

Oriental Religions

Denominational and Natural

*a study of religion
as we do not know it*

21 August – 18 December, 2006

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Oriental Religions *Denominational and Natural*

Table of Contents

PROLOGUE

i

PREFACE

x

INTRODUCTION

xxvi

SPECULATIVE and MYTHOPOETIC THINKER and Reality

CHAPTER ONE

1

Gilgamesh, Sumerian Myth and Oriental Religion

CHAPTER TWO

14

“God-Language” and Existence as humans speak of it

CHAPTER THREE

28

Ludwig Feuerbach, David Hume and Sigmund Freud criticize denominational Religion

CHAPTER FOUR

46

Lao-tzu, Tao and Chinese Religion

CHAPTER FIVE

55

The *Bhagavad-Gita* and Hindu Religion

CHAPTER SIX

64

The *Book of Tea* and Japanese Religion

CHAPTER SEVEN

82

The **Buddhist** (*Dhammapada/DarmaRealms*) View of Reality

CHAPTER EIGHT

86

Heraclitus and Pre-Socratic Religion

CHAPTER NINE

95

God, Morals, Ethics - **Socrates** and Greek Religion

CHAPTER TEN

108

The **Judaic** View of God: Myth and Reality

Yhwh, Old and New Testament Difference in Myth

CHAPTER ELEVEN

120

New Testament: Christ's Oriental View of Religion

CHAPTER TWELVE

137

Denominational versus the Natural Virtue of Religion

Phil. 353; 10740; D115

Day-to-day syllabus; Fall. '06 (30 classes)

Robert Buckenmeyer

MW 3:30-4:45PM

OFFICE HOURS: 4:45-5:30PM

MW

ROOM 335, DAVIES' HALL

TOPIC QUESTION

#CLASSES

DATES

READINGS

The Question: Whether
or not God exists?

2

8/21,
23

Prol, Pref, Introduction,
Chap.Two/Three; notes: bkst.
Eliade: *Sacred and Profane*.

"God language"

THE ORIGINAL MYTH:

3

8/28,
30;9/6

Chap. One, notes; bkst.
Campbell, *Oriental Mythology*

Eastern origins of

"god" in **Gilgamesh**

THE ORIENTAL VIEW

Chinese

3

9/11,13
18

Chap. Four, *The Way* - notes

Lao-tzu: *The Way*

THE Hindu VIEW

Indian Vyasa

3

9/20,
25,27

Chap. Five, *The Gita*; notes

THE Zen VIEW

Japanese: Kakuzo

3

10/2,4
14

Chap. Six, *The Book of Tea*;
notes

Okakura

**DISCUSSION PAPER # 1:question to be answered:What relation, if any, does the
literal meaning of the Latin word "religion" have to you?** (Students read in
class.)

2

10/16,18

The BUDDHIST VIEW

The Dhammapada

3

10/23,25,30

Chap.Seven, notes

PRESOCRATIC/GREEK

VIEW: Heraclitus

2

11/1,6,8

Chap.Eight,
The Fragments-
Apology; notes

Socrates

1

11/13

Chap.Nine,
Notes on Ethics;
notes

JEWISH VIEW

Old Testament

2

11/15,27

Chap. Ten, *Eight*
Chaps on Ethics;
notes

Moses Maimonides

CHRISTIAN VIEW

New Testament

2

11/29;12/4

Chap. Eleven, *New*
Testament; notes

Jesus Christ

RELIGION REVIEW

2

12/6,11

Chap. Twelve,
notes

Denominational vis á

vis natural religion

**DISCUSSION PAPER #2:question to be answered:What effect has this course had
on your view of religion as you view it from AD To BC?**

2

12/13, 21 ?*

*Final Exam day, date and time to be determined: The mid-term is a "take-
home," to be given 10/14, due back in class on 10/18;the **second discussion
paper will take the place of the final.**

Students **shall read** each of the two discussion papers during the
assigned class dates; this is **non-negotiable**. Basic Requirements for the
discussion papers: 2 pages DOUBLE-SPACED, proof-read, a clear, concise and
coherent **answer to the question asked.**

THE FOUR SCHEDULED CLASS DISCUSSION DAYS- 10/16, 18;12/11, 13 are

**REQUIRED ATTENDANCE. Failure to attend THESE DISCUSSION DAYS means an "F" for the
course, UNLESS PRIOR APPROVAL IS GIVEN BY THE INSTRUCTOR; THIS IS the NON
NEGOTIABLE ELEMENT WHICH STANDS AS PART OF THIS SYLLABUS CONTRACT BETWEEN
STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR.**

Open Letter to Students Seeking to Enroll in Introduction to Philosophy, Ethics and
Oriental Religions, Spring, 2006

You are shopping today, well, so am I! Let me put my shopping in perspective. I began teaching Philosophy at ARC (one year at Sac City) September 1972 when I went to work for the State Department of Education, however, I began teaching full time at Loyola High School, L.A. in September of 1957, forty-eight years ago; I then taught at various colleges until I left the University of Santa Clara in 1972 to work for the State Depart. of Education. I have been a part-time instructor here at ARC thirty-three years.

Therefore, I have been teaching here longer than most of you have been alive, perhaps longer than your parents have been alive. Now, two things I have noticed these last ten years: first, student skills and learning interest have deteriorated precipitously; secondly, my patience has worn thin. An example from last year illustrates both. A young male student approached me after I handed back the first discussion paper in Ethics' class. I asked him if I could help him. He said "yes" – I need to describe the context: I just handed back forty-eight first discussion papers. I gave only six grades to six papers; the remainder had "rewrite" typed below the pages of corrections. I asked him: "how may I help you?" He stated: "I do not like what you did to my paper"; I retorted, "I do not like what you did to the English 'language'" - I had made forty corrections. He responded: "You don't understand: I like the way I write; it gives me pleasure". I pointed to the door asking: "Do you see that?" He said, "Yes, the door?". I said: "good, use it".

These last five years at ARC have seen dramatic changes. I have found that so many students merely seek to take a course to slide through and/or get an "easy" grade insensitive to any interest in learning or resentful of any challenge; I no longer have patience with this – I am too old; my love of learning is too great; my remaining days are limited in number and therefore, I do not want to waste my time - how much longer I shall teach here, I do not know. I take is a semester at a time. So, if any of you qualify as disinterested in learning or uninterested in being challenged: Do you see that door? Well and good, USE IT. Now, here is what this course requires: this course requires two things: first a competent command of the English language, specifically, grammar and punctuation – if you are incompetent in English expression but are interested in working to improve under my demanding direction, then stay and be prepared to sweat academically; finally, a persevering effort to read and understand the texts studied within the course syllabus.

Thus, those are the kind of students I am shopping for; now, you decide if I am the kind of teacher you can love to hate. The decision is yours, but note that my demands are inflexible. You decide whether or not you want to work to learn. This course requires two discussion papers so students may communicate their learning to each other. The course also gives a mid-term whose sole purpose is to determine whether or not the student is reading and understanding the texts as are listed in the syllabus. The purpose of the mid-term is to separate the student chaff from the student grain. The structure of the mid-term and the discussion papers is to separate the serious student from the curious student.

Being human is one thing, however, being respectful is another. Furthermore since the first human being we experience is self, respect must start with the self before it can extend beyond to other humans. The story is self-explanatory and follows:

This story concerns a monastery which had fallen upon hard times¹. Once a great religious order², as a result of waves of anti-monastic persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the rise of secularism in the nineteenth, all its branch houses were lost and it had become decimated to the extent that there were only five monks left in the decaying mother house: the abbot and four others, all over seventy in age. Clearly it was a dying religious order.

In the deep woods surrounding the monastery, there was a little hut that a rabbi from a nearby town occasionally used for a hermitage. Through their many years of prayer and contemplation, the old monks had become a bit psychic, so they could always sense when the rabbi was in his hermitage. “The rabbi is in the woods; the rabbi is in the woods again”, they would whisper to each other. As he agonized over the imminent death of his order, it occurred to the abbot at one such time to visit the hermitage and ask the rabbi if by some possible chance he could offer any advice that might save the monastery.

The rabbi welcomed the abbot in his hut. But when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only commiserate with him: “I know how it is,” the rabbi exclaimed. “The spirit has gone out of the people; it is the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore.” So the old abbot and the old rabbi wept together. Then they read parts of the *Torah* and quietly spoke of deep things. The time came when the abbot had to leave. They embraced each other. “It is a wonderful thing that we should meet after all these years,” the abbot said, “but I have still failed in my purpose for coming here. Is there nothing you can tell me, no piece of advice you can give me that would help me save my dying order?”

“No, I am sorry,” the rabbi responded. “I have no advice to give; the only thing I can tell you is that the Messiah is one of you.”

When the abbot returned to the monastery, his fellow monks gathered around him to ask: “Well, what did the rabbi say?” “He couldn’t help,” the abbot answered. “We just wept and read the Torah together. The only thing he did say, just as he was leaving –something cryptic– was that the Messiah is one of us. I don’t know what he meant.”

In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks pondered this and wondered whether there was any possible significance to the rabbi’s words. “The Messiah is one of us! Could he possibly have meant one of us monks here at the monastery? If that’s the case, which one? Do you suppose he meant the abbot? Yes, if he meant anyone, he probably meant Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand, he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Brother Thomas is a holy man. Everyone he could not have meant Brother Elred! Elred gets crotchety at times. But, come to think of it, even though he is a thorn in people’s sides, when you look back on it, Elred is virtually always right. Often very right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Elred. But surely not Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, a real no body! But then, almost mysteriously, he has a gift for somehow always being there when you need him. He just magically appears by your side. Maybe Phillip is the Messiah. Of course, the rabbi didn’t mean me. He couldn’t possibly have meant me. I’m just an ordinary person. Yet, supposing he did! Suppose I am the Messiah? O God, not me. I couldn’t be that much for You, could I?

¹ This story lists an author to be “Chesid,” was written about 1870 and comes from an ancient manuscript.

² Within Catholic Christianity, a religious order is one within which the postulants applying for membership take a minimum of three vows, as a condition of being accepted: poverty, chastity and obedience. Some of the more notable religious orders are: Trappists, Carthusians, Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits but several others exist.

As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect!

Because the forest in which it was situated was beautiful, it so happened that people still occasionally came to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, to wander along some of its paths, even now and then to go into the dilapidated chapel to meditate. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the atmosphere of the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling about it. Hardly knowing why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently to picnic, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to show them this special place and their friends brought their friends.

Then it happened that some of the younger men who came to visit the monastery started to talk more and more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them? Then another. And another. So within a few years the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality in the realm.

Chessid

Philosophy classes

Robert G. Buckenmeyer

DIRECTIONS: writing, grading discussion papers and other “irrelevants”

DEFINITIONS: The first thing necessary is to define the terms:

1. relevant/irrelevant(s): the only relevant goal of any course of instruction is a student's learning; the only relevant method by which any student learns is that the student understands the subject matter/method.

2. grades(ing): grades are teachers' approximate measurements of the student's internal learning and understanding of subject matter/method; essentially then, every grade is subjective, whatever the standard of measure whether of the student's skills to learn (since each student is unique) or of the student's skills to imitate. That external approximation is then quantified, so the measurement is not just subjective but arbitrary because neither learning nor understanding, as spiritual activities of the human mind and will, can be quantified. Therefore, grades/grading are conveniences for the educational system's administration, but have little or no direct relevance to the student's life of learning, unless to score the student's ability to imitate, by, for instance, a “scantron”.

3. discussion paper(s): the discussion paper has a dual purpose: first, to stimulate that the student “objectify” in writing his/her internal thinking about a specific question and then that the student externalize out-loud that “objectification” to peers and the instructor during classroom readings.

This instructor uses discussion papers for the same reason an artist uses some medium through which to express an idea. Take, for instance, the potter and an idea of a beautiful pot, vase, whatever. The potter must throw clay in order to “make” the idea of the pot “real”. Only when we humans **do** something do we learn the extent of our knowledge, skill and understanding. (This fact applies equally to students and teachers.) Writing our thoughts parallels the potter's throwing of clay. As the potter molds and works the clay, the clay molds and works the potter's idea; so too, as we mold and work our words, language molds and works our ideas.

Once thoughts are written, then, we speak what we have written. This speaking closes the circle of our communication with ourselves. Literally, our internally expressed idea returns to us through speaking its written expression and we hear what we thought. We reflect upon our thinking and this reflection leads us to clarify our own thoughts. What we thought silently, we wrote; what we wrote, we speak; then we rethink again silently what we thought as we listen to what we speak.

In addition, this speaking of our written words to the class benefits us in two other ways: first, we gain confidence through sharing our thoughts and through the appreciation others show of our thought(s). Secondly, we generate new thoughts because we share in others' ideas, sparked by our spoken thoughts. Again, this completes the circle of our communication with ourselves, but this time as human beings who share and reflect upon our thinking. What we began in the silence of our private minds, we verbally share socially; through this sharing we come in contact with our shared, human nature, providing a social perspective to our individual, private thoughts. So our private, internal thoughts are reinforced, reevaluated, reformed, but most of all enriched, deepened, broadened and heightened.

The question now becomes: how are the discussion papers and/or any tests graded? The answer is simple: they are graded subjectively and arbitrarily, as are all grades(ing) - of course, this statement is true only if the instructor and/or administrator is honest. The question should be: how does this instructor seek to achieve a balance or justice within this subjective, arbitrarily “objective” bureaucratic requirement? This instructor seeks first to “level the playing field” by

providing the same set-questions for all students to answer and a common set of primary sources from which all students approach the question. Maria Montessori calls this “freedom within limits”. Secondly, this instructor seeks to measure the student’s increase in learning and understanding within the context of the class’ learning and understanding as expressed in two discussion papers.

This means simply that each paper is graded for two basic elements: first, the form through which the thoughts appear, including proper use of grammar, punctuation, spelling and other formal mechanics; in short, this means that the instructor seeks to access the student’s skills in the use of language, both as to content and structure, as the material through which the student’s ideas take shape. But, just as the most artistic ceramic clay pot idea is dependent upon the potter’s successful work with the ceramic clay, so the most brilliant philosophic idea depends upon the student’s work with his or her language materials. Thus, if the potter has not worked the clay so every bubble is removed, the most beautiful, artistic ceramic clay pot will explode within the kiln. If the student has not worked his or her language materials so that mechanics’ bubbles are removed, the most beautiful, artistic philosophic idea will explode within this instructor’s critical kiln!

The second element graded is the student’s thought process and development. This element uses the standard of the question asked and the philosopher who expressed and developed a similar thought, for the purposes of the “Intro” course, people such as Confucius, Lao-tzu, Socrates, Ivan Ilych, and so forth. This instructor frequently requests students to re-write an original paper. Such an opportunity, however, merely requests re-expression and inevitably leads the student to a deeper and broader understanding of the subject-question, sometimes to a better grade. Nevertheless, students should know that some former, successful students have re-written discussion papers more than once, twice, even more, in one case ten, yes (10) times.

Finally, the student’s second discussion paper becomes more important than the first because the student grades self upon his or her own increase in understanding and learning. Thus, a better effort in the second discussion paper can lead to a better grade, and vice versa. The bottom line, so to speak, is that the grade which any student receives lies within the control of a student’s attitude and motivation. A person’s attitude determines that person’s ability, but one’s ability may well exceed one’s attitude. The instructional purpose is single, namely, that the material be presented in a manner such that the student may learn and understand. This instructor is not interested in providing students with information or knowledge, so students who seek such limited learning should seek it elsewhere. The student’s purpose, therefore, in writing and discussion papers is to communicate that student’s learning and understanding. Grades seek to represent the progress of each student in his or her journey on the road of learning and understanding the problems philosophers discuss. You, therefore, grade yourselves and I, as instructor, am merely an instrument who assigns that grade for administrative, that is, bureaucratic purposes. 7/97;1/98;12/02

PROLOGUE

Contemporary religion is not only one of the most controversial of human activities, but it is one of the least understood. We occidentals (that is, people who live where the sun goes down) are more comfortable speaking about sexual than about religious experiences. The contemporary American practice of religion is more a weekly burden than a daily experience. Yet, even this weekly religious practice is more social and external in intent than it is personal and internal in purpose - social in the sense of morally right and external in the sense of knowing peoples' names and being "nice" leaving the church parking lot. Such weekly practice and social purpose, however, were not the case in prior so-called *primitive* cultures wherein people worshiped the presence of the sacred as the source of life. Nor is it the case in some current contemporary cultures and many individual cases.

Yet, the fact remains Americans are more likely to ask about and respond to the question "How's your sex life?" than they

Americans are more comfortable speaking about sexual experiences than about religious experiences.

would to the question "How's your religious life?" We speak avidly and freely about physical health, sicknesses and body building but avoid speaking about spiritual health, sickness and strength. Why? Given the fact that we all have but two things in common, namely, that we are born from a woman's womb and that we all will die and return to the dust of the earth, we would seem as interested in death as we are in our sexual origin or experience. Indeed, is not human living what we do while we await death?

Occidentals in general and Americans in particular, however, have a peculiar attitude which precludes their understanding of Oriental religion in particular and the sacred versus the profane in general. This peculiar attitude results from two presuppositions: first, linear time, that is, from B.C. (or B.C.E.) to A.D. (or, C.E.); secondly, that Christian is better (even the best!) than pagan. As to linear time, the fact is that notwithstanding Greenwich "mean time", biological time prevails in nature, so real time is cyclical, as reflected in the annual seasons, but Greenwich time is artificial and linear subject to a given hemisphere. As to the Christian, any specific religion, including the Christian (whether Episcopalian, Protestant or Catholic), as well as Orthodox Judaism is denominational, but few who consider themselves "religious" have heard of the natural virtue of religion, as manifested and studied in The Sacred and the Profane of Eliade.

Indeed, cyclic time is natural, both biological and seasonal. The human body depends upon the day to night, night to day repetitive process in order alternately to rest and to work to such an extent that a San Francisco to London or to Melbourne air flight occasions disorientation, or so-called "jet lag". The flora of nature, specifically grape vines depends upon the severity and cold of winter to find rest so that the following spring the buds will be abundant and in fall the grapes will be plentiful, rich in flavor and full-bodied in its wine taste. Winter, after all, is not a time of death, except superficially, but is rather a time of rest both for flora and fauna. Black and polar bears, as well as other animals, hibernate and, as it were, turn down their thermostats so that they conserve energy looking forward to spring and the new life it provides. The death of winter generates the life of spring.

In a parallel fashion, the natural virtue of religion is both the basis and tap root of any denominational religion because the natural virtue of religion stands as an individual human being's interior relationship to the source of life. So, such a natural virtue should take precedence over any "denominational" religious group, as we shall see. Whether one is Christian or not, therefore, is irrelevant to one's natural and personal relationship to the source of life through what people as diverse as Cicero and St. Thomas Aquinas define as the natural virtue of religion!

**Most A.D. Christian assume
Christianity to be better than
B.C. pagan, primitive religion.**

The American legal system litigates more about the separation of church and state than it does about the possible transcendent value of the human being and the sacred gift of life in relation to a state's temporal good or a person's convenience, even the enforcement of law so society might obtain what is called civil order. Yet, if, American citizens have alleged "inalienable rights" given by God and recognized by the Declaration of Independence, then it would seem the American legal system would support and promote a society which recognized a unique relationship between a human being and God, say, the natural virtue of religion. From what other source, after all, might "inalienable rights" come to the human being? Surely, these do not come from human society, or what we call the "state". Were that the case, the state could take them away with or without notification and independent of due process. As a matter of fact, Americans and lawyers even seem blind and deaf to the pervasive presence of religion within the so-called English language. The *Prologue* exhibits provide examples of such a presence, as taken from the 1985 edition of the Colonial American English Dictionary compiled by Richard M. Lederer, Jr.

At the same time, American society contains more examples of economic exploitation of religious' aspirations and the secularization of religious' values than any other past or present society. Contemporary tele-evangelists, for instance, concern themselves more with acquiring money than in practicing corporal works of mercy, such as feeding the poor, clothing the naked and housing the homeless. Again, *Prologue* exhibits provide several examples, ranging from "Nude Angels" coaxing lonely men to donate money to a minister of a "Church of Love" and copulating with church members so they might commune with God - even to "Heavy Metal Music Becoming a 'Religion'". The 1980s provide a multitude of examples wherein many sincere, but naïve religious Americans lost their life savings, even their monthly income to supporting the affluent lifestyle of tele-evangelists.

**Occidentals think the "spoken" word more
important than what is unspeakable.**

Nowhere is the absence of religion more noticeable than the cheapness in which American society views human life in particular and the worth of a human being in general - this ranges from the cheapness of human life present in the womb to the cheapness of human life within elderly or terminally ill people. In addition, Americans hold their supposed right under the second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to "bear arms" more sacred than they do the value of a human life. A 1999 F.B.I. report estimates some 250 million guns to be owned by a population of only about 230 million people! Thus, minor disagreements, even angry glances result in gun violence and murder. This cheapness of human life is the "flip side" of a coin whose other side is the lack of self-knowledge in the value of the uniqueness of the gift

of just being alive. Such self-knowledge is popularly "hyped" as self-esteem, yet, disregards the unique gift which every life is. But, if the value of being alive and/or of being human were limited to that assigned by fellow human beings, then no human being would be any more valuable than any other and no one could exceed the value assigned by any given society or political entity. A poem by American poet Emily Dickinson says it well:

This world is not conclusion;
 A sequel stands beyond,
 Invisible as music,
 But positive, as sound.
 It beckons and it baffles;
 Philosophies don't know
 And through a riddle, at the last,
 Sagacity must go.
 To guess it puzzles scholars;
 To gain it, men have shown
 Contempt of generations
 And crucifixion known.

A further characteristic of American society is its view of "other" religions and past

Can the "words" humans speak effect the presence of that about which they speak or can "beliefs" replace actions?

cultures, particularly those within the B.C., or "Before Christ" era. (Actually, contemporary public school instruction within the "social sciences" now uses terms like C.E. and B.C.E., that is, "Common era" and "Before the Common era" - since A.D. smacks of a specific religion!) Indeed, Americans have and do view A.D. Christianity as best and "anglo European" as better! But, this view of A.D. versus B.C. is an American heritage brought first by Spanish Conquistadors, then by Congregational pilgrims from a European view which looked upon "colored" peoples as uncivilized and pagan (the word *pagan* being a descriptive word, originating about 1 A.D. to distinguish followers of Christ from other peoples). The fact is, however, that this inherited European view persists in unnoticed ways. An American presumption is that "new" is better and that our current century, year, month and day is "best". Such views reflect the anglo-European view that time and technology mean *better*, a view which finds its origin in Roger Bacon's 1620 *Novum Organon*. But, the interesting thing about so-called pagans, such as the Greek Aristotle, is that they provide us a non-Christian, non-European perspective upon ourselves and how we view the world and ourselves. The *Rhetoric* of Aristotle offers a unique example:

The true and the approximately true are apprehended by the same faculty; it may also be noted that men have a sufficient natural instinct for what is true, and usually do arrive at the truth. (1355a 10-15, Bk. 1, Chap. 1)

The religious fact is that since the Reformation, the theologies of an Augustinian German monk, Martin Luther, followed by the Frenchman John Calvin and the Englishman, John Wyclif, founder of the Methodist Protestant religious denomination have dominated and decimated the A.D. European and occidental person's view of him or herself. That view is summarized by

Luther's conviction that when Adam and Eve "sinned", the devil entered into and corrupted human nature. Calvin thereafter concluded that both human reason and will were evil and that the human hope for "salvation" depended solely upon faith in Jesus Christ, a radically **Gnostic** view (A Greek word, meaning knowledge), that is, a view that God is known and "saves" through the knowing of a rational "faith" in the New Testament Jesus Christ, so denominational religion becomes an exclusive gift to and activity of the human mind. All we have to do, therefore, is "know" and "accept" Jesus Christ and we are "saved". Would that "being religious" were so simple!

Thus, the occidental denominational religion called "Christian" assumes the knowledge characteristic of occidental science. The implied assumption here, however, is that since such "knowledge" comes through faith from God, then those who receive such "faith" are both privileged and "saved" whereas those who do not believe with such faith are "damned", a view which dominates so-called "Born Again" "Christians". Obviously, this A.D. view of human nature is contrary to Aristotle's B.C. view of human nature; yet, do we presume that this A.D. view of Luther and Calvin is "enlightened", even "better" than that of the B.C. Aristotle? Perhaps pagans have insights certain so-called "Christians" have lost!

Joseph Campbell traces the origin of occidental religion to the oriental Persian, Zoroaster.
--

A second fact complicates any study of religion for an A.D. occidental. That fact is the lack of knowledge occidentals in general have about their religious' assumptions. Occidental, or "falling" sun area residents of earth planet include an emphasis within denominational religion different from that of the oriental, or "rising" sun area residents of planet earth. Typical to occidental religion is the assumption that the emphasis upon and importance of knowledge, so the known "Gods" of denominational religions are preferable to the "unknown Gods", even the unknowable gods of pagan religions. This emphasis finds an echo within the *Acts of the Apostles* within the New Testament:

Paul's escort took him as far as Athens...Even a few Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some said, 'Does this parrot know what he's talking about?' And, because he was preaching about Jesus and the resurrection, others said, 'He sounds like a propagandist for some outlandish gods.'

They invited him to accompany them to the Council of the Areopagus, where they said to him, 'How much of this new teaching you were speaking about are we allowed to know? Some of the things you said seemed startling to us and we would like to find out what they mean.'...

So Paul stood before the whole Council of the Areopagus and made this speech:

'Men of Athens, I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are in all religious matters, because I noticed, as I strolled round admiring your sacred monuments, that you had an altar inscribed: To An Unknown God. Well, the God whom I proclaim is in fact the one whom you already worship without knowing it. (*Acts of the Apostles*, 17:15-24)

This occidental emphasis upon the knowledge aspect of belief or faith seems to originate in 361 A.D. when the Catholic Synod of Alexandria authoritatively approved and concurred with the Emperor Constantine and, later, his son Constantius and the Emperor Constans upon what has become known as the *Athanasian Creed*. This written creed summed up the basic principles of the Catholic Christian faith and these rulers sought to use its public confession as a means to reunite the oriental and occidental elements of the Alexandrian empire split by what became known as the Arian denial of the divine nature of Christ as advocated by a group of bishops called Eusebians centered around the city of Tyre. So, the Athanasian Creed became the verbal expression of the knowledge of the essence of the Catholic Christian faith and its public recitation became both the source of unity as a Catholic Christian and a citizen of the empire. Thus, a belief of the what is intangible and invisible began to be expressed in knowledgeable terms recited as the Athanasian Creed.

The oriental, Lao-tzu, however, counsels

Are A.D. denominational religions better, worse or neither than primitive religions?

humans that the *Tao* is both intangible and invisible and, therefore unknowable so humans must return to nature and to the “belly” as the judge of truth, virtue and religious living. Lao-tzu consequently urges them to reform themselves individually as the only “way” to exhort others to change or reform the social world of politics. Nature, specifically Mother Earth “speaks” non-verbally, indeed, biologically to the human being through the principles of *yin, yang* and the **material** world. This non-verbal message is felt through the “belly”. *So, health, virtue and spiritual communication come through the self-feeling nature, not the mind knowing a nature by name*. This Way of the B.C.Oriental, Lao-tzu contrasts with the way of the occidental Paul and A.D. Christians. The Japanese author of *The Book of Tea*, Kakuzo Okakura underscores this self-proclaimed “better” of the occidental when he writes:

Unfortunately the western attitude is unfavorable to the understanding of the East. The Christian missionary goes to impart, but not to receive. Your information is based on the meager translations of our immense literature, if not on the unreliable anecdotes of passing travelers.

The Gospel writer John, for instance, begins with a “poem” about the “Word made flesh”, the *Logos* which Paul describes as the Second Person of the Trinity who “emptied Himself”. *Logos*, as we saw, is the Greek manner of defining human being as distinct from all other animals because human being is the speech animal. Indeed, the Orthodox Jewish description of *Elohim*’s relationship to humans is through prophets, literally, “speakers” and the Christian manner of proclaiming denominational religion becomes “preaching”, but with a difference, namely, God, the Father and Holy Spirit “speak” to the people directly, through the “Word”, “the Son of God”. Thus, the New Testament Jesus Christ, the “anointed one” is the “spokes-person” of God, the Father to human beings.

Lao-tzu, on the contrary, cautions humans to discipline themselves in the use of words because words are rational and thus arbitrary, albeit natural products of the human mind. As early as the fourth century A.D., the Catholic Christian bishops throughout the Mediterranean countries, including Europe, Asia and Africa opposed the British monk Pelagius for stating knowledge of God to be both necessary and sufficient for salvation, condemning it as **gnosticism**

(a **gnosticism** which many contemporary Protestant Christian denominations echo). Occidental Christian religions have flirted with **gnosticism** throughout A.D.'s history. This flirtation parallels the occidental scientific emphasis upon knowledge as **the way** to save human populations from sickness, poverty, even vice and immorality. Indeed, Bertrand Russell offers scientific knowledge as the secular alternative to any and all Christian knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ within his *Why I Am Not a Christian?* Yet, Lao-tzu counsels we humans to return to nature, as the source of life and the belly as the way to judge of truth and virtue, urging us to reform ourselves individually as the only way to exhort others to change and reform.

Joseph Campbell traces occidental denominational religious beginnings within *Occidental Mythology* to the oriental Persian Zoroaster, c. 628-551 B.C., a prophet (from what is now Iran) who, as Campbell states it, "is the first personality to have worked creatively and formatively upon the course of (Western) religious history". Campbell observes:

In Zoroaster's new mythic view, on the other hand, the world, as it was corrupt - not by nature but by accident - and to be reformed by human action. Wisdom, virtue, the truth lay, therefore, in engagement, not in disengagement. And the crucial line of decision between ultimate being and non-being was ethical. For the primal character of creation had been light, wisdom and truth, into which, however, darkness, deception and the lie had entered, which is now man's duty to eradicate through his own virtue in thought, word and deed. (pp. 191-192)

Thus, **the** twofold question this book will probe is: whether or not the denominational religion of A.D. is better, worse, perhaps both or neither than so-called first or primitive peoples' natural virtue of religion, including B.C. peoples, as for instance, those summarized in Eliade's book, *The Sacred and the Profane*? Secondly: whether or not the denominational religion(s) of occidental A.D. peoples is (are) different from those of oriental B.C. or A.D. pagan peoples? If occidental A.D. denominational religions are different, the question becomes: **how** and, perhaps, **why**, but also **so what**?

A brief clarification of terms is necessary here. The word denominational stands opposite the word natural as adjectives to the word religion. The reader might find this unusual, however, this distinction is essential for the subsequent study of the oriental religious texts. An initial parallel will illustrate the opposition: if we compare word meanings such as denotative and connotative with natural and denominational, the similarity and difference appear:

<u>denotative</u>	:	<u>natural</u>
connotative		denominational

The English language steals, or borrows (depending upon one's attitude toward the so-called "English" language) words from Greek, Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish and others, including Anglo Saxon. Such words have so-called root, or denotative meanings in its source language, particularly, if these words come from the Greek or Latin languages. This stands as true even though any dictionary is only a reflection of words as used, that is, even these root meanings reflect the peoples' use of the words. So, any dictionary merely provides a reader with

the meaning of the word as the people used that word, thereby reflecting the culture of the people themselves. Yet, in addition, our current dictionaries also reflect the current connotative meanings of these borrowed words, however, such meanings might be contrary to, even contradictory to the root meanings of these same words - this occurs for one principal reason, namely, the lack of modern, current English language peoples' awareness and even interest in any language history, also called, linguistics - indeed, I would go so far as to say most contemporary American English language users do not give a damn about the meanings of the words they use since their word usage is so individualistic, arbitrary and solipsistic.

The question then becomes: is the God you think exists really the God who does exist?

A case in point would be the Greek word *barbarikos*, translated as *barbarian*. Greek society used this word to mean a foreigner, that is, a non-Greek citizen and insisted that such a person be treated as a guest, to reflect Greek civility. But, if you look this word up in an American English language dictionary, you will find its meaning to be: uncivilized and uncouth. So, our connotative meaning of this word stands in opposition to its root, or denotative meaning. If, therefore, a dictionary does not provide root or denotative meanings of other language words, the reader will lack perspective upon the word that reader uses, since the reader will not see the current word-use in relation to the word's source meaning.

If we compare such word meanings to the word *religion*, a curious truth reveals itself. Denominational religion, as the *Preface* observes, is a noun and derived, that is, it means religion as practiced socially. Most Americans, for instance, classify America as a Christian country - as we shall see, such a denomination might be true were we to re-define religion as secular or Epicurean materialism! But, as the Medieval philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas notes within his *Summa Theologica*, the work wherein Aquinas writes about theological matters for "beginners", that is, those who are entering the discipline of formal Theology, (*Pt. II-II, q. 81, Of Religion, in eight articles*), denominational religions are the result of human laws unlike the natural virtue of religion.

So, the purpose of this discussion is twofold: first, to place the discussion of religion within the context of a natural virtue, which both the B.C. pagan, Cicero and the A.D. Dominican, Aquinas call the *natural virtue of religion*, as part of the virtue of justice; secondly, to discuss various denominational ways of practicing religion by reading original sources and taking note of the historical cultures out of which they originate.

If it is true that man and woman are made in the *image* and *likeness* of God, as occidentals find in the *Old Testament* (the Hebrew word being *zelem*), then it should follow that the self-image which humans have will affect their view of God. Indeed, if it is true that our view of other human beings is a projection of our view of ourselves, then would it not follow also that our view of God would be a projection of our view of ourselves? Heraclitus of Ephesus, a 6th Century B.C. philosopher observed:

We should let ourselves be guided by what is common to all. Yet, although the *Logos* is common to all, most men live as if each of them had a private intelligence of his own. (*Fragment # 2*)

Even Xenophanes of Colophon, also a 6th Century B.C. philosopher offers a caution to us A.D. occidentals as we walk along this path of thinking:

If oxen or lions had hands which enabled them to draw and paint pictures as men do, they would portray their gods as having bodies like their own: horses would portray them as horses, and oxen as oxen. (*Fragment # 6*)

The self-reflection occasioned by the following readings and discussions will lead us to question our various views of God and ourselves. Perhaps, these reflections might reveal that the God we thought to be is not the God who is. These reflections might even bring us to question whether or not our view of ourselves is the view which God has of us, or, if, rather, our view of our God is not merely a projection of our view of ourselves? Obviously a difference exists between these two views, a difference which might have a serious effect at the moment of our death, so we might want to reflect upon this difference while we are still alive! After all, living is what we do while we are waiting to die!

The title “Religions of the Far East” needs clarification since this instructor does not agree with the “popular” distinction between “West” and “East”. These verbal descriptions stand in opposition and, even Rudyard Kipling speaks of this classification with sarcasm in his 1889 “The Ballad of East and West”. The first and last stanzas are one and the same:

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God’s great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

Kipling describes the son of an Indian, Kamal riding his dun and the unnamed son of a British Colonel, riding his mare, culturally different, ethnically opposed, but humanly similar:

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fires and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.

So, this instructor looks upon mother nature’s sun from the view point of planet earth in a complementary way: geographically, the sun comes out of the *orient*, a Latin word meaning *rising* with light only to set in the *occident*, a Latin word meaning *falling* into darkness. Thus, just as the *yang* is the *light* principle so the *yin* is the *dark* principle productive of the “thirty thousand”, as Lao-tzu describes Mother Nature’s reality. “West” and East” are as arbitrary and capricious as *yang* and *yin* are natural and complementary. After all, were you or I in New York City, then San Francisco would be in the East; while were you or I in Peking, China, then Tokyo, Japan would be in the West! So, yours truly shares Kipling’s sarcasm in relation to the separation indicated by “Religions of the Far East” syllabus description!

PREFACE

“Webster's New
International Dictionary of
the English Language,

Religion, as other human words, is both denotative and connotative in origin and meaning.

(1926) traces the word "religion" to a Greek language origin, *alegein*, meaning to heed or to have a care. (The word *neglect*, on the contrary, is its opposite, meaning not to heed or not to have a care.) Webster gives the first definition to be:

The outward act or form by which men indicate their existence of a God or of gods having power over their destiny, to whom obedience, service, and honor are due; the feeling or expression of human love, fear, or awe of some superhuman and overruling power, whether by profession of belief, by observance of rites and ceremonies, or by conduct of life; a system of faith and worship, a manifestation of piety; as, ethical religions; monotheistic religions; natural religion, revealed religion; the religion of idol worshipers. Religion (as distinguished from theology) is subjective, designating the feelings and acts of men which relate to God. As distinguished from morality, religion denotes the influences and motives to human duty which are found in the character and will of God, while morality describes the duties to man, which true religion always influences. (p. 1801, column 3)

This definition of religion originates, as do all dictionary definitions, from the connotative meanings drawn from the practice of religion and the verbal and daily use of the term by human beings at the time of the dictionary's writing. Practice of religion, however, would most probably consist in denominational religion(s). Yet, two things are interesting about this initial, Webster's New International dictionary definition of religion. First, the denotative meaning, or the root, original meaning of taking heed indicates that the basic act of religion is a human being's acknowledgement of a relationship to God, whatever that "god's" name and however that God is construed. Even the Orthodox Jew and Pharisee Paul, A.D. convert to Catholic Christianity recognized this fact when he entered Athens, as recorded within Acts of the Apostles:

Men of Athens, I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are in all religious matters, because I noticed, as I strolled round admiring your sacred monuments, that you had an altar inscribed: To An Unknown God. (Acts 17:23-24, The Jerusalem Bible edition, 1966)

Religion, after all, is awareness of a relationship of origin. We recognize ourselves and other living beings to be derived rather than to be original, as self-generated, so we seek a source for this life which we and others share. Our very act of breathing, for instance, manifests an act of dependence because not even our autonomic nervous system can be the sufficient origin of our human existence. However, this relationship of origin, unlike the relationship of son or

daughter to father and mother, is a unique relationship to the origin of life itself. We seek not just the origin of our physical existence, but the very origin of that existence itself in which we share and recognize a dependence of living beings of our experience, both each **new** existence and the continuance of that **new** existence on some being who causes an existence which is shared by all but **possessed** by none.

Religious peoples seek the origin of the life we share but do not originate.

The second interesting thing is that this dictionary meaning of religion understands that a response is due "...by which humans indicate their existence of a god or gods having power over their destiny..." Given the fact that this is a connotative description of religion, it provides the dictionary with the first, basic definition of religion by the people who practice and talk about religion. This means that the basic reason most people give for practicing religion is that "a god or gods...(has/have) power over their destiny". Whether or not this is true of non-Christian religions is subject to analysis of original source texts, however, given certain basic beliefs of Christianity, it should not seem true of New Testament Christians for the two reasons.

Christians, after all, seem to have two beliefs which preclude the practice of New Testament Christianity as an obligation, or duty. The first would be that man is "made in the image and likeness (*zelem*) of God" (*Gen. 1:26-27*), a Hebraic view which does not seem to lend itself to any idea of grovelling duty. If anything, the covenant spurred the Jews to be aggressive, even a military power in obtaining and maintaining "the promised land". The second belief is that "God is love" (maternal love within the Hebraic *Hosea*, specifically *11:1-11*, and pure love within the Christian *1 John 4:7-21*). So, if God is love, then humans are acts of love, first beloved by the New Testament God and love neither begins nor terminates in obligation or duty.

Furthermore, if human beings, both man and woman are **the** distinctive creation of God because humans have the gift of free choice in regard to self-destiny, any response out of obligation or duty would be questionable as to its having any origin within an act of free choice. A human tyrant, or dictator might demand obedience and a human slave might respond out of obligation or duty, but it would seem that no Old or New Testament God of love would demand any such obedience and no lover of God would respond out of obligation or duty even in regard to the so-called Ten Commandments. We will analyze specific Old and New Testament texts later on this subject.

However, whatever the connotative definition(s) of religion, this "Preface" also will discuss the denotative, or root meaning of the word as a Thirteenth Century A.D. theologian, Thomas Aquinas describes it. The interesting thing about comparing Webster's Greek origin of religion as *alegein* with Aquinas'

Latin origins is that they are correlative. Indeed, the three Latin denotative origins Aquinas cites stem from this common Greek word ***alegein***. Of course, any dictionary also describes religion as it is found in common English usage and Websters distinguishes religion as subjective and as: *ethical, monotheistic, natural, revealed and idol worshipping*. It also distinguishes it from *theology* which by reference would classify as "objective" and not dealing with "feelings and motives of human duty". However, such a dictionary definition is a presumption which the facts of theology, even as a science do not verify - the science of moral theology, for instance, treats of human motives and duty. So, although these distinctions in the main are valid, they do need more specific differentiation.

Denominational religion is man-made from human laws and rules.

Religion, whatever its meaning(s) and practice(s) is a human phenomenon. Cicero describes the human being as the *most religious animal* literally, ***homo religiosus***. No other species of animal leaves any trace of religious activity as witnessed by archeology or cultural anthropology whether the 14,000 year old religious paintings within the Salon Noir cave scenes at Niaux (outside Tarascon) or the 18,000 ones at Lascaux (in the Dordogne region) of Southern France or, indeed, the artifacts recently discovered about Gilgamesh in current Iraq. The sixth century B.C. Plato records his teacher's, Socrates' comments within the *Apology* as stating that God has no religion; "the Gods", he says, "have no need of one".

"Religion" is man-made, as noted above, the result of recognizing a relationship between humans sharing existence and a source or "cause" of that shared-existence, a reality which is not reducible to biological DNA. This recognition becomes the awareness that the source, or cause of this existence is present, though transcendent within existent beings. This human response, comment both Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell, is characterized by the perception of an immanent, yet transcendent a *sacred*, so-called Divine existence within the *profane* world. Both Eliade and Campbell therefore, begin their investigations of religion with the analysis of the human perception of transcendence and the human expression of this transcendence into myths.

This so-called "sacred" or "transcendence" is more common sense than mystery. Humans, be they primitive or so-called civilized celebrate birth-days, that is, the day of a person's birth as sacred. Why? The simple reason is that a person's birth is a new life and any new life is a sacred event, a time at which "spring" manifests the transcendence of life over death.

Take any seed, whether plant, say, a snow pea or human, both ovum and sperm. Unless the seed literally dies to itself, to its unique individuality, then the snow pea can not root, grow and mature into a healthy plant of numerous snow pea pods. So also, unless the unique sperm and ovum die to its unique individuality, mitosis can not result and a human being can not come into being

on or about the fourteenth day and implant upon the uterine wall and develop into a unique forty-six chromosome human being. Just as the “birth” of the snow pea plant, so the birth of a new human being manifests the sacred and transcendent purpose of nature. Again, the death of these seeds manifests the transcendence of life over death, indeed, the fact that the purpose of dying is to give life!

Thus, if the fact is that human religion presupposes a

“This very heart which is mine always remains indefinable to me.”

sacred, a Divine existence, is such a presumption valid? Yet, even if it is valid, how can its validity be verified? If the humans subjective response is religious, can humans analyze this subjective response objectively? If objective, can this analysis be scientific? An irony occurs here: if religion as a human relationship to a transcendent sacred being is of human origin, then any demand to verify the authenticity of religion is, at the same time, a demand to verify both the human perception of and the human response to human perceptive experience.

Yet, the interesting fact is that science and art are of human origin also, however, one seldom finds anyone challenging the authenticity of the first principles and cause of science, presumably a transcendent sacred, called truth or the cause of art, presumably a transcendent “beauty.” Indeed, science as we know it by nature progresses through the application of scientific knowledge into applied knowledge which we call technology. Neither art nor philosophy progress, however, since each merely re-expresses what human reason and imagination reflect upon as human. Yet, although humans progress historically, we will find the human response to religion and beauty the same whatever the historical date or cultural difference. However, a modern philosopher does provide us with a challenge to the claim that science is objective and can provide answers to all questions, particularly those of origin, namely, the causes and principles of science.

Albert Camus comments upon the scientific process and promise in The Myth of Sisyphus:

Indeed, of what and of whom can I say: 'I know that? I am able to feel this heart within me and I judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge; the rest is construction. If, then, I attempt to seize this 'me' of which I am assured, and I try to define and summarize it, it is nothing but water which trickles between my fingers. I am able to sketch one by one all these aspects which I seize by knowledge, all these also which are given to me, this education, this birth, this intensity and these silences, this virtuousness and this viciousness. But one can not add up these aspects. This very heart which is mine always remains indefinable to me. Between the certainty which I have of my existence and the content which I attempt to give to this assurance a hole will

never be filled. I will always be a stranger to myself. ("An Absurd Reasoning", pp. 14-15, Vintage Book, V. 75; translation by r. buckenmeyer.)

Camus'
"bottom
line" is that
neither

The uniqueness of a given living being is not replicable, notwithstanding the fact that its offspring are within the same species or sub-species.

human knowledge nor science will succeed in giving "objective" content to this feeling of me as a subjective, unique human being.

The human being, each *I*, stands as a first principle of self and self-action, even self-knowledge; *I am*, therefore, my *am* is knowledgeably indefinable, yet, perceptually existent. The *I* is presupposed and necessarily existing, yet, contingently alive but not able to be concluded to or proven to exist - all living beings are born and live, yet die, no matter how they seek life without end. Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that each human progenitor can be determined by DNA analysis, yet, no father or mother can pass on the uniqueness of self, but only the similarities of being within and from the same family. Camus' point, therefore, is well taken! Einstein would say later that the first principles of science itself are assumed, a matter of belief and unable to be proven; some two thousand and five hundred years before, Aristotle would say that to demand formal, demonstrative proof of everything is to have proof of nothing -- first principles are just that, "first" and nothing comes before them, but they validate anything and everything which comes after them. Thus, even scientists must accept the first principles of the sciences "on faith" or suffer the loss of the very basis of the sciences themselves. Perhaps, we humans also must accept the meaning of our lives on faith notwithstanding the temporal demands of human reason itself, even in the face of death?

Indeed, scientists cannot give "objective" status to the first principles of science itself because scientists for all their objectivity accept the following **on faith**: that they know, that knowledge is different from sense perception and belief, and that truth is distinct from error or falsehood, as well as many other "first principles". These are scientific *givens*, that is *facts* just as our share in being alive is a *given*, or *fact*.

The same thing is true about "the" First Principle, namely, God, *Yhwh*, *Eloheim*, *Allah* whatever the name. This is a *given*, impossible for reason to prove, but equally impossible to disprove. Thus, the person seeking to prove the existence of God has just as impossible a task as does the person seeking to disprove the existence of God; neither can be successful. So, Thomas Aquinas, a Medieval theologian turned philosopher, recognizing this fact provides "five ways" to "show" reason the probability that God exists. Consequently, the person who states "there is no such thing as absolute truth" is the person who asserts that which s/he seeks to deny. So also, the person who states "God does not exist"

provides a "meaning" to the term "God" which that person claims has no meaning. Both people affirm contradictions and, in the process, invalidate any possibility of disproving that which they claim is not true. Thus, disapproval is as much of a matter of belief as is approval; both are equally unprovable.

But, before progressing in the search for "proof" or "disproof" of God as existing, the *kinds* of

The virtue of religion is natural in origin and occasions denominational religions.

religion stated within the Webster's definition require comment. Webster's definition lists two types of religious' sources: religion which claims *reason* as its source; and religion which claims *revelation* as its source. The more famous founders of *religion* which use *reason* as its source, to name a few, were Socrates, Aristotle, Cicero and Aquinas.

Religion which claims *revelation* as its source is multiple, depending upon the type of revelation claimed. Homer and Hesiod, two renowned Greek poets, point to myths as revealing God(s); Plato criticizes these poetic sources and disclaims them. Mircea Eliade and Joseph Campbell, contemporary scholars of myth and religion, provide analysis of *myth as revelation* within *The Sacred and the Profane*, *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* and *The Masks of God: Oriental Mythology*. This type of revelation might be called "natural" in so far as *myth*, a Greek word meaning *word* is a function of *reason*, or *ratio*, the Latin word which comes from a Greek word *logos*, also meaning *word*.

Aristotle characterizes the work of mythologers when he compares them to philosophers within his first chapter of *Me ta Physica* (literally, *after-the-physics*):

If human religion presupposes a Divine existence, how can such a presumption be validated?

The lover of myth is in a sense a lover

of wisdom because both 'wonder' about the principles and causes of things...and God is such a principle and cause.

Aquinas considers such to be the "natural virtue of religion", a moral virtue proper to human nature - and independent from any denominational designation, such as Judaic, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Taoist, or whatever we call various connotative religions. Aquinas comments on this discussion of the origin of what Aristotle calls the "love of wisdom and the love of myth" within his *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, Book I, chapter 1, No. 55*:

Doubt and admiration arise from ignorance. When we see certain obvious effect(s) whose cause is hidden from our sight, we wonder then about those cause(s). This wonder leads us to philosophize, so a philosopher is something of a lover of myth, that is, a lover of *fable* (a *story* we fabricate about what we can

not see). *Fable*, after all, is proper to poets. (Translation is the responsibility of this author.)

Indeed, this 2,500 year old distinction of Aristotle and twofold definition of religious types by Webster find corroboration in the distinctions of a German traveler and scholar Adolf Bastian (1826-1905) who recognized a uniformity of what he termed the *elementargedanke*, mankind's *elementary ideas* about God and the way they were practiced within various human cultures, or what he termed the *Volkergedanke*, or *ethnic ideas*. Indeed, as we will find in Indian thought, as evidenced within the *Gita*, two aspects of mythology and ritual, or practice are distinguished: *marga*, meaning *path* or *way* to discover the universal first principle, or God (we may call this *denotative, or natural way*) and *desi*, meaning *of the region, local, or ethnic*, or sectarian practice or ritual of that God (we may call this *the connotative or denominational*). The Nineteenth Century wise and holy man, Ramakrishna describes the difference between these two:

God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with wholehearted devotion. You have no doubt heard the story of the chameleon. A man entered the wood and saw a chameleon on a tree. He reported to his friends. 'I have seen a red lizard.' He was firmly convinced that it was nothing but red. Another person, after visiting the tree said, 'I have seen a green lizard.' He was firmly convinced that it was nothing but green. But the man who lived under the tree said, 'What both of you have said is true. But the fact is that the creature is sometimes red, sometimes green, sometimes yellow, and sometimes has no color at all. (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 159)

The only difference we would register to Ramakrishna's comment is that these various kinds of religions are not of "God's making" but of man's designing.

Judaic religion also claims revelation as its source. Prophets, literally, speakers carry the divine message to the chosen people and their words are recorded within the Old Testament as the Pentateuch or Torah. Moses Maimonides is one of the major classical Jewish scholars who writes about this revelation during the latter part of the 12th Century in two of his most famous works: The Guide for the Perplexed, and The Eight Chapters of Ethics -- although Moses Maimonides is unique among rabbani, or teachers in that he also used reason to explain revelation. Muslim religion also claims

Denominational religions claim both divine and human origins.

revelation as its source and records this revelation through Muhammad, Son of Abdullah, of the tribe of Qureysh, born at Mecca in the Koran. An American religion which claims revelation as its source is the Mormon through Joseph Smith and is found in the Book of Mormon, an account which alleges it is the story of an ancient American people spoken to Smith by an angel named Moroni. Of course, the first, so-called Christian religion claims revelation as its source. The record of this revelation is within the New Testament and tells of an Incarnation, or a Divine being with a complete Divine nature assuming a complete human nature in the person of Jesus Christ, as born of a Virgin at Bethlehem, celebrated as Christmas (in Europe, as the sixth of January, in America as the twenty-fifth of December). Augustine was the earliest, most well known of the writers on this subject, a common source for all so-called Christians, whether Catholic, Episcopalian or Protestant.

Now, no introductory analysis of religion(s), natural (as through reason) or revealed, would be complete without consideration of a third group which denies the Absolute, or God, for which religion requires worship. This group has two sets of protagonists: agnostics and atheists. Among these two sets we will find advocates which seem out of place, however, any such "seeming" is due more to our misunderstanding of these sets than to the description of these advocates. The agnostics include such well known Greeks as Heraclitus and Socrates. Agnostic has a Greek origin and means: a, or, not, and gnosis, or known, so the word means someone who claims that God can not be known through human intelligence or through human reason.

Do the multiple B.C. and A.D. denominational religious have anything in common?

Agnostics claim that a God may indeed exist, but such a God can not be known directly by human reason. God, in other words, is beyond the capacity of human reason to know, even though the fact that God exists might be attainable through human reason as manifested by myth or by probable conclusion via reasonable argument. Agnostics range from the oriental, Lao-tzu in the Way, through the medieval theologian, Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologiae as an occidental example. Another example is Muhammad, son of Abdullah, a Meccan claimed to be a descendant of Abraham, through Ishmael, the son of Abraham and his black, Egyptian slave, Hagar within the Old Testament (Genesis, 16:1-16;21:8-21). Muhammad identified with a group called Hunafa, in 613 A.D., literally, "those who turn away", from the worship of known-gods, and thus preached that there was but one God, unknowable, Allah.

The majority of atheists claim that God does not exist, however, the Greek word atheist would seem to call such a claim into question. Atheist probably comes from a, or not and thein, or go along with, thus, an atheist might originally and traditionally be someone who does not go along with the societal, or sectarian view of God. The B.C. Greek, Xenophanes, for instance, denied that the Olympian God(s) of Greek Ionia were God(s). Xenophanes claimed that they were anthropomorphic projections, fictions men made in man's image. Thus, Xenophanes refused to worship these state God(s) and wrote:

Religion is not what men say the human's relationship to God is or is not, but the way that relationship to God is.

form or thought.

There is one God, the greatest among gods and men, not at all like mortals in

The interesting lesson learned from Xenophanes is that he is classified as an atheist, but seems to be the first Presocratic Greek history records to have asserted the doctrine which is now called monotheism, Greek, meaning one God. Thus, labels or categories, such as agnostic and atheist, are deceiving; indeed, even the label Christian can be deceiving, even contradictory, as the "San Francisco Chronicle" article of December 5, 1987 illustrates in its report about "Kemp Aide's Views on Catholics, Jews".

This discussion seeks to clarify the subject-matter this book pursues, namely, whether or not various, even opposing kinds of world denominational religion have anything common between and among them.? The following set of distinctions concerning the Latin origins of the English word religion have a self-styled agnostic as their author, Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas

claimed that man could use reason to arrive at a metaphysical probability "that an Absolute exists which we call 'God'", but denied that human reason by its own power

If human religion presupposes a Divine existence, how can such a presumption be validated?

could achieve a direct knowledge of God -- something which Aquinas argued that Adam and Eve could and did have as a God-given ability in the Garden of Eden, but an ability they lost as a result of the act of disobedience we call original sin.

These root word, or denotative definitions of religion describe what he terms the actions proper to the "moral virtue of religion", found within the cardinal virtue of justice -- cardinal, a Latin word meaning the hinge of a door. This means that justice is the moral virtue which opens the door of life to human beings. "Justice", Aquinas says, following the Greek and Roman philosophers, means "to render what is due, or required, no more, no less". Thus, if someone owes another \$5.00 and that person returns \$4.95 or \$5.05 to the other, then that person has not performed a "just" action; the person has not exercised and does not manifest the virtue of justice. In the first instance, the person has been unjust, returning only \$4.95, rather than the \$5.00 owed; in the second instance, the person was "magnanimous", or generous, returning \$5.05, \$.05 more than was owed.

Now, Aquinas calls religion a form of justice because the human being owes a debt of worship to God as first principle (that is, the source of life) because God is excellent and deserves glory and praise, two characteristics which require respect. Thus, when we reflect on the fact that Aquinas characterizes the virtue of religion as within the virtue of justice, we conclude that religion literally opens the door of our life to the life source. This analysis of the Latin word religio is all the more interesting given the root meaning of taking heed which the Webster's dictionary provides as the origin of the English word religion and, thus, its denotative meaning.

Justice is the cardinal virtue, the "hinge" which opens the door to life for the human being; religion is a virtue within justice.

The natural, moral virtue of religion,

therefore, is the means through which man repays this debt of worship to God - which Aquinas specifies to be a freely chosen act of love of the creature to the Creator. The moral virtue of religion thereby unifies the activities of all other moral virtues so that man's practice of any and all moral virtues also become part of the act of worship to God. (Summa Theologiae, II-II, 23, 7 & 8.) Furthermore, says Aquinas, the acts of all the other moral virtues (namely, the other three cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, and temperance, as well as the virtues related to each one of these) such as those related to justice, namely, piety, gratitude, vindication, observance and truthfulness, are incomplete and imperfect unless they are unified in and commanded by the virtue of religion in the service of and in recognition of this First Principle as the supreme power over the world and everything within the world.(S.T. II-II, 81, 4)

Aquinas then analysis the word religion linguistically and observes that it has three possible Latin root meanings. The first source is relegere, from the prefix re, meaning again and lectio or legere, meaning reading or to read. So religion results from a person "rereading things which pertain to the

worship of God". This "reading again" might mean that the human being

If the value of human life is the value human beings or the state assigns to it, human life is as cheap or as expensive as humans decide.

rereads the world around and within him or her self and concludes that the signs, effects, symbols, whatever indicate the existence of God; therefore, worship is due to this existent first principle, God. The second source is reeligere, from the prefix re, meaning again and eligere, meaning to choose. Thus, this sense of religion results from us "rechoosing" or choosing again the God whom we had lost by our neglect." The third source is religare, from the prefix re, meaning again and ligare, meaning to bind. Thus, this sense of religion results from the person "rebinding" him or herself back to God as his or her "first principle and last end." Whatever or how many the linguistic sources of the word religion, Aquinas says:

religion implies a relationship to God. For, we ought to be bound to God as to our unfailing principle; we must unceasingly choose him to be our last end; and, if we lose him through negligence by sinning, we ought to recover him by believing and professing our belief. (S.T. II-II, 81, 1)

Aquinas' final conclusion is: natural religion dictates that man should give reverence to God, but does not decide its determinate form which is instituted either from divine or human law. The fascinating aspect of the reasoning of this 13th Century theologian and philosopher, a

Are human beings naturally religious or are they only socially religious?

Dominican monk, is that it stands compatible with the discoveries of the 19th Century Adolf Bastian and the 20th

Century analyses of Eliade and Campbell. Aquinas' conclusion is also far in advance of the American U.S. Supreme Court rulings, since it both recognizes the natural virtue of religion within all human beings, yet, also specifies that what we call denominational religion is the result either of divine (as in the case of the Hebraic covenant with Yhwh) or of human law (as in the case of Episcopalianism in Britain).

Aquinas thereby states that although religion is basic to human nature, the form which the human being's worship of God takes has its origin either in divine or human sources. At the same time, this simple linguistic analysis coupled with the anthropological analyses simplify what Sigmund Freud rejected because he did not understand within his celebrated but prejudiced treatise which dismissed the relevance or religion to the realm of the id, or the primitive as sub-rational within The Future of an Illusion:

The truths contained in religious doctrines are after all so distorted and systematically disguised that the mass of mankind cannot recognize them as truth. It is an instance of the same thing when we tell the child that new-born babies are brought by the stork. Here, too, we tell the truth in symbolic guise, for we know what that large bird signifies. But the child does not know it; he hears only the distortion, and feels that he

has been deceived; and we know how often his refractoriness and his distrust of the grown-ups gets bound up with this impression. We have come to the conclusion that it is better to avoid such symbolic disguising of the truth, and to allow the child knowledge of the real state of affairs in a way suitable for his stage of intellectual development.[translated by W.D. Robson-Scott, (The International Psycho-Analytic Library, No. 15, London: The Hogarth Press, 1928) p. 78].

Understanding Aquinas' statement is essential as we study world religions. The statement means that religion is a virtue natural to man, but the "form which is instituted", or the ritual according to which it is practiced, is "denominational", that is, "is instituted either from divine or human law". Two questions occur because of this distinction: first, if God, whatever the "name" assigned, as first principle and origin exists, what, if any, action does this occasion on the part of human beings? Secondly, what relevance does the existence of such a first principle or origin have for any human society, or state?

The first question raises an interesting issue, namely, whether or not human beings who are religious according to the natural virtue of religion

If a person practices the natural virtue of religion, is this person obligated to practice a denominational religion?

incur any other responsibility once they individually realize this divine existence? Orientally speaking, Lao-tzu seems to require no social action, such as reforming the society, or redeeming its members; rather, Lao-tzu urges each human being to take no action except to follow Tao, the Way - such "no action", however, requires and occasions virtuous living.

Occidentally speaking, however, a unique responsibility does follow and that responsibility is summed up in the oft quoted statement: "we are our brother's keeper". The interesting aspect about occidental denominational religion from its apparent beginning with Zoroaster through "the event" of the Incarnation, or the so-called "virgin birth" of Jesus Christ, reputed to have two complete natures, one divine and one human, is that Christ defines Himself through His corporal works of mercy, the healing the sick, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked and so forth. Thus, such New Testament Christianity calls for reformation of human action, redemption of all human beings not just one's ethnic "brothers and sisters." Thomas Aquinas, therefore, classifies the natural virtue of religion within the virtue of justice, literally, a virtue which reestablishes balance, balance between man and God and between man and man in the name of God.

The second question raises the issue of the relation of the natural virtue of religion to human government(s). The ignorance of this distinction specified by the 13th Century Dominican, for instance, results in the irrelevance of various United States Supreme Court decisions. The U.S. constitutional "separation of church and state" does not mean and is not synonymous with the natural virtue of religion or its acts, such as worship and including prayer. But, it does mean separation of denominational church identity, such as Baptist, Jewish, Catholic and so forth, something we will see those "enlightened" philosophers, such as Hume and Feuerbach insisted upon.

Whether or not this "separation" would exclude the Torah, or Pentateuch, or, more broadly, Old Testament, as well as the Koran and New Testament remains a question

If humans decided whether or not the sacred and the profane were to exist, then the difference between them would be arbitrary.

-- certainly, it could not

exclude them as within the tradition of the Western culture as within the discipline known as the humanities and, thus, as literature, just as it could not exclude the Way of Lao-tzu or the Gita of Buddha. So the U.S. constitutional guarantee of free speech would seem to require freedom to read these writings within any public school setting as literary expressions of human beings. Thus, from the literary perspective, the present U.S. Supreme Court rulings are ironic, if not myopic.

Finally, the fact of religion is basic to human nature and action and, therefore, is reasonable; however, the form or method of religious practice, also called ritual and liturgy, a Greek word meaning people acting, is a decision of socialized man through human law, or, as revealed to him through divine law, as manifested through a specific revealed word, whether the Torah, or the Old Testament, the Koran, the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, whatever.

Of course, the interesting thing about these scriptures as "revealed words" is that each has a prophet, literally, speaker, whether that be the Old Testament prophets, such as, Moses, Abraham, Joshua, David and others, the New Testament prophets, principally, Jesus Christ, but as written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Koran prophets, principally, Mohammed, the Gita prophets, principally, Buddha, the Book of Mormon prophets, specifically, John Smith, and so forth. Yet, within these "revealed words", or scriptures an interesting fact emerges. The various founders of these "religions", whether Yhwh, Buddha, Lao-tzu, Jesus Christ, never wrote these scriptures; rather, their disciples, whether individually, or as groups wrote these so-called sacred scriptures -- and this is of special relevance to the Old and New Testaments. In other words, these stories, fables according to Aquinas, myths, in the word of Eliade and Campbell, were told, the result of memory carried on by oral or, later, a written tradition -- again, this underscores Paul's insistence that "faith comes through hearing". This is the source and importance of the Catholic Christian view of "inspiration" relative to the sacred scriptures. As such then, these scriptures would seem to parallel those "sacred" writings within the humanities, such as, Sumer's Gilgamesh, Homer's Odysseus, Virgil's Aeneid, among others, those which Campbell describes within his Hero with a Thousand Faces.

Yet, two "Christian" age examples claim differently, one the Koran, purportedly incorporating an autobiographical statement of Allah's personal communication to Muhammad.

To claim that "no absolute exists" is to deny the claim.

The second is the Book of Mormon, again purportedly an autobiographical statement of God's personal communication to Joseph Smith through the angel Moroni, the son of the prophet Mormon. These two modern religions are unique in that their scriptures claim autobiographical texts reported by the founders of these religions themselves.

Now, this brief description of the meaning of religion through dictionary and linguistic analysis clearly shows that religion, as a moral virtue, is as natural to man and as non-sectarian as language, art, science and knowledge. So no state can demand that its citizens separate themselves from this virtue. (A comparison of Aquinas' view with that of David Hume's -- Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion -- provides an interesting fact, namely, that David Hume, together with John Locke, are two of the contributors to the U.S. Constitution, including the so-called "Bill of Rights", or the first ten amendments thereto. That religion is natural to the human being must be distinguished from the specific ritual practice which religion takes within a given society. These modes or ritual practices are literally, man-made, usually by law, as in the case of King Henry the VIII of England (1534, Act of Supremacy) or, prior to him, in the case of Justinian I of Byzantium (518-565). The problem is that men might disagree about the form or ritual through which the first principle, or God might be worshiped, however, this form should not interfere with the realization that religion is a natural, moral virtue and a part of the virtue of justice common to each human being regardless of birth place or political system.

Do occidentals assume myth to be untrue because they assume that science and knowledge "have a corner on truth"?

Of course, any human, as history shows, can chose to be agnostic or atheistic, but one must make such a choice intelligently. Furthermore, in making such a choice, one must be consistent with archeological, linguistic and natural realities, independent of sectarian or ritualistic differences. The fact that self-styled agnostics and atheists are such for religious reasons, as is clearly the case with Xenophanes and Socrates, should not exclude them from being believers in a first principle, God. After all, anyone versed in common sense, independent of formal logic, recognizes the inherent contradiction in the self-styled contemporary secular humanist's claim that "there is no absolute" - except, of course, that secular humanists own statement!

Eliade and Campbell both comment on the uniqueness of the contemporary secular humanist within occidental society -- neither anthropology nor history find any comparable phenomenon. But, those who make such contentions do not, indeed, can not understand the significance of such argumentation for the simple reason that such contentions are more emotional denials in their content than they are thoughtful considerations in their conclusions. Simply speaking, such denials are reactions, rather than reflective conclusions, as, for instance, in the cases of the Catholic Camus and the Calvinist Sartre. As such, they must be out-grown rather than out-argued. No argument can prevail for or against emotion. Thus, the popular saying warns that two things we do not talk about are religion and politics because both are more emotional attachments than rational conclusions.

Now, we turn to specific examples of the practice of religion, the various rituals through which the awareness of a First Principle, or God by human beings manifests itself. The first examples of the practice of religion will be the ritual used by mythic peoples. The mythic practices of human beings found in oral tradition, including the oriental Sumerian Gilgamesh (2000 B.C.), antedated those found in the "scriptures", literally, written religion. Scriptural religion is a recent phenomenon and, by definition, is limited to the literate and, thus, educated, a privilege even today when we have so-called "democratic" systems which have as its principal purpose the education its youth on a public or "free" school basis. This introduction will be

provided by using Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane* and Joseph Campbell's conversations with Bill Moyers.

Two final distinctions are necessary prior to the discussion of so-called primitive religions and myth. The first is between knowledge and belief; the second is between logos and mythos, both of which are Greek words, describing two functions of human reason, each of which means word. The first distinction is that between knowledge and belief. Contemporarily, belief is considered a function of a religious person, whereas knowledge is viewed as a function of a scientist, yet, a similarity exists between the contemporary so-called "evangelical" Christian and the positivistic scientist. That similarity is the human mind, or reason as the ultimate arbitrator. The contemporary so-called "evangelist" claims the mind, or reason is superior because of the so-called gift of "faith", literally, the belief in being "saved" by Jesus Christ, whereas the contemporary positivistic scientist, after the model of Bertrand Russell claims that the human being will save him/herself through the science of reason founded upon the belief that "truth" and "error" differ and the former is superior and preferable to the latter.

Whether or not this assignation of functions and basis of belief are valid and adequate, the fact is that "bad" knowledge is more easily correctable than "bad" belief, when both "bads" are considered to be false, or erroneous. If a person thinks that s/he knows, but the supposed knowledge is wrong, it is easier to persuade the person of the knowledge error by pointing out the evidence for the real knowledge; people will admit error more readily when confronted by evidence of knowledge contrary to what they thought to be true. However, the contrary occurs about what people "believe" to be true. Thus, "bad" scientists are more susceptible to correction and orientation to the "truth" than "bad" believers notwithstanding the commonality of their belief roots.

If a person "believes", and that belief is in error, evidence to the contrary seldom convinces the person of the error, much less of the validity of the evidence showing something contrary to what the person believes. The reason for this is simple, but points out the deadly difficulty in convincing a person of the error of a belief: if a person believes in what s/he is doing, that person will find no fault in his or her actions. This belief situation is deadly because the belief also becomes the basis for the person's judgment about truth and falsity, validity and invalidity, even the goodness and badness of other people who do not believe as does the believer. No more contemporary case is more noteworthy than that of the so-called Islamic Jihad.

Human knowledge, no matter how scientific is based on belief.

Such a subjective belief becomes the objective criterion to judge about objectivity, and, therefore, is self-fulfilling and, of necessity, self-verifying. Occidental religious history is

strewn with examples, stretching from the 100 years war, to Henry the VIII, from the Muslim/Catholic Christian holy wars, up through Martin Luther's protesting and the birth of Protestant Christianity, into the present Muslim/Shiite, Palestinian/Israeli and Pakistani/Hindu conflicts. More recent and closer American examples range from Black Muslims in L.A. to Jamestown, Guyana and a Seventh-Day Adventist minister in Nuangola, Pennsylvania as well as the Waco Texas disaster. A contemporary example is the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, between

the so-called "Christians" and the Muslims. The "Preface" exhibits provide some documentation of these examples.

***Mythos* and *logos* both mean "word," whether heard or spoken.**

The Indian Ramakrishna's story offers some insight into the problem of "blind" belief. Leaving aside whether or not the chameleon story is symbolic, some believers swear that God is red, others, green, others yellow and some, no color at all. The "red" believers are as adamant about the "reality" of their perception as are those who adhere to the "no color at all" view. The point is that the lives of each are defined by that colored view which might have more to do with the tinted or non-tinted lenses of the believer's eyes than to the color of the reality. The adage that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" is applicable here. God is in the eye of the believer, so the perception of the believer is the result of the conviction of that belief. The eyes of the believer, therefore, are blind to the light of reason; indeed, these blind eyes participate in the same phenomena of the naturally blind person, namely, any description of light and any distinction between light and darkness is totally incomprehensible because the experience of anything other than that which the blind person perceives is alien and meaningless. The question facing any self-styled believer is: whether or not my belief is valid and verifiable? Of course, the answer to that question is possible only at death when the question becomes: is the God I believed to be, the God who is? Aurelius Augustine addresses this issue within the context of light and darkness within *On True Religion*.

The second distinction is that between *logos* and *mythos*, both Greek words meaning word as a product of human reason. Contemporarily, myth is used pejoratively. Webster's Third New International Dictionary Of The English Language Unabridged, 1966 states that myth is Greek, meaning word, speech, tale and specifies the first meaning to be:

- 1: a story that is usually of unknown origin and at least partially traditional, that ostensibly relates historical events, usually of such character as to serve to explain some practice, belief, institution, or natural phenomenon, and that is especially associated with religious rites and beliefs...
- 2a: a story invented as a veiled explanation of a truth...
- b: the theme or plot of a mythical tale occurring in forms differing only in detail. (p. 1497, col. b)

The dictionary is kinder to myth than the average person and the newspaper's or magazine's connotative use of myth. The S.F. "Chronicle" article on "Nude 'Angels' at Heart of Church Fraud Case" states, for instance:

At issue is the elaborate myth Lowry says he spun to provide a fantasy for his church members.

Usually, myth, mythic or mythical are used when people speak of non-reality, of sham, of what is untrue. The fact of the matter, however, is that myth is the verbal expression of what is beyond the grasp of rational comprehension, just as a reason is the verbal expression of what is beyond the grasp of sensible comprehension. So, humans create stories to convey truths which

exceed the grasp of human reason. The "Introduction" describes the characteristics of two ways reason uses to express its understanding of reality within and outside the human mind.

This Preface requires one more clarification: what does pagan mean? Its Latin origin is *paganus*, meaning “rustic, or villager”, indicating the fact that so-called “primitive” worship continued in such locations as distinct from the Christian worship practiced in the cities. Tertulian and St. Augustine originated the use of the word “pagan”.

INTRODUCTION

H. A. Frankfort published a book entitled *Before Philosophy*, in 1946. The thesis of this book is that the so-called subjective thinking productive of mythology is primitive whereas the so-called speculative thinking productive of philosophy (but most precisely science) is mature. The assumption underlying this thesis is that human history progresses linearly and biologically; so just as the human being develops from the infant stage of emotional, "subjective" living to the adolescent, mixed stage, finally, to the adult stage of detached, "objective" thinking, so too do peoples and cultures. This view of societies and cultures is a variant of that of Oswald Spengler, (1880-1936), a German philosopher whose *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, *The Decline of the West* viewed societies as so many life cycles within history, like veritable flowers within a garden - they germinated, grew, matured, flowered and died.

Are *subjective* and *objective* thinking possible, opposed, complementary?

Frankfort's final chapter title underscores this thesis: "The Emancipation of Thought from Myth"; a summary statement is:

When we compared the lands of origin of Egyptians and Mesopotamians, we were concerned, not what the relation between group psychology and habitat, but with profound differences in pristine religious experience. The peculiar experience which we have just described seems characteristic for all the most significant figures of the Old Testament. It is important to realize this, not because it enables us to understand them better as individuals, but because we then recognize what colored and integrated their thought. They propounded, not speculative theory, but revolutionary and dynamic teaching. The doctrine of a single, unconditioned, transcendent God rejected time-honored values, proclaimed new ones, and postulated a metaphysical significance for history and for man's actions. With infinite moral courage the Hebrews worshipped an absolute God and accepted as the correlate of their faith the sacrifice of a harmonious existence. In transcending the Near Eastern myths of immanent godhead, they created, as we have seen, the new myth of the will of God. It remained for the Greeks, with their peculiar intellectual courage to discover a form of speculative thought in which myth was entirely overcome. *Before Philosophy*, Frankfort, H.; (University of Chicago Press, 1946, Penguin Books, Baltimore Maryland), pp. 247-8.

The best thing we may say for this view is that it is a subjective value judgment of Frankfort, and suffers from the logical fallacy of accent, that is, Frankfort has left out many facts both within so-called "primitive history" and Greek philosophy which would challenge the accuracy of his "Scholarship". - the extensive economic system and meticulous scientific knowledge of habitat and lagoon-life by the Trobrianders, documented by Malinowski in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* are some of the omitted facts about "primitive history". The philosophic treatment of myth by Heraclitus and Aristotle are other examples.

Of course one of the contributing factors to Frankfort's view of history is Darwin's projected theory of evolution as concluded to within *The Origin of the Species*. Darwin's experiences and conclusions while observing the Galapagos Islands animals, birds and plants

explained evolving species through natural selection. So, if we apply this to Greenwich time, the past developed into the present through a natural selection, and B.C. develops into A.D., using the analogy of a child growing into an adolescent and an adolescent growing into an adult. Yet, notwithstanding the evolution of various species might be facts of observation, yet, natural selection remains an unproven theory, especially since even great evolutionary changes (macro-evolutionary changes) are the result of a species selection not of a natural selection. If, the changes within an the individual species could be explained by natural selection, then differentiated species would not remain individualized. So, the theory of natural selection does not explain the characteristics and direction necessary to maintain the species, even granting that it might explain its adaption to the environmental changes. Indeed, in Darwin's second classic, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin himself came very close to rejecting his own theory of natural selection:

A very large yet undefined extension may safely be given to the direct and indirect results of natural selection; but I now admit...that in the earlier editions of my *Origin of Species* I probably attributed too much to the action of natural selection or the survival of the fittest...I had not formerly sufficiently considered the existence of many structures which appear to be, as far as we can judge, neither beneficial nor injurious; and this I believe to be one of the greatest oversights as yet detected in my work. I may be permitted to say as some excuse, that I had two distinct objects in view, firstly, to show that species had not been separately created, and secondly, that natural selection had been the chief agent of change, though largely aided by the inherited effects of habit, and slightly by the direction action of the surrounding conditions. Nevertheless, I was not able to annul the influence of my former belief, then widely prevalent, that each species had been purposely created; and this led to my tacitly assuming that every detail of structure, excepting rudiments, was of some special, though unrecognized, service...If I have erred in giving to natural selection great power, which I am far from admitting, or in having exaggerated its power, which is in itself probable, I have at least, as I hope, done good service in aiding to overthrow the dogma of separate creations. [*The Descent of Man* (New York, P.F. Collier And Son, 1901, second edition), pp. 88-89]

Darwin and Frankfort lack the basic element of a scientist, namely, openness to discovery through experimentation because both entered into their scientific and literary efforts with an "agenda", Darwin to disprove creation and Frankfort to prove that the contemporary scientific era is superior to any prior era of human existence, particularly the so-called pagan or B.C. era - in Logic, this is called the fallacy of ascent wherein the particular person leaves out any facts or evidence which call the presupposition into question. In addition, both assume to be true or false what each, as researchers should have been open to determine true or false through their investigations, namely, each one's presupposition about what we call reality. Of course, this same presumption in the "truth" of one's theory exists in Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1776) and Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1843).

Prior, however, to a discussion of the noun religion within human history, it is necessary to discuss the meaning and function of metaphor. Metaphor has a Greek word origin, coming from meta, meaning across or beyond, and pherein, meaning to bear. So, a metaphor literally

bears the reader or listener across the chasm between a reality present but invisible and its meaning by means of a comparative example which bridges that gap between the present but invisible reality and the person's experience. The Webster's Third International Dictionary (1926 edition) defines metaphor as a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or actions (is) used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. An example would be the statement: The ship plows the seas; another is: He exploded in a volley of oaths. A New Testament example of a metaphor comes from John's Gospel (15: 1-7 - all quotations from the New and Old Testaments come from The Jerusalem Bible, a multi-national scholarly collaborative directed by the French, translated into English in 1966):

Human language is more than verbal because we seek to understand not to know.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit, he cuts away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more. You are pruned already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you. Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away - he withers; these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. (All biblical texts are taken from Jerusalem Bible, 1966 edition.)

A contemporary scholar and popular "pulp paperback" writer, Andrew Greeley, wrote a book titled The Jesus Myth, wherein he states:

The experience of subjectivity provides the happiness which the objectivity of knowledge merely promises.

The Pharisees were appalled at his casual disregard of the law and his vigorous condemnation of their moral self-righteousness. The Zealots could find in his preaching no promise of success in political revolutions. The Essenes were undoubtedly horrified by his proclamation of a kingdom for all men. Those who expected a political messiah were disillusioned when Jesus refused the claim that he was such a messiah and would have no part of the schemes to make him king. And finally, those who expected an eschatological apocalypse were told that they would see no signs from heaven and that they would hear from Jesus no guess as to when the last days would be fulfilled. In other words, Jesus rejected the titles, the categories, the theories, and the aspirations of all religious movements of his time. He did preach a kingdom, but it was a kingdom not of this world; he did announce an eschaton, but it was one quite free from cosmological signs and wonders. Instead of insisting on the old law, he proclaimed a new one. Instead of extolling the uniqueness of the Jews, he preached Good News for all men. Small wonder that when the chips were down he found himself quite without friends or allies. (The Jesus Myth, Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1976, pp. 29-30)

Greeley contends that Jesus Christ is summed up in two words: abba and amen.

For the world amen indicates he was one who preached on his own authority, and the word abba indicates that he was one who claimed the most intimate of possible connections with God, his Father. (Ibid., p. 87)

Greeley also observes that the Hebraic word ebed, servant, utilized within the Old and New Testaments specifies that Christ is Yhwh's love made manifest through the human nature of Christ. In other words, this sacred, or transcendence of the Divine manifests itself through the human nature of Christ; the Divine, God is present to men through the human nature of Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. Greeley comments:

Jesus is real precisely because he is poetry, precisely because his life and message are symbols - symbols of God's love for us. (Ibid., p. 214)

These Greeley comments will take on additional meaning as we discuss the Hebrew God, Elohim, or Yhwh and the Catholic Christian God-Man, Jesus Christ within the appropriate texts. In addition, however, one other Greeley comment comes from his newest novel, *Love Song* through the dialogue between Diana Marie Lyons and Conor Clement Clarke, during a golf game:

"You really read "love Song"? (The Old Testament book usually entitled Canticle of Canticles, whose writing is attributed to King Solomon.) He did not bother to try to hide his pleasure.

"I told you Maryjane had a copy. I compared it with her Bible. Even the original is pretty erotic for the Scriptures. It's all allegorical, isn't it?"

"My priest, Monsignor Ryan, you know..."

"Judge Kane's brother."

"Right. He tells me that it's strictly secular love poetry that was included in the Jewish Scriptures because it was sung at weddings. Maybe written by a woman..."

"I should think so." She dropped his golf bag against the bench and gestured for him to tee up.

"Monsignor says it's not allegorical but sacramental. Human passion, he says, gives us a hint of God's passion for us. We are most like God's love for us when we are aroused in the presence of our beloved. And we best experience a hint of God's love when our beloved pursues us."

"Really?" She searched for a tee in her pocket.

"God is a passionately aroused lover, nice huh? And kind of scary?"

"Scary?" She considered her golf ball. "I suppose so. Beautiful, too. Now drive, three wood. I think." (Love Song, Warner Books, Warner Books Inc., New York, N.Y., November, 1989, p. 28)

Humans seek to understand both through knowledge and love.

An *Old Testament* example comes from the Pentateuch, specifically Exodus (3: 1-6):

Moses was looking after the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law. He led his flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of Yhwh appeared to him in the shape of a flame of fire, coming from the middle of a bush. Moses looked; there was the bush blazing but it was not being burnt up. 'I must go and look at this strange sight,' Moses said 'and see why the bush is not burnt.' Now Yhwh saw him go forward to look, and God called to him from the middle of the bush. 'Moses, Moses!' he said. 'Here I am' he answered. 'Come no nearer' he said. 'Take off your shoes, for the place on which you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father,' he said 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' At this Moses covered his face, afraid to look at God.

These are metaphors because the "vine", the "burning bush" and "God's passion for us" bear us beyond the literal meaning of a grape vine, a desert bush or human passion. Metaphor uses an image familiar to people as a means to carry the people beyond the denotative meaning of the words or image to a meaning which the words or image can not contain or be, that is an intangible, spiritual meaning. So, the image is used analogously, that is, the image is somewhat similar to the meaning intended, yet, the meaning intended is also somewhat different from the image; the metaphor, therefore, becomes a bridge by which human thought can move from what is familiar to it to that which is within a realm of being unfamiliar to and inaccessible by ordinary human language means. This is the function of metaphor and myth is a metaphor. So far, Joseph Campbell would agree, for this is his central thesis and contribution to the history of human thinking.

However, Campbell identifies the power of myth with the meaning of metaphor, an identification with which New Testament examples disagree. Indeed, as we shall see, these examples seem to show that myth not only carries people beyond the word's connotative meaning to a denotative meaning, but that this denotative, or literal meaning can become the transcendent, or sacred reality to which myth's denotative meaning initially carries people. Thus, the myth as metaphor becomes myth as simile, or, to phrase this transformation in a philosophic way, the ultimate end, or sacred is present within the intermediate end, the profane; transcendence manifests itself through the secular. The Greek word for such a presence is: epiphany, literally, a shining through.

We will return to myth as metaphor and simile after we consider two ways of viewing the world in which we live, namely, the mythopoeic and the speculative. Aristotle notes that the lover of myth (mythologer) is in a sense a lover of wisdom (philosopher) because both seek the first principles and causes of the world as a result of their wonder about how the world came about and continues to exist. Twenty-five hundred years later, Mircea Eliade observes:

The great mythologies - those consecrated by such poets as Homer and Hesiod and the anonymous bards of the Mahaharata, or elaborated by ritualists and theologians (as in Egypt, India and Mesopotamia) - are more and more inclined to narrate the gestae of the gods. And at a certain moment in History - especially in Greece and India but also in Egypt - an elite begins to lose interest in this divine history and arrives (as in Greece) at the point of no longer believing in the myths while claiming still to believe in the Gods...

For these elites the 'essential' was no longer to be sought in the history of the Gods but in a 'primordial situation' preceding that history. We witness an attempt to go beyond mythology as divine history and to reach a primal source from which the real had flowed, to identify the womb of Being. It was in seeking the source, the principle, the arche that philosophical speculation for a short time coincided with cosmogony; but it was no longer the cosmogonic myth; it was an ontological problem.

The 'essential' is reached, then, by prodigious 'going back'...by an effort of thought. In this sense, it could be said that the earliest philosophical speculations derive from mythologies: systematic thought endeavors to identify and understand the 'absolute beginning' of which the cosmogonies tell, to unveil the mystery of the Creator of the World, in short, the mystery of the appearance of Being. (Myth and Reality, Mircea Eliade, pp. 111-112)

The interesting fact about Eliade's description is it depicts the efforts of what are called the Pre-socratic philosophers. Furthermore, it illustrates what herein is termed "faith seeking understanding". This "faith" is human reason's effort to understand what human beings believe, but have not yet analyzed so that reason can understand, or attempt to understand but, perhaps, never will understand. Indeed, as shall be seen, human faith or belief drives reason to seek out its reasons precisely so that the faith is reasonable to believe. This separate set of activities is called "speculative" and "mythopoeic" and are the two "ways" humans view the world within and around them. Some writers and researchers have classified them as opposing each other. However, each has its specific characteristics and both are complementary to the rational human process, a veritable yin and yang present within human thinking.

One vexing question requires discussion prior to the consideration of oriental religions, namely, what relevance and meaning has faith, or belief in any human search for truth? We live in a so-called scientific era, that is an era which insists and requires anything believable is reasonable, understandable by human reason itself. But, both myth and faith, or belief are suspect or "flat out" rejected as relevant to our "adult" stage of historical development! The classical Greek way of characterizing human thinking provides a backdrop to give us perspective on this question. Plato and Aristotle distinguished human thinking into wrong opinion or right opinion, literally, *pheude doxa* or *orthos doxa*. Right opinion comprised the knowing that something is true, call this a fact; whereas wrong opinion was in error about the fact. What the two called *episteme*, or knowledge meant that the person added to this right opinion, or that fact the understanding of the causes of the fact, the formal, material, efficient and final causes, literally, its organization, its composition, its immediate source(s) and its proximate and ultimate purpose(s). Now, *doxa* or opinion was the Greek equivalent to our faith or belief and carries over

into our contemporary meaning of orthodox, literally, right opinion to indicate correctness and compliance in matters of denominational religion.

In addition, the Greeks used the word *pistos*, translated as belief from the Greek verb *peisw*, to persuade whose equivalent in Latin is *fido*, the verb and *fides*, the noun, translated as faith. Aquinas comments that the principles of any science is a matter of faith because those principles can not be proved, but by virtue of the power of those principles the science exists and functions. (S.T. q. 7, a. 1, response) Thus, St. Paul's description of faith (*pistos*), namely, that "faith is about things which are not apparent" (Heb. 11,1), that is, those things about which humans have faith can not be seen or otherwise sensed, applies equally to the reality of God and to the first principles of human and scientific knowing. No one, for instance, can see the truth which the experimental scientist presumes and seeks as he conducts his experiments; nor can the artist know the beauty which his efforts to capture through painting, sculpting and writing seek to present; nor can the moralist possess the goodness which he seeks to express in and provide through his actions. Every human, whether scientist, artist or moralist believes that truth, beauty and goodness exist and such first principles empower their efforts and without these principles and this belief no human search could start or, if started, could continue.

Humans view the world and themselves both speculatively and mythopoetically.

Too many "philosophers" consider the origin of philosophic thinking to be Greek; but, the reality is that the origins of philosophic thinking should be and are human, that is, not limited to a specific culture, time or perspective. Essentially each of us may take one of two attitudes toward any "object" of our thought, whether that object be ourselves, others, or, the world or God(s). The attitude taken will affect the view we have to that object of our thought and the following schema seeks to describe the dominant characteristics of these two viewpoints. The one view is characterized as "speculative", literally, "one who looks at" something; the other as "mythopoeic", or "one who makes words (to explain what is not able to be comprehended by human reason."

SPECULATIVE THINKER REALITY MYTHOPOETIC THINKER

Thinker sees an.... IT
(The characteristics of each are:)
IT is impersonal
non-emotional
objective
clinical
This IT is...inanimate
So, the INANIMATE is REVEALED
THROUGH CONCEPTUALIZATION.
The SIGN carries the meaning
of the signified.

REALITY/APPEARANCE or:
Thus, EXPERIENCE is

Thousees I
Thou is personal
emotional
subjective
imaginative
Animateis THOU
ANIMATE REVEALS self.

The symbol IS the meaning.
REALITY reveals SELF. (Therefore, the
following are distinguished:)
SACRED AND PROFANE
THOUGHT is subordinated

subordinated to the THOUGHT
of the experience.

(Therefore, the thinker
seeks a WHAT

The WHAT-seeker formulates
general laws; so all happenings/
are understood in so far as
they are manifestations of those/
general laws, as "gravity."
The WHAT-seeker is LOGICAL;
So, the basic rule here is:
THE AFFIRMATION (or NEGATION)/
of the WHOLE is AFFIRMATION/
(or NEGATION) of the parts.
The WHAT-seeker wants ONENESS/
or UNITY ACCORDING TO REASON.

The WHAT-seeker emphasizes
the SYSTEM OF THOUGHT;
and analyses particulars

THROUGH/WITHIN the UNIVERSAL,
the conceptual general
representative of all
similar experiences.

The WHAT-seeker attempts
IMAGELESS, and CONCEPTUAL
thought(s), ABSTRACTIONS.
As a result, WHAT views
time/space as QUANTITATIVE
and measurable, segmented.

Greenwich mean-time dominates.
WHAT-seeker is a SPECULATOR,
outside the world, viewing
action and events, organizing/
and categorizing them.
RATIONALIZER, about which
ee cummings speaks:
when god decided to invent/

he took one
breath bigger than a circustent/

to the EXPERIENCE felt.

The I seeks a WHO.)

The WHO-seeker views each
event as individual, a
manifestation of life
and is understood in its
experiential uniqueness.

The WHO-seeker is CONSISTENT
But, the basic rule here is:
AFFIRMATION (or NEGATION)
of the PART is the ASSERTION
(or DENIAL) of the whole.

The WHO-seeker appreciates
MULTIPLICITY, or DIVERSITY
ACCORDING TO EXPERIENCES.
The WHO-seeker emphasizes
EXPERIENCE, seeking the
particular for which no

UNIVERSAL is adequate, or,
perhaps, available.

Whereas the WHO-seeker uses
multiple, personal IMAGES
in human likeness(es).
Whereas, WHO views
time/space as QUALITATIVE,
not measurable and uniform.

Biological time permeates.
WHO-seeker is INVOLVED,
inside the world, feeling
actions and events,
empathizing with them.
LOVER, about which
ee cummings observes:
may my heart always be
open to everything
little
birds who are the secrets

and everything began

of living
whatever they sing is better
than to know
and if men should not hear them
men are old

when man determined to destroy/
himself he picked the was/
of shall and finding only why/
smashed it into because

may my mind stroll about hungry
and fearless and thirsty
and supple
and even if it's sunday may i
be wrong
for whenever men are right
they are not young

and may myself do nothing
usefully
and love yourself so more
than truly
there's never been quite such
a fool who could fail
pulling all the sky over him
with one smile

The above schema has but one
purpose: to show differences
without implying separation.

**Occidentals presume the purpose of reason is
to control through knowledge so they can
conquer through technology.**

This means that the human being thinks both speculatively and mythopoetically. Few people, however, realize that Bohr's so-called scientific construct of the atom was just as much a myth as the Sumerian construct of Ptah, both being constructs to illustrate the invisible and untouchable first principles and causes of the universe. The universe literally "spoke" these principles and causes to Bohr (and the Sumerians) through the effect of the order which both observed.

Albert Camus best describes this feeling of self and subjectivity vis á vis that "hope" of science and its so-called objectivity within his essay, "An Absurd Reasoning", from The Myth of Sisyphus:

Of whom and of what indeed can I say: 'I know that!' This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction. For if I try to seize this self of which I feel sure, if I try to define and to summarize it, it is nothing but water slipping through my fingers. I can sketch one by one all the aspects it is able to assume, all those likewise that have been attributed to it, this upbringing, this origin, this ardor or these silences, this nobility or this vileness. But aspects cannot be added up. This very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. Between the

certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled...(pp.14-15)

And here are trees and I know their gnarled surface, water and I feel its taste. These scents of grass and stars at night, certain evenings when the heart relaxes - how shall I negate this world whose power and strength I feel? Yet all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws and in my thirst for knowledge I admit that they are true. You take apart its mechanism and my hope increases. At the final stage you teach me that this wondrous and multicolored universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom itself can be reduced to the electron. All this is good and I wait for you to continue. But you tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain this world to me with an image. I realize then that you have been reduced to poetry: I shall never know. Have I the time to become indignant? You have already changed theories. So that science that was to teach me everything ends up in a hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor, and uncertainty is resolved in a work of art...(p. 15)

Camus graphically describes science's choices:

I realize that if through science I can seize phenomena and enumerate them, I cannot, for all that, apprehend the world. Were I to trace its entire relief with my finger, I should not know any more. And you give me the choice between a description that is sure but that teaches me nothing and hypotheses that claim to teach me but that are not sure.

Camus then concludes within his essay "Helen's Exile", the effect of contemporary speculation and science:

We (Western world) have exiled beauty; the Greeks took up arms for her. First difference, but one that has a history. Greek thought always took refuge behind the conception of limits. It never carried anything to extremes, neither the sacred nor reason, because it negated nothing, neither the sacred nor reason. It took everything into consideration, balancing shadow with light. Our Europe, on the other hand, off in the pursuit of totality, is the child of disproportion. She negates beauty, as she negates whatever she does not glorify. And, through all her diverse ways, she glorifies but one thing, which is the future rule of reason. (p. 134)

Now, both logos and mythos have a common Greek origin and both mean word, primarily the spoken word; yet, as scholarly scientist as J. L. Dreyer has written the following within his *A History of Astronomy from Thales to Kepler* (Dover Publications, Inc., Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 6:

At first Greek cosmological speculation like that of the eastern nations proceeded on purely mythological lines. The origin of the world was sought for in a childish manner; supernatural beings were invented, and earth, sea and sky were believed to have been generated by them.

Thus, Erebus begot with Nyx, the aether and the day, and Earth by itself produced the sea, and with the Heaven the rivers, etc. But eventually the

Human knowledge and love do not compete, rather, they complement each other.

and

Greeks shook themselves free from mythological trammels; they endeavored to find the laws which regulated the phenomena of nature without continual interference from supernatural and capricious beings, and they reasoned with a freedom of thought to which their Oriental precursors had never risen.

It is interesting that a renowned scholar in science could exhibit such profound prejudice and manifest such a gross lack of historical knowledge. A statement like "with a freedom of thought to which their Oriental precursors had never arisen" flies in the face of the massive historical evidence of Chinese scientific achievements over 3,000 years old, such as the invention of gun power, of guided missiles, and so forth.

Two tendencies are noticeable in the above quote and in Frankfort's title of the eighth chapter within *Before Philosophy*, that is, "The Emancipation of Thought from Myth": first, reason and its logic-word is presumed to be that through which man achieves intellectual, even personal freedom whereas the mythic-word enslaves man in his search for truth and law; secondly, reason is presumed to be superior when it is non-mythic and law is presumed to be the product of reason as the alternative to "mystery", "lack of control" and "superstition". The mythic, on the contrary, is supposed to be inferior and non-rational, incapable of attaining law, of achieving control or of explanations independent of superstition.

Men like Frankfort and Dreyer presume that the human being's perfection consists in overcoming myths and the mythic-word, supposedly eliminating prejudice and achieving control over nature, human life and the world through discovery of law; thus, they presume the society or culture which uses reason and its logic-word is superior to those cultures which use myth and the mythic-word. An interesting fact is that the societies which these Western European and American scholars refer to as mythic, and thus, "primitive" are "colored", that is, red-man, yellow-man, black-man and brown-man, whereas the society from which they speak are "white". (A demographic fact is that the "white", or caucasian humans make up merely 9% of the current humanity on the planet earth, down 1% from 1985! Indeed, "caucasian" itself pretends to depict an anglo ethnic group from a geographical location which itself is the source of multiple non-anglo ethnic groups! - one more example of the stupidity of anglo occidental characterizations which seek to categorize but backfire into prejudice! Perhaps this explains why English language words describing reason depict it as: the "clear light", the "bright light", or the "white hot light".

Such words might reflect more of an attitude which might have a carry over into social and cultural attitudes which presume that "colored" peoples were bodies to be used by "rational", superior whites -- through black slavery in the Southern and Northern, yellow slavery in the Western United States. Only today are contemporary scientists living with so-called medicine men in South America and Southeast Asia in order to study the herbal medicines, acupuncture and acupressure techniques as natural ways of maintaining and achieving health. (Digitalis, literally, a finger shaped and leafed plant was used by indigenous American Indians to stimulate

the heart and as a diuretic and arsenic, literally, a golden pigment was ingested by African people to strengthen bones - interesting scientific practice for mythic peoples!)

Perhaps, we might let a poet, Robert Frost describe these two ways of viewing the world within "The Road Not Taken":

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

And took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same;

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day
Yet, knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Yet, perhaps, the most significant analogy to understand the relationship between the logic-word and the mythic-word would be one found in another of Frost's poems, "Two Tramps in Mud Time":

But yield who will to their separation,
My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.
Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed every really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

Must the logic-word and the mythic-word be in competition? Frost exclaims within "To A Thinker":

...So back and forth. It almost scares
A man the way things come in pairs.

**The life which Spring manifests
exceeds the power of reason to
categorize or to control.**

So, could speculative and mythopoeic, logic and mythic not be complementary, that is, come in human "pairs"? Why could they not be the two roads the human being's thought process takes on the way to Truth? Why could not these two ways to Truth, these two ways of looking at reality be analogous to "my two eyes" which "make one sight"? Is it not possible that both ways of viewing reality offer human perspective on the world and that only one, be it "speculative" or "mythopoeic" make man myopic, limited in sight? What meanings are these human "words" expressing?

Does the mythic word express a message that the logic word can not; indeed, does the logic word express a message that the mythic word can not? These are the questions which need to be addressed whenever human beings discuss religion, or, indeed, any human knowing, not just the specialized knowing about God. Mythopoeic means literally "maker of words"; whereas logic means literally a "producer of words", succinctly, "speech." What is the relation between the mythic-word and the logic-word? What relevance does this relation have to the human as philosopher, as scientist, as religious?

e e cummings captures these disciplines as they individually hawk their wares and compete for converts. The interesting thing about this poem is that it contrasts the "rationality" of the human, in this case aberrant, approach to nature's mythopoeic reality. "Sweet spontaneous earth", as a mythopoeic alternative is credited with answering these systemizers "with spring", through "the incomparable couch of death" as a "rhythmic lover". At the same time, cummings depicts such "philosophers" as "doting fingers", scientists as "naughty thumbs" and religious as "scraggy knees".

Oh sweet spontaneous
earth how often have
the
doting

fingers of
prurient philosophers pinched
and
poked
the
, has the naughty thumb
of science prodded
thy

beauty .how
often have religions taken
thee upon their scraggy knees
squeezing and

buffeting thee that thou mightest conceive
 gods
 (but
 true

to the incomparable
 couch of death thy
 rhythmic
 lover

thou answerest

them only with

spring)

Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane* analyzes the mythic-word from the viewpoint of the meaning of religion, just as Plato's *Republic* analyzes the popular doxa, opinion, or belief from the viewpoint of the meaning of philosophic knowledge. Eliade comments:

**Order results from love,
 not from knowledge.**

The first conclusion we might draw would be: the world becomes apprehensible as world, as cosmos, in the measure in which it reveals itself as a sacred world. Every world is the work of the gods, for it was either created directly by the gods or was consecrated, hence cosmicized, by men ritually, reactualizing the paradigmatic act of Creation. This is as much as to say that religious man can live only in a sacred world, because it is only in such a world that he participates in being, that he has a real existence. This religious need expresses an unquenchable ontological thirst. Religious man thirsts for being. (pp. 63-4)

Thus, the mythic-word is our effort to obtain contact with the divine source of the world and thereby to attain meaning for the world into which we are born, live and die. The mythic-word gives us a reference point thanks to which we and the world in which we find ourselves attain meaning. Such a mythic-word provides a source and an end which make this world a cosmos, or ordered place and, therefore intelligible to us. In lieu of myth, Eliade describes chaos:

His (man's) terror of the chaos that surrounds his inhabited world corresponds to his terror of nothingness. The unknown space that extends beyond his world - an uncosmized because unconsecrated space, a mere amorphous extent into which no orientation has been projected, and hence in which no structure has yet arisen -for religious man, this profane space represents absolute non-being. (p. 4)

As, religious, therefore, we look at space as non-homogeneous; we experience interruptions, breaks in it of the sacred, or absolute reality. Secular, or scientific man, on the contrary, views that same space as homogeneous, neutral, or relative. Eliade notes:

No true orientation is now possible, for the fixed point no longer enjoys a unique ontological status; it appears and disappears in accordance with the needs of the day. Properly speaking, there is no longer any world, there are only fragments of the shattered universe, an amorphous mass consisting in an infinite number of more or less neutral places in which man moves, governed and driven by the obligations of an existence incorporated into an industrial society. (pp. 23-4)

This merely restates what we shall see Socrates saw in Athens, during the sixth century B.C., namely, human life can find no lasting meaning if its day-to-day priorities consist merely in "wealth, honor and reputation" because human life gains no intrinsic meaning from these values -- only relative values accrue from such "ends" and those relative values change with the opinions of men. But, if no lasting, intrinsic or ultimate meaning can be found for the human being, then only chaos, disorder remains because we are "governed and driven by the obligations of an existence incorporated into an industrial society" - or any other society, nuclear, or whatever. Such a world view is purely profane and meaning is momentary. What human beings in such a world face is described by e e cummings within i six nonlectures:

In this empty un-understanding world anyone can sell knowledge; everybody wants knowledge and there's no price people won't pay to get it. (i six nonlectures, harvard university press, cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951, "i am santa claus, nonlecture six", p.104)

Actually, what Eliade refers to as modern man's profane view of the world, other writers have specified as a scientific view of the world. The scientific man literally gives meaning to the world through his logic-word; thus, the world is meaningless unless and until human beings give it meaning through logic-words -- what Camus referred to as "construction". Scientific man, therefore, organizes the world which lays before him as chaos until he makes it cosmos, a mental, or conceptual cosmos, constituted in and through the logic-word. Yet, giving meaning to the human world, science acts as religion, with one, serious problem: whereas religion gives ultimate and universal meaning, the meaning science gives can only be temporal and particular. Again, e e cummings places an appropriate comment in the mouth of santa claus:

-Just a moment. Friends,
it never shall be said that Science favored
or slighted anyone. Remember: Science
is no mere individual. Individuals
are, after all, nothing but human beings;
and human beings are corruptible:
for (as you doubtless know) to err is human.
Think - only think! for untold centuries
this earth was overrun by human beings!
Think!: it was not so many years ago
that individuals could be found among us!
O those dark ages! What a darkness, friends!
But now that hideous darkness turns to light;

the flame of Science blazes far and wide:
 Science, impartial and omnipotent,
 before whose superhuman radiance
 all dark prescientific instincts vanish.
 Think- only think! at last the monster, man,
 is freed from his obscene humanity!
 (i six nonlectures, "i santa claus", pp. 105-06)

Lin Yutang, editor of *The Wisdom of China and India* (Modern Library, N.Y., 1955) describes the "cause" of the profane view of the world:

**To live humanly is more than
to know rationally.**

Owing to the rapid use of prestige of the natural sciences, about the middle of the nineteenth century, all branches of human studies were beginning to call themselves 'sciences.' The words 'organism,' 'natural law,' 'origins,' and 'evolution' were applied to literary and historical studies. Auguste Comte had started the fashion by calling his new sociology 'social physics' and society 'an organism.' What he does mean when he says, 'Society is an organism' no one will be able to make out. There was a veritable orgy of 'fundamental laws' even in literary and social studies. Taine applied them to literary history; Marx applied them to economics; Zola applied them to the novel; and even Saint-Beuve called his literary and biographical studies 'the science of souls'...Dr. J. B. Watson one day made the astounding discovery of the possibility of studying the human mind without reference to thinking or feeling, and thought he was on the point of making psychology a true science by eliminating such medieval terms as 'consciousness,' 'will,' 'emotion,' 'memory' and 'perception' and confined it to the measurements of mechanical impulses and responses...And as a result of the century of development, one need only think of Theodore Dreiser's view of man as a chemical compound, a trapped animal moving in the gigantic chaos of blind chance, blind images and drives and moral irresponsibility. We have come to the end of the road.

It can be proved that the world has gone to pieces as a direct result of scientific naturalism invading our literature and our thought...For scientific materialism must spell determinism and determinism must spell despair. It is therefore not an accident that the most admired spirits of our times...are pessimists. (pp. 573-74)

**Without metaphor, human communication
would be impossible.**

Eliade, in 1957 describes the "effect" of this pessimism and profanization of the world as follows:

First of all, the nonreligious man refuses transcendence, accepts the relativity of 'reality,' and may even come to doubt the meaning of existence. The great cultures of the past too have not been entirely without nonreligious men, and it is not impossible that such men existed even on the archaic level of culture, although as yet no testimony to their existence there has come to light. But it is only in the modern societies of the West that nonreligious man has developed fully. Modern nonreligious man assumes a new existential situation; he regards himself solely as the subject and agent of history, and he refuses all appeal to transcendence. In other words, he accepts

no model for humanity outside the human condition as it can be seen in the various historical situations. Man makes himself, and he only makes himself completely in proportion as he desacralizes himself and the world. The sacred is the prime obstacle to his freedom. He will become himself only when he is totally demysticized. He will not be truly free until he has killed the last god. (pp. 203-04)

Here we see Eliade's analysis of the statements of Dreiser and Frankfort; these scientists and others, true to their speculative, or scientific attitude, seek a value-free world in which to seek truth which they can verify solely through human reason's analysis of sense perception and experimentation. The problem is that such a value-free world is valueless, susceptible to arbitrary and daily meaning changes; no permanence exists and no stability is possible. Cultural anthropology provides a unique comparison between a predominantly mythopoeic culture, that of the Trobriand Islanders and that of the post-nineteenth century western European and American cultures. The Trobriand Islanders were profoundly religious, yet, developed a precise scientific understanding and practical technology in fishing and agriculture. e e cummings, a poet, again minces few words, yet, collapses all of Yutang's and Eliade's academic verbiage into a two line statement of the reason and result:

--O, we are all so very full of knowing
that we are empty: empty of understanding...

Not only the early Greek philosophers, but, perhaps the most intellectual, namely, Plato and certainly the most scientific, namely, Aristotle, tolerate, include and compliment myth and mythology within their philosophical works. The Greeks sought understanding both through knowing and not-knowing. Post-nineteenth century occidental, or Western societies, on the contrary, develop a passion for scientific knowing which has no place for religion or, indeed, philosophy, seeking to reduce all the unknowns into scientific, or pure knowledge, and all the probabilities into predictable or necessary knowledge. This use of science and scientific method as the solution to man's physical and moral problems has been championed by such scholars and literary giants as H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley, Aldous Huxley, Albert North Whitehead, J. B. Watson, Bertrand Russell, De la Metre, to mention but a few. *Walden Two*, *The Problem of Philosophy*, *Reason Without Revelation*, *The Secular City*, *Why I am Not a Christian*, *Man The Machine* are some of their books. Alfred North Whitehead states unequivocally, for instance, that: "Hard headed men want facts and not symbols". [Symbolism: its Meaning and Effect (Capricorn Books, N.Y., 1959) p. 60] Bertrand Russell is equally emphatic: "Religion has its source in terror...fear of nature gives rise to religion". [Why I am Not a Christian (Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1965) pp. 53-4] Perhaps the fact is that realizing that some things exist which humans cannot know through reason means that humans do not and can not control the world in which they live through rational thought! Maybe the real fear Whitehead and Russell face is fear of losing control?

The question is: why this post-nineteenth century occidental intolerance and rejection of anything other than pure science, as if there were such "an animal" - as Camus clearly questions with his criticism of Bohr's model for his "atomic theory". Is scientific knowledge the "adult" stage of human intellectual development and myth and religion merely a "childish" level and philosophy only a "juvenile" stage? The answer to this question will be certified by history (as

all such questions are), but can be verified in two other scientific ways now: first, common sense experience of each individual; secondly, the effects of this scientific knowledge solution and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of scientific methods for coping with human problems. The first offers positive verification; the second offers negative rejection.

**Without the *sacred*, the
profane is meaningless.**

Any human "science" or knowledge which provides the human being perspective and self-knowledge is useful and meaningful; any "science" or knowledge which limits the human perspective and self-knowledge is destructive and counter-productive. Eliade comments:

...a symbol speaks to the whole human being and not only to the intelligence...(p. 129)
Now, symbolism plays a decisive part in the religious life of humanity; it is through symbols that the world becomes transparent, is able to show the transcendent. (p. 130)

Elsewhere, Eliade describes the effect myth on the human being:

Clearly his life has an additional dimension; it is not merely human, it is at the same time cosmic, since it has a transhuman structure. It could be termed an open existence, for it is not strictly confined to man's mode of being...The existence of homo religiosus...is open to the world; in living, most-religious man is never alone, part of the world lives in him. (p. 166)

In other words, cosmic symbolism adds a new value to an object or action, without affecting their particular and immediate values. An existence open to the world is not an unconscious existence 'buried in nature' (as Hegel termed 'primitive man'). Openness to the world enables religious man to know himself in knowing the world - and this knowledge is precious to him because it is religious, because it pertains to being...life is lived on a twofold plane, it takes its course as human existence and, at the same time, shares in a transhuman life, that of the cosmos or the gods. (p. 167)

Thus, whether through religion or philosophy, man achieves a presence and preeminence of the spiritual in and over the material. The insistence on this value of the soul over the pursuit of material wealth, honor and reputation, cost Socrates his life and the insistence on the value of the spiritual kingdom over the pursuit of a temporal kingdom cost Christ his life. The sacred and the profane necessarily coexist; just as the mythopoeic and speculative viewpoints cooperate.

The point science, philosophy and religion share in is that they each seek the first principles and causes which all humans, whether educated or uneducated seek. "Mythologers are in a sense philosophers", stated Aristotle in the 3rd Century, B.C. [Metaphysics, Book Alpha, Chapter 2, lines 10-25 (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1952), p. 7]. The difference is that science seeks the proximate causes and principles; however, philosophy and religion seek the remote causes and principles. Thus, both philosophy and religion face human beings with two dimensions of being and force them to choose why they live their lives and this choice requires them to choose between values. Eliade puts it this way:

Whatever the historical context in which he is placed, homo religiosus always believes that there is an absolute reality, the sacred, which transcends this world but manifests itself in this world, thereby sanctifying it and making it real. He further believes that life has a sacred origin and that human existence realizes all of its potentialities in proportion as it is religious -- that is, participates in reality. (p. 203)

Joseph Campbell comments:

Half the people in the world think that their metaphors are facts; call them theists. The other half of the people in the world think that their metaphors are lies; call them atheists.

The purpose of this book is to define and locate myth and the mythic-word within the oriental human experience of religion. The purpose of myths is to bring us to spiritual consciousness. Campbell calls mythology the "homeland of the muses, the inspirers of art and poetry. Myth enables us to see life as a poem and to participate in this poem". Campbell emphasizes that:

The example of myth exceeds the value of knowledge.

..every myth, every religion is true in this sense; it is true as metaphorical of the human and cosmic mysteries, but when it gets stuck to the metaphor, then you are in trouble.

His point is that we make a mistake when we read symbols as prose, rather than poetry. In other words, we read them as denotative, that is, literal, when in fact they are used connotatively, or, better, analogically. The issue which Campbell does not pursue, however, is whether or not the myth as metaphor includes or excludes myth as simile, that is, whether or not the analogy of Aquinas means the identity implied within simile. As we shall see, myth serves a number of services. The first purpose of myth is that it opens our understanding to the world to mystery. Secondly, myth provides a cosmology according to which we can understand the origin and development of the world, things which exceed the grasp of human knowledge. Campbell's comment is that "The universe becomes a holy picture". The third purpose of myth is that it provides a sociological study of the human world; thus, myth leads to the forming of moral, even nutritional values, as the book of Deuteronomy within the Old Testament shows.

To be full of knowledge is to be empty of understanding.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, myth offers a teaching medium for our learning because myths show human beings how to live their lives and herein the issue of identity arises. The primary New Testament example would be Christ, specifically, when He states: "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart"; then, also, when He states: "I am the way, the truth and the life". This statement appears to be more than a metaphor, if, that is, the Catholic Christian faces the issue that does not seem to have confronted the primitive mythologer, that is, whether or not the sacred, transcendent can also be identified with the profane, secular?

Indeed, such a similarity without identification seems to be more prevalent within oriental thinking and, thus, argues to an oriental influence on the presumed occidental Christianity of New Testament Jesus Christ. Even the Bhagavad-Gita contains the implied identity of Brahman and Atman and prevails through the advice of Khrisna as to the nature and relationship of life and death, as he advises Arjuna how to live. But, before we discuss the meaning of metaphor from the perspective of univocal, equivocal and analogous language usage (Chapter Two), let us view a primary oriental myth as currently available to our occidental world, namely, that of the African, Sumerian Gilgamesh within Chapter One.