

Text 16. M. Eliade : excerpt from Religious Phenomenology

Note: We have replaced terms such as ' wijman ' (or 'consecrated man'), ' wijplant ' (or 'consecrated' plant), ' wijvrouw ' (or 'consecrated woman') with 'holy man', 'holy plant', 'holy woman'... because the digital translation program does not know how to translate these words. The term 'holy' is then not used in its high and ethical biblical sense, but rather as the possession of much occult, subtle power. We could also speak, respectively, of a sorcerer, a magical plant, a witch...

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16.1. Agricultural rites (1)

16.1.1. Agricultural rites (a).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1953, 285ff. (*Rites agraires*). Eliade begins his exposition with the general proposition that, within traditional (meaning: pre-modern) cultures, agricultural activities are—broadly speaking—essentially rites, i.e., sacred acts.

Reasons .

The object cultivated by the farmer is “the body of Mother Earth”.

Incidentally: even now—in South America, for instance—farmers worship the Earth Mother while they cultivate the earth. To begin with, the lands are 'property', understand: the sphere of life and work, of the spirits that inhabit the earth.

Incidentally: these beings are by no means always pleased that humans disturb and subjugate their domain. The earth, certainly as the sphere in which Mother Earth is situated, is often simultaneously the domain of the ancestors from a multitude of perspectives. The growth forces inherent in plants, for example, are 'sacred': through the mediation of the one who cultivates the earth, they are activated not only as usable elements of existence but also as essentially 'consecrated'. This is one aspect of what religious scholars call 'dynamism', that is, the fact that every force—ceremoniously the force of all that lives—is an expression of the reality that is essentially—what the ancient Greeks called—'dunamis', life force. So much for the synchronic aspect.

Reasons.

Since time immemorial, man has been situated within the rhythms of the cosmos, particularly those of the earth. Thus—already practically but above all sacredly— certain times prove to be favorable or unfavorable for agricultural activities. It has been claimed that religions stand or fall with their calendars, which determine which activities fit which periods and which do not. This is most certainly the case in agriculture. So much for the diachronic aspect.

Consequence. – Since ancient times, the farmer has found himself in a system – however simple – of ceremonies, small- and large-scale, which allow the synchronistic and diachronic reasons, briefly summarized below, to come into their own. These ceremonial acts are a very clear 'hierophany', that is, the manifestation of the sacred (in this case: of the sacred in agriculture). –

Eliade . – “For primitive man, agriculture – like every other essential activity

– is not merely a profane (understand: non-sacred) technique. Agriculture is being concerned with life, and he aims at the wondrous increase of this life, present both in the grains, in the furrow, in the rain, and in the nature spirits of the plants. Therefore, agriculture is first and foremost a set of rites” (oc, 285). This is how the author briefly summarizes the ritual.

Eliade places a striking emphasis on the periodic.

1. The farmer is involved in spatially sacred areas such as the fertile grounds, the growth forces in the seeds, in the buds, in the flowers.

2. His work is governed by the seasons. Such entanglement in cyclical rhythms explains a number of ceremonies connected with the banishment of “the old year” (understand: the worn - out year) and the summoning of “the new year” (understand: the year rising from the life-giving forces in creation). It also explains the 'expulsion' (exorcism) of all that is evil (in the sacred or, as it is also expressed, the 'occult' sense) and the rebirth of forces. Such ceremonies are found just about everywhere, and are indeed connected with agricultural activities.

Optimism and pessimism.

The engagement—certainly after centuries—with the synchronic and diachronic aspects of agriculture creates a certain optimism: a winter is never simply the end, for, thanks to the cosmically fixed sequence of the seasons, it is invariably followed by spring, the total rebirth that nature displays in new forms of life bearing witness to great diversity. Everything perishes into matter only to rise from it again. Yet the seasons differ: one succeeds, the other fails. This creates, for example, famines that make the radical finitude of success—also with the aid of rituals—experiencing it very clearly. However optimistic the farmer usually is—he must, otherwise there is no existence left—he carries within himself the awareness of failures of all kinds.

16.1.2. Agricultural rites (b).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 285/314 (*L' agriculture et les cultes de la fertility*). -

We dwell very extensively on all parts of the chapter given their far-reaching significance, if only because, in order to survive and live, man develops agriculture (and livestock farming) as one of the most important steps in cultural evolution.

Khond (Kond, Kandha , Kondhia , Kodulu , - Kuwinga , Kondho).

The Khond are a people (one million) in India (Orissa, Andhra Pradesh ,

Madhya Pradesh) who traditionally practice hunting and fishing, but also agriculture and livestock farming. They practiced human sacrifice until the English abolished it. - Oc, 295s., quotes Eliade . - We present this first because it represents a basic insight and sheds light on the entire agricultural religion.

The Meriah , a class, provided the victims. The always voluntary victim, named ' Meriah ', was a member of that class. The Meriah lived fairly happily for many years. They were considered 'consecrated', married other victims, and received a piece of land as a dowry. Ten to twelve days before the human sacrifice, the hair was cut off. The earth goddess, Tari Pennu (Bera Pennu), apparently demanded the sacrifice, which took place either periodically or exceptionally.

The entire population came to the ceremony because it served the well-being and prosperity of all humanity. This was followed by an indescribable orgy.

According to the records, this occurs frequently in agricultural celebrations. - In procession, the Meriah was led from the village to the place of sacrifice, usually situated in a forest where wood had never been cut. There, the Meriah was consecrated, rubbed with melted butter and turmeric , and decorated with flowers. According to Eliade , the Meriah made the deity visibly and tangibly present, for the villagers crowded together to touch him. They danced around him to music. Turning to “the earth,” they cried out: “God, we bring you this sacrifice. Grant us good harvests, favorable seasons, and good health.” To the Meriah they cried out: “We bought you and did not seize you by force. Now we offer you according to custom so that no sin can be attributed to us.”

The orgy was suspended in the evening to be resumed the following morning until noon : once again people gather around the sacrifice. The killing follows in many ways: one administers opium and binds the victim and breaks the bones; one strangles it or cuts it into pieces or burns it etc.

Crucial is that all those present, all villages sending representatives, receive parts of the body which are carried as hastily as possible to all the villages to be buried—ritually—in the fields. Other parts—especially the head and the bones—are cremated. The ashes are scattered over the fields to ensure a good harvest. When the British banned this, the Meriah was replaced by certain animals (bucks, buffaloes).

Note - Eliade mentions a similar custom among the Aztecs in Mexico. As soon as the maize germinated, “one sought the god of maize,” i.e., a shoot. They brought it into the home and offered it gifts (foodstuffs) as if it represented him visibly and

tangibly. - Then follows an entire rite which we will skip. It is striking that young girls were sacrificed.

Among the American Pawnees , the body of a sacrificed girl was cut into pieces and buried in the fields. Among some African tribes, the pieces of the victim are buried in the furrows.

Note - Notice how the magic formula “Do ut des” (“I give so that you may give”) applies time and again: one gives something to receive something in return.

Note - What is striking is that, if one places such practices in their broader context, the fertility deities are simultaneously deities of war and deities of the dead (ancestors), even though this is not always stated clearly and explicitly.

16.1.3. Agricultural rites (female roles).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 224/229 (*Glèbe et femme/ La femme et l'agriculture/ Femme et sillon*), 286s. (*Femme, sexualité , agriculture*). -

The parallel between woman and agricultural land is one of the striking features of traditional agricultural societies: just as the womb relates to fertilization, so does soil relate to cultivation. Thus, the plow or the spade is interpreted as a phallus. In the background is the hierogamy , understand: the sacred marriage between the (male) Heaven-(god) and the (female) Earth (goddess), who are visibly and tangibly present in agriculture as a rite. That is the cosmic-polytheistic dimension.

The female role.

Eliade takes *AV Rantasalo , Der Ackerbau im People's rights of the Finns and Estonians entsprechenden Gebräuchen der Germanen verglichen* , 1-5, Sortavala , Helsinki, 1919/1925, on.

Among the Finns, women take the seeds to the fields in a menstrual shirt, a prostitute's shoe, or a bastard's stocking. Thus—according to Eliade— the fertility of the seeds is strengthened—which is also called ' dynamization ' —through material contact—which is called 'contact magic'—by women characterized by strong eroticism.

Incidentally : beets sown by a woman taste sweet; beets sown by a man taste bitter! Peasant women sprinkle the furrows with the milk from their breasts before

sowing time. Eliade sees a threefold reason for this: the 'sympathetic' (understand: nature-related) influence of the fertilized woman, the mother, on the soil; the transformation of infertile soil into fertile land; - the offering in honor of the dead (ancestors).

Incidentally: among the Estonians, young girls bring the linseed to the fields; among the Swedes, flax is sown exclusively by women; among the Germans, women—especially married and pregnant women—sow the seeds.

Ritual nudity.

In Finland and Estonia, the magician appears naked when casting out occult evil (casting lots, other ailments). In Estonia, farmers plow and harrow naked in anticipation of a “good harvest.” In Finland and Estonia, people sometimes sow at night completely naked, while praying: “Lord, I am naked! Bless my flax!” In East Prussia, there was a custom: peas were sown by a naked woman. – By comparison: during a drought, women in India pull the plow completely naked.

Water Ritual

The first agricultural work of the season is sanctified by a rather widespread custom: sprinkling the plow with water. In this rite, this ritual represents not only rain magic but also sperm magic. In Finland, Estonia, and also in Germany, such sprinkling is very frequent. By way of comparison: a text from Hindu literature states that, just as the flow of sperm fertilizes the woman, so rain makes the earth fertile.

Decision.

Eliade , Oc, 287. - "Naturally, if the woman exerts such an influence on the plants, then with all more reason hierogamy and the collective orgy will have the most favorable consequences for the fertility of the plants." - We will return to this later. - Here we draw attention merely to the sexual magic which, in a multitude of forms, plays a not accidental but essential role in the pre-Biblical agrarian world.

Polytheism.

The earthly woman represents the Earth Mother, the earthly man the God of fertility. - According to a common historical evolutionary scheme, archaic 'telluric' (also ' chthonic ') higher beings (ancestors, deities, nature spirits, connected with ' tellus ' (Lat.) or ' chthon ' (Gr.), earth, were worshipped first. As soon as agriculture is established, 'agricultural' higher beings are worshipped (who do not necessarily displace the earlier ones): “Through the appearance of the Great Agricultural Goddesses one can recognize the presence of ‘the Ruler of the ground’,

Mother Earth". Oc, 228. The Earth Mother is simpler, whereas the later goddesses are more complicated regarding her roles in agriculture ..

16.1.4. Agricultural rites (sacrifices).

Bibl.st. : M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 287s. (*Offrandes farmers*).

That agriculture is a rite within traditional cultures is also evident from the labor itself. Like any religious act, ritual purity is a duty at its beginning. At the start of both the sowing and the harvest seasons, the farmer must wash himself (take a bath), put on a new shirt, etc. The sequence of actions at the beginning of sowing and harvesting is exactly the same. This is no coincidence, for these times are highlights of farming as a sacred drama.

Offers.

Strictly speaking, such initial acts are sacrifices made with a view to a kind of "lulling." In that presupposition, for example, the first grains are not entrusted to the earth but thrown out as an offering in honor of the higher beings who co-control the growth and ripening process, such as the dead (ancestors), the 'Corn Goddess,' or the winds (understood as sacred factors). In the same presupposition, the first ears are left in the field for the Corn Mother, the "Three Maidens," the angels (whoever they may be), the birds, etc.

Offers.

Animal sacrifices at the beginning of the sowing season are the same as at the start of the harvest . Thus, among the Finns and the Germans, ewes, lambs, cats, dogs, etc. are sacrificed.

Recipients and purposes.

The goal is, of course, "a very good harvest". But it is not that simple!

1. A multitude of factors are involved in the sowing and harvesting process, as has already become clear above.

2. That same progression is situated within a multitude of cultures.

3. That course of events, in particular, is interpreted in very diverse ways, so diverse that even contradictions arise. It is clear, for example, that the same method of sacrifice is interpreted differently by a pre-Christian farmer than by a baptized person.

Dynamism.

The belief in a sacred life force – 'dunamis' (Gr.) – fundamentally determines the recipient and the objective. For in the harvest, that life force is present either in the impersonal sense or in the personal (possibly personified) sense.

Sometimes that life force or 'power' is treated in a way that makes it difficult to ascertain whether the rite aims at preserving an impersonal power or at venerating a 'power' that is thought to be personal. This is the case with the widespread custom of not harvesting the last ears of corn.

Either they are intended for “the spirit of the neighbor’s house” or for “those who dwell beneath the earth” (understand: the dead) or, as Finns, Estonians, and Swedes put it, for “the horses of Othin” or, as Germans put it, for “die gute Frau” (the Good Lady), “die arme Frau” (the Poor Lady), “das Waldfräulein” (the Forest Maiden) - thus *W. Mannhardt, Wald- und Feldkulte*, 1-11, Berlin, 1875/1977-1 - either for the Corn Bride or “die Holzfrau” - according to *J. Frazer (Spirits of the Corn)* -.

Note - According to *Jan de Vries, Contributions to the Study of Othin Especially in his relationship According to * Agricultural Practices in Modern Popular Lore**, Helsinki, 1931, the meaning of this refusal lies in the concern not to exhaust the life force of the harvest. This is also evident in not picking the last fruits of a tree, in leaving a few threads of wool unshorn on the backs of the ewes, or, as with Finns and Estonians, when one does not completely empty the grain chest. Or again: when farmers, after emptying a well, sprinkle it with droplets of water “so as not to let it dry out”. What is released (ears of grain, for example) preserves the life force (in the soil and in the plants). The axiom states: “The life force allows itself to be exhausted but never completely, since, being inexhaustible, it restores itself.” According to de Vries, the ritual of not fully exploiting was later interpreted as a tribute to the higher beings involved in the agricultural process (to use their life forces).

Note - It is reasonable to assume that this was already the case with the earliest agricultural rites, given the feeling (the sensitivity) that even the most primitive humanity possessed. - In any case: dynamism is decisive in this matter.

16.1.5. Agricultural rites (ambiguous).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1953, 290/293 (Personnifications mythiques).

The occult power is worshipped in no less than 'persons' whom Eliade calls

'mythical', who act within the framework of a 'myth', that of a sacred, indeed, power-bearing story. In this regard, a great variety is striking concerning the roles that become fixed in names. Among the English and Germans, the Corn Mother, the Great Mother, the Poverty Mother, the mother of the ears of grain, the Old Prostitute are power-bearing; among the Slavs, the Old Lady or the Old Man; among the Arabs, the Harvest Mother, the Old Man; among Bulgarians, Serbs, and Russians, the ' Djedo ' (Old Man), the Beard (of Elias, Jesus, St. Nicholas). They are worshipped as being present in the last sheaf of corn.

Harmony of opposites .

Sometimes great honor is paid to human representatives of the 'power' in the harvest. Sometimes, however, they are ridiculed. "This ambivalence seems to spring from the ambivalent role played by the one who reaps the last ears: if identified with the 'spirit' or the 'power' of agriculture, then he is celebrated; if, however, considered its killer, then he is treated with hostility and put to death." (Oc, 292).

Thus, in various Germanic countries, it is said that the one who strikes the last flail during threshing has "struck the Old Man" or "seized the Old Man." He must, laughed at and mocked, carry a straw effigy to the middle of the village, or alternatively, he must throw the straw effigy unnoticed into the field of the neighbor who is still threshing the grain.

In Germany, the person who harvests the last sheaf, or the girl who binds the last sheaf of grain, is tied to that sheaf and led with great pomp to the village, where they are served the finest dishes of a feast . — Here, one clearly senses the opposing interpretations. It is very likely that, when the custom was introduced, that interpretation was based on sensing the true value of the life force in the sheaf, and does not merely represent a whimsical impression. In the latter case, it truly concerns what has been called "harmony of opposites" since the ancient Greeks (understand: the fact that the same thing can turn into its opposite).

One more thing. The Bulgarians call the last sheaf "the Corn Queen". They dress them in a woman's shirt, carry them throughout the village, and throw them into the river to secure the rain that the next harvest will need. In a second interpretation, they burn them and scatter the ashes on the fields to increase their fertility (dynamization).

Figures of misfortune. - Among the Scots, the last sheaf is called ' Cailleach ' (Old Lady). Everyone involved tries not to have to reap it. Reason: in that case, he would be facing starvation, for it is believed that he will be obliged to feed an

imaginary old woman until the next harvest.

Norwegians believe in the ' skurekail ', the harvester, who lives unnoticed in the fields all year round and feeds on the owner's grain. He is caught in the last sheaf. From this, a doll is made in the appearance of a human. Another interpretation says that this doll is thrown into the field of a neighbor who is still harvesting, with the result that the neighbor will have to feed the skurekail all year round.

Note - Whether such omens are merely imagined is highly questionable, as it frequently happens that sensitive or sighted people do indeed 'feel' or 'see' such beings as a subtle presence.

Baba.

In Poland, the person who binds the last sheaf is called 'Baba' (Grandfather). He is wrapped in the straw from that sheaf so that only the head remains visible. On the last wagon, Baba is accompanied to the farm where the whole family sprinkles him with water. For the entire following year, the person in question bears the name 'Baba'. In Carinthia, the person who binds the last sheaves of grain is wrapped in that straw and thrown into the water.

Conclusion

Here are a few samples from the collection of interpretations of the first, or especially the last, sheaves. The impression that the diversity also includes contradiction is justified.

16.2. Agricultural drives (2)

16.2.1. Agricultural rites (human sacrifices).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 293/296. -

Two customs are widespread, namely sprinkling the representative of the plant power with water and throwing him into the water, and burning the straw effigy and scattering the ashes on the fields. They have a precisely defined meaning and belong to a scenario that is still preserved intact in some regions and reveals something deeper.

If in Sweden a strange woman comes too close to the work, she is bound in straw and called a 'Corn Woman'. In Vendée, the farmer's wife plays that role: she is wrapped in straw and driven to beneath the threshing machine; she is then pulled from among the ears being threshed while the farmer's wife is thrown into the air on a blanket as if she herself were the grain to be winnowed.

Eliade :

The identification of the power of the grain and the human representative is complete in this respect: the peasant woman undergoes the entire drama of the grain, whose life force is stored in the last sheaf. Through the course of these rites, the aim is to cause the last sheaf to be reborn.

Death threats .

In many other regions of Europe, strangers who approach the harvest field or threshing floor too closely are threatened with death. Elsewhere, they bite the fingertips or bring the sickle up to the neck. In Germany, the stranger is bound by the harvesters and forced to pay a fine. A song is sung that speaks plainly. In Pomerania, for example, it goes: "The men are ready. The scythes are bent. The corn is large and small. Mowing down the man is the task!" Around Stettin, they sing: "We are going to strike down the visitor – With our bare swords – With which we shear the fields and meadows".

Myth.

An ancient Greek myth recounts: Lityerses , a bastard son of King Midas, is notorious for his fabulous appetite and the ferocity with which he harvested his grain. Any stranger who happened to pass by his field was treated to a feast, led to his field, and compelled to harvest alongside him. It became a test of strength. If the stranger was defeated, Lityerses bound him in a bundle, chopped off his head with a scythe, and threw his body onto the field. Until Heracles challenged Lityerses , fetched him, and threw the body into the Meander.

One sees the similarity with what was explained above. An assumption: Lityerses did the same with his victims. This Phrygian myth may be a remnant of the custom of the Phrygians centuries earlier, namely to offer a human sacrifice at the harvest. Moreover, according to some indications, this frequently occurred in other regions of the eastern Mediterranean.

Reference is hereby made to the chapter on human sacrifice among the Khond and the Aztec ken.

Note . - G. Welter, *Les croyances et leurs survivances (précis de paleopsychologie)*, 1960, 86/88, state quiet in sacrificial magic . Its essence—according to the author—consists in 'sacrificing' a part to save the whole. Thus, the first bundle of grain to 'save' the entire harvest, a lamb to secure the livestock, a newborn to preserve the clan. Time and again, the victim bears witness to a beginning or a new beginning that represents birth, youth, or the introduction of

something new.

Human sacrifice seems to be the rule as soon as Homo sapiens appears! The goals are:

1. fertility (among the Bene-Israel the firstborn is sacrificed, - a custom that Abraham abolishes and replaces with the sacrifice of an animal by command of God);

2. plant diversity (practiced on a large scale in ancient Mexico, where during the conquest a Spanish soldier counted 136,000 skulls piled up in an Aztec temple);

3. foundation (in India as recently as 1952, a boy was beheaded to anoint the new altar in the temple of Shiva with his blood; among old Slavs, 'diētīnēts' (quick) meant both the fortress and the young man who was sacrificed during its construction);

4. ex-voto (Jephth in the Bible returns from the war as a victor and sacrifices his daughter to fulfill a vow);

5. veneration of the dead (the widow of the deceased man is sacrificed);

6. deification (among Native Americans, a human becomes a god or goddess after sacrifice).

16.2.2. Agricultural rites (rebirth).

Library st. : M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 296ss. (*Sacrifice et régénération*). -

It concerns the fundamental purpose of the sacrifice. According to Eliade — who returns to this again and again—it is determined by the archaic notion that the life forces must be regularly revived . That aspect of Eliade's theory is indeed irrefutable. But he situates this rebirth within the creation myth: as he says, oc, 298, every new year is a new creation of “time”. This 'time' is the time of “the beginning” of creation, a time that is actually eternally present and can therefore be made present again in a rite. Just as it was “in the beginning”, so it is again and again in the rite that makes that beginning tangibly present.

Primal sacrifice

One application of this is the myth that recounts that in the beginning a primeval giant was killed in a benevolent manner so that from the parts of his body the universe (the worlds, the plants, for example, that farmers cultivate and consume) was 'created'. The human being who is sacrificed in the human sacrifice represents the sacrificed primeval being —a primeval giant : from his body—in particular his blood, for example—the harvest is created, just as in the beginning.

If necessary, the human being is replaced by an animal or another substitute , but the event itself remains the same.

The immediate intention integrates itself into that cosmogonic (concerning the origin of the universe) framework but anchors itself in the life force that, for example, plants make possible.

The uncertainty of life.

Eliade explains the need for a rite by stating that man, especially traditional man, lives in uncertainty regarding the necessity and sufficiency of the life forces of, for example, his plants. The sun seems to set definitively with the winter sun newing; the moon seems to disappear after the last quarter; the plants die in autumn. This last point is particularly convincing in the case of natural disasters that cause plants (and animals and people) to starve to death.

The uncertainty also feeds on another aspect: the beings (deities, the dead, nature spirits) to whom the land and plants are the occult possessions watch with dismay as man takes possession of them. This is all the more so because, by consuming them, man exhausts his life forces.

Firstfruits sacrifice.

Firstfruits offerings serve as a way out of all kinds of uncertainties. Their purpose is to appease the occult beings and to 'dynamize' the life forces of the plants. And this at the beginning of the new season. Thus the farmer performs rebirth. Among the Kaffirs and Zulus in South Africa, after the celebrations of the new year, the great dance takes place in the king's kraal: on a new fire lit by magicians, all kinds of fruits are prepared in new pots that are used precisely that one time. Thereupon the king lets everyone partake of this brew, the firstfruits.

Among the Creek (Native Americans), the offering of firstfruits coincides with the 'purification,' meaning the expulsion of all sins and ailments. All lights are extinguished; the holy men light a new fire by rubbing. Everyone purifies themselves during this by an eight-day fast, by vomits, etc. Only when the season is thus reborn may one consume the harvested grains.

Among the Aztecs, the old season is ritually driven away along with all ailments and sins. This is accompanied by a sacrifice in honor of the maize goddess. This is elaborated in warrior parades, reenactments of battles, and the like .

Aspects . - Eliade summarizes the most important aspects of the firstfruits sacrifice. -

1. Cosmogonic framework: present thesis of the beginning of the creation of

things.

2.1. Dangers that pose problems when consuming the new harvest results: exhaustion of life forces; discontent of the occult owners of lands and plants.

2.2. Cleansing of the community through the expulsion – 'exorcism' – of sins and ailments. Which is one aspect of warding off dangers.

2.3. Ritual consecration of the firstfruits. Which is a second aspect of warding off dangers.

Result:

rebirth of primeval times in the rites that present that time today, source of all life forces.

16.2.3. Agricultural rites (final rites).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 298s. (*Rituals finals*).

The fundamental idea governing an entire agricultural rite is that of a closed loop ('cycle'). The whole year is not a succession of seasons but a cyclical event. This entails a renewal of the life force of the earth, of plants, and of all that lives from both; in the form of a beginning that is completed at the end. The end still belongs to the beginning as its ultimate unfolding. - The author provides some details in this regard.

The rituals of the harvest.

At the beginning of the harvest, Finns sacrifice a lamb born within the year itself. The blood is allowed to flow onto the ground. The entrails are offered as a "toll to the bear," to "the gamekeeper." Understand: the mysterious being that represents the life force of the field, indeed, controls it. The meat is roasted communally and eaten in the field. Among the Estonians, there is a place in the field called "the pit of sacrifices": there, every year, the first fruits of the new harvest were placed.

The rites of the harvest .

That harvesting is a ritual is further evident from what follows. The first three sheaves are harvested in silence. Estonians, Germans, and Swedes let the first ears fall to the ground. A custom that is very widespread. The recipients are "Othin's horses," "the cow of the forest lady ," "the rats," "the seven daughters of the barns," "the fairy of the forest," etc. Note well: once again, names for the beings that help determine the life force of the harvest. Thus, "the rats" must be understood as a description of specific beings.

The rituals of overtaking.

They threw a handful of grains over the left shoulder while saying: “These grains are for the rats.”

Incidentally: the left shoulder means that the ritual gesture was intended for the dead.

Among the Germans, it was a custom to pulverize the first hay stalks that arrived in the barn, saying: “It is the food of the dead.”

In Sweden, people carry wine and bread into the barns to obtain the favor of the spirit of the house. When threshing, they set aside a few ears of grain in honor of the spirit of the threshing floor. Finns state that the purpose of this offering is to ensure that the grain will continue to grow next year.

Finns have another tradition: the sheaf that is not threshed is destined for the earth spirit (' maanhaltia '). Elsewhere, people are convinced that the earth spirit (' talonhaltia ') comes to thresh the three sheaves left behind on the night of Easter. These left-behind sheaves are called “the sheaves of the spirits”.

Swedes do not thresh the last sheaf but leave it in the field until the next harvest “so that the year might be abundant”.

Eliade . - It is suspected that many such offerings are intended for the dead. It is certain that harvests and the veneration of the dead go hand in hand.

Cyclic.

Attention was paid to the perfect likeness of the offerings at the beginning of the sowing season, of the harvest, of threshing, or of storing in the barns. The cycle closes with the collective celebration of the harvest in the autumn: it includes a meal, dancing, and sacrifices in honor of spirits of all kinds. With that, the agricultural year is finished.

Deaths.

Winter celebrations become understandable—according to Eliade —if one prioritizes the intimate connection between fertility rites and celebrations of the dead: the dead, who protect grains sown in the earth, also control—as living in the earth—the harvest piled up in the barns and constituting the food of the living during the course of the winter.

Orgiastic.

The cyclical rebirth naturally also encompasses countless orgiastic rites—mind you: rites, not debauchery—partly because the dead, lacking life force in their world, wish to participate in these rites to nourish themselves from them and at the same time benefit the life force of the living and their harvests.

According to Eliade, the fundamental pattern is the primordial disorder that nourished creation “in the beginning.” Through an orgy, the farmers currently arrange that primordial disorder in such a way that primeval times can once again play the nourishing role. – However, this aspect is set out separately.

16.2.4. Agricultural Rites II (Involvement of the Dead).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 299ss. –

This second part of the exposition can be summarized in what Eliade says, oc, 300: “The connection between the ancestors, the harvests, and the erotic life is so close that the funerary, agricultural, and genetic worship flow into one another, and this up to and including their complete fusion.” - ' Genesisic ' means “concerning procreation”.

1. The dead, just like the seeds, are 'buried' in the earth. The chthonic lifespace is accessible only to both realities.

2. Agriculture is pre-eminently a fertility technique such that life not only sustains itself but develops. Ancestors were particularly attracted by that mystery.

Consequence: they approach the living in their agricultural activities, but especially in those moments thereof that involve abundance and orgy. - “The souls of the dead thirst for all brimming biological reality, for every eccentricity of organic life, because such vital outburst compensates for the poverty of their being and plunges them into a tumultuous stream of possibilities and seeds.” (Oc, 300).

Note - Something of that still lives on in some carnivals.

The communal feast.

The feast exhibits all the characteristics of such a boundary-pushing. It is understood, therefore, that in those days the feast took place at the graves themselves so that the ancestors would feast on the excess of life force that was so within their grasp.

In India, beans were the offering par excellence for the dead, but they were

simultaneously regarded as an aphrodisiac. In China, the marriage bed was situated in the darkest corner of the home: there the seeds were kept, just above the graves. In Northern Europe, the Yule festival was simultaneously a celebration of the dead and a life of vitality: at Christmas, the lavish festivities took place, which often included wedding celebrations and grave care.

Wedding.

In Sweden, the woman keeps a piece of the wedding cake in her dowry chest to take with her when she dies. In Northern Europe, in China, women are buried in their wedding dress.

The interests of the living.

As long as the grains remain 'buried', they are subject to the legal order of the dead. This means that Mother Earth or the Great Fertility Goddess governs the fate of the seeds in the same way as that of the dead. The dead appear to be present among the living to such an extent that the farmer turns to them so that they may give their blessing and, for example, help substantiate the labor.

None other than Hippocrates states that the spirits of the dead cause seeds to germinate and grow: the 'winds'—understand: the souls of the dead—give life to plants and to all things. In Arabia, the last sheaf ("the Old One") is harvested by the owner of the land, placed in a grave, and buried with prayers asking that "the grain rise from death to life".

At the Bambara, water is poured on the head of the corpse, which is to be covered with earth, while praying: "May the winds blowing from north to south, from west to east, be favorable to us. Grant us rain. Grant that we may experience an abundant harvest."

In Finland, during the sowing season, dead bones (which are collected from the churchyard to be returned after the harvest) are buried in the ground. If the farmers do not have them, they make do with churchyard soil, or soil is taken from crossroads where the dead once passed. In Germany, it was customary to take soil from the grave of a recently buried person or the straw on which someone died, to scatter it with the seeds in the field.

Note - We can already cautiously conclude that agriculture as a rite has indeed existed since ancient times, but that it involves thoroughly pre-Biblical life force, drawn primarily from ritual sexuality. The Bible calls this 'flesh', substandard life force, and replaces it with 'spirit', God's essential life force.

16.2.5. Agricultural rites II (funerary and agricultural deities).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 301ss .. –

The term 'deities' actually encompasses what is commonly called 'gods', but also nature spirits, even deified ancestors. - General statement: usually a fertility deity is funerary.

Durga in India is worshipped in many local religious services. She is essentially the ruler of agricultural fertility but is also the ruler of the dead. In Rome, Feronia is called “ dea agricultural sive called inferorum (“goddess of the fields and of the underworld”). In Greece, both the dead and the grains were kept in terracotta pots : candles were offered to the rulers of the underworld, just as to the fertility deities.

The holiday season.

In ancient India, the commemoration of the dead fell during the height of the harvest; it was simultaneously the main celebration of fertility. In Northern and Central Europe, it was the same: September 29 – the Feast of St. Michael – was the date of the celebration of the dead and fertility.

Confluence.

The fertility rites become sacrificial celebrations in honor of the dead: those who dwell “under the earth” influence the harvest and are thus appeased. Thus, the grains thrown over the left shoulder—as a tribute to “the rats”—are intended for them. The 'Old Ones,' whom farmers venerate as the ruler (or ruleress) over the fertility powers—meaning life forces—over time take on the appearance of 'ancestors': one wishes to appease them—for they are not always well-disposed—and 'nourish' them in the form of the celebrations and the surplus life forces they entail, so that they help protect and multiply the harvests.

This is very clear among the Germanic peoples. Odhin is ruler of the dead, the figurehead of “the furious hunt” of souls that find no rest. In time, he becomes the ruler who is worshipped in a multitude of agricultural rites. At the Yule festival, the festival of the dead, on the Christian Christmas Day, the last sheaf of the past harvest is brought forward to make an image of a man or a woman from it .

Curious:

They also made the image of a rooster, a goat, or another animal of it. To which Eliade , oc, 302: “The fact that the animal forms in which the life force of plants manifests itself are the same as those which the souls of the dead manifest themselves is significant.” The convergence of funerary and agricultural worship is such a fact that one— Eliade means the scholars first and foremost—can no

longer determine whether a 'spirit' manifesting itself in a theriomorphic (understand: animal) manner represents the souls of those who have passed away, or the life force of a telluric-plant nature.

Note - 'Telluric' - from ' tellus ' (Lt.), earth - means "that which is connected with the earth."

Note - The fact that the souls of the dead manifest as animals implies that within such a religion there are souls that have remained stuck in the animalistic stage—type of behavior, manner of disguise. The orgiastic nature of fertility and death celebrations explains this in part. One need only think of Indian temples with their statues depicting sexual activities and in which animals also play a role.

The synthesis of agrarian and funerary worship becomes total—according to Eliade—in the course of the second millennium BC, although it is likely that its clear, definitive form is of a later date. It is of great religious-historical importance, for what are called “the mysteries”—the religions that contact the realm of the dead in a limited, indeed, closed circle in the form of initiation—arise from it. The convergence began in northern Europe and China as early as prehistoric times.

Yule festival.

Yule is the pathetic moment: the dead gather around the living— merging with the fertility deities ! Yule is the celebration of the announcement of the resurrection (not in the Biblical sense, of course) of the season, i.e., spring, from the death of winter. Souls of the dead are drawn to everything that begins, like the start of the year. Here, with the exuberant celebration, begins the explosion of new cosmic-biological life.

16.2.6. Agricultural Rits II (sexual rites).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 303/ 305 (*Sexualité et fécondité agraire*). -

Main theorem

The life force of plants is nowadays represented by, on the one hand, a bundle of grain or a tree, and on the other by a human couple, resulting in the dynamization of the life force of plants, animals, and people (women), celebrated by the community. The rite, as one can see, is bursting with 'dynamism'!

A first stage can be seen in China .

Convinced that their act empowered the rebirth of the cosmos, young men and

women performed unions in the spring in the fields, in mystical unity with the omnipresent germinating forces, to obtain rain. - As large a number of involved couples as possible in the field was desired.

A second stage envisioned the role of the holy men and holy women. Eliade provides models that are more fully developed.

The Ewe in Africa, as the decisive moment of agricultural labor approaches—when the barley begins to germinate—take precautions against disasters. They perform ritual orgies. A considerable number of young girls are offered as brides to the Python (a deity in animal form). This hierogamy (sacred marriage) is performed in the temple of the Python when his 'representatives' (meaning: those who make him visibly and tangibly present), the holy men, become one with the girls. This “sacred prostitution” continues for a time within the enclosure of the sanctuary. According to tradition, such sexual behavior serves “to safeguard the fertility of the soil and animals.”

Note - Western scholars use the term “sacred prostitution,” but this is misplaced, because in the West it is understood to mean “unauthorized extramarital sexual intercourse in a more or less institutionalized form.” In fact, for the Ewe, it is the core of their religion! This is quite different from 'prostitution'!

Central African male Pipilen sleep away from their wives for four nights to sharpen the sexual desire they need the night before sowing begins, while some couples are sexually active at the very moment of sowing. In some regions of Java, husband and wife perform union in the field when the rice is in bloom.

Eroticism and fertility.

In Northern and Central Europe, the wedding was often performed in the field, starting from the consecrated tree ('maj'). - In Ukraine, on the feast of St. George, young couples rolled themselves in the furrows of the newly consecrated field.

In Russia, it was the priest who was rolled over the furrows, and by women at that. Eliade sees in this latter practice more than the blessing of plants: he sees in it the hierogamy, the primordial union of Heaven with Earth.

Elsewhere, the rite was reduced to the ritual dance of a couple adorned with ears of corn. It was also reduced to the symbolic marriage of the 'corn bride' with her 'corn groom'.

Such reduced marriages were often surrounded by great artistic flair. For

instance, in Silesia, the couples were escorted by the entire population on a decorated bridal carriage from the fields to the village.

So much for a few samples.

Eliade's reservations .

Given : the seeds.

Requested : successful germination (up to and including full harvest).

Solution : dynamization of the seeds through the application of human sexuality, preferably in its unleashed—though not thereby immoral—degree, so that the life force naturally inherent in sexuality, in its orgiastic degree, overflows into the life force of the seeds.

“Such a connection between the forms and activities of life was once one of the most essential discoveries of archaic man. He magically made this connection fruitful according to this method: ‘What is accomplished collectively yields better results.’ The fertility of the woman favors the fertility of the fields, but the abundance of plants, in turn, helps the woman to conceive .” – Eliade adds to this the role of the ancestors (which we have already discussed).

16.2.7. Agricultural rites II (orgies).

Library st. : M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 305s. (*Function rituelle de l'orgie*). -

The author expresses himself lyrically! Premise: the ever-present primordial beginning: Heaven and Earth create all things in a sexual act in a degree of intoxication, for the sake of the seasons and the life within them. The orgy, understand: sexuality to a degree that pushes all boundaries, is of this “ generally speaking,” Eliade relativizes —the visible and tangible ritual representation: “The general genetic (*note*: concerning procreation) frenzy on earth must correspond to the union of the divine couple” (oc, 305).

Samples

During the hierogamy (sacred marriage) in the month of May at the Oraon of the Sun God with the Earth Goddess, the holy man engages in public sexual intercourse with his wife as the start of an indescribable orgy. On a few islands west of New Guinea and north of Australia— Leti , Sarmata , etc.—the same orgies take place at the beginning of the rainy season.

Comment by Eliade :

“People can do no better than to imitate the divine couple, especially if the prosperity of the whole world—particularly the fate of the plant and animal kingdoms—depends on it. Excesses play a precisely defined and salvific role in the essential course of the sacred. They break through the chasms between man, society, nature, and the deities. They help power, life, and seeds pass from one level to another, from one realm of reality to another. That which no longer possessed its own life force saturates itself; that which existed fragmentarily is reabsorbed into unity. (...). The orgy puts the sacred life force into circulation. Cosmic moments of crisis or times of abundance in particular serve as a reason for unleashing an orgy.” (Oc, 305) .

Samples

The Kana – Indigenous people in Brazil – stimulate the reproductive forces of the earth, animals, and humans through a phallic dance that depicts the act of fertilization. This is followed by a collective orgy.

Incidentally : according to Eliade , traces of phallic symbols can even be discovered in European agricultural rites: the 'Old' – the consecrated sheaf – is sometimes sculpted in the form of a phallus. The last sheaf is called “the Slut” or is given the form of a black head with red lips (the colors of the female genitalia in magic).

Eliade here recalls archaic plant rites with their excesses. Such as the Floralia (April 27) among the ancient Romans, during which processions of naked young people paraded through the streets. Such as the Lupercalia , in which young men touched women to make them fertile.

Holi .

This is the principal agricultural festival in India. Holi displayed all the characteristics of a holy orgy. “All modesty is set aside because the stakes are much more serious than reverence for norms and customs. The stakes are: the uninterrupted flow of life.” Thus states the author. Gathered groups of men, including children, walk through the streets singing and shouting, while sprinkling each other with Holi powder and red water.

Incidentally: red is the vital and genetic color par excellence. When one meets women or notices them behind curtains, tradition demands that one treat them with the coarsest obscenities and insults. To which Eliade notes that indecent insults have a recognized magical value that continues to be acknowledged even in evolved cultures: one need only think of the Greek thesmophoria .

Note - It is not surprising that even Eliade cites the immoral excesses at field festivals in Northern and Central Europe as condemned by a number of ecclesiastical councils! Such as the Council of Auxerre in 590.

16.2.8. Agricultural Rites II (Mental Revolution).

Library st. : M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 306/ 309 (*Orgie et réintégration. Mystique agricultural and sotériology*). -

What the author presents there are reflections. Nevertheless, we mention them here because they represent a sound view on the matter. Seeds, if they germinate in the soil and become a harvest, lose their individuality, which thereby becomes “something else.” Likewise, people lose their individuality if they throw themselves into an orgy. By experiencing the primordial disorder, man allows himself to be absorbed anew into “a bio-cosmic unity,” even if this unity signifies a regression of life as a person into that of the seed.

But the same orgy entails rebirth into a new life. And indeed in this sense. For the time being, man descends into the nocturnal, formless disorder to be reborn with increased life force into the order formed in broad light.

The orgy

just like immersion in water (whatever that 'water' may visibly and tangibly represent) – creation lowers itself to a lower mode of being but also immediately recreates it. – This is mythical: in “the beginning,” an orderly creation arises from primordial disorder. – And immediately we situate ourselves within the cyclical course of that creation: time and again, what has been acquired is dismantled somewhere, so that time and again – ritually, orgiastically – it must be rebuilt, reborn. This is what the cosmos looks like as a course – at least from an archaic-mythical perspective. – Whereby Eliade admits that “the monstrous forms (of the orgies) are degenerations of this fundamental intuition” (oc, 307) which is, in fact, the cyclical interpretation of the cosmos.

Soteriological.

' Soterio.logie ' is the bringing up of ' sotèria ' (Gr.), salvation.

Agricultural mysticism, that is, the belief that cultivation in the soil is a sacred—call it 'occult'—command, is, viewed from both an orgiastic and a non-orgiastic perspective, a mysticism of redemption. Eliade : “The plant life that, through its apparent vanishing (the burying of seeds), causes itself to be reborn, is at the same time an example and a hope: the same can happen with the dead

and the souls of men” (oc, 308). In other words: what happens to agricultural life happens to earthly life in general.

This entails what follows .

The process of sacred agriculture is not a given: rebirth is brought about by magical acts involving the Great Goddess (of agriculture), women, and erotic energies—not without the cooperation of the entire cosmos (rain, warmth, etc.)—partly thanks to the ritual re-presentation of the mythical primeval era (i.e., primeval disorder / creation). The farmer's own effort is the decisive aspect. Decisiveness is essential!

Note - Eliade refers to the ancient mysteries. He sees the precursor to this in agricultural mysticism. After all, the ancient mysteries have preserved traces of agrarian ceremonies. These were developed into initiation religions—a 'mystery' essentially encompasses a method of initiation—after a long period of agricultural mysticism. The core of this is the cyclical rebirth of the plant kingdom. This scheme led—millennials ago—to the parallel life cycle of seed and man and to the mystical idea that the whole man—not just the agricultural man— is reborn through death into a new, a post-death life.

Significance of agriculture, in particular arable farming .

It is usually stated that agriculture fundamentally changed the fate of humanity because abundant food was made available and an astonishing population increase was made possible. But according to Eliade —there is apparently another meaning involved—with a definitive aftermath: the 'theory' that the farming man developed! A theory that was expounded in the chapter we are concluding with this, along with its multitude of aspects . One need reread all the preceding pages to grasp its richness. In other words: according to Eliade , the mental evolution that the farming man underwent and bequeathed to us is just as significant as food abundance and population growth.

16.3. Profane and Sacred Time

16.3.1. Profane duration! Holy time .

Library st. : *M. Eliade ; Traité d'histoire des religions , Paris, 1953,332/349 (Le temps et le mythe de l'éternel recommencement).*

Difficulty .

Eliade notes that the subject is “one of the most difficult” within the framework of the phenomenology of the sacred.

Basic distinction. - There is profane duration and there is sacred time. Profane duration is different for modern man than for primitive man.

1.1 . Time can be a part of cosmic rhythms. For example, within lunar (meaning: associated with the moon) religions, a certain phase is 'sacred', a bearer of special life force, such that it gives rise to celebration and thus creates “sacred time”. Immediately, 'periodic' ('cyclical') time appears here, because the profane duration of the moon shows a regular return of the same and thus gives rise to repeated sacred time in lunar religions.

1.2. Time can be duration insofar as it is devoted to a celebration. Thus, in practicing families, the table prayer is in itself a profane duration, but sanctified by family prayer. For the members, this is then “a sacred moment”—meaning: holy or ritual time—during which one briefly withdraws from the profane duration to absorb within oneself the life force released by that restraint. In the truly Christian family, that energy springs from prayer to the Holy Trinity, which—once contacted through prayer—becomes a source of life force.

2. Time can – in Eliade's interpretation – be mythical in the strict sense insofar as he describes a 'duration' that occurred at the beginning of creation and was filled (sanctified) by some act that served as an example.

Note - Even the Bible preserved that mythical time in the creation story in which we see God bringing the ordered world into existence in the beginning in six working days and one day of rest. At least, the division of the seven-day week in the Bible, with six working days and one day of rest, as God demonstrated “in the beginning,” is based on this. The Biblical week thus becomes a duration that loses its profane character: the Biblical person actually never lives entirely in the purely profane duration, but in time 1.2. (duration spent on celebration - sanctification).

Note - The Christian religion adopted the Jewish week, but what serves as a model and foundation—besides God's creation week—is the Holy or Great Week from the Monday before Easter to Easter Sunday. After all, the holiest time within Christianity encompasses, clearly according to the Gospels in liturgical interpretation, the holy time from Monday to Wednesday as an introduction to the four-day act of redemption of Maundy Thursday (institution of the holy time of the Eucharist), Good Friday (sacrifice on the cross/Glorification of Jesus), Holy Saturday (descent into hell), and Easter Sunday (bodily resurrection of Jesus).

For the traditionally believing Christian, the profane duration of the week is sanctified by the creation week and the re-creation week. Seen in this light, he is

the 'time' companion of God as creator and of God in Jesus as re-creator . Seen in this light, all that is precious is filled with holy time in two layers and with two life forces, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Hierophanic time.

In Eliade, the sacred time is called ' hierophany ', the showing – 'appearance' – of ' hieron ', something holy. Duration filled with a rite is immediately hierophanic .

Thus, every moment or stretch of the profane duration can become hierophanic : it suffices that a kratophany , a hierophany , or a theophany occurs for a duration to be sanctified.

Eliade's terms deserve explanation .

' Kratophany ' emphasizes the sacred as manifesting itself in a powerful fact (' kratos ' (Gr.), power). Our traditional usage would speak of 'miracle' or 'wonder' in this case.

The site of the tomb where Jesus rose on Easter Sunday is such a kratophanic place: it repeatedly attracts pilgrims who wish to visit “such a place” so that it becomes a place of pilgrimage. For believers, it is as if the power in which Jesus rose there still lingers there, and that the moment in which that power acted reveals itself there again and again as accessible. - 'Theophany' is “God (theos) as appearing”. In that term, the emphasis lies not on the sacred in general or on the sacred power, but on the divinity.

16.3.2. Profane duration/ sacred time: a list.

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 333ss..

Sample . - *L. Lévy-Bruhl* (1857/1939) is cited in his *Le surnaturel et la nature dans la mentalité primitive* . The Dayak distinguish five types of sacred time, and from more than one perspective. It concerns Sunday.

1. Sunrise . - Favorable to begin an operation. Thus, children born at that moment are 'lucky'.

Note - 'Fortunate' here means “possessing the necessary and sufficient life force to succeed throughout life - unless chance, or a factor foreign to that life, depletes that life force. Unfavorable to go hunting or fishing at that moment, or to embark on a journey. -

Note - Reason: at that moment, there is no necessary and sufficient life force

available for such purposes. It immediately becomes apparent that dynamism (belief in life force) is essential to understanding those statements. 'Favorable' is then “that which dynamizes”, and 'unfavorable' is “that which does not dynamize (sufficiently) ”.

2. Around nine o'clock in the morning .

Unfavorable, for whoever starts something then will fail. Favorable, for whoever sets out on the way then need not fear highway robbers.

Note - Which entails that highway robbers lack the necessary vitality at that moment!

3. Afternoon. - Very favorable time.

4. Three o'clock in the afternoon . - Favorable for the battle. Favorable for the enemies, the hunters , and the fishermen. Unfavorable for the travelers.

5. Sunset. - Favorable over the course of a short time.

Such value judgments are found in all religions and magic ..

What stands out is that an objective life force, existing either before all value judgments or not, is available or unavailable. In other words: in the course of profane duration, a sacred time (with its available energy) is present and therefore active in phases.

Explanation. - What is responsible for that pre-existence? What governs duration such that it displays sacred times between profane durations?

Experience shows that whoever practices black magic, for example—using the life force they possess to undermine the life force of another person—is 'working' at specific moments, “at work” (as it is expressed). For the victim, this is then sacred time in an unfavorable sense. Undertaking something or being occupied with something at that time becomes 'disastrous', unfavorable.

Could the ' hierophanic' —as Eliade calls them—list of the Dayak not have such an origin? Once, long ago, a great chief was attacked by brutal black magic—so much so that it became a life-or-death struggle... Not only for the chief himself but for his entire people—which lasted for years and became a fixed pattern. This is ' hierophanically ' entirely possible.

Naturally, upbringing also plays a role in this domain: every Dayak is instilled

with the above list of favorable and unfavorable from childhood. A dose of gullibility—moderns call this 'suggestion' (which has so far remained a concept that is difficult to experiment with exactly)—must not be excluded either: it is not the first time that black magic has convinced its victim, through magical methods of persuasion, that they are doomed to die, for example, and thus that they have entered an unfavorable time.

Eliade does, however, present explanations.

Thus, the day as a product of our solar system in the above list reflects the phases of the day (cosmic explanation). However, one fails to see that these phases directly create favor or adversity: they are simply phases of objective duration without sanctifying value. Such is the religious life of the group that has long introduced sacred times. But one does not get very far with that. The first question is: “What exactly created favor and adversity within the Dayak list ?” Eliade remains too theoretically vague in this regard.

16.3.3. Profane duration/holy time (eternal beginning).

Library st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 333ss..

Before entering into Eliade's text , we pause to consider a prayer that defines Christianity to its very core: “Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, and now, and always, and for ever and ever.”

'Glory' means “essential life force insofar as it bears witness to strong radiance – 'splendor'”. Only the three strictly divine – 'supreme essential' – persons possess that glorious life force. Now, the prayer asserts that it is indeed the conviction of the Christian as a Christian that this is the case, that is to say, what is essentially of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rightfully belongs to them and to them alone.

The second part expresses that the objective fact just expressed is so “in the beginning” and now and always and “for ever and ever”. In other words : the profane duration—however long it lasts—is filled by both the fact and the prayer formula that affirms the fact. Moreover, hierophanic time, seemingly consisting of short periods (beginning/ now/ ever and ever), is in fact one single, powerfully charged present time. This is further underscored by the inserted “and always”, which is not as superfluous as it seems, for it expresses the coherence throughout the fragmented short periods of the one sacred time.

Moreover. – “As it was in the beginning” is a typical mythical remnant bearing

witness to the origin, where 'beginning' means both “spreading over the rest of time, because inexhaustible life force” and “beginning in duration.” Beginning is both the first member of the entire set of times and a summary of the entire set of times!

That they be held before our eyes by way of introduction

Social origin . - Eliade rightly opposes, for example, M. Mauss (1872/1950), who claims that the sacred times are a product of society.

1. Lunar religion .

Mauss et al. establish that the rhythm and repetitions found in the lunar phases differ from the rhythm and repetitions exhibited by the rites. The objective calendar of the cosmic phenomenon differs from the hierophanic calendar that celebrates the cosmic phenomenon.

To which Eliade replies: the celebrations do not concern the natural phenomenon, the phases of the moon, but their sacred meaning (in short: the 'favor' emanating from the moon and its phases).

2. Field religion .

The study of the agrarian religions abundantly demonstrates that the calendar announcing spring differs from the calendar of liturgical agrarian ceremonies.

To which Eliade replies: what the peasants celebrate in their spring rites as 'favor', i.e., as a life force that develops through and in response to the objective cosmic spring event, is indeed connected with it—as in the case of the moon phases—but transcends the natural event: the rebirth that reveals “life” (basic concept of religion) with and in spring is the actual object of the celebration. The actual object, in other words, is not cosmic but hierophanic !

The many parts of the one total time.

Eliade arrives at the actual subject, namely the myth and its “eternal re-beginning”. He expresses this as follows: the many parts of moon celebrations or field rites may seem unconnected to one another, but are in fact 'solidary' or 'connected' to one another. He clarifies this using the Eucharist.

The Christian Eucharist as a sample .

The moment when Jesus for the first time substantially transforms bread and wine (natural phenomena) into his body and his blood (hierophanic phenomena) is in itself a first separated sacred time (essentially the primordial time of the Eucharist).

All subsequent Masses, which continually make that first transubstantiation present, admittedly appear to be isolated holy times, but in fact they are the bubbling life force of the first or primordial transubstantiation at the Last Supper, which spreads endlessly in objective duration.

Both courses—that of the profane duration and that of the rite resumed again and again—are two distinct courses. Compare with what we said about the Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!

16.3.4. Profane duration / sacred time (religion , magic, myth, legend).

Bible st. : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 3~5 .. –

“What applies to the time of Christian worship also applies to all times that religion, magic, myth, legend (and folklore) reveal” (oc, 335). In particular: a ritual does not limit itself to repeating the previous one (which is itself the repetition of an archetype (understand: primal example)), it is adjacent to it and continues it, periodically or not.

Magic herb.

The picking of magic herbs is performed at the intersection of what Eliade calls “critical moments” which, however ultra-short, make the profane duration favorable, such as the midnight of St. John. “For a few seconds, as in the case of the fern, for example, ‘heavens open’, as folk belief puts it: the magical herbs then acquire exceptional life forces and the one who picks them can become invulnerable, invisible, etc.” (ibid.).

Such seconds return at the same moment every year (periodicity). Insofar as they are a sanctified—or rather sanctifying—time, they connect with one another over the course of the centuries. In fact, they constitute a single encompassing time of reverence (or sacred time), notwithstanding that, spread over the profane duration, they do not visibly or tangibly connect.

Lot.

In the legends about cities, castles, monasteries, and sunken churches, a curse is a throw of fate that, once cast, continues to repeat itself. For example, every year, every seven years, every nine years.

Hubert and Mauss, Eliade says : “On the well-defined date the city rises again, the bells ring (*note*: of the sunken church), the lady of the castle comes out, the treasures open, the guards fall asleep. But at that specific moment the curse dies

out and everything becomes silent.”

Such periodic repetitions of fate suffice, so to speak, to demonstrate that the same dates revive the same facts.

Behold a sample of the language used in legends. That language use comprises:

1. (favorable or unfavorable) primordial fact (mythical basis),
2. repetitions of that primordial fact (periodicity), which together constitute one encompassing sacred (favorable or unfavorable) time.

Eternal presence.

In religion, magic, myth, legend, and folklore, it concerns a sacred time that is repeatedly made present for an indefinite duration, a kind of “eternally present present.” The language of all rituals (which describe and prescribe rites) encompasses the term 'now,' 'present.' The duration that the commemorated or repeated (favorable or unfavorable) event has experienced is presented as present, as if it were still there.

“The suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ are not merely commemorated in the course of Holy Week: they take place then before the eyes of the faithful. And a true Christian must feel himself a contemporary of these transhistorical (understand: transcending the profane framework of historical science) events, since the Theophanic time, once repeated, is made present before him.” Thus the author, *oc*, 336;

The herbalist.

Upon her departure, she says: “We are going to gather herbs to place on the wounds of the Lord.” Thereby she becomes a contemporary of the wounded Jesus and elicits the favor emanating from his wounds. Or she acts as if her plants are growing at the foot of the cross. More precisely: plants are growing at the foot of the Lord’s cross; she does nothing other than gather them as if they were still present there.

It is related that the healer meets Mary or other saints; that Mary is informed of someone's illness and indicates the remedy. Thus the cited *Ch . Pavelescu , Cercetari asupra magiei la Románii din Muntii Apuseni* , Bucharest , 1945, 156,- a compatriot of Eliade .

Conclusion. The sacred in all its domains—religion, magic, myth, legend, folklore—invariably exhibits the same structure, as is evident from what was just said.

Note - Whether just any herbalist has direct contact with the plants at the foot of the cross like a Christian believer is a question that must be asked, since direct contact with the sacred also depends on mental convictions.

16.3.5. Profane duration/sacred time (characters/ decay and restoration).

Bible st . : *M. Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions* , Paris, 1953, 337s..

The eternally present, spread over a fundamentally endless series of 'presences', entails the imitation of a deity, ancestor, or cultural hero (understand: someone who enriched the existing culture with a definitive achievement; one also says 'cultural hero').

Whoever celebrates Mass as a priest inevitably steps into the person and, above all, the benevolent role of Jesus, who demonstrated the first Mass and immediately 'instituted' it, leaving it capable of endless repetition.

New Guinea.

Given : a myth tells of the deeds that serve as the epitome of the maritime law of the Aori ;

Application . - A naval leader sets sail. He wishes to resemble Aori by dressing like Aori , coloring his face black like Aori , and establishing a 'love' in his hair that resembles the one Aori tore from Iviri 's head . As Aori , he dances on the deck and opens his arms as Aori tore open his wings. In this way, he creates a sacred coherence with Aori's sacred time such that Aori's time is present.

New Guinea .

Given : Kivavia is a mythical , exemplary – successful – fisherman.

Toepas sing: a fisherman who goes fishing with his arrow pretends that he is Kivavia himself. He does not beg Kivavia : he identifies with him! Eliade's commentary: either he becomes the fishing hero himself in a mythical way, or he merely becomes his contemporary in a mythical way, whereby the Melanesian contacts Kivavia 's present . Such a thing transcends profane duration and is sacred time. It is as if profane duration vanishes into sacred time.

It suffices to know the myth to understand life.

Eliade quotes this saying by van der Leeuw. Every traditional, non-secularized culture—regardless of which cultural phase it finds itself in—wants above all to

realize the mythical primeval era as a primal favor in rites and the ritualization (dynamization) of “(profane) life”. With Marcel Mauss, one can say that the religious matters taking place in the profane realm, when viewed with logical justification , take place in eternity. In Mauss 's terminology, 'eternity' stands for “mythical primeval era”.

Note - In Oc, 336, Eliade writes a short sentence: “All life forces, even if they were divine, vanish and are lost as soon as they are active within the framework of profane duration.” The constant need to resume rites, periodic and non-periodic, has its reason in that exhaustion.

Eliade situates the rebirth of time here, oc, 340. People want to dismantle the past in order to create a new time. This is seen in the New Year's rites . These include:

1. cleansing, confession of sins, exorcism, banishment of evil from the village, etc.
2. extinguishing the fire and relighting the fire,
3. masked processions (the masks represent the dead), solemn reception of the dead with meals and the like, again leading the dead out at the end (to a brook, the sea, etc.),
4. battles between hostile groups,
5. eccentricities of all kinds (Saturnian events, carnival processions, unscrupulous acts, orgies).

Note - The person who made a very significant contribution here is *WB Kristensen* , *Collected Contributions to the Knowledge of Ancient Religions* , Amsterdam, 1947, especially oc, 231/290 (*Cycle and Totality*).

Both concepts merge: there is, after all, 'totality', the harmony (coincidence/exchange) of opposites (salvation/harm; ethical good/ethical evil) such that, if one of the opposites exists, the other is already in the process of breaking it down, and vice versa. Which leads to periodicity.

Kristensen's exposition is a detailed illumination of what actually happens to sacred time: it is called upon, only to immediately lead to exhaustion. That is what everyone with sufficient sacred experience observes time and again. That is what repeatedly leads one to return to rites of dismantling the preceding and building up the following—call it “rebirth of sacred time.”

Even the sacred time that the sacraments of the Catholic Church create time and again does not escape this. Certainly not when, amidst the postmodern crisis,

the traditional belief in a sacred time—that of Christ's appearance—vanishes.