

**FACT AND INTERPRETATION:
SUI GENERIS RELIGION, EXPERIENCE,
ASCRIPTION, AND ART¹**

Bryan RENNIE

Westminster College, New Wilmington, PA

Introduction

DESPITE HIS FAULTS AND HIS ANTIQUITY, Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) had insights to which we would do well to attend. Our epistemological ancestors bequeath our situation to us and we need to respect them – which does not mean adopting or ignoring their vices but cultivating their virtues. The danger is not so much of throwing out the baby with the bathwater but – in a perhaps even more grotesque image – throwing out Grandpa with the bathwater, which is all too often done in the iconoclastic style of scholarship most popular in the contemporary academy. One of Eliade’s chief but largely ignored insights was that reality is always an interpretation rather than a matter of empirical perception or direct and unmediated experience. This means that, despite the popular wisdom to the contrary, he is not best seen as proponent of the “*sui generis* discourse on religion” but an early forebear of “attribution theory,” who can contribute something that we might otherwise miss. I will attempt to support these contentious claims and to argue that Eliade’s contribution may best occur in our consideration of religion and the arts. To do so I will make reference to Ann Taves’ recent *Religious Experience*

¹ This paper has grown out of the paper originally presented to the Arts of Interpretation Group at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the AAR. It was supplemented with some new material and combined with material originally published in *Temenos* 43 (2007), no. 1, pp. 73-98 to generate a longer paper delivered at the Davis Center of Harvard University on April 8th, 2011. I would like to thank both Norman Girardot and James Russell for their invitations to present, which eventually led to the current paper.

Reconsidered,² on attribution theory in which it is argued, among other things, that “what we need is a common, more generic discourse that will allow us to analyze how people use these various terms [magic, sacred, and religious] in practice” (161-162). Taves suggests the terms special, specialness, special things. I have other suggestions to make.

*Faptul magic*³

In 1933 Eliade submitted a revised version of his doctoral thesis on Yoga, which was further revised and published in English translation as *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* in 1958. The opening sentence of the revision read,

the object of this study is the historic-religious interpretation and the philosophical discussion of a large number of *fapte* known in India under the generic term of ‘yoga’ [...] By a *fapt* we mean any concrete manifestation of an experience, whether individual or collective, as well as any opinion or judgment, whether fantastic or real, formulated about these experiences. An historical event, a myth, a philosophy, or a practice – in other words, any kind of event or document – is a *fapt*.

Mac Linscott Ricketts, Eliade’s translator and biographer, explains that “ordinarily, the word [*fapt*] refers to something real: a thing that has been done, a ‘deed,’ a ‘fact.’”⁴ In a telling passage from a radio broadcast of 27th July 1935, Eliade said that

We cannot learn the answers to such questions [the big questions of life] by inspecting millions of facts and thousands of truths – but by contemplating *fact* (*faptul*) directly, as a whole and indivisible reality. The

² Ann TAVES, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*. Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009.

³ Enroute to India at the age of 21 Mircea Eliade wrote an article that he called “Faptul Magic,” The Magic Fact (or Deed or Act, perhaps). He sent it home to Romania to be published but it was lost somewhere along the way. It is the thesis of the Romanian scholar, Liviu Bordaș, that Eliade always saved drafts of his work and that much of the lost article reappeared in Eliade’s small book, *Soliloquii* (București: Editura Cartea cu Semne, 1932; București: Humanitas, 1991). Liviu BORDAȘ, “Eliade secret – India și ‘metapsihica’ în construcția filosofiei religiei lui Mircea Eliade,” unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bucharest, 2010.

⁴ Mac Linscott RICKETTS, *Mircea Eliade: The Romanian Roots*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988, 495.

difference between *facts* and *fact* has been observed by countless great thinkers. Facts are infinite and their collection endless. But *fact* (*faptul*) we encounter less often; our life as a whole is such *fact*; love or death constitute *fact*. The contemplation of fact is more fertile for the growth of our spiritual life than the knowledge of a million facts.⁵

Eliade's idea of *faptul* as "a whole and indivisible reality," which may also be "opinion and judgment," obviously cannot refer to immediate experience but must be an *interpretation*, but one which is encountered as unquestionably real. This is a key element in the development of his understanding of the "sacred" – in many ways equivalent to it as the intentional object of human apprehension that is deemed to be the "most" real. This human tendency to shape the plurality of facts (as concrete phenomena) into fact (as abstract interpretation or judgment) can be seen to be markedly at work in the scholarly reception of Eliade. It is widely regarded as fact that Eliade uncritically accepts "the reality of the sacred." To give but one example, this is the title of the section on Eliade in Daniel Pals' *Eight Theories of Religion*.⁶ This is hardly surprising since this is, with only rare exceptions, the way that Eliade is represented throughout the academy. However, I have long argued that this reading is inaccurate.⁷

⁵ "Răspunsul la asemenea întrebări nu-l putem afla cercetând milioanele de fapte și miile de adevăruri care ne înconjoară – ci contemplând *faptul* direct, realitatea întregă și indivizibilă. S-a observat de către nenumarați gânditori marea deosebire dintre *fapte* – și *fapt*. Faptele sunt infinite, și colecționarea lor nu se poate termina niciodată. *Faptul*, însă îl întâlnim mai rar; viața noastră întregă este un asemenea *fapt*; iubirea sau moartea constituie un *fapt*. Contemplarea faptului e mult mai fertilă pentru creșterea vieții noastre sufletești decât cunoașterea a un million de fapte. (*50 de conferințe radiofonice: 1932-1938*. București: Humanitas, 2001: 140, my translation, also partially translated in RICKETTS, *Romanian Roots*, 960.)

⁶ Daniel PALS, *Eight Theories of Religion*. Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. First published as *Seven Theories of Religion* in 1996. More recently, my esteemed colleague James Russell (Harvard) has written: "Both Eliade and Culiianu seem to have considered magical operations real in effect, but their thinking on this issue diverges. ... For the former, shamanism and magic work because there is a spirit world. For the latter, they work because they create a mode of thinking which acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy in the human apperception of external reality." ("The Science of Parting: Eliade, Iranian Shamanism, and the View from Tomis," in *Proceedings of the 6th EASR / IAHR Special Conference in Bucharest*, vol. 4, ed. E. CIURTIN and Mihaela TIMUȘ = *Studia Asiatica* 11 [2010], p. 89-97: 97, emphasis added).

⁷ I can only refer the reader to the second chapter of my *Reconstructing Eliade* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996) for the full argument, which I present here in highly condensed form: "Although Eliade has frequently been criticized for making a priori assumptions of the ontological autonomy of the sacred it is rather the case that he is investigating an intentional object (to use the language of Husserlian

Eliade always insisted that the revelation occurring in a hierophany is not universally irresistible. It can be perceived by some and simultaneously unrecognized by others. “Awareness of a miracle is only straightforward for those who are prepared by their personal experience and their religious background to recognize it as such. To others the ‘miracle’ is not evident, it does not exist.”⁸ It is the *perception* of the sacred which constitutes it as it is for those who perceive it. Eliade also repeatedly states that “the sacred is an element in the structure of (human) consciousness.”⁹ In other words, he is *not* discussing an independent ontology but that which is *apprehended* as real by the consciousness of the aware, experiencing subject; that which is *deemed* to be real. Yet it is not the case that “the sacred is simply whatever is *deemed* sacred by any group,” as William Paden has pointed out;¹⁰ certainly not if “simply” implies an arbitrary choice. Eliade’s sacred is not *either* “a value placed *on* objects” *or* “a power that shines *through* objects” (the dichotomy suggested by Paden) but a complex reciprocation of *both* (and I hope that the significance of this will become clear later). That is, “Eliade’s view of the sacred [...] is the intentional object of human experience which is apprehended as the real” (Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade*, 21) and his understanding of the distinction between *faptul* and *fapte*, fact and facts, bears this out.

This reading of Eliade seems to me irrefutable based on his actual statements. Nonetheless, it is simply ignored when his position is characterized as “The Reality of the Sacred” with any nuance to this equation lost in a simplistic identification of “reality” with the empirical, and the concomitant implication that Eliade assumed the sacred to be ontologically independent. Daniel Dennett refers to Eliade’s oft-quoted passage to the effect that “a religious phenomenon will only be

phenomenology) without raising the question as to its proper or pure intentionality” (18).

⁸ “[...] à savoir qu’un miracle n’est évident que pour ceux qui sont préparés, par leur propre expérience et leur propre culture religieuses, à le reconnaître comme tel. Pour tous les autres, le « miracle » n’est pas évident, il est donc inexistant ; en effet il reste dissimulé dans les objets et dans les événements quotidiens” (*Mademoiselle Christina*, Paris: L’Herne, 1978, 7).

⁹ *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969, i; *No Souvenirs: Journal, 1957-1969*. New York: Harper and Row, 1977, 1; and *The History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1, *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, xiii.

¹⁰ William PADEN, “Before the Sacred became Theological: Rereading the Durkheimian Legacy.” In Thomas A. IDINOPULOS, Edward A. YONAN (eds.), *Religion and Reductionism: Essays on Eliade, Segal, and the Challenge of the Social Sciences for the Study of Religion*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994, 198-209, 203.

recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level [...] as something religious [anything else] misses the one unique and irreducible element in it – the element of the sacred.”¹¹ Dennett identifies this position with “those who insist that only those who believe, only those with a deep appreciation of the sacred, are to be entrusted with the investigation of religious phenomena” (261). Dennett considers this a “preemptive disqualification” that is used to discredit rational analyses of religion, and again this is not an accurate representation of what Eliade has said.

Attribution Theory and the Sui Generis Discourse

This itself is a good example of someone taking as fact what is, in fact, an interpretation of Eliade, who has been consistently presented as a (if not the) primary representative of “the *sui generis* discourse.” This has by and large become as much “fact” as his naïve understanding of “the reality of the sacred.” Recently, Ann Taves commented that “[m]uch of the discussion of the limitation of a *sui generis* approach has centered on the work of Mircea Eliade [...] [who] has been widely criticized for promoting a view of the sacred as *sui generis* and ontologically autonomous.”¹² However, I will argue that this perpetuates a creation of scholarly discourse: “fact” that is interpretation and not credibly supported by the facts.¹³ Now, although Eliade never made the claim or used the words, “*sui generis* religion... can be found in one manner or another in virtually every book and article he published on religion” according to Russell McCutcheon.¹⁴

In *Religious Experience Reconsidered* Taves “focus [...] is on experiences deemed religious [...] the processes whereby experiences come to be understood as religious at multiple levels” (xiii). She explains that “If we want to understand how anything at all, including experience,

¹¹ Daniel DENNETT, *Breaking the Spell*, New York: Viking, 2006, 259, quoting ELIADE, *Myth and Reality*, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, iii.

¹² Although Taves does go on to say that “some who know his work best argue for a more nuanced view (see RENNIE 1996, 179-212).” (*Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 19 n.)

¹³ What makes Taves’ work of more importance here is her focus on Religious Experience, which, “Reconsidered” is to some extent reinstated as a valid object of study. The Eliadean fact (*faptul*) as both “something real: a thing that has been done, a ‘deed,’ a ‘fact’” and yet as something that is not simply and directly experienced is something that also needs to be reconsidered in a similar light.

¹⁴ Russell MCCUTCHEON, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, 52.

becomes religious, we need to turn our attention to the processes whereby people sometimes ascribe the special characteristics to things that we (as scholars) associate with terms such as ‘religious,’ ‘mystical,’ ‘spiritual,’ etcetera” (8). She advocates “a way of studying ‘religion’ that allows us to understand how humans have used things deemed religious (simple ascriptions) as building blocks to create the more complex formations (composite ascriptions) we typically refer to as ‘religions’” (9). What she calls “specialness” can be “a function of value” (35). However, “[v]alue is not the only way to think about specialness” (35). Another way is the beautiful: “people may view themselves as creating something in which the absolute can manifest itself. Thus, for example, artists often create things that they and others consider beautiful” (37). “When individuals or groups make composite ascriptions regarding paths they set apart as special, they not only deem the thing special but also constitute a path whereby the special thing (for example, the enlightenment of the Buddha or the presence of Christ) may be recreated, re-encountered, and thus re-experienced in the present” (54). I suggest that the identification of such things as “special” is simply too vague and that Eliade’s more precise idea of hierophany, or better, ontophany as experiences apprehended as revelatory of the existence and nature of imperceptible realities would be more helpful.

Throughout her otherwise extremely useful analysis, Taves not only continues to talk of “the *sui generis* model” with no acknowledgement that it remains arguable whether there actually is one single and unified model, but actually divides the whole field of religious studies on this basis.¹⁵ Despite the other values of this work, the ascription of unity and consistence to a “*sui generis* model” is problematic. Since the time of Rudolf Otto, the only unequivocal defenders of “*sui generis* religion” I have been able to find have been Daniel Pals and Lorne Dawson,¹⁶ and they were proponents of a scientific approach. This alone seems significant evidence that the “discourse” is more a product of its critics than of actual scholars who explicitly advanced this as a theoretical position. Recently Donald Braxton likewise divides religious studies into

¹⁵ “There have been two major approaches to the study of ‘religious experience’ in religious studies, which I refer to as the *sui generis* model and the ascriptive model,” Ann TAVES, “Ascription, Attribution and Cognition in the Study of Experiences Deemed Religious.” *Religion* 38/2 (2008), 125-140, 125.

¹⁶ Daniel PALS, “Reductionism and Belief: An Appraisal of Recent Attacks on the Doctrine of Irreducible Religion.” *Journal of Religion* 66 (1986), 18-36 and “Is Religion a *Sui generis* Phenomenon?” *JAAR* 55 (1987), 259-82. Lorne L. DAWSON, “*Sui Generis* Phenomena and Disciplinary Axioms: Rethinking Pals’ Proposal.” *Religion* 20/1 (1990), 38-51.

two camps, this time “*sui generis* Religious Studies and its postmodern critics.”¹⁷

There seems to be a fairly clear tendency to confabulate “camps” and “positions” more to illuminate one’s own position by contrast. Braxton’s very title, “The Third Way of Religious Studies: Beyond *Sui Generis* Religious Studies and the Postmodernists” perfectly illustrates this tendency to use “the *sui generis* position” as one of two poles, to which the writer’s own position is contrasted as a corrective. It seems that even Taves is using her characterization of a supposed *sui generis* model more to position and locate her own understanding by expressing *what she does not intend*, than as an accurate representation of what other scholars *have intended*. She states that “the *sui generis* approach to the study of religion, which defines religion in terms of religious experience, sets the study of religion apart and protects it with taboos against comparing it with nonreligious things” (*Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 14). This is clearly not so in the case of Eliade who explicitly stated that “[a]nything man has ever handled, felt, come in contact with or loved can become a hierophany” (*Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 11), and explicitly did compare the archaic/religious and the modern/non-religious throughout *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. I have a considerably longer argument in support of my claims here but suffice it to say that considering Eliade’s insistence that anything can be considered religious and that things considered religious by some people are not so by others, there seems to be fairly decisive evidence that Eliade belongs more to the attributional camp rather than any supposed *sui generis* camp.

*Believing is Seeing*¹⁸

Eliade’s understanding was that *uninterpreted* physical perception is without meaning – it is unreal, illusory, profane – *factual*, but not yet *fact*. It is, nonetheless, the only possible source of insight into the real, the true, the meaningful – the “sacred.” Religious items are *experienced* by those who venerate them as something more than their

¹⁷ Donald M. BRAXTON, “The Third Way of Religious Studies: Beyond *Sui Generis* Religious Studies and the Postmodernists.” *Zygon* 44 (2009), no. 2, 389-413, 389.

¹⁸ Much, but not all, of the following material was published in RENNIE, “Mircea Eliade: The Perception of the Sacred in the Profane, Intention, Reduction, and Cognitive Theory.” *Temenos* 43 (2007), no. 1, 73-98.

experience gives to others – they are vehicles for the perception of the sacred. They are hierophanies or ontophanies.

According to Eliade, every effective religious symbol is a hierophany, a revelation of the sacred and in his analysis of symbols he is quite specific about his understanding of the apprehension of the sacred. (What holds true for symbols also holds true for myths and rituals, since they are symbols in narrative or dramatic form.) In “Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism”¹⁹ he explains that

A symbol is not a replica of objective reality. It reveals something deeper and more fundamental. [...] Symbols are capable of revealing a modality of the real or a condition of the World which is not evident on the plane of immediate experience. [...] This is not, of course, a matter of rational cognition, but of apprehension by the active consciousness prior to reflection. It is of such apprehensions that the World is made [...] it is not a question of considered knowledge, but of an immediate comprehension of the “cipher” of the World. The World “speaks” through the medium of the [symbol], and its “word” is directly understood.²⁰

Religious symbols allow people to “become conscious” of alternative modalities of the real. They “disclose to us a perspective from whence things appear different” and they “make the immediate reality ‘shine.’”²¹

*Implication, Apperception, Ascription, Interpretation*²²

The apprehension of *facts*, physical perceptions, which are, as material perceptions, mundane and ordinary, as being authentically revelatory of *fact*, a “special” reality whose existence is not immediately and empirically perceptible but is nonetheless signified or implied by the

¹⁹ “Some Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism” in Mircea ELIADE and Joseph KITAGAWA (eds.), *History of Religions: Problems of Methodology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959. Reprinted as “Observations on Religious Symbolism,” in *The Two and the One*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965, 201–11, and in RENNIE, *Eliade: A Critical Reader*, London-Oakville: Equinox, 2006, 132–40.

²⁰ “Methodological Remarks,” 97–98; *The Two and the One*, 201–02; *A Critical Reader*, 133.

²¹ ELIADE, *Symbolism, the Sacred, and the Arts*, edited by Diane APOSTOLOS-CAPPADONA, New York: Crossroad, 1986, 6.

²² It is not my purpose in using the following optical effects to suggest either an optical basis or a neurological substrate to religious experience. I simply use them as illustrative analogies to my interpretation of Eliade.

facts and so simultaneously “concealed and revealed” within them is characteristic of Eliade’s understanding of religion.

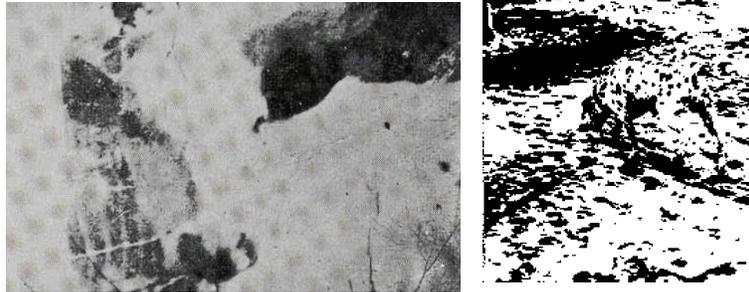


Figure One. Such images are usually not recognizable until the subject is told what they are. Then they become instantly and permanently meaningful. (Cow and Dalmatian)

This can be compared to the optical effect of pattern recognition. When exposed to a confused or unclear perception in which the “noise” overcomes the “signal,” some of us may not perceive the information implied by the experience. However, once a certain stimulus is supplied in the form of some semantic input, the signal may overcome the noise.

This sort of conceptually determined perception is known as “apperception”; a physical perception whose significance is determined by prior experience and is thus experienced differently by differently prepared subjects. It is what Taves calls “top-down (culture sensitive)” processing (*Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 93).²³ Without appropriate prior conditioning experience some subjects will continue to be unaware of implications that others apprehend as experience. Looked at in this way religious myths, symbols, and rituals can be seen as deliberately constructed communicable experiences, the aim of which is, not so much to *themselves* communicate the sacred/real, but to transform our normal, mundane perception of the world into a perception (or more properly an apperception) of the sacred – to make certain *implications* of mundane perceptions apparent.

Eliade explicitly recognizes that in such cases “the meaning is in the mind” but adds that “it is not a *creation* of the mind.”²⁴ In order to

²³ Thomas Kuhn famously argued that even in the hard sciences, “paradigms determine large areas of experience.” *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972, 129.

²⁴ ELIADE, “The Sacred in a Secular World,” *Cultural Hermeneutics* 1, 1973, 101–113, 103; in RENNIE, *A Critical Reader*, 59, emphasis added.

explain further what I take Eliade to mean here, let me refer to certain other optical effects, specifically these Kanisza figures.

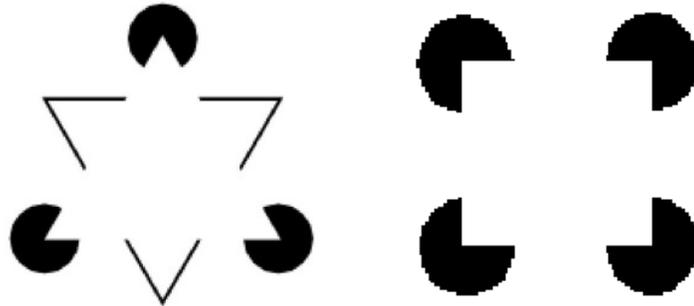


Figure Two. Kanisza Figures in which the suggested shape is strongly perceived by the subject although not empirically present to the senses.

Here, the perception of the central triangle and square is in the mind, but it is not solely a *creation* of the mind – it is strongly implied by the data. These Kanisza objects demonstrate that it is often misleading to assume too rigid a distinction between the experience and the interpretation of the experience, between the perception and the implication of the perception. Perhaps *all* sighted human subjects perceive the dividing line between the inner and outer areas of the implied shapes (which do not exist as an external physical stimulus or a properly intentional object). However, other possibilities are raised by analysis of another common optical illusion, the Müller-Lyer drawing:

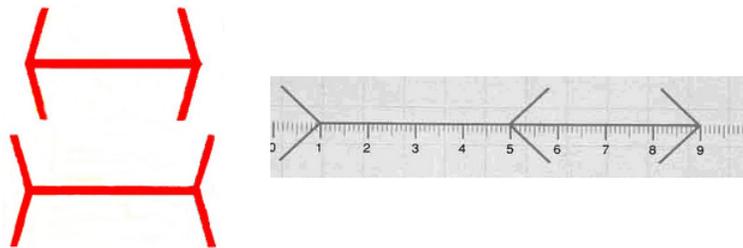


Figure 3. The Müller-Lyer Illusion.

The most common effect is to perceive the upper /right-hand horizontal as considerably shorter than the other, which it is not. It has been suggested that a normal human subject who has not been immured (quite literally) in a “carpentered” society surrounded by three-dimensional rectilinear

corners, or perhaps who has not been brought up in a society where perspective drawing is commonplace, will *not* experience this illusion.²⁵ That, of course, is precisely the point – what presents itself as straightforward, physical perception may in fact be culturally determined. As William James recognized, there is “*a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call ‘something there,’* more deep and more general than any of the special and particular ‘senses’ [in the human consciousness].”²⁶ When our immediate perceptions, combined with our past experience, imply the existence of something strongly enough, we have a tendency to experience its existence as a real presence.²⁷

The great majority of subjects will agree on the perception of a cow and a dog (and *only* a cow and a dog) in my first example. By contrast, the implication of the religious symbol, the apprehension of the sacred, the ascription of specialness, is neither uniform nor universal. Nor, of course, is it as simple as the optical effects that I have used to illustrate these ideas. When it comes to religious symbols there is no “God’s-eye view” from which to determine what is “really” there. I would suggest that the operation of religious imagery is something like a combination of these two effects, in which “personal experience and religious background” serves to condition the apperception of the sacred – so different people apprehend different things – but, like the Kanisza figures, what we seem to perceive *is* implied by actual perception.

Eliade’s analysis of symbols suggests that the apperception of ontophany is not arbitrary or delusory because it is based on our communal experience of the world. His sacred is not *either* a value placed *on* objects *or* a power that shines *through* objects but a complex reciprocation of *both*. It involves both top-down and bottom-up processing. For example,

Before the discovery of agriculture, man did not grasp the religious meaning of vegetation. But with the discovery, man identified his destiny with the destiny of a plant; he translated the meaning of human existence into vegetative terms. As is the case with a plant, I am born from a seed, I

²⁵ Arun AHLUWALIA, “An intra-cultural investigation of susceptibility to ‘perspective’ and ‘non-perspective’ spatial illusions,” *British Journal of Psychology* 69 (1978): 233-241. Robert N. MCCAULEY, “Susceptibility to the Müller-Lyer Illusion, Theory-Neutral Observation, and the Diachronic Penetrability of the Visual Input System.” *Philosophical Psychology* 19/1 (2006): 79-101.

²⁶ JAMES, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, London: Collins, The Fontana Library, 5th edition, 1972, 73, emphasis original.

²⁷ Taves’ discussion of “Imagination and Reality” (156) and of the “real presence” of Christ in the Eucharist (141-147) are very relevant here.

will die, I will be buried, and I will come to life again. This meaning is certainly in the mind, yet it could not have developed before the discovery of agriculture.²⁸

Eliade points out that “No conquest of the material world was effected without a corresponding impact on human imagination and behavior.”²⁹ Like the discovery of agriculture, the discovery of the bow and arrow provided human culture with previously unknown images, effects, and relationships. All new material technologies make possible a range of symbolism that is not entirely a creation of the mind but is (like the lines in the Kanisza illusion) suggested by empirical data. “Every hierophany we look at is also an historical fact. Every manifestation of the sacred takes place in some historical situation. Even the most personal and transcendent mystical experiences are affected by the age in which they occur.”³⁰

It is necessary to add one further layer of (hopefully) suggestive visual imagery to complete the explanation of Eliade’s understanding of our “experience of the sacred.” Profane experience resembles an ambiguous (or more accurately, polysemic, “multivalent”) image – Wittgenstein’s Duck/Rabbit image is a famous example, but there are plenty of others (the Mexican artist Octavio Ocampo is particularly adept at producing such images).

There is a multitude of potential interpretations of our empirical perceptions. The specific ontophany will be unavoidably shaped and colored by the historical situation in which it occurs because it does not differ empirically from that situation. However, the apperception of the sacred is always *more* than that historical situation and once one has “seen” the sacred [or the cow] the prior perception of the image as meaningless is almost impossible to recover and any alternative apperception will be almost impossible to comprehend. For Eliade, the ontophany is always an *anamnesis*. One does not actually “see” anything “new” but rather “unforgets” the meaning of what was already there, as one suddenly realizes that the cow was there all along. This argument explains how the majority of (particularly US) scholars genuinely and irresistibly now “see” the *sui generis* discourse in the works of Mircea Eliade. They may well, by now, be incapable of seeing anything else.

²⁸ ELIADE, “The Sacred in the Secular World,” 103; RENNIE, *A Critical Reader*, 59.

²⁹ “Notes on the Symbolism of the Arrow,” from *Religions in Antiquity*, edited by Jacob NEUSNER, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968, 463-75, 465; in RENNIE, *A Critical Reader*, 143.

³⁰ ELIADE, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, London: Sheed and Ward 1958, 2; in RENNIE, *A Critical Reader*, 43.

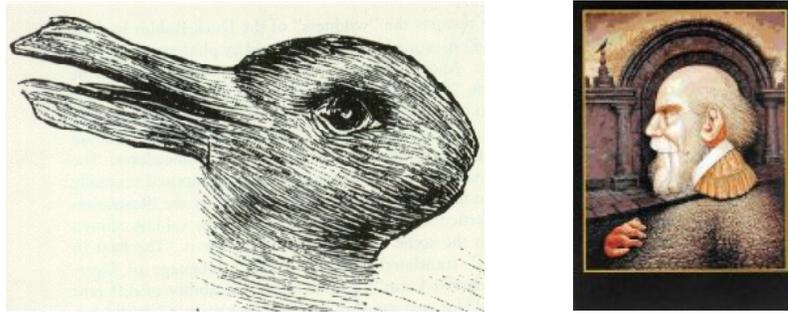


Figure Four. Like ambiguous or polysemic images, the religious symbol is multivalent and more than one meaning can be seen in the “profane” or empirical experience. (The duck/rabbit and an example of Octavio Ocampo’s ambiguous art, “General’s Family.”)

For Eliade, it seems, this is what the study of religion, as he explicates and practices it, is about – the (ap)perception of experience as meaningful. This is, in part, why the religious cannot be reduced to the economic, the psychological, the political etc. These are *specific strategies* of meaning-recognition, specific ways in which the empirical data of physical perception and lived experience can be rendered more-or-less meaningful. They do not concern the *general category* of such recognition, the apperception of the sacred in the profane, the identification of the special, of fact among the facts, and so they are not about the religious activity which (by definition for Eliade) centers on that apperception. To interpret Eliadean “non–reduction” as insisting on the ontological autonomy of the sacred or the “*sui generis* discourse” merely perpetuates and compounds overly-simplistic readings of his understanding of the sacred and the real.

Religious items are physical experiences, that “fine tune” our apperception of the world encouraging the recognition of a consistency and coherence to which we can conform our behavior. This image is taken from Wassily Kandinsky’s *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* where he says that “[t]he mood [literally “voice,” *Die Stimmung* – the way it *speaks* to one] of the work [of art] can deepen – and clarify – the mood of its audience [...] such works of art stop the soul from coarsening. They tune it to a certain pitch, as the tuning-key does the strings of an instrument.”³¹

³¹ “Die ‚Stimmung‘ des Werkes kann die Stimmung des Zuschauers noch vertiefen – und verklären. Jedenfalls halten solche Werke die Seele von der Vergrößerung ab. Sie erhalten sie auf einer gewissen Höhe, wie der Stimmschlüssel die Saiten eines Instrumentes.” *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, 5.

Religious symbols can be seen as catalytic “seminal experiences” that enable the recognition of a *meaning* in ensuing experience, just as the words “cow” and “Dalmatian” enabled our recognition of the content of the uncertain images earlier. This, I believe, constitutes a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship of religion and art.

... *and Art*

Art, religious art particularly, uses traditional forms to enable and encourage the apperception of the sacred in mundane experience. According to Eliade:

the imaginary universes created in novels, stories, and tales reveals certain values and meanings unique to the human condition which, without them, would remain unknown, or, at the very least, imperfectly understood [...] for the literary imagination is the continuation of mythological creativity and oneiric experience. [...] Just as all religious phenomena are hierophanic (in the sense that they reveal the sacred in a profane object or act), literary creation unveils the universal and exemplary meanings hidden in men and in the most common place events.³²

It does not require a great deal of imagination to understand the potential practical contribution (and the dangers) of perceiving (or apperceiving) human experience as having some meaning, as requiring some coherent and consistent response, and as offering some potential resolution to the human dilemma. Eliade’s understanding of religious symbolism goes some way towards suggesting how such imaginary, or at least imaginative, responses to our environment might be “true” in the sense of workable adaptations to the human condition, even if their historical accuracy or physical factuality is unverifiable or even obviously false. He consistently stresses the imaginary as effective and goes so far as to say that, “I am inclined to add that the reflections of the objective conquests upon such imaginary universes are perhaps even more important for an understanding of man.”³³ In *The Quest* (1969) he points out that initiatory motifs and symbols “partake of an *imaginary* universe, and this universe

³² *Journal III*, 283, and also see 284, 19 November 1977: “in the framework of the colloquium *Religious Studies and the Humanities: Theories of Interpretation*, sponsored by our department, I gave a lecture on literary imagination and religious studies. It is the first time that I speak in public about my literary writings and their relationship to the history of religions.”

³³ “Notes on the Symbolism of the Arrow,” 465; in RENNIE, *A Critical Reader*, 143.

is no less important for human existence than the world of everyday life” (121), and in *Images and Symbols* (1952/1961): “that essential and indescribable part of man that is called *imagination* dwells in realms of symbolism and still lives upon archaic myths and theologies” (19). On a slightly different note, but one that serves further to explain his meaning, he states that “the novel must tell something, because narrative (that is, literary invention) enriches the world no more and no less than history, although on another level. We have more creative possibilities in imaginary universes than we do on the level of history”³⁴ This is neither ahistoricism, nor mystical obfuscation, but a potentially empirically investigable understanding of culture and creativity.

That imagination is not only of great importance but also an integral part of religious life is indicated by Eliade’s statement that “[o]ne can pass through a Symplegades in so far as one behaves ‘as a spirit,’ that is to say shows imagination and intelligence and so proves oneself capable of detaching oneself from immediate reality.”³⁵ This identifies “spiritual” existence with imagination and, specifically, with the ability to “detach oneself from immediate reality.” For Eliade, “spiritual” existence is constituted by the specific human imaginative ability to become detached from immediately experienced reality, *träire*, *Erlebnis*, or “history.” This is his “escape from history,” nothing more (or less) mystical than the ability to learn from that which one has not physically experienced and, via “spiritual” discipline, to avoid the purely physical effects of causal determination and to apprehend the world as something other, something more, than the sum of our physical perceptions. At one extreme this might be represented by astonishing feats, like sitting naked on a glacier for days, but at the other it is simply not allowing the quotidian pressures of life to “get you down,” (which may, in the end, be no less astonishing a feat given human psychology and causal determinism). One “escapes from history” every time one smiles in the face of adversity or performs any act that is not directly determined by historical/empirical preconditions. When one actually experiences the world as infused with meaning – possessed of a compelling causal narrative – one can react to it with more confidence, control, and consistency.

Our ability to “escape history” in this way is directly dependent on our relationship to imaginative narrative. One illustration that I have already employed was taken from Martin Seligman’s 1975 book,

³⁴ *Journal II, 1957-1969*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989, 205.

³⁵ “Methodological Remarks,” 101; *The Two and the One*, 205; *A Critical Reader*, 135.

Helplessness.³⁶ “Helplessness” is the condition in which an experimental subject acquiesces and no longer makes any attempt to avoid “powerful negative stimuli” (suffering). This condition is induced relatively easily in subjects that have no way to control their suffering. Given some measure of control, subjects are considerably more resistant to such “helplessness” but continue to strive for an improvement of their condition, no matter how elusive control may be. In empirically controlled experiments Seligman found that “merely telling a human subject about controllability duplicates the effects of actual controllability” (48). In other words, a story *can have the same effect as events of the world of real experience*. Stories, *as stories*, are part of the world of experience. By dint of imagination and the apperception of the sacred in the profane humanity can be described as “escaping history,” being “detached from the immediate reality,” “autonomous” in that we are not wholly determined by our physical environment but contribute, through the imaginative generation of narrative and other experiences, to the construction of our own determining environment. Imaginative creations of the human mind become a component part of the conditioning factors of human experience, and ones which history reveals to be of the greatest significance. Significance is not either an inherent characteristic of objects or events or a creation of human interpretation, but a reciprocating engine of both.

To those who insist on the self-evident nature of the empirical and perceptible as the real, Eliade’s equation of the sacred and the real will no doubt continue to appear simply wrong, as might his insistence that the religious cannot be reduced to any other area of human analysis, and the creative hermeneutics of Eliade’s history of religions will remain an unwarranted proliferation of imaginary non-entities. The meaninglessness of religious items for any particular group, however, cannot render religion meaningless for others. If it be accepted that the creative imagination has an effective role in inducing specific apperceptions then symbols, as creative, meaningful, pre-reflective devices, are not *just* symbols but effective tools for tuning perception. In his insightful discussion of literary Darwinism, Jonathan Kramnick reports that

“[a] more correct view of human evolution [...] would entail simultaneous evolution of the human and its environment, the latter consisting of artifacts and concepts that can be learned and improved. The organism is viewed then as part of the environment and changes in each occur during

³⁶ SELIGMAN, *Helplessness*, San Francisco: Freeman and Co., 1975; RENNIE *Reconstructing Eliade*, 223–24.

the trajectory of evolution.” He summarizes: “[h]umans don’t so much confront an established environment as create the environments to which they also respond.”³⁷

Studies have indicated that religious kibbutzim behaved more co-operatively than their secular counterparts and that the distinction was greatest with those men who attended synagogue daily.³⁸ The authors of that study suggest that it is the public display of devotion that effects this distinction. This Eliadean analysis suggests that those who attend religious ritual more frequently will be more effectively primed by that ritual to (ap)perceive their world as being possessed of an order in which co-operative, obedient, “righteous” behavior is self-evidently rewarding. Their experience of the world, conditioned by religious myths, symbols, and rituals, is an apperception of the profane as suffused by the sacred and possessed of a predictable and reliable (and benevolent) structure. Just as the word “cow” allowed us to recognize the image and transform an apparently meaningless chaos of shapes into a meaningful constellation, so religious traditions encourage their adherents to apprehend the world as a meaningful whole to which a specific response is appropriate, so as to recognize what we ought to do about what is.

If such an understanding of religion be adopted, what implications might this have for its study? Nothing massively far-reaching. The study will go on much as before with ethnography and philology leading the way, but for methodologists and theorists there may be some fruitful implications. While I agree concerning the importance of empirical and clinical studies, it is implied that there is also a complementary component to the study of religion that will remain for the foreseeable future irreducibly subjective or aesthetic, more akin to literary and artistic criticism than to any clinical procedure or laboratory methodology.

In previous articles I have argued that Eliade’s thought is not in conflict with the perspective brought to the study of religion recently by

³⁷ Jonathan KRAMNICK, “Against Literary Darwinism,” *Critical Inquiry* 37/2 (2011): 315-347, 347. Quoting from Elisabeth A. LLOYD and Marcus W. FELDMAN, “Evolutionary Psychology: A View from Evolutionary Biology,” *Psychological Inquiry* 13/2 (2002): 150-156, 153.

³⁸ Richard SOSIS & Bradley RUFFLE, “Religious Ritual and Cooperation: Testing for a Relationship on Israeli Religious and Secular Kibbutzim,” *Current Anthropology* 44 (2003), 713-722 and “Does It Pay To Pray? Evaluating the Economic Return to Religious Ritual,” *The B. E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy* 7, 2003, 1-35 (available at <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wpa/wuwpx/030-9002.html>).

the cognitive science of religion.³⁹ It is not my intention here to demonstrate that, but to open the possibility that it has potential for providing a foundational understanding of the role of the arts in religion and of religion itself as a natural and effective organ of human culture. Eliade's insights into the role of the arts in religious traditions are borne out and extended by the researches of cognitive science, while in turn an Eliadean understanding of religious traditions can integrate and provide a conceptually coherent foundation for cognitive and naturalist analyses of the role of religion and the arts in human culture. The recent work on "biocultural criticism" by Brian Boyd,⁴⁰ despite a heavy reliance on empirical neuroscientific findings, also claims that "precisely what questions an evolutionary criticism will open up in what works or traditions depends as much on the imagination of good readers as on the researches of cognitive and evolutionary anthropologists" (398). Boyd's evolutionary approach, "although it is informed by science, [...] does not limit itself to scientific reduction, since art by its nature invites a creative and original response, to some degree subjective and open-ended, an aura of implication rather than an exact transfer of information" (390). Imaginative creativity can, from both an Eliadean perspective and the perspective of this biocultural criticism, be seen to be both an existentially valuable response to a challenging environment and to contribute to an accurate and practical understanding of religious traditions. As Boyd says,

Creativity matters to us as humans, but may seem difficult to account for in terms of hard biological costs and benefits. Yet like sex, wasteful in that we lose half of our variable genes in each offspring [...] creativity ultimately benefits us in producing a wide array of behavioral options, some of which will survive better than others under unpredictable selection pressures. (302)

It is not *consciously* that we appreciate creativity as benefitting us in terms of survival. Again like sex, it engages our attention and is apprehended as self-rewarding, its value appears self-evident.

³⁹ RENNIE, "Mircea Eliade and the Perception of the Sacred in the Profane" (*supra* n. 18), 89; "Mircea Eliade and the Cognitive Study of Religion: Contradictory or Complementary Approaches," unpublished paper read at Lafayette College, Easton, PA, April 1st, 2010; "Mircea Eliade and the Cognitive Study of Religion: Consonances between Cognitive Science and Eliadean Concepts (and Possible Applications Concerning Religion and Art)." Annual National Conference of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, Friday October 29th, 2010, reworked and extended as the present paper.

⁴⁰ *On the Origin of Stories*, Cambridge, MA, 2009, bearing in mind the salutary caveats of Jonathan Kramnick.

Valorization as Paying Attention

One of the areas in which Eliadean and cognitive theory coalesce is that of attention and valorization. This is central to the understanding that I am attempting to elucidate. One needs to proceed cautiously in the area of attention. Patricia Churchland pointed out that “the nature and function of attention is [...] poorly understood” and Harold Pashler went so far as to say that “no one knows what attention is, and there may even not be an ‘it’ there to be known about (although of course there might be).”⁴¹ Nonetheless, according to the “casual usage of ‘attention,’” “the mind is continually assigning priority to some sensory information over others, and this selection process makes a profound difference for both conscious experience and behavior” (Pashler, 2). The work of Pashler and his colleagues “discusses attention within the framework of the contemporary, information-processing approach. ... [Their] ultimate goal is to work out some account of how the mind processes information ... to analyze the mind in terms of different subsystems that form, retain, and transmit representations of the world” (6, 7). The proposed analysis of Eliade is closely concerned with his understanding of religion as a process of ascribing value – “assigning priority to some sensory information over others” – and I have concluded that

[o]ne aspect of Eliade’s history of religions is that its autonomy springs from the central place given to the specifically religious form of consciousness. [This] is specifically the study of hierophany, of the apprehension of the sacred in our necessarily profane existence: the tendency to valorize, and to evaluate some certain phenomena ... as “of ultimate concern,” that upon which we are “absolutely dependent,” that which constitutes our proper conditioning antecedents or origins: that which is the source of significance and value in all other phenomena. Properly the study of religion would become the study of the cognition of value. (Rennie 1996: 243)

In traditional cultures that value was, as I say, “reinforced by mythical rather than by rational means,” that is, the ascription of value was made apparent and self-evident through the process of acculturation, through “appeals to our species preferences and our intuitions, often as they have been modified by local culture” (Boyd, *Origin of Stories*, 411).

⁴¹ Patricia CHURCHLAND, *Neurophilosophy: Toward a Unified Science of the Mind/Brain*. Cambridge, MA-London: MIT Press, 1986, 232; Harold PASHLER, “Introduction,” in *The Psychology of Attention*. Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1999: 1-34, 1.

What is it to “valorize” something but to pay close and sustained attention to it, to concern oneself with it, to cultivate it, to direct others to pay attention to it, to learn from it and to look to it for meaning? (and, ultimately, to exchange goods of intrinsic practical value for it – the social capital invested in religious behavior often has a pay-off in material capital). Boyd particularly emphasizes attention in the same way as Eliade emphasizes the ascription of value. He points out that our species has a “singular capacity to share attention” (*Origin of Stories*, 7). “The unique human capacity for narrative emerges from animal capacities for representing events but adds specifically human capacities for joint attention” (16). Initially, “Childhood play and storytelling for all ages engages our attention so compulsively through our interest in event comprehension and social monitoring that over time their concentrated information patterns develop our facility for complex situational thought.”⁴² “From infancy humans seek to command the attention of others, to shape it more finely, and to share it more fully” (96). “[F]iction specifically improves our social cognition and our thinking beyond the here and now. Both invite and hold our attention strongly enough to engage and reengage our minds, altering synaptic strengths a little at a time, over many encounters, by exposing us to the supernormally intense patterns of art” (209).

One question has constantly been involved in the academic study of religion – why do we hold in high esteem and pay close attention to objects, acts, and events that have no inherent, intrinsic, or evident pragmatic value? The answer is that their value might be latent (that is, real but not apparent) and further, there are complex cognitive and neurological processes, often communicated and propagated non-verbally, that determine our apprehension of value. This apprehension is neither voluntary nor conscious but is culturally determined and apprehended as a simple self-evident perceptual experience.

With influences from Ellen Dissanayake, Robert Root-Bernstein, John Tooby and Lisa Cosmides, Boyd indicates an understanding of art in which

the feedback of action, attention, reaction, and the refinement of action to shape further attention and reaction provide an exclusively human basis for art ... we can view art as a kind of cognitive *play*, the set of activities designed to engage human *attention* through their appeal to our preference for inferentially rich and therefore patterned information ... As long as art in any form can reward us enough to hold our attention it can reconfigure

⁴² BOYD, 49, citing TOOBY and COSMIDES, “Does Beauty Build Adapted Minds? Towards an Evolutionary Theory of Aesthetics, Fiction and the Arts,” *Substance* 30 (2001), 6-27.

our minds in significant ways. ... In art ... we work at forms especially elaborated to hold attention in ways that appeal enough to override the criterion of relevance ... Art fundamentally alters our relation to our world ... By focusing our attention away from the given to a world of shared, humanly created possibility, art makes all the difference. (7, 85, 94, 99-100, 111, 125)

This is where the connection to religion and Eliade's "escape from history" comes alive: such use of art is the mechanism by which religious traditions enhance and tune experience in existentially valuable ways.

Fiction enormously enhances creativity. It offers us incentives for and practice in thinking beyond the here and now, so that we can use whole of possibility space to take new vantage points on actuality and on the ways in which it might be transformed ... Because fiction extends our imaginative reach, we are not confined to our here and now or dominated by automatic responses. We can think in terms of hidden causes, inspiring or admonitory examples from the past, fictional or real, utopian or dystopian models, of probable scenarios or consequences, or of counterfactual whose very absurdity clarifies our thought. (Thus Boyd, 197, 198, in a manner obviously reminiscent of Eliade's comments on literary creativity)

Our myths are the fictions that we live by and these inspiring or admonitory examples are the exemplary models that are the hallmark of religious apprehension in the Eliadean understanding.

Neuroscientists Max Weisbuch and Nalini Ambady have made a very strong argument for "non-verbal behavior" as a source of social influence and "the shared consciousness that characterizes culture." "If we consider only the prevalence of exposure to potentially influential acts, then the capacity for influence is larger for nonverbal than verbal communication." Although by "non-verbal behavior" Weisbuch and Ambady "refer to facial expressions, body language and prosodic vocalization (e.g. tone, pitch, rhythm)," ⁴³ it must be considered that if such subtle nonverbal behaviors have such significant effect, then the effect of not-so-subtle influences like art – statuary, music, ritual performance, drama etc. – cannot but have influence in generating "the shared consciousness that characterizes culture." Unquestionably, the fine grain of this effect must be recognized in that people in the same street of

⁴³ Max WEISBUCH, Nalini AMBADY, "Non-conscious routes to building culture: Nonverbal components of socialization." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 15 (2008), 159-183. Reprinted in C. WHITEHEAD (ed.), *The Origins of Consciousness in the Social World*. Exeter, UK: Imprint, 160, 164.

even a very stable and homogenous culture seem to demonstrate considerable religious differences.

Conclusion

We are only gradually becoming aware of the processes that generate “the consciousness that characterizes culture” and that awareness is itself a change in such consciousness and has significant effect in the development of modernity, post modernity, science and the arts. Eliade’s analysis of religion was an early step in this direction but one that can be seen to be consonant with more recent developments. It could and should be used to enhance our insights into the workings of religion, to provide a general perspective from which the newer insights of cognitive studies and cultural neuroscience can be integrated with the older understanding of the history of religions without losing the valuable insights of earlier theoreticians (and, perhaps, allowing us to distinguish the long-term value from the short-term gain). It can potentially integrate the best of both cultural neuroscience and the non-reductive phenomenological approach.

The mechanisms of these processes are natural and cognitive: repeated experiences created or shaped by human agency to attract and retain our attention influence the way that we apprehend and respond to other experiences, potentially in a meaningful, adaptive way. The potential is there to change synaptic strengths and neural activity so as to make certain behaviors self-rewarding: “Art can reconfigure minds only so long as it rewards us enough, like play, to hold our attention again and again” (Boyd 94). An entirely natural and empirically assessable understanding of religion can thus be effected without any necessary conflict between the truth values of religious traditions except that those truth values must be most importantly seen as creative, artistic, evolving, productive, rather than historically accurate or ontologically verifiable. For those who have been culturally conditioned to apprehend historical accuracy and ontology to be self-evidently more valuable than human creativity and play this understanding may well prove unattainable. However, with a growing understanding of the functional importance of the arts and creative *poesis*, the historic vision is not the only option.

One implication is that the arts and the religious traditions should not be artificially separated, nor should the verbal and visual arts. The logocentric tendency to identify religious traditions with scriptures and propositional constructs must be overcome, as must the tendency to consider literary and verbal constructs as something other than artforms. According to Weisbuch and Ambady,

empirical research on social influence has largely been research on verbal social influence ... It is our argument that the methodological focus on verbal influence has unnecessarily limited the scope of what might be theorized and concluded with regard to social influence and shared beliefs. Specifically, as a channel of influence, nonverbal communication may be equally prevalent, more influential, and based in a more primitive and spontaneous psychological system than verbal communication. If so, cumulative knowledge of the psychological processes responsible for shared beliefs – and hence culture – may require considerable revision. (163)

Obviously it is also implied that we can never accurately analyze any religion or art form out of the elaborate context to which it properly belongs: as Eliade always insisted, we must always interpret religious behaviors *in their own terms*. In this way, we could attain an understanding of religion as the creative fine tuning of our perceived experiences so as to facilitate effective interaction with our environment.

The scientific method is largely one of identifying error. It encourages us to rinse and scour and throw out the dirty bathwater as often and as thoroughly as possible, but the study of religion, although capable of benefitting hugely from scientific input, is not yet itself a science and still must exercise the free creativity of the arts. Using the authority of science to attack the humanities is a characteristic part of the iconoclastic approach to scholarship to which I referred in my introduction. Jonathan Kramnick points out that the kind of literary Darwinism he opposes “shares many features with earlier attacks on the humanities” (343) and Edward Slingerland’s *What Science Offers the Humanities*⁴⁴ is likewise fairly typical in spending almost one third of its content on excoriating the current humanities.

One of the most fundamental operations of a scientific approach is the identification of error (as Charles Sanders Peirce and Popperian falsification both inform us).⁴⁵ The principle is enshrined in Sherlock Holmes’ famous dictum: “once we have eliminated the impossible, then whatever remains, no matter how improbable, is the truth.” However, once again, the study of religion is not, or not yet, science. Holmes’ dictum and the utility of Peirce and Popper are entirely dependent on our already being in possession of all of the relevant data and at least one adequate explanation. Otherwise, all that is left when the impossible has been eliminated is nothing. If we have not yet dreamed up such an

⁴⁴ Edward SLINGERLAND, *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁴⁵ C. S. PEIRCE, “Four Approaches to Philosophy,” (variously anthologized); Karl POPPER, *Conjectures and Refutations*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

explanation then the process of finding fault with our forebears leaves us in danger of starting from scratch every time. Avoiding this will require, as I say, a close connection between scientific approaches and earlier phenomenological and non-reductive approaches – specifically the Eliadean.