, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, (especially but by no means exclusively chapters X and XI), and *The Sacred and the Profane*—are centrally concerned with sacred space and time, as is *Myth and Reality*,<sup>2</sup> whose table of contents reveals the full, subtle range of Eliade's temporal vocabulary: Magic and the Prestige of Origins; Myths and Rites of Renewal; Eschatology and Cosmogony; Time Can Be Overcome; Mythology, Ontology, and History; Mythologies of Memory and Forgetting. Much of Eliade's prolific production has been related to these patterns of sacred space and sacred time, for example, his many articles on the notions of beginning (*ab origine, in illo tempore*), repetition, mythic, cyclical time in cosmogonic myths as opposed to history;<sup>3</sup> his remarks on the

<sup>1</sup> This paper was delivered as part of a symposium on the work of Professor Eliade at the University of Notre Dame, February 12, 1971. I have retained the style of the original, adding only brief footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York, 1954); *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York, 1958); *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York, 1959); *Myth and Reality* (New York and Evanston, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Eliade, "Kosmogonische Mythen und magische Handlungen," *Paidaima*, VI (1956): 194-204; "La vertu créatrice du mythe," *Eranos Jahrbuch*, XXV (1957): 59-85; "The Prestige of Cosmogonic Myth," *Diogenes*, XXIII (1958): 1-13; "Structure et fonctions du mythe cosmogonique," in *La naissance du monde* (Paris, 1959), pp. 469-95; "Repetitione della cosmogonia," in E. de Martino, ed., *Magia e civiltà* (Milan, 1962), pp. 168-82; "Mythologie, ontologie, histoire," in E. Haberland, et al., *Festschrift für Ad. E. Jensen* (Munich, 1964), vol. I, pp. 123-33; "Archaic Man and Historical Man," *McCormick Quarterly*, XVIII (1965): 23-36;

prestige of origins;<sup>4</sup> his concern for the renewal of time or the abolition of profane time in New Year and initiatory scenarios;<sup>5</sup> his studies of recollection and memory,<sup>6</sup> and of eschatology and Paradise.<sup>7</sup> He has had, since his early writings, a special interest in Indian myths and philosophies of time, and this concern, joined with his perception of cosmic and spatial homologies, underlies his most creative studies of Yoga.<sup>8</sup> His numerous articles, perhaps influenced by Paul Mus's massive *Barabudur* which he reviewed in Romanian in 1937,<sup>9</sup> on the symbolism of the Center in cosmologies, rituals of orientation, temple and house construction, witness to a persistent theme.<sup>10</sup> In addition, one might point to other less obvious researches: his notion of the "speed up" of time in his studies of alchemy;<sup>11</sup> his concern for ascension symbolism and the transcendence of space and

"Cosmogonic Myth and Sacred History," *Religious Studies*, II (1967): 171-83. On the theme of history and cyclical time, see further "History and the Cyclical View of Time," *Perspectives*, V (1960): 11-14; and "Symbolism and History," in Eliade, *Images and Symbols* (London, 1961), pp. 151-78.

<sup>4</sup> Eliade, "Le mythe du bon sauvage ou les prestiges de l'origine," *Nouvelle revue française*, XXXII (1955): 229-49, (trans.) *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries* (New York, 1960), pp. 39-56; "The Quest for the 'Origins' of Religion," *History of Religions*, IV (1964), 154-69.

<sup>5</sup> New Year: Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 62-73; "Nouvel An, peau neuve," *Le courrier*, VIII (1955): 7-32. Initiation: Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth* (New York, 1958), pp. x-xv, 4-7 et *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Eliade, "Mythologies of Memory and Forgetting," *History of Religions*, II (1963): 329-44.

<sup>7</sup> Eliade, "The Yearning for Paradise in Primitive Tradition," *Daedalia*, LXXXVIII (1959): 255-67; "Cosmic and Eschatological Renewal," in Eliade, *The Two and the One* (London, 1965), pp. 125-59; "Les Américains en Océanie et le nudisme eschatologique," *La nouvelle revue française*, VIII (1960): 58-74; "Cargo Cults' and Cosmic Regeneration," in S. L. Thrupp, ed., *Millemial Dreams in Action* (The Hague, 1962), pp. 139-43; "Paradise and Utopia: Mythical Geography and Eschatology," in F. E. Manuel, ed., *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (Boston, 1966), pp. 260-80.

<sup>8</sup> Eliade, "Time and Eternity in Indian Thought," in J. Campbell, ed., *Man and Time (Papers from the Eranos Yearbook, Vol. III)* (New York, 1957), pp. 173-200; "Symbolisme indien de l'abolition du temps," *Journal de psychologie*, XLV (1952): 430-38; "Mythes indiens du temps," *Combat* (March 13, 1952); *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (New York, 1958), *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Eliade, "Barabudur, templul simbolic," *Revista Fundatiilor Regale*, IV (1937): 605-17 (*non vidit*).

<sup>10</sup> Eliade, "Centre du monde, temple, maison," in G. Tucci, ed., *Le symbolisme cosmique des moments religieux (Serie orientale Roma, XIX)* (Rome, 1957), pp. 57-82; "Le symbolisme du centre," *Revue de culture européenne*, II (1952): 227-39; "Symbolism of the Center," in Eliade, *Image and Symbols*, pp. 27-56.

<sup>11</sup> Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible* (New York, 1962), *passim*; "Alchemie und Zettlichkeit," *Antaios*, II (1960): 180-88.

time in mysticism and ecstasy; the magical flight of shamans,<sup>12</sup> in the elucidation of the seven footsteps of the Buddha,<sup>13</sup> the Indian metaphor of "breaking the roof,"<sup>14</sup> or the Indian rope trick,<sup>15</sup> as well as in his exciting article on spatial and temporal bounds in his "The God Who Binds" and the Symbolism of Knots."<sup>16</sup> Finally, as many of the Romanian critics illustrated in Eliade's *Festschrift*, his novels are preoccupied with time and to a lesser degree with space.<sup>17</sup>

In this paper I propose to undertake two tasks. The first is a general discussion of Eliade's structures of sacred time and space with a few critical remarks. In making these, I feel acutely the stance of the pygmy standing on the giant's shoulders but without the attendant claim of having seen further (if one dares to so stretch this tortured phrase, fondly contracted as OTSOG, following Robert K. Merton's brilliant investigation of its history).<sup>18</sup> The giant, in this case, has taught all of us how and what to see; and, far more important, how to understand what we have learned to see. For as Marcel Proust has somewhere noted (a novelist equally obsessed with Eliade's problem of time): "One can place indefinitely in succession, in a description, the objects which appear . . . ; truth will not begin to appear until the moment when the writer will take two different objects and will place them in a relationship." Eliade has shown us the patterns and systems of these interrelationships (and thus differs, despite superficial similarities, from older catalogs of "objects" such as *The Golden Bough*). It is for us, his students, only to bring forth the questions, blurrings, and shadows which result from our more peripheral vision.

As a second task I should then like to offer some queries to and applications of Eliade's basic presuppositions. These queries arise for one who understands himself to be standing within Eliade's work as I confront the material that I am concerned with interpreting.

<sup>12</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (New York, 1964), pp. 477-82, *et passim*; "Symbolisme du 'vol magique,'" *Numen*, III (1956): 1-13.

<sup>13</sup> See the articles collected in Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, pp. 99-122.

<sup>14</sup> Eliade, "Briser le toit de la maison: Symbolisme architectonique et physiologie subtile," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion: Festschrift G. Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 131-39.

<sup>15</sup> Eliade, "Ropes and Puppets," in *The Two and the One*, pp. 160-88.

<sup>16</sup> Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, pp. 92-124.

<sup>17</sup> See the contributions by V. Ierunca (esp. pp. 348-52), V. Horia (pp. 387-95), G. Uscatescu (pp. 397-406), and the article by G. Spaltmann (esp. pp. 375-85) in J. Kitagawa and C. Long, *Myths and Symbols: Studies in Honor of Mircea Eliade* (Chicago, 1969).

<sup>18</sup> R. K. Merton, *On the Shoulders of Giants: A Shandean Postscript* (Glencoe, Ill., 1965).

## I. THE BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONS AND ELEMENTS OF ELIADE'S WORK REGARDING SACRED SPACE AND TIME

There is a basic opposition between the Sacred and the profane. At times the opposition in Eliade's presentation seems to resemble Durkheim's classic formulation in the opening chapter of *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*.<sup>19</sup> For Eliade, the Sacred, and sacred space and time in particular, is the extraordinary, the realm in which the Sacred paradoxically manifests itself through hierophanies, kratophanies, and the like. (Rudolph Otto will frequently be appealed to by Eliade in this connection.<sup>20</sup> Indeed one might suggest that part of Eliade's "strategy" has been to substitute Otto's language of the Holy for Durkheim's more neutral and positional Sacred while maintaining the dynamics of Durkheim's dualism.) The profane is the ordinary, the neutral, the realm of the adiaphora (to borrow a useful term from Lutheran theology). In other passages, Eliade appears to suggest that the Sacred is the Real, understood as Being, power, or creativity, as opposed to the profane, which is unreal, "absolute non-Being," or chaotic.<sup>21</sup> In accord with this formulation, which seems to me far more central to Eliade and to which I shall return, one might propose retitling Eliade's well-known book *The Sacred and the Chaotic*, or, adopting the title of Bernard W. Anderson's interesting study, *Creation versus Chaos*.

Since Kant it has been commonplace to define man as a world-creating being and human culture or society as a process of world construction. Taking their clue from the third *Kritik*, philosophers and social scientists have sought to elucidate the mechanisms of human creativity and to explore the limits of human possibility and freedom. Complex theories have been proposed—all starting from a fundamentally anthropological base ("man makes himself"). Eliade, at first glance, appears to continue this post-Kantian endeavor with his focus on the characteristic categories of time and space and in such pregnant formulations as, "If the world is to be lived in it must be founded"; in settling a territory "what is involved is *undertaking the creation of the world that one has chosen to inhabit*."<sup>22</sup> But, in fact, Eliade

<sup>19</sup> E. Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1960), pp. 50-56; English trans. J. S. Swain (London, 1915), pp. 37-41.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Eliade, "Power and Holiness in the History of Religions," in *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, pp. 123-54.

<sup>21</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 62-65; *Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>22</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 22, 51.

implies a fundamental reversal. World creation and world founding are not anthropological categories expressive of human freedom. Rather, they are to be understood as ontological (perhaps even theological) categories.<sup>23</sup> Man's fundamental mode is not freedom and creativity but rather repetition. Or, perhaps more accurately, man's creativity is repetition.

Repetition is the human mode of articulating absolute Reality. It is expressive of man's "unquenchable ontological thirst," his desire to "found" his existence in "real existence," in "objective reality," in that which is not "illusory," which avoids the "paralysis" of "the never-ceasing relativity of purely subjective experiences."<sup>24</sup> This reality is *given* to man, it is autonomous, and it "s'impose à l'homme du dehors."<sup>25</sup> Yet man is no mere passive receiver; he must creatively appropriate it for himself. This he does primarily through repetition.

Eliade has several parallel languages for describing the givenness of Reality. At times he speaks of the "manifestation" of the Sacred which "ontologically founds the world."<sup>26</sup> Here a highly dramatic and dynamic language prevails of power breaking into and displacing itself within man's ordinary, profane, changing, and unreal world (his favorite term is "irruption"). In this category Eliade treats those "elementary manifestations" for which he is most famous—a set of terms founded on the root *phainō*: hierophanies, kratophanies, epiphanies. At other times he speaks of the symbol as "pointing toward" or "revealing" the Real.<sup>27</sup> Or he may speak of myths which, for him, reveal the inner dynamics of Reality expressed as the creative activity of the gods. "Myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthrough [irruptions in the French original] of the sacred

<sup>23</sup> While I am appreciative of Peter Berger's attempt to reconcile Eliade's notion of *cosmos* with the sociological conception of *nomos* in *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, N.Y., 1969; reprint), chaps. I-II, his anthropological perspective reverses Eliade's presuppositions (see esp. pp. 25-27) in a creative and suggestive way. Likewise the important remark of C. Lévi-Strauss, that being in place is what makes a thing sacred, would precisely reverse Eliade's formulation (Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* [Chicago, 1966], p. 10; cf. J. Z. Smith, "Birth Upside Down or Right Side Up?" p. 148, n. 5, below).

<sup>24</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 28, 64.

<sup>25</sup> Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1964), p. 312.

<sup>26</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," in M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa, *The History of Religions: Essays in Methodology* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 86-107. For a valuable exposition and trenchant critique, see H. Penner, "Bedeutung und Probleme der religiösen Symbolik bei Tillich und Eliade," *Antaios*, IX (1967), esp. 134-42.

(or the 'supernatural') into the World. It is this sudden breakthrough [irruption] of the sacred that really establishes the World and makes it what it is today."<sup>28</sup> These myths of supreme creativity provide the blueprint for all creativity. Because they are an expression of the Real, their repetition in ritual or their paradigmatic use in all modes of human creativity confers reality on man and his world. This is the essence of the "primitive ontology" that Eliade has devoted a major portion of his scholarly life to elucidating: "an object or an act becomes real only insofar as it imitates or repeats an archetype. Thus, reality is acquired solely through repetition or participation; everything which lacks an exemplary model is 'meaningless,' i.e., it lacks reality."<sup>29</sup> Human reality thus depends upon participation in a given Reality and this is doubly "paradoxical." First, it is paradoxical that the Sacred should be manifested in something profane and limited. Eliade employs many synonyms to express this paradox: the "coming-together of sacred and profane, of being and non-being, absolute and relative, the eternal and the becoming... the co-existence of contradictory essences: sacred and profane, spirit and matter, eternal and non-eternal, and so on." It is a "rupture of ontological levels"<sup>30</sup> which relentlessly leads toward the "reduction" and ultimately the "abolition" of the "spheres that are profane."<sup>31</sup> Second, man's existence is paradoxical. "Human existence takes place simultaneously upon two parallel planes: that of the temporal, of change and illusion, and that of eternity, of substance and of reality."<sup>32</sup> Man strives to be "real" and this results in his being swallowed by Being, in a loss of his "individuality." On the other hand, man asserts the value of his own creativity and thus, for Eliade, falls into a "flight from reality."<sup>33</sup> (It is in this sense that one must understand what has been, for me, Eliade's most shocking notion—that history and the historical mode of existence represents man's "second fall.")<sup>34</sup>

In an uncharacteristic moment Eliade ventures a definition of the "principle function of religion" which grows out of these considerations. It is:

<sup>28</sup> Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, p. 6. Cf. the French original, *Aspects du mythe* (Paris, 1963), p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 34.

<sup>30</sup> Eliade, *Patterns*, pp. 29f.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 460f.; cf. *Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 34f., 158.

<sup>34</sup> See esp. *Myth of the Eternal Return*, pp. 154-62.

that of maintaining an "opening" toward a world which is superhuman, the world of axiomatic spiritual values. These values are "transcendent" in the sense that they are revealed by divine beings or mythical ancestors. They therefore constitute absolute values, paradigms for all human activity. The function of religion is to awaken and sustain the consciousness of another world, of a "beyond" . . . This other world represents a superhuman "transcendent" plane, that of absolute realities. It is this experience of the sacred, that is, the meeting with a transhuman reality, that generates the idea of something which *really* exists and, in consequence, the notion that there are absolute, intangible values which confer a meaning upon human existence. It is thus through the experience of the sacred that the ideas of *reality*, *truth* and *meaning* come to light, ideas which will later be elaborated and articulated in metaphysical speculations and which ultimately become the basis of scientific knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

For Eliade, the major problem man—especially modern, "historical" *homo faber*—confronts is that of relativism and subjectivism. Eliade faces the issue squarely by addressing the two categories which have been conceived as being relative and subjective *sans pareil*: space and time. Eliade revalues these categories by relating them to the manifestation of and participation in transhuman Reality. Both space and time are, for Eliade, modes of irruption and repetition. However, we may note that when Eliade speaks of sacred space, it is the irruptive element which predominates; when he speaks of sacred time, it is the repetitive. Both space and time are experienced by religious man as "non-homogeneous." Hence both reflect the experience of a breakthrough of the normal ontological levels, and this break allows the possibility of participation in Reality—of reifying or sacralizing the profane.

In sacred space it is this breakthrough, this "image of an opening, which is primary. "Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different. . . . *Something* that does not belong to this world has manifested itself. . . . and this manifestation ontologically grounds (or "founds") human existence.<sup>36</sup> The sacred place is not merely the dramatic experience of the presence of the Sacred (Eliade's favorite example is the Bethel vision of Genesis 28:12-19); it is a point of communication, the "paradoxical point of passage from one mode of being to another,"

<sup>35</sup> Eliade, "Structures and Changes in the History of Religion," in C. H. Kraepling and R. M. Adams, eds., *City Inevitable* (Chicago, 1960), p. 366.

<sup>36</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 26f.

which is repeatable *by man*.<sup>37</sup> Here Eliade invokes his well-known image of the Center which is the experience of the break in homogeneous space par excellence, the place of passage and communication through all the planes of existence and the means of organizing and founding the world in which men live.<sup>38</sup> Eliade notes, by way of complicating this model, that one finds in the history of religions two basic attitudes toward this Center. The one emphasizes the accessibility of this Center to man, who may experience it in his cities, temples, and dwellings; the other emphasizes the inaccessibility of the Center, it is difficult to gain access to it, it is available only to an elite who have undergone ordeals and who possess sufficient merit so as to be worthy of its possession.<sup>39</sup> The repeatability of the Center experience, whether theoretically available to every man or only to an elite, and the notion that the Center founds and organizes the cosmos as real, leads Eliade to a second motif. As I have already suggested, Eliade postulates two coextensive, fundamental structures of reality: the irruption of the Sacred and the paradigmatic deeds of the gods in the beginning. Therefore the Center, which is revealed to man "from without," may also be "rebuilt" by him as a "reconstruction" of the world organized about the sacred Center by following the general model of creation provided by the cosmogonic myths. This is particularly the case in acts of human construction. Thus the space in which man dwells is reified by being ritually homologized to the sacred Center and is constructed according to the "true" laws of creation which are, as we have seen, the "inner dynamics" of the Sacred. "Every dwelling, by the paradox of the consecration of space and by the rite of its construction, is transformed into a 'centre.'"<sup>40</sup>

Sacred time is likewise an "opening" to the transcendent which results in the radical discontinuities which are characteristic of the "irruptive" experience. Profane time is abolished and a new value-laden time intrudes. This sacred time is "indefinitely recoverable, indefinitely repeatable." Sacred time is not primarily the time of revelation; but rather the time of beginning. It is the time of cosmogony in its first, clear, pristine form. Hence Eliade's emphasis on the

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-47. See the literature cited in n. 10 above.

<sup>39</sup> Eliade, "The Symbolism of the 'Centre,'" in *Images and Symbols*, esp. pp. 54f.; and *Patterns*, pp. 382-85.

<sup>40</sup> *P. ternus*, p. 379.

fact that sacred time differs from profane time in that it is "reversible," "circular," "cyclical." It is the time of festival, and particularly the time of myth and the occasion for the recovery of the realia narrated in the myths. It not only allows man to reexperience the time of creation which is the "supreme divine manifestation," "the stupendous instant in which a reality was for the first time fully manifested," but, by the cyclical character of creation-decreation (return to chaos)-recreation serves to strengthen and revivify the cosmos, society, and the individual.<sup>41</sup> The cosmos and its structures are understood to be "a living world—inhabited and used by creatures of flesh and blood, subject to the law of becoming, of old age and death. Hence it requires a periodical repairing, a renewing, a strengthening. But the only way to renew the World is to repeat what the Immortals did *in illo tempore*, is to reiterate the creation."<sup>42</sup> Thus Eliade would join with the distinguished Old Testament scholar, Sigmund Mowinckel, in insisting that every creation myth is soteriological as well as cosmogonical:

That life is thus *created* through the cult means salvation from that death and destruction which would befall, if life were not renewed. For existence is an everlasting war between the forces of life and death, of blessing and curse. "The World" is worn out if it is not regularly renewed. . . . Thus it is "the fact of salvation" which is actualized in the cult. . . . The fact that the cult is a repetition and a renewed creation leads to the view that the salvation which takes place is a *repetition of a first salvation* which took place in the dawn of time.<sup>43</sup>

The faith of Eliade's "archaic man" is a profound faith in the "truth" of the cosmos as ordered in the beginning and a joyous celebration of the primordial act of ordering, as well as a deep sense of responsibility for the maintenance of that order through repetition of the myth, through ritual, and through norms of conduct.

## II. QUERIES AND APPLICATIONS

Thus far I have tried to report as faithfully as possible what I understand the central theses of Eliade to be with respect to the categories of sacred space and time. To such a general understanding I have

<sup>41</sup> Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp. 68-113, esp. pp. 69, 80, 85, from which I have taken the quotations.

<sup>42</sup> Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, p. 45.

<sup>43</sup> S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford, 1962), vol. I, pp. 18f. See further Mowinckel's more general statement in *Religion und Kultus* (Göttingen, 1953), pp. 70-80.

questions—some of which have effectively been spoken to by Eliade, although not necessarily in explicit form. Within the scope of this paper it is possible only to briefly state these before moving to a central problem which emerges for me out of my work in Hellenistic religions. Therefore I shall merely offer a set of interrelated questions for discussion and indicate where in Eliade's work I find the resources for their possible resolution.

1. Is chaos best understood as the equivalent of the profane, that which is neutral, that which is unreal? I would suggest that chaos is never profane in the sense of being neutral. It is not *chaos* in the archaic Greek meaning of the word: a "gap," "yawning hole," or "void."<sup>44</sup> Rather, chaos *only* takes a significance within a religious world view. Chaos is a sacred power; but it is frequently perceived as being sacred "in the wrong way." It is that which is opposed to order, which threatens the paradigms and archetypes but which is, nevertheless, profoundly necessary for the very creativity that is characteristic of Eliade's notion of the Sacred. Like the famous myth of the charioteer in Plato's *Phaedrus* (253-54), both horses are equally necessary. If one had only the white horse of decorum, temperance, and restraint, he would never reach heaven and the gods. If one had only the lawless black horse, he would rape the gods when he appeared before them. Without the black horse there would be neither motion nor life; without the white horse there would be no limits. Without such religious "black horses" as shamans and prophets, religious structures such as that of the High God might become so refined, so otiose, so transcendent, that they would run the risk of being irrelevant.<sup>45</sup> Thus chaos is never, in myths, finally overcome. It remains as a creative challenge, as a source of possibility and vitality over against, yet inextricably related to, order and the Sacred. For example, ancient Israel appears to share the common creation-by-combat mythology of the ancient Near East in which the warrior deity creates by dividing the chaotic waters. In later tradition the upper waters are male and the lower waters are female, and they cry out ceaselessly to be reunited. If they do come together, the world will be destroyed by flood, and chaos will have won. Yet once a year

<sup>44</sup> See the perceptive comments and the valuable collection of texts in F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 194f. (and notes).

<sup>45</sup> See the fundamental exposition of this pattern of the archaic otiose High Gods being replaced by younger fecundating deities in Eliade, *Patterns*, chap. II. See also the testing of Eliade's pattern in U. Oldenberg, *The Conflict between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden, 1969), esp. pp. 146-51.

(at the Feast of Water Drawing), the "stoppers" to the channels leading down to the subterranean dangerous waters were opened and the upper and lower waters were mingled while a general carnival atmosphere and sexual license prevailed in the Temple.<sup>46</sup> For my purposes it is essential only to emphasize that this was no descent into chaos so that chaos could be overcome through recreation; but rather a recognition of the power, the life-giving power, of chaos for insuring vitality and fecundity for the year to come. My sense is that on this issue, Eliade's discussion of water and water symbolism would provide a valuable corrective to the negative or neutral interpretation of chaos.<sup>47</sup>

2. Has not the illuminating category of the "Center" been too narrowly discussed in literalistic terms of geographical symbolism? Eliade has suggested, in works such as *Yoga*, the complexity of this symbol as equivalent to the *Grund* and has indicated the dimensions of this symbol in relation to interiority.<sup>48</sup> Yet most of his more general discussion has concerned midpoint on either a horizontal or vertical axis. I have attempted in a previous article to briefly sketch out the variety of ways in which Jerusalem served as the "Center": as an enclave against the forces of chaos, as the vertical and horizontal center of space, as the center of time and history, and as a center of value. The majority of relevant texts do not explicitly employ the kind of "Center" language Eliade has collected, yet they are frequently more eloquent testimony to the underlying ideology.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, this focus on the explicit presence of the term "Center" leads Eliade at times to employ questionable interpretations of his material (e.g., the term given to Babylonian sanctuaries, *Dur-an-ki* [Bond of

Heaven and Earth], probably does not mean, as Eliade often implies, the place of intersection of the upper world with earth, but rather the scar, or navel, left behind when heaven and earth were forcibly separated in creation—it is the disjunctive rather than the conjunctive which is to the fore).<sup>50</sup> At other times it leads to him to ignore texts which do contain important elements of the "Center" pattern but never explicitly use the term (e.g., Eliade has not, to my knowledge, dwelt on the significance of the fact that the Babylonian creation epic, *Enuma elish*, is not so much a cosmogony as it is a myth of the creation of a temple).

As a second but related issue, directly informed by Eliade's work on the "Center," I would query whether one can pay such attention to the "Center" without giving equal attention to the periphery. I would note the anthropological work of Alfonso Ortiz, the theoretical paper of Edward Shils on "Center and Periphery," and my own concern for the category of exile as three examples of such use of Eliade.<sup>51</sup>

3. Are all mythic first times paradigmatic and to be ritually repeated, as the usual, but I think not accurate reading of Eliade would suggest? Many of the first times described in myth—particularly those dealing with the origin of death, sickness, illness, sin, and evil—may well be existentially repeated in the human condition itself; but they are neither celebrated nor ritually repeated. The myth is frequently utilized as a description of how the present cosmos was created in order that it may be recreated, that creation may be reversed. This is particularly the case in myths concerning the destiny of man, and I find Eliade's 1967 article, "Cosmogonic Myth and 'Sacred History,'" a major advance in suggesting that there are two types of primordality (the cosmogonic and the ancestral-anthropological) with differing modes of repetition.<sup>52</sup> In other traditions there are even more daring mythologies in which the whole of creation, the world, the gods, and the structures of order and destiny

<sup>50</sup> See the discussion of Dur-an-ki in Th. Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Iamuz and Other Essays on Mesopotamian History and Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 112f.

<sup>51</sup> A. Ortiz, *The Teva World* (Chicago, 1969), chap. II, *et passim*; E. Shils, "Center and Periphery," reprinted in *Selected Essays by Edward Shils* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 1-14; J. Z. Smith, "Earth and Gods," pp. 119-128, below. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York, 1966), and Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago, 1969), explore the relationship of center and periphery, but are not influenced by Eliade.

<sup>52</sup> Reprinted in Eliade, *The Quest*, pp. 72-87.

<sup>46</sup> For the general pattern, the fundamental work remains H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, 1895). See further, A. J. Wensinck, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites* (Amsterdam, 1918); O. Eissfeldt, "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel," in *Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen* (Copenhagen, 1953), pp. 76-84; O. Kaiser, *Die mythischen Bedeutungen des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel*, 2d ed., (Berlin, 1959); L. R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and the Old Testament," *Vetus Testamentum*, XV (1965): 313-24; F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," in A. Altman, ed., *Biblical Motifs* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 1-10. For the material on the Feast of Water Drawing, see R. Patai, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (London, 1947), chaps. II and III.

<sup>47</sup> Eliade, *Patterns*, chap. V.

<sup>48</sup> Eliade, *Yoga*, esp. pp. 115f., 219-27.

<sup>49</sup> J. Z. Smith, "Earth and Gods," see below, pp. 104-128. Compare Eliade's use of this article in "A Cosmic Territorial Imperative?" *Center Report*, IV: 2 (1971): 22-26.

are judged to be evil or confining and must be reversed or destroyed. Although this has not been Eliade's major concern, he alludes to this possibility in his exegesis of the Indian metaphor of "breaking the roof" which, for him, "brings an end to the archaic idea that man can live only in a cosmos (i.e., territory, city, village, body), that is to say, in a 'world' which is sacred because it is patterned after the divine paradigm."<sup>53</sup> In my own research I have found reason to suggest that this pattern is just as fundamental as the category of a paradigmatic world and may well be just as archaic.

A related problem is suggested by questions one and three. It strikes me that historians of religion have been weakest in interpreting those myths which do not reveal a cosmos in which man finds a place to dwell and on which he found his existence, but rather which suggest the problematic nature of existence and fundamental tension in the cosmos. I have in mind such traditions as dualistic creation myths, Earth-diver traditions, Tricksters, or the complex narratives of Corn or Rice Mothers who create by "loathsome" processes (e.g., rubbing the dirt off their bodies, by defecation, secretion).<sup>54</sup> Clearly these mythologies, many of which are extremely archaic, point to a different spiritual horizon than that described by Eliade as the fundamental "archaic ontology."

4. Is the material Eliade describes best organized under the categories "archaic" and "modern"? If one accepts the basic dualism just described between those cultures which affirm the structures of the cosmos and seek to repeat them; which affirm the necessity of dwelling within a limited world in which each being has its given

<sup>53</sup> Eliade, "Structure and Change," in *City Inimicable*, p. 366. See further the literature cited above, n. 14.

<sup>54</sup> Eliade has dealt with some of these traditions in "Mythologies asiatiques et folklore sud-est européen: Le plongeon cosmogonique," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, CIX (1961), 157-242; "Dualism," *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1969), vol. VII, pp. 717f.; "Prolegomena to Religious Dualism: Dyads and Polarities," *The Quest*, pp. 127-75; "Le Diable et le Bon Dieu: Préhistoire de la cosmogonie populaire roumaine," in *De Zalmoxis à Gengis-Khan* (Paris, 1970), pp. 81-130. The Trickster has been dealt with from a History of Religions perspective in an exhaustive but inconclusive dissertation by M. L. Ricketts, "The Structure and Religious Significance of the Trickster-Transformer-Culture Hero in the Mythology of the North American Indians" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1964), vols. I-II; see further, Ricketts, "The North American Indian Trickster," *History of Religions*, V (1966): 327-50. The theme of "loathsome" creation has been especially emphasized by G. Hart, "The Corn Mother in America and Indonesia," *Anthropos* XLVI (1951), 853-914, who offers, however, no interpretation.

place and role to fulfill, a centrifugal view of the world which emphasizes the importance of the "Center" as opposed to those cultures which express a more "open" view in which the categories of rebellion and freedom are to the fore; in which beings are called upon to challenge their limits, break them, or create new possibilities, a centripetal world which emphasizes the importance of periphery and transcendence; in which, in Eliade's terms, one "has chosen not installation in the world but absolute freedom . . . the annihilation of every conditioned world"<sup>55</sup>—ought one to suggest the periodization implied by the terms "archaic" and "modern"? In part this is a terminological problem. In my own writings I have toyed with the distinction centrifugal and centripetal, central and peripheral, considered adopting Bergson's classic distinction between the closed/static society and the open/dynamic one, or Eric Voegelin's contrast between a "compact" and "differentiated" experience of the cosmos.<sup>56</sup> With some hesitation I have settled for the present on the dichotomy between a *locative* vision of the world (which emphasizes place) and a *utopian* vision of the world (using the term in its strict sense: the value of being in no place). Whatever terminology is employed, we must be careful to preserve a sufficient sense of the experiential character of this dichotomy and resist imposing even an implicit evolutionary scheme of development "from the closed world to the infinite universe" (to borrow the title of Alexander Koyré's well-known work). This requires our resisting as well the frequent tendency to identify the centripetal-closed-locative view with primitive, archaic society and the centrifugal-open-utopian with the modern. Both have been and remain coeval existential possibilities which may be appropriated whenever and wherever they correspond to man's experience of his world. While in this culture, at this time or in that place, one or the other view may appear the more dominant, this does not effect the postulation of the basic availability of both at any time, in any place.

I have a sense that much will be learned from relating these cosmic views to the social worlds in which they are found. For example, my own appreciation of the locative and the rebellious has been

<sup>55</sup> Eliade, "Structure and Change," in *City Inimicable*, p. 366.

<sup>56</sup> H. Bergson, *Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris, 1932); E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vol. I, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge, 1956), p. 5, and compare J. Z. Smith, ch. 7, below; Smith, ch. 6, below.

much enriched by reading works such as Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus*, and I would hope that historians of religion will pay more attention to these resources in the future.<sup>57</sup>

Although space forbids its development in this essay, the same question might be raised to the related distinction between cyclical-mythic time and linear-historical time, a distinction which is an inheritance from the pan-Babylonian school of Winckler and Jeremias. This dichotomy does not seem to do justice to the rich patterns of temporal significance which have been discovered in various cultures. Again, sociological works, such as Georges Gurvitch's *The Spectrum of Social Time*, may be of some use to the historian of religions.<sup>58</sup>

By way of conclusion, I should like to illustrate the coexistential conflict between what I have called the central-locative and the peripheral-utopian world views by two anecdotes told of Alexander the Great and his meeting with the naked sages of India. (The first, by the way, is the genesis of the title for this paper.)

It was Calanus we are told who lay before Alexander the famous illustration of government. It was this. He threw down upon the ground a dry and shrivelled hide, and set his foot upon the outer edge of it; the hide was pressed down in one place, but rose up in others. He went all around the hide and showed that this was the result wherever he pressed the edge down, and then at last he stood in the middle of it, and lo! it was all held down firm and still. The similitude was designed to show Alexander that he ought to put most constraint upon the middle of his empire and not wander far away from it.<sup>59</sup>

On the appearance of Alexander and his army, these venerable men stamped [the earth] with their feet and gave no other sign of interest. Alexander asked them through interpreters what they meant by this odd behavior, and they replied: "King Alexander, every man can possess only so much of this earth's surface as this we are standing on. You are but human like the rest of us, save that you are always busy . . . travelling so many miles from your home, a nuisance to yourself and to others."<sup>60</sup>

The dichotomy remains. On the one hand the structures of Center and conformity to place as represented by the Indian sages; on the

<sup>57</sup> L. Dumont, *Homo hierarchicus* (Paris, 1967); English trans. (Chicago, 1970).

<sup>58</sup> G. Gurvitch, *The Spectrum of Social Time* (Dordrecht, 1964).

<sup>59</sup> Plutarch, *Alexander*, LXXV.4 (trans. B. Perrin, *Plutarch's Lives* [London, 1949], vol. VII, pp. 409, 411).

<sup>60</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, VII.i.6 (trans. A. de Selincourt, *Arrian's Life of Alexander the Great* [Baltimore, 1958], pp. 225f.).

other, Alexander the world conqueror, the utopian, relentlessly and restlessly testing the boundaries of the cosmos and seeking to transcend all limits. The question of the character of the place on which one stands is *the* fundamental question as Eliade has taught us. The alternation, the discoveries and choices of and between these two views is, as again I have learned from Eliade, the history of man and the history of religions.