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History and Archetypes a Critique of Mircea Eliade's Philosophy of History as Applied to a Study of Spatial Orientation in Dante

Marilyn J. Hughes  
*Western Michigan University*

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HISTORY AND ARCHETYPES

A CRITIQUE OF MIRCEA ELIADE'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AS APPLIED TO A STUDY OF SPATIAL ORIENTATION IN DANTE

by

Marilyn J. Hughes

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INTRODUCTION

Whether he is willing to admit it or not, a scholar always starts a research project with certain theoretical choices and biases, with preconceived notions about what the research will discover, and with a Weltanschauung that conditions his perception of the data. As some would have it, the researcher's theoretical "prejudices" cause him to pigeonhole the data, to force the facts to fit the theories; indeed, some researchers do just that— one anthropologist of note has so far refused to publish the data from his field research because it conflicted with what his theoretical assumptions told him he should find, the anthropologist concluding that he must have done something wrong in the way he collected the data rather than assuming that the theory needed to be thrown out. Examples of such obstinate clinging to theories no matter what lends justification to those who argue that one ought to proceed to the data with a theoretical tabula rasa, but, it is only a partial justification. There is no such thing as scientific objectivity in the utopian sense of the term. It is part of the human condition that any methodology adopted by a scholar is limited in the questions it can answer, and that the truths it establishes are only tentative formulations. Truth is a process, a gradual growth of man's consciousness and differentiation.
conceptualization, and organization of reality; truth is therefore always relative and cannot be retained unless it grows. 1

In addition to his general frame of reference or Weltanschauung and his unconscious theoretical assumptions, a scholar must have made certain conscious theoretical choices at the beginning or early stages of his research; otherwise his research has no direction. One must have theories, albeit theories he is willing to relinquish or revise in favor of superior formulations, or else he has no questions to ask of the data. And if he has no questions to ask, then he does not know what to look for, the enterprise thus becoming a chaotic one. Although there is the danger that he will distort the data by seeing what he expects to find, if he tries to see everything the quality of his perception becomes so diluted that there is a sense in which he sees nothing at all.

Most researchers have some personal stake in the results of the research; that is, they are motivated to study what they study because they hope the answer they find will reinforce their own philosophy of life, back up the findings of their previous professional publications, or in some other way reward them for their efforts. If the motivation is strong enough it can be a distorting factor. However, in

an article on the psychology of creativity, Rollo May suggests that it is precisely when the creative person is most emotionally involved with his project that his intellectual faculties are most alert and his observations most objective.²

These general statements will establish a frame of reference for understanding the methodology of Mircea Eliade and my critique of it, a critique evolving during the course of this thesis and explicitly formulated in the conclusion. Eliade's and my research take place in different mental environments. My Weltanschauung is an "historicist" view and his is a "religious" view (his terms), and these a priori differences create widely disparate results. Eliade clearly sees fallacies in the historicist position,³ and without attempting to directly refute historicism,⁴ he attempts in his works to outline the historical phenomena which (properly interpreted) constitute a superior alternative to historicism. M. Eliade has dedicated his life to demonstrating the impoverished experience of the "secular" or "profane" man as


compared with the richer, fuller, more human experience of the "religious" or "traditional" man; this is his personal stake in his research, his motivation for working in the history of religions, and his a priori assumptions. In accord with the opening statement, we see that Eliade's motivation has a positive and a negative side, positive in its giving him the incentive to organize a prodigious amount of ethnographic data into a coherent and highly respectable intellectual system, and negative in its frequent molding of the facts to fit the system. My own historicist presuppositions have a similar positive and negative effect. This is not the place to enter into a philosophical debate concerning the respective truth value of "religion" versus "historicism," except to make the aside that Eliade's narrow definition of "religion" and his "sacred" versus "profane" dichotomy are highly suspect. For the most part, however, I will throughout this paper content myself with drawing attention to the differences between Eliade's interpretation of Dante (or rather, what I think Eliade's interpretation of Dante would be if he took the time to research the problem himself) and the historicist interpretation. In other words, the basic lines of the conflict will be drawn without much attempt to resolve it. It is, after all, a conflict which exists primarily on the level of philosophy and religion and only partially within the disciplines of history and anthropology. Since the research with which this paper is
concerned is anthropological-historical, I will offer both Eliade's analysis and an historicist one, suggesting a resolution of the conflict only inasmuch as I point to the philosophic disagreements which underlie and cause the separation of the two views.

The frame of reference established in the opening paragraphs should also serve to explain something of the genesis of this paper. I was at first enthusiastic about Eliade's work and about the possibilities of applying it to a study of spatial orientation in the thought of Dante. On first insight I though Eliade's analysis would explain much about Dante's cosmology; in particular it seemed that either Jerusalem or Rome or both were Centers of the World for Dante. It was easy to see how the High Middle Ages, standing culturally about half way between the ancient world and the modern, could have been a time of creative cultural synthesizing in regard to spatial conceptions, orientation, and representation, a time when traditional views were yet strong but fast changing in the direction of modern. The theoretical choice I made at the beginning of the research was to use Eliade's analysis of the Center of the World and to look for evidences of it in Dante's thought; midway through the project, however, I became disillusioned with this theoretical choice, continuing the application of the

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5 For an explication of this term see this paper, 35–44.
Center of the World concept only for the purposes of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of this kind of approach.

Eliade considers himself an historian of religions rather than an anthropologist, but he nevertheless employs a method of cross-cultural comparison, and it is anthropology which is particularly engaged in cross-cultural analyses. Regarding methodologies of cross-cultural comparison in current acceptance and use by anthropologists, there is no one comparative method but rather a number of methods, chosen in accordance with the problems. Oscar Lewis has written an excellent article reporting on the cross-cultural comparisons published during the five-year period 1950-54; in the preparation of that article he covered an estimated ninety percent of the books, articles, and dissertations published during those years and arranged them into categories according to the location in space of the cultures or cultural variants studied: comparison of cultures or aspects of cultures 1) selected randomly over the globe, 2) located in different nations or major civilizations (variant cultures), 3) within a single nation (variant cultures or "sub-cultures"), 4) within a single culture area, 5) within a single culture (local groups), and 6) within a single local group. In

addition to this classification, Lewis adds a more informal
categorization.

There are comparisons between single culture
traits, between institutions, between subcultures, between areas, nations, and civiliza-
tions. There are synchronic and diachronic comparisons, controlled and uncontrolled,
localized and global, formal and functional, statistical and typological. The kinds of
comparisons made by anthropologists seem to be of an endless variety indeed.7

Using Lewis's categories, Eliade's cross-cultural compari-
sions fall into the classification of global or random
comparisons, are synchronic, uncontrolled, formal, and
typological. Lewis points out strengths and weaknesses in
the various methods without arguing for any one, rather
praising the "variety of methods and approaches" and the
"wide range of objectives" as "a healthy eclecticism which
speaks well for anthropology and its future."8 Lewis's
pluralistic attitude towards methodologies is an admirable
one, one in which Eliade's method is pitted only against
the methods of others doing similar global, random studies.

As an aid to the understanding of Eliade's approach
and as an aid to organizing my critique, I have devised the
grid-type schema which appears on the following page. The
remaining paragraphs in the introduction are numbered to

7Ibid., 260. Cf. Milton Singer, "Summary of Comments
and Discussion" (Wenner-Gren Foundation Supper Conference),
American Anthropologist, LV (1953), 362.
8Ibid., 279.
correspond with the four boxes in the grid and consist in an amplification of the schematic content of the boxes, especially the first two.

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| COMPARISON OF CULTURES AT WIDELY DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT | II. Evolution of human culture from traditional to modern Western—"traditional-modern continuum." | IV. Universals common to all men. Depth analysis leads to repressed but surviving religious symbols in modern unconscious, same as in primitive man; need to reawaken. |
|                     | Acceptance of time & history good but historicism means despair. | |

I. We will be concerned here only with Eliade's analysis of spatial conceptions, orientation, and representation, an analysis which comprises one segment of a larger theme, the basic cultural differences between what Eliade labels "traditional" and "modern,"

... the meeting and confrontation of the two types of mentality which might be called, for simplicity's sake, the traditional and the modern; the first being characteristic of man in archaic and Oriental societies, the second of man in modern societies of the Western type.9

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Eliade highly respects these traditional cultures; the term is not a derogatory one.

One day the West will have to know and to understand the existential situations and the cultural universes of the non-Western peoples; moreover, the West will come to value them as integral with the history of the human spirit and will no longer regard them as immature episodes or as aberrations from an exemplary History of man—a History conceived, of course, only as that of Western man.¹⁰

In striving for communication with non-Western peoples of the present we are at the same time coming to grips with the past histories of these non-Western peoples and of a substantial portion of Western history as well. It is a common assumption of cross-cultural scholars that there is an equivalence or great similarity between the primitive peoples existing in the world today and the primitive peoples of past and prehistoric times.¹¹ But Eliade goes farther than most anthropologists would when he lumps together as "traditional" not only all primitive peoples of past and present but also all peasant cultures past and present; archaic civilizations such as Ancient Egypt, the Indus Valley Civilization, Mayan

¹⁰Ibid., 9.


Civilization, and so on; Oriental civilizations of past and present, to the extent they have not been Westernized (India, China, Japan); Greco-Roman Civilization; and, with some qualifications, apparently also the European Middle Ages. Eliade admits this as an over-simplification, but he nevertheless employs the distinction explicitly or implicitly throughout his works. In a typical place he explained the characteristics of a behavior pattern found in traditional cultures, then went on to draw examples of this same behavior pattern from the Upanishads; the cultures of the Australian aborigines, several African tribes, and the Pawnee Indians; as well as Sumerian, Chinese, and Judaeo-Christian writings. It is not that Eliade fails to recognize the great contrasts between these various traditional cultures—differences in social structures, economic and political systems, for instance. Nor does he ignore the obligation of the historian of religions to take into account the historical conditioning of all religious behavior.

There is no "purely" religious fact, outside history and outside time. The noblest religious message, the most universal of mystical experiences, the most universally human behaviour—such, for instance, as religious fear, or ritual, or prayer—is singularised and delimited as soon as it manifests itself. When the Son of God incarnated and became the Christ, he had to speak Aramaic; he could only conduct himself as a Hebrew of his times—and not as a yogi, a Taoist or a shaman. His religious message, however universal it might be, was conditioned by the past

13Eliade, Cosmos and History, 21-27.
and present history of the Hebrew people. If the Son of God had been born in India, his spoken message would have had to conform itself to the structure of the Indian languages, and to the historic and prehistoric tradition of that mixture of peoples.14

Nor does he fail to take into account the changes that occur in symbols, the many variants of even a single myth, and the differences in symbols and myths among various cultures; Eliade often gives explicit recognition to historical diffusion processes, talks of variants of a myth or symbol, or localizes a mythic or symbolic theme in a single culture area or civilization.15 His over-simplified dichotomy of "traditional" and "modern" arises, then, not from a failure to recognize history; it arises from other factors, primarily his idea of religion as an experience of the eternal and changeless verities and Being, an experience essentially the same for all men.

II. Eliade is certainly aware of the vast differences between modern Western culture and what he calls traditional cultures, and, although he rejects historicism as a despairist position, he applauds the Western bringing to consciousness of the process of history and of the temporal conditions of man's existence.16 I think it would be fair interpretation of Eliade to say that he sees a single-line cultural evolution from the aborigines to the modern West,

14Eliade, Images and Symbols, 31-32.
15See, for instance, ibid., 40-47.
16See, for instance, Cosmos and History, 147-62.
assuming the qualification that the West is not more advanced in all ways (especially the impoverished consciousness of religion). "Traditional society" and "modern society" seem to be "ideal types" in the Max Weberian tradition, mental configurations or abstract models much like the two poles of Robert Redfield's "folk-urban continuum." In such a methodology it is not necessary to assume that these ideal types exist in this pure form in reality. Just as the physicist may use such ideal types as "frictionless motion" and "total vacuum"—useful abstractions even if they do not describe conditions which ever exist in reality—so ideal types are useful abstract models in the social sciences, even though there may be no societies which exactly fit the models. We can, I think, push further the analogy of Redfield's folk-urban continuum. Not only is there a correspondence between the use of ideal types at the poles of the continuum, there is also a correspondence in the gradation or continuum between the poles. Traditional societies are dominated by conceptions of and the desire for sacred space, time, nature, and human existence, although they also have conceptions of profane space, time, nature, and human existence. Modern societies of the Western type, in contrast, are almost completely confined to conceptions of profane space, time,

17Robert Redfield, Folk Cultures of Yucatan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941). This is an analysis of four studies planned by Redfield, two of which he carried out himself and two of which were done by others who were associated with Redfield on the total project. The object was to study four villages or towns at different points on the folk-urban continuum, i.e., at different stages of development between the isolated peasant village and the city. As with any important theory the folk-urban continuum has received much comment and criticism.
nature, and human existence, making a virtue of their sophisticated exclusion of such "superstitions" and "nature worship." Between these two ideal types are many combinations of the various characteristics of traditional and modern, as well as cultural variants unrelated to the continuum. For example, Eliade finds both traditional and modern elements in medieval views of time and history and of space.\(^{18}\)

III. The purpose of Eliade's comparison of cultures is to discover what is similar or identical. He uses a morphological or structural analysis of symbols, thereby discovering parallels too close to be explained by historic connections (cultural contact and diffusion), parallels which he tentatively accounts for by a theory of archetypes or paradigmatic models.\(^{19}\) In this paper we will be concerned only with the structure of symbolisms of the Center of the World and therefore with the archetypal Center.

IV. Depth analysis has, according to Eliade, discovered traditional symbols in the unconscious of modern men, symbols which have suffered changes in form, mutilation, and hibernation, but which have nonetheless survived.\(^{20}\) These symbols are common to the most archaic primitive man and to men in the most positivist of civilizations, and therefore they are universal to all men of past, present, and future. Modern man must reawaken them and recover thereby a richer dimension in living, namely, religion.

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\(^{18}\) Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 17 and 144-45.

\(^{19}\) Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 115-19; *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, 54; many other passages could be cited also.

\(^{20}\)
CHAPTER I

THE VIEW OF SPACE OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY

In the introduction we spoke of the traditional-modern continuum and said that the Middle Ages showed traits from both the traditional pole and modern pole of this continuum. Therefore, to do a complete job of analyzing Dante's view of space we should describe both poles and distinguish between those traits which associated him with the traditional society and those which pulled him towards modern society. We have decided, however, to limit ourselves primarily to describing the traditional society and attempting to discover evidences of the traditional mentality in Dante's works. There is justification for this limitation. Most scholars (some exceptions will be treated in the conclusion) have apparently not asked themselves whether Dante's view of space might be fundamentally different from our own, apart from the obvious difference in scientific knowledge and therefore in Dante's cosmological construction; so the principal contribution of our present study would not be to show how Dante's view of space resembles our own but rather how it differs from our own. It seems, therefore, that our decision to concentrate on Dante the traditional man rather than Dante the modern man will not handicap us very much.
And narrowing our topic will serve to emphasize some differences between Dante and ourselves which explain some puzzling aspects of Dante's work: how, for instance, Dante could spatially locate a non-spatial God, and how he could be such a patriot of Rome and Italy and at the same time posit a world monarchy and universal unity of mankind.

The Feeling of Being Lost in the Vast Chaos of Indeterminate Space

The first step towards comprehending sympathetically the attitude of traditional man towards space is to bring to consciousness our own conception of space. For men in modern society one spot of earth is no better than any other, except that a plot of ground in the Iowa corn belt may be much better farm land than a like amount of ground in the steppe land of central Asia; the mountains of Austria may be more beautiful than the Nebraska flatlands; Paris and Rome with their historic sites and character may excite one more than the functional modern architecture of Chicago or Los Angeles. No city, no building, no mountain is a sacred place; even churches are just buildings where people meet weekly, more or less, for socializing and worship, and religious services could just as well be held in some farmer's barn except for the lack of comfortable furnishings and "atmosphere." As Eliade puts it, all space is profane space for the Western man today; whether this modern Western secularization of space is an advance over or an impoverishment
of traditional man's view of space is not the issue here, so there is no need to accept Eliade's negative judgment of modern man's view of space implied in the following passage.

Revelation of a sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity, to "found the world" and to live in a real sense. The profane experience, on the contrary, maintains the homogeneity and hence the relativity of space. 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 a shattered universe, an amorphous mass consisting of 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.

Eliade goes on to qualify this statement somewhat, pointing out that each individual has places which hold memories dear to him as an individual, the place where he grew up, the spots he and his first love used to frequent, the memorable places he has visited on vacations.

Even for the most frankly nonreligious man, Eliade uses the term "religious man" synonymously with the term "traditional man," all these places still retain an exceptional, a unique quality; they are the "holy places" of his private universe, as if it were in such spots that he had received the revelation of a reality other than that in which he participates through his ordinary daily life.

Nevertheless, except for these "holy places" of his private universe, the man in modern Western society sees all places


2Ibid., 24.
as equal except on purely pragmatic or aesthetic grounds: the quality of the soil for farming, the beauty of the landscape, the water and mineral resources for industry, the quality of the government and its closeness to his own political ideals, and so forth.

Believing in the homogeneity and relativity of space has its problems for modern man, already noted by Eliade in the preceding passage, because modern man has little sense of belonging anywhere in particular. In an age of rapid communications he is fully aware of the fact that there is no special purpose in his living and working in a certain locale, as he might just as well be doing the same work or different work in some other place. His fate was to be born and grow up in, say, Chicago, but he might just as well have been a Londoner or a Venetian. Furthermore, this modern man is aware that he is but one of several billion human beings on earth, and that earth is but one planet of billions in the universe, meaning that this one individual is really terribly insignificant except to his family, and to them only if they love him. One human being out of three billion on earth, earth but one planet out of billions of habitable planets; thus one human being out of an inconceivable number of intelligent beings in the universe, perhaps teaching several thousand high school students a little bit about world history (of the planet earth) during his lifetime, meanwhile raising three children so that these
children can have more children and keep the process going on indefinitely.

Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever. The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun.  

Hemingway quotes from this passage of Ecclesiastes as an inscription to his *The Sun Also Rises*, and, although Ecclesiastes wrote before an age in which TV and jets and rocketships made man more aware of the vastness of the space surrounding him in the universe, yet he aptly expresses the lostness, the alienation of realizing how insignificant it all seems to be for those modern men who have little or no sense of orientation, nothing solid and real and meaningful to anchor to. Let me emphasize very strongly that I do not mean to imply that modern men have no solutions to this problem; if I concentrate on the

3Ecclesiastes 1: 2-9, RSV.
problem rather than the solutions at this point, it is only to provide a common denominator whereby we can understand the problems and solutions of traditional man.

The problem is essentially one of finding a sense of belonging, of relatedness to the world, a sense of really being someone who is important to the surrounding universe, of being a meaningful part of an integrated whole. This sense of lostness in indeterminate space is a problem which modern man shares with traditional man, be he of the past or the present. There are differences, of course, and these will become clearer as we proceed. Yet there are nevertheless striking similarities. Modern man fears the vast universe of indeterminate space because he needs a point of orientation near enough to him that he can belong to the universe at that point. In much the same way, traditional man seeks sacred places within the vast chaos of profane space, places to which he feels an intimate relation. Modern man also fears unknown space, the unknown space that lies beyond this planet and beyond our sun and beyond our galaxy, whence might descend on us terrible one-eyed monsters. This apprehension about the unexplored world of outer space is something like the primitive Africans must feel when they venture through some portion of the jungle previously unexplored by their tribe, a jungle peopled by their imaginations with fearsome beasts and foreigners.

To understand the view of space of traditional man, however,
we must do more than generalize that his problems concerning the vast chaos of indeterminate space are not so different from our own. Let us explore his cultural outlook on space more carefully.

It is necessary, first of all, to get clearly in mind how little of the world around them most men in traditional societies have experienced and accurately conceptualized. An excellent example of this is reported to us by Alan Beals in his anthropological study *Gopalpur: A South Indian Village*. Professor Beals tells us of a conversation he had with one of the young men of the village, Hanumantha by name.

In a few minutes, Hanumantha gives the stone to Sabe and sits beside me on the stone platform under the num tree. "Is it true," he asks, "that in America people eat children?" He continues without permitting an answer, "I have heard about your country, people there don't do any work, everything is done by machines. You people are not very strong. That is why you must depend on us for food. We must work hard every day under the hot sun and even in the rain. You people work whenever you feel like working, and you eat rice every day. My brother has been to Bombay and has told me all about the way you Americans live."

"Actually," I tell him, "my country is not Bombay, it is many miles from Bombay."

"Yes," he says, "I know, it is in London."

Although he is only twenty-six, scarcely old enough to marry (according to Gopalpur customs), Hanumantha has seen much of the world surrounding Gopalpur. He has been several times to the market at Kandkur, four miles away, and he has attended fairs and festivals in villages up to ten or eleven miles distant. He has never been to the town of Yadgiri, fifteen miles away, and is a little afraid of what might happen to him if he goes there.

Hanumantha's business is the business of almost every other adult male in Gopalpur. It is to plow the fields, to dig the gardens, and to
Harvest the ripened crops. The most important thing in Hanumantha's life is to find his place in the village.⁴

Hanumantha, we may conclude, fears the unknown space beyond the familiar territory of his village and a few neighboring villages, and he also fears being "lost" in a space with which he has no meaningful relationship. Eliade summarizes the attitude of traditional man towards the space which lies beyond his village's territories and nearby areas of his acquaintance.

One of the outstanding characteristics of traditional societies is the opposition that they assume between their inhabited territory and the unknown and indeterminate space that surrounds it. The former is the world (more precisely, our world), the cosmos; everything outside it is no longer a cosmos but a sort of "other world," a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons, "foreigners" (who are assimilated to demons and the souls of the dead).⁵

The dualism traditional man sees between his own territory and the chaotic space beyond it is more complex than we have indicated here. To see this we must ask ourselves what makes the space surrounding the traditional man's own territory into a chaotic and foreign territory.

It is easy to jump to the conclusion that the "chaotic" surrounding space is seen as foreign and chaotic either because it is uninhabited or because it is inhabited by enemies. But this is by no means always the case;


frequently "unoccupied" to a traditional society simply means, "unoccupied by our people."

An unknown, foreign, and unoccupied territory (which often means, "unoccupied by our people") still shares in the fluid and larval modality of chaos. By occupying it and, above all, by settling in it, man symbolically transforms it into a cosmos through a ritual repetition of the cosmogony. What is to become "our world" must first be "created," and every creation has a paradigmatic model—the creation of the universe by the gods. When the Scandinavian colonists took possession of Iceland (land-náma) and cleared it, they regarded the enterprise neither as an original undertaking nor as human and profane work. For them, their labor was only repetition of a primordial act, the transformation of chaos into cosmos by the divine act of creation. When they tilled the desert soil, they were in fact repeating the act of the gods who had organized chaos by giving it a structure, forms, and norms.

Whether it is a case of clearing uncultivated ground or of conquering and occupying a territory already inhabited by "other" human beings, ritual taking possession must always repeat the cosmogony. For in the view of archaic societies everything that is not "our world" is not yet a world.⁶

For traditional man, then, there are two kinds of space: sacred space, which exists only in "our world," and the chaotic, indeterminate, profane space outside "our world" and within "our world" inasmuch as we have allowed it to revert to chaos.

For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others. "Draw not nigh hither," says the Lord to Moses; "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus, 3, 5). There is, then, a sacred space, and hence a strong, significant space; there

⁶Ibid., 31–32.
are other spaces that are not sacred and so are without structure or consistency, amorphous. Nor is this all. For religious man, this spatial nonhomogeneity finds expression in the experience of an opposition between space that is sacred— the only real and real-ly existing space—and all other space, the formless expanse surrounding it.

This is not quite like modern man's view of the space beyond his private universe, for he believes that it does have form and order. It may not have meaning for him personally, perhaps, because he has no personal relationship to it other than his sense of the community of all men, but he knows it has meaning for the human beings who live there. Even the space on inhabited and uninhabited planets in the universe is not considered to be chaotic but ordered by the same principles or Principle of order which governs earth and the course of the planets and stars. This last statement deserves some qualification, however: witness the chills that run up and down peoples' spines when they talk about UFO's on dark and windy evenings, and ponder their wild imaginings of the world beyond. Just as men of tribal villages fear that their gods have no control over anything beyond the boundary lines of their own territories, so modern men in what has been called the "global village" fear that God or whatever powers govern the earth may not order the other planets of the universe with beautiful and loving forms of life. Except for this parallel, the

\[Ibid., 20.\]
closest modern man can get to traditional man's experience comes when he moves or travels to a new place where he does not know his way around or have any friends. Then this new place seems chaotic, foreign, and even inimical and frightening. Nevertheless, to a large degree traditional man's conception of the chaos beyond "our world" is closed off to the man of modern Western societies. In turn, traditional man could not possibly understand the modern's awareness of personal insignificance in the face of the vastness of the universe. Traditional man has no conception of the size of the universe or even of the size of the earth. He does not know the terror of extreme relativity and insignificance but only the fear of chaos, although, in a sense modern man's fear of relativity and personal insignificance is an experience of chaos, an experience of chaos equalled only by the modern idea of the chaos of all-out nuclear world war. In these ways, then, we have had to delineate and distinguish the experience of traditional man from that of modern man.

Yet, let us look for a moment at the psychological motivation of traditional man to relate himself to sacred space as compared with the motivation of modern man to find a sense of belonging somewhere, a sense of significance in the fact that "I am here." Eliade explains two reasons for the desire of traditional man to have his world be sacred space: one is his need for a fixed point, a central
axis for his orientation, and the other, distinguishable only for discussion, is traditional man's thirst for the real, his thirst for being. In the following passage Eliade delineates the first reason.

When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality, opposed to the non-reality of the vast surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center.

So it is clear to what a degree the discovery—that is, the revelation—of a sacred space possesses existential value for religious man; for nothing can begin, nothing can be done, without a previous orientation—and any orientation implies acquiring a fixed point. The fixed point of orientation, the sacred space, must have been revealed by the gods, meaning by implication that the gods are interested in "our world." Is this so different from modern man's search for meaning and for community to overcome his feelings of meaninglessness and alienation, so different, that is, in psychological motivation?

The second reason why traditional man wants the space in his world to be sanctified is, according to Eliade, that he thirsts for complete being, for greater realness.

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.

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8 Ibid., 21-22.
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. His terror of the chaos that surrounds his inhabited world corresponds to his terror of nothingness. . . . Religious man's profound nostalgia is to inhabit a "divine world," is his desire that his house shall be like the house of the gods, as it was later represented in temples and sanctuaries. In short, this religious nostalgia expresses the desire to live in a pure and holy cosmos, as it was in the beginning, when it came fresh from the Creator's hands.9

This thirst for being is in evidence in modern man, too, in his quest for meaning and his search for Utopia, or perhaps it would be more enlightening to say his quest for meaning through working for a better or even a Utopian future. Likewise, already noted, modern man knows the terror of nothingness, a terror which is expressed well in the writings of men like Jean-Paul Sartre. There is not space here to substantiate and qualify the generalizations about modern man which have occurred in this paragraph, but perhaps that does not matter; they are offered only as points of connection between the experience of modern and traditional men, trying to make it possible for a person of modern Western society to identify sympathetically with the outlook of traditional man, and thereby to understand better the traditional view of space. We turn now to further explication and analysis of that view of space.

9Ibid., 64-65.
How Traditional Man Discovers Sacred Space

According to the professed ideals of the Western outlook, each individual human being has value and dignity, and his unique talents and personality are valued in and for themselves; whether modern man acts as if he valued the uniqueness of the individual by protecting his freedom and dignity is quite a separate issue, the point here being simply that the modern West puts a very high value on the individual. Similarly, in the dominating outlook of the West each event is seen as unique and non-repeatable. History is that one-directional process that is composed of these unique events, and no other culture has devoted so much energy to finding out what has happened in the past, to charting the biological and cultural evolution of the earth and of mankind. Further, each event, be it a personal happening or an occurrence involving a large group of people, is valued for its uniqueness. We are admonished by men such as Erich Fromm and other existential psychologists to live fully in each present moment, and we savor each major event as it happens anywhere in the world because it will never happen again. In a similar fashion we value the uniqueness of each individual place on earth. New Orleans we like for its French influences and Negro jazz and San Francisco for its hilly streets and its San Francisco Bay; we distinguish between the rugged beauty of the Rocky
Mountains and the softer beauty of the Blue Ridge Mountains or of the Pennsylvania hills. No two places are just alike, even when they are both cities or both mountain ranges, and each is valued for its own particular characteristics; we would like to travel to both and experience the uniqueness of each. All of this -- the value of each unique individual human being, the value of the uniqueness of each event in history and in personal experience, and the value of each place on earth for its own unique beauty and characteristics -- all of this seems so obvious as to approach being clichés.

Yet traditional man does not share our attitudes toward uniqueness; these attitudes are not part of the psychological substratum of all human beings. Eliade describes the contrasting attitudes of traditional man for us, here using the term "archaic man" to mean the same thing.

If we observe the general behavior of archaic man, we are struck by the following fact: neither the objects of the external world nor human acts, properly speaking, have any autonomous intrinsic value. Objects or acts acquire a value, and in so doing become real, because they participate, after one fashion or another, in a reality that transcends them... . Take the commonest of stones; it will be raised to the rank of "precious," that is impregnated with a magical or religious power by virtue of its symbolic shape or its origin: thunderstone, held to have fallen from the sky; pearl, because it comes from the depths of the sea. Other stones will be sacred because they are the dwelling place of the souls of ancestors (India, Indonesia), or because they were once the scene of a theophany (as the bethel that served Jacob for a bed), or because a sacrifice or an oath has consecrated them.10

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10 Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 3-4.
A unique space can have meaning for traditional man but only inasmuch as it is an imitation of a celestial prototype, that is, inasmuch as its uniqueness can be ignored and its similarity with the places of the gods can be emphasized.

Specific places, according to this view, must have a corresponding celestial prototype: temples, cities, territories, mountains, rivers, each specific place must have been planned to exist as it does by the gods themselves.

The temple in particular—pre-eminently the sacred place—had a celestial prototype. On Mount Sinai, Jehovah shows Moses the "form" of the sanctuary that he is to build for him: "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. . . . And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25: 9, 40). And when David gives his son Solomon the plan for the temple buildings, for the tabernacle, and for all their utensils, he assures him that "All this . . . the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (I Chronicles 28: 19). Hence he had seen the celestial model. 

Cities, too, have their divine prototypes, and Eliade cites the celestial Jerusalem as a good example in the Judaeo-Christian tradition (e.g., Apocalypse 21: 2 ff., Isaiah 59: 11 ff., and Ezekial 60). Babylonian cities, Eliade says in the same place, had their celestial prototypes in the constellations, and all Indian royal cities up to the

\[11\textit{Ibid.}, 7.\]

\[12\textit{Ibid.}, 7-9.\]
modern period have been built on the pattern of a celestial city where the Universal Sovereign dwelt in the mythical golden age. Even Plato's ideal city has a celestial archetype (Republic, 592b; cf. 500e).

The world that surrounds us, then, the world in which the presence and the work of man are felt—the mountains that he climbs, populated and cultivated regions, navigable rivers, cities, sanctuaries—all these have an extraterrestrial archetype, be it conceived as a plan, as a form, or purely and simply as a "double" existing on a higher cosmic level.¹³

Anything which does not have a celestial archetype belongs to the chaotic, undetermined, formless space which traditional man fears.¹⁴

The all-encompassing celestial prototype is Creation itself. "The creation of the world is the exemplar for all constructions. Every new town, every new house that is built, imitates afresh, and in a sense repeats, the creation of the world."¹⁵ As we shall see in the next section of this chapter, traditional man assimilates all his cultivating new territory or building new buildings to a repetition of Creation and to the Center of the World, the place where Creation began. Within the one cosmos

¹³Ibid., 9.

¹⁴Ibid., 9; cf. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 64.

created by the gods—within "our world"—there are numerous signs and symbols of transcending reality, signs and symbols of celestial prototypes. Thus, traditional man is forever seeking some sign that a specific place or specific object belongs to the one sacred cosmos, and therefore that it has a celestial prototype, evidence that it was meant by the gods to be the way it is. In other words, traditional man is always seeking a revelation of the sacred meaning of otherwise meaningless to him unique objects, and he determines that sacredness by whether or not it is part of the sacred plan of the gods for the cosmos.

Every sacred space implies a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different. When Jacob in his dream at Haran saw a ladder reaching to heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it, and heard the Lord speaking from above it, saying: "I am the Lord God of Abraham," he awoke and was afraid and called out: "How dreadful is this place: this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And he took the stone that had been his pillow, and set it up as a monument, and poured oil on the top of it. He called the place Beth-el, that is, house of God (Genesis, 28, 12-19).16

Such a dramatic occurrence as a hierophany is not necessary for a place to be or become known as sacred, however.

Often there is no need for a theophany or hierophany properly speaking; some sign suffices to indicate the sacredness of the place. "According to the legend, the marabout who founded El-Hamel at the end of the sixteenth century stopped to spend the night near a spring and planted his

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stick in the ground. The next morning, when he went for it to resume his journey, he found that it had taken root and that buds had sprouted on it. He considered this a sign of God's will and settled in that place." . . .

When no sign manifests itself, it is provoked. For example, a sort of evocation is performed with the help of animals; it is they who show what place is fit to receive the sanctuary or the village. This amounts to an evocation of sacred forms or figures for the immediate purpose of establishing an orientation in the homogeneity of space. A sign is asked, to put an end to the tension and anxiety caused by relativity and disorientation—in short, to reveal an absolute point of support. For example, a wild animal is hunted, and the sanctuary is built at the place where it is killed.17

To us such sign-hunting seems a bit contrived—human actions arbitrarily called divine actions and happenstance human choices called divine choices. But this is not the way traditional man sees it. In his view it does not lie within his power to go out and choose a spot on which to build a house or an altar; he believes that "men are not free to choose the sacred site, that they only seek for it and find it by the help of mysterious signs."18

Once a sacred space has been revealed by the gods or discovered by men by following mysterious signs, this sacred place remains permanently sacred.

A sacred place is what it is because of the permanent nature of the hierophany that first consecrated it. That is why one Bolivian tribe, when they feel the need to renew their energy and vitality, go back to the place supposed to have been the cradle of their ancestors. The

17Ibid., 27-28.
18Ibid., 28.
hierophany therefore does not merely sanctify a given segment of undifferentiated profane space; it goes so far as to ensure that sacredness will continue there. There, in that place, the hierophany repeats itself. In this way the place becomes an inexhaustible source of power and sacredness and enables man, simply by entering it, to have a share in the power, to hold communion with the sacredness.  

It is here, I think, that we see a necessary connection between the traditional man's view of space and his view of time. The sacred place can remain permanently a place to communicate with the sacred because the sacred place is essentially a revelation of part of the celestial prototype or divine plan of Creation, and because that act of Creation can be repeated infinitely. As we quoted from Eliade above, traditional man's nostalgia to inhabit a divine world "expresses the desire to live in a pure and holy cosmos, as it was in the beginning, when it came fresh from the Creator's hands." Eliade continues: "The experience of sacred time will make it possible for religious man periodically to experience the cosmos as it was in principio, that is, at the mythical moment of Creation." Whenever traditional man ritually repeated the cosmogony—during New Year festivals and when he built a new house or a new sanctuary or inhabited a new territory—he believed himself

19Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 368.
20Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 65.
21Ibid.
not simply to be commemorating the event of Creation by symbolic repetition of it; rather he was *reactualizing* the event of Creation, and he was living at the very mythical moment when the gods created the world.

The psychological motivation for wanting to live in the **time** when the gods created the world matches the motivation for living in the **space** where the gods revealed themselves—according to Eliade it is a demonstration of traditional man's thirst for being.

It is easy to understand why the memory of that marvelous time **Creation** haunted religious man, why he periodically sought to return to it. *In illo tempore* the gods had displayed their greatest powers. The cosmogony is the supreme divine manifestation, the paradigmatic act of strength, superabundance, and creativity. Religious man thirsts for the real. By every means at his disposal, he seeks to reside at the very source of primordial reality, when the world was **in statu nascendi**.

We see this most clearly in the symbolism of the Center of the World from traditional societies. Traditional man sought not only to be in a place where the gods had revealed themselves, but at the place where his ancestors were created, and therefore at the place where the whole human race was created; traditional man sought to be at the Center or "navel" of the world, the place at which the act of Creation began and from which it spread, and also the place at which the gods created the human race. We

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shall turn to a discussion of the conception of the Center of the World in the next section.

The Center of the World Conception
In Traditional Society

As we have seen in the first two sections of this chapter, chaos is a tremendous problem to traditional man; he has a terror of nothingness, of formlessness, of disorientation and relativity. And this goads him in a negative way towards what he already desires in a positive way, complete being, that which is fully real. He believes that there was once a golden age, a paradisal time when the things of this world were fully real, fully existing, when they came from their creators' hands. This happened before time existed, in mythical times, and it happened before chaos had been turned into being. Creation began from one point and spread outward from there, and traditional man sometimes has likened this to an embryo developing from the navel outward.

The symbolism of the "centre" embraces a number of different ideas: the point of intersection of the cosmic spheres (the channel joining hell and earth; cf. the bethel of Jacob); a place that is hierophanic and therefore real, a supremely "creational" place, because the source of all reality and consequently of energy and life is to be found there. Indeed, cosmological traditions even express the symbolism of the centre in terms borrowed from embryology: "The Holy One created the world like an embryo. As the embryo proceeds from the navel onwards, so God began to create the world from its navel outward,
and from there it was spread out in different directions." Yoma declares: "The world has been created beginning with Sion." And in the Rg Veda too, the universe is seen as spreading out from a single central point.  

Traditional man strives, as we might guess from the above, to become and remain as close as possible to that point from which Creation began, the Center of the World.

The religious man sought to live as near as possible to the Center of the World. He knew that his country lay at the midpoint of the earth; he knew too that his city constituted the navel of the universe, and, above all, that the temple or the palace were veritably Centers of the World. But he also wanted his own house to be at the Center and to be an imago mundi.

At this Center he could communicate, he thought, with either heaven or with the chaotic underworld and the place of the dead.

The Kwakiutl /a culture in British Columbia/ believe that a copper pole passes through the three cosmic levels (underworld, earth, sky); the point at which it enters the sky is the "door to the world above." The visible image of this cosmic pillar in the sky is the Milky Way. But the work of the gods, the universe, is repeated and imitated by men on their own scale. The axis mundi, seen in the sky in the form of the Milky Way, appears in the ceremonial house in the form of a sacred pole. It is the trunk of a cedar tree, thirty to thirty-five feet high, over half of which projects through the roof. This pillar plays a primary part in the ceremonies; it confers a cosmic structure on the house. In the ritual songs the house is called "our world" and the candidates for initiation, who live in it, proclaim: "I am at the Center of the World... I am at the Post of the World," and so on...

23 Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 377.

24 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 43.
The cry of the Kwakiutl neophyte, "I am at the Center of the World!" at once reveals one of the deepest meanings of sacred space. Where the break-through from plane to plane has been effected by a hierophany, there too an opening has been made, either upward (the divine world) or downward (the underworld, the world of the dead). The three cosmic levels—earth, heaven, underworld—have been put in communication. As we just saw, this communication is sometimes expressed through the image of a universal pillar, \textit{axis mundi}, which at once connects and supports heaven and earth and whose base is fixed in the world below (the infernal regions). Such a cosmic pillar can be only at the very center of the universe, for the whole of the habitable world extends around it.\textsuperscript{25}

Traditional man strives to be at the Center, then, because he wants to live as much as possible in communication with the gods and with the world of the dead; this is his desire to be as fully alive as possible.

The cosmic pole is one of the images used by traditional society to symbolize the Center of the World and to ensure communication with the heavens and the underworld, as we have seen in the example of the Kwakiutl people. There are other images, however: a cosmic mountain, a temple, or a stone known as an \textit{omphalos} or navel of the world. Let us look at examples of each kind, beginning with Eliade's exposition of the symbol of the cosmic mountain.

The mountain occurs among the images that express the connection between heaven and earth; hence it is believed to be at the center of the world. And in a number of cultures we do in fact hear of such mountains, real or mythical, situated at the center of the world; examples are Meru in India,

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 35-37.
Haraberezaiti in Iran, the mythical "Mount of the Lands" in Mesopotamia, Gerizim in Palestine—which, moreover, was called the "navel of the earth." Since the sacred mountain is an axis mundi connecting earth with heaven, it in a sense touches heaven and hence marks the highest point in the world; consequently the territory that surrounds it, and that constitutes "our world," is held to be the highest among countries. This is stated in Hebrew tradition; Palestine, being the highest land, was not submerged by the Flood.26

The symbolism of the temple at the Center of the World is similar to that of the cosmic pole and the cosmic mountain.

"Every temple or palace—and, by extension, every sacred city or royal residence—is a Sacred Mountain, thus becoming a Center."27 Furthermore, the temple is built on a rock- or other foundation which extends into the underworld, the world of pre-Creation and chaotic formlessness and the world of the dead. Eliade gives many examples, among them examples from Mesopotamian Civilization.

As for the assimilation of temples to cosmic mountains and their function as links between earth and heaven, the names given to Babylonian sanctuaries themselves bear witness; they are called "Mountain of the House," "House of the Mountain of all Lands," "Mountain of Storms," "Link between Heaven and Earth," and the like. The ziggurat was literally a cosmic mountain; the seven stories represented the seven planetary heavens; by ascending them, the priest reached the summit of the universe. . . .

Dur-an-ki, "Link between Heaven and Earth," was a name applied to a number of Babylonian sanctuaries (it occurs at Nippur, Larsa, Sippara, and elsewhere). Babylon had many names, among them "House of the Base of Heaven and Earth," "Link between Heaven and Earth." But it was also

26 Ibid., 38.
27 Eliade, Cosmos and History, 12.
in Babylon that the connection between earth and the lower regions was made, for the city had been built on bāb apsû, "the Gate of Apsû," apsû being the name for the waters of chaos before Creation.²⁸

In regard to the navel of the earth, let it first be said that this symbol is frequently assimilated to that of the cosmic mountain.

The summit of the cosmic mountain is not only the highest point of the earth; it is also the earth's navel, the point at which the Creation began. . . . The creation of man, which answers to the cosmogony, likewise took place at a central point, at the center of the world. . . . Paradise, where Adam was created from clay, is, of course, situated at the center of the cosmos. Paradise was the navel of the Earth and, according to a Syrian tradition, was established on a mountain higher than all others.²⁹

Not only the creation of man took place at the navel or omphalos; the entire world began at that point.

A universe comes to birth from its center; it spreads out from a central point that is, as it were, its navel. It is in this way that, according to the Rig Veda (X, 149), the universe was born and developed—from a core, a central point. Hebrew tradition is still more explicit: "The Most Holy One created the world like an embryo. As the embryo grows from the navel, so God began to create the world by the navel. . . . Rabbi ben Gorion said of the rock of Jerusalem: "it is called the Foundation Stone of the Earth, that is, the navel of the Earth, because it is from there that the whole Earth unfolded." Then too, because the creation of man is a replica of the cosmogony, it follows that the first man was fashioned at the "navel of the earth" or in Jerusalem (Judaeo-Christian traditions).³⁰

²⁸Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 40-41.
²⁹Eliade, Cosmos and History, 16.
³⁰Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 44-45; cf. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 377; cf. also this paper, 25.
We had already noted that the creation of man took place at the navel, but this last sentence has told us why: it is because man is a microcosm. To conclude this analysis of the symbolism of the Center, let us cite a further reference to the cosmic pole, for it shows how seriously traditional man took such symbolic Centers of the World.

According to the traditions of an Arunta tribe, the Achilpa, in mythical times the divine being Numbakula cosmicized their future territory, created their Ancestor, and established their institutions. From the trunk of a gum tree Numbakula fashioned the sacred pole (kauwa-auwa) and, after anointing it with blood, climbed it and disappeared into the sky. This pole represents a cosmic axis, for it is around the sacred pole that territory becomes habitable, hence is transformed into a world. The sacred pole consequently plays an important role ritually. During their wanderings the Achilpa always carry it with them and choose the direction they are to take by the direction toward which it bends. This allows them, while being continually on the move, to be always in "their world" and, at the same time, in communication with the sky into which Numbakula vanished.

For the pole to be broken denotes catastrophe; it is like "the end of the world," reversion to chaos. Spencer and Gillen report that once, when the pole was broken, the entire clan were in consternation; they wandered about aimlessly for a time, and finally lay down on the ground together and waited for death to overtake them.\(^\text{31}\)

Spencer's and Gillen's report remind us that, even though the conception of the Center of the World seems rather unreal and incredible to us, traditional man believed it was an accurate representation of reality; he thought his very life depended on being able to communicate with his

gods and being in or having constant access to sacred space.

The Achilpa believe it (the sacred pole) to be the means by which they can communicate with the sky realm. Now, human existence is possible only by virtue of this permanent communication with the sky. The world of the Achilpa really becomes their world only in proportion as it reproduces the cosmos organized and sanctified by Numbakula. Life is not possible without an opening toward the transcendent; in other words, human beings cannot live in chaos. Once contact with the transcendent is lost, existence in the world ceases to be possible—and the Achilpa let themselves die. 32

With the example of the Achilpa tribe lying down to die soon after their sacred pole was broken, we have a dramatic demonstration of traditional man's need to locate himself at the Center of the World and to remain within sacred space.

Something else also draws our attention about the sacred pole of the Achilpa tribe, and that is its movability. This is one of the strangest aspects of traditional man's view of space. How can it be that the Center of the World can be moved? And closely related to this question is another: How can there be more than one Center of the World for a single people? Eliade has a response.

The multiplicity, or even infinity, of centers of the world raises no difficulty for religious thought. For it is not a matter of geometrical space, but of an existential and sacred space that has an entirely different structure, that admits of an infinite number of breaks and hence is capable of an infinite number of communications with the transcendent. 33

32 Ibid., 34.
33 Ibid., 57.
Apparently traditional man, lacking a scientific outlook and without our training in geometry, saw no problem here. It was certainly a great psychological advantage to him if he could have more than one Center of the World, because then every building of his and of his people could all be at the Center of the World.

The true world is always in the middle, at the Center, for it is here that there is a break in plane and hence communication among the three cosmic zones. Whatever the extent of the territory involved, the cosmos that it represents is always perfect. An entire country (e.g., Palestine), a city (Jerusalem), a sanctuary (the Temple in Jerusalem), all equally well present an imago mundi. Flavius Josephus wrote that the court represented the sea (i.e., the lower regions), the Holy Place represented earth, and the Holy of Holies heaven (Ant. Jud., III, 7, 7). It is clear, then, that both the imago mundi and the Center are repeated in the inhabited world. Palestine, Jerusalem, and the Temple severally and concurrently represent the image of the universe and the Center of the World. This multiplicity of centers and this reiteration of the image of the world on smaller and smaller scales constitute one of the specific characteristics of traditional societies.

To us, it seems an inescapable conclusion that the religious man sought to live as near as possible to the Center of the World.\(^{34}\)

It is still exceedingly difficult to conceptualize so many Centers all concurrent existentially when they could not be so in geometric space—one wonders why the traditional man saw no contradiction here. Perhaps they did not yet have conception of geometric space. Perhaps we must just accept it as possible in their minds because they did

\(^{34}\)Ibid., 42-43.
believe in a multiplicity of Centers, and they apparently did so without difficulty; everything they built—their house, temple, village, and so forth—was considered to be at the Center because it was an imitation, or rather a reactualization, of Creation.

In our view it is by human actions that houses, temples, and cities are constructed and territories conquered or brought under cultivation; but to the traditional man such acts are not primarily human acts but divine acts, because the humans are reactualizing the cosmogony and doing so contemporaneously with the creation of the world by the gods.

Every construction or fabrication has the cosmogony as paradigmatic model. The creation of the world becomes the archetype of every creative human gesture, whatever its plane of reference may be. . . . Every human establishment repeats the creation of the world from a central point (the navel). Just as the universe unfolds from a center and stretches out toward the four cardinal points, the village comes into existence around an intersection. . . . The cosmic symbolism of the village is repeated in the structure of the sanctuary or the ceremonial house. 35

The paramount time of origins is the time of the cosmogony, the instant that saw the appearance of the most immense of realities, the world. This . . . is the reason the cosmogony serves as the paradigmatic model for every creation, for every kind of doing. . . . Religious man reactualizes the cosmogony not only each time he creates something (his "own world"—the inhabited territory—or a city, a house, etc.), but also when he wants to ensure a fortunate reign for a new

35 Ibid., 45-46.
sovereign, or to save threatened crops, or in the case of a war, a sea voyage, and so on. But, above all, the ritual recitation of the cosmogonic myth plays an important role in healing, when what is sought is the regeneration of the human being.\footnote{Ibid., 81-82.}

Being at the Center of the World spatially and temporally (temporally in the sense of reactualizing the Creation of the world which began at the Center of the World) is the unifying experience for traditional man. The symbolism of the Center of the World (space) and of the mythical \textit{in illo tempore} when Creation occurred (time) is the core symbolism of traditional cultures. The details of the rituals and the symbolism of human creations (houses, temples, settling new land, etc.) is considerably more complex than we have taken time to explain here. Eliade explores it in much greater depth in several of his works.\footnote{See ibid., 20-65.}

For our purposes we have delved sufficiently deep, however, for we have been interested in only two things: 1) obtaining a general understanding of traditional man's attitude towards space, so that we will be sensitive to indications of it in the writings of Dante, and 2) the symbolism of the Center of the World, for we will be asking in the next two chapters whether either Jerusalem or Rome or both were Centers of the World for Dante. We shall turn now to the question of Jerusalem as a possible Center of the World for Dante.
CHAPTER II

JERUSALEM AS CENTER OF THE WORLD FOR DANTE

Jerusalem as Sanctified by Hierophanies and Signs

As we have seen in the first chapter, every sacred space is sacred because it has been sanctified by a hierophany or hierophanies, a sign(s), or a ritual reactualization(s) of the cosmogony (which constitutes a hierophany in the mind of traditional man, because it is not seen as merely a symbolic commemoration but as an actual being-there-at-the-mythical-time—when Creation took place). The question faces us, then, whether Jerusalem was sanctified by hierophanies or signs in Dante's mind. We will want to look at the textual evidence to decide, so this section will serve a dual purpose: 1) introducing the textual evidence for all aspects of the problem of Jerusalem as Center for Dante, and 2) letting us survey the textual evidence for the belief that Jerusalem had been sanctified by hierophanies or signs.

There are not many direct or even indirect references to Jerusalem in Dante's works, so we do not have a lot of evidence on which to work. Of these mentioned two\(^1\) are

\(^1\)Dante, \textit{Purgatorio}, ii, 3; iv, 68.
only for the purpose of getting one's bearings; one is a use of Jerusalem to see the relationship between time (measured astronomically by the sun) in the Southern and Northern hemispheres; the other is an observation of the position of the sun in relation to Jerusalem as compared with the sun in relation to Purgatory, thereby helping Dante, Virgil, and the reader to get their geographical and directional bearings. In a third, Dante is in the Crystalline sphere, looking down to earth, and he tells the time by noticing that the sun is setting over Phoenicia (near Jerusalem), meanwhile divulging some perhaps significant information about the position of the heavenly constellations and spheres' equators in relation to the earth's geographical regions. A fourth reference explains the position of the earth's equator by saying that it is equidistant from the Hebrews' Land and Purgatory. In two more places Dante makes mention of the siege of Jerusalem and of Charles II, titular king of Jerusalem, but neither of these last two reveal his attitude to Jerusalem itself in even the slightest degree. All of the mentions cited in this paragraph are, I think, largely irrelevant for our purposes; Dante is referring to Jerusalem

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2Dante, *Paradiso*, xxvii, 83-84.
3*Purg.*, iv, 83.
4*Purg.*, xxiii, 29; *Par.*, xix, 127-29.
as a spot on the map rather than Jerusalem as a city with sacred meaning. Taken as a group, however, they do accomplish something highly significant: they locate Jerusalem in Dante's cosmology at antipodes with Purgatory and in the center of the Northern Hemisphere, the land hemisphere and only part of the universe inhabited by living creatures. This placement of Jerusalem is extremely important, as we shall see clearly in the next sections of this chapter.

In another group of references to Jerusalem, the city has religious significance as the city of David, the principal city of the Hebrew people; as a basically orthodox medieval Christian Dante accepts the Old Testament as revelation, and he accordingly accepts Jerusalem's place in that revelation. In five direct references to the city, for instance, Dante quotes or alludes to Scriptural passages for authority substantiating thereby whatever he is arguing for at that moment, or for poetic effect. In six more places indirect mentions are made by referring to Israel, the Hebrews, or some other term closely related to Jerusalem. In yet another place Dante refers to Jerusalem without naming it explicitly, calling it the spot where Christ was crucified.

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5 Purg., xxiv, 124; Par., v, 49; De Monarchia, III, ix, 75; Epistle viii (to the Italian Cardinals), 7; Ep. x (to Lord Can Grande della Scala), 10-11.

6 Purg., xviii, 135; Mon., I, viii, 23; Mon., I, xiv, 66-73; Mon., II, viii, 37-42 and 57-59; Ep. vii (to Henry VII), 104-105; Ep. vii, 183.
As when it shoots the first rays where its Maker shed His blood, the Ebro lying under the lofty scales and the waters of the Ganges scorched by noon, so stood the sun; . . .

Dante is again telling time for us astronomically, meaning that it is noon in India, sunrise in Jerusalem, and midnight in Spain where flows the Ebro River; this part of the passage is not significant. However, certainly the fact that the God-man, Christ, was born, taught, and was crucified and resurrected in the Holy Land, plus the fact that Christ was a Jew and that he built on rather than destroyed the Old Law—certainly these constitute a hierophany for Jerusalem; God Himself, Maker of the earth and of man and of the universe, was incarnated as the Son of Man and walked the earth at Jerusalem and its environs—what greater or more dramatic hierophany can one imagine? In another similar reference, Jerusalem is again alluded to as the site of the Crucifixion.  

Likewise significant are the mentions of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the use of the Exodus from Egypt to Jerusalem to mean the journey from the world to heaven, or from sin to grace. In one place Dante uses the term "Heavenly Jerusalem" without reference to the Exodus, and in another he speaks of his journey in the Divine Comedy as coming "from Egypt to Jerusalem." Also, the spirits who are just

7 *Purg.*, xxvii, 1-5.  
8 Dante, *Inferno*, xxxiv, 114.  
9 Dante, *Ep.* ii (to the Counts Guidi), 35.  
10 Dante, *Par.*, xxv, 56.
arriving from earth onto the shores of Purgatory are singing *In exitu Israel de Aegypto* (Psalm 114). In his letter to Can Grande della Scala Dante explains the four interpretations of the Exodus, one of which is the release of the soul from earthly bondage into the Heavenly Jerusalem.

There is one meaning that is derived from the letter, and another that is derived from the things indicated by the letter. The first is called literal, but the second allegorical or mystical. That this method of expounding may be more clearly set forth, we can consider it in these lines: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary and Israel his dominion."

For if we consider the letter alone, the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is signified; if the allegory, our redemption accomplished in Christ is signified; if the moral meaning, the conversion of the soul from the sorrow and misery of sin to a state of grace is signified; if the anagogical, the departure of the sanctified soul from the slavery of this corruption to the liberty of everlasting glory is signified. And although these mystical meanings are called by various names, they can in general all be said to be allegorical, since they differ from the literal or historic; . . .

Dante offers a similar but less complete explanation in the Convivio.

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These allegorical interpretations of Jerusalem and the Scriptural references used to apply to contemporary situations give Jerusalem meaning for Dante's own time. In other words, Jerusalem is not simply a place which meant something to the Hebrews in past history, but it is also a place which means something to him personally. The last five mentions of Jerusalem also show this contemporaneity of Jerusalem's significance for Dante. In three of them he refers to Jerusalem either at the time of the Babylonian exile or at the destruction of the city by Titus, using this period of anguish in Hebrew history to symbolize the present troubles of Rome as an imperial city\textsuperscript{14} or as a papal city\textsuperscript{15} or his own grief after the death of Beatrice.\textsuperscript{16}

In one of the two final mentions, Dante refers approvingly both to the conquest of Canaan and to the Crusades to recapture the Holy Land, the Crusades being wrongly neglected (in Dante's opinion) by Pope Boniface VIII. Folco is the person speaking in this passage, he being located in the heaven of Venus, the sphere for those saints whose love was marred by wantonness.

\textsuperscript{14}Dante, \textit{Ep.} vii, 187.
\textsuperscript{15}Dante, \textit{Ep.} viii, 13.
\textsuperscript{16}Dante, \textit{La Vita Nuova}, secs. 29 and 31.
'Thou wouldst know who is in this radiation that so sparkles here beside me like a sunbeam in clear water. Know then that within it Rahab a harlot mentioned in Joshua is at peace, and, since she is joined by our order, it is sealed with her in its highest rank; by this heaven, where the shadow ends that is cast by your world, she was taken up before any other soul of Christ's triumph. It was indeed fitting to leave her in some heaven as a trophy of the lofty victory that was gained with the one and the other palm Christ's triumph in the Harrowing of Hell, his hands pierced with nail holes, because she favoured Joshua's first glory in Holy Land—a place that little touches the Pope's memory.'

In the other of the final mentions of the Holy Land, Dante again speaks in favor of the Crusades and the Latin kingdoms there. The approving attitude Dante evinces in these two passages will be important to us in another context, to be dealt with below—whether Jerusalem is still a sacred place for Christians of Dante's own period—but the other idea touched—Joshua's first glory in the Holy Land—is of immediate import. The Conquest of Canaan was considered by the Hebrews as revelation of God's providential care for them; they believed that God wanted them to have the Promised Land of milk and honey even if it meant a massacre of the previous inhabitants. Medieval Christians, including Dante, believed that the figures of the Old Testament were God's chosen people to prepare the way for Christ, and the Old Testament


18 Inf., xxvii, 85-105.
Testament was studied avidly by theologians, who were particularly interested in preview revelations of the coming Messiah. In the above passage Dante is demonstrating his approval of the Conquest, for Rahab is honored primarily because she was in favor of the battles led by Joshua to effect this conquest, and because of the implications of her action.

Not only the Old Testament story of Rahab the harlot's deliverance of the Hebrew spies, but also the singular place given to her in the New Testament—as an ancestress of Christ (Matt. i. 5), as one who acted 'by faith' (Heb. xi. 31), and as one 'justified by works' (Jam. ii. 25), and in the Church's teaching—as the type of the Church, saved by Joshua who was the type of Christ; all this explains Folco's language about her as sparkling 'like a sunbeam in clear water' and as 'a trophy of the lofty victory' of Christ. 19

In Dante's view and that of other medieval Christians, there were many signs and hierophanies recorded throughout the Old Testament, indicating that the Hebrews were the chosen people and the predecessors of the Christians; Dante says in the Commedia that the Hebrews were taken from Limbo during Christ's Harrowing of Hell, excepting only three Jews who were placed in Hell because of the Crucifixion—Annas, Caiphas, and Judas Iscariot. We meet many of these Hebrews, including the great original sinner, Adam, scattered throughout Paradise. Since Dante fully accepts the Old Testament as revelation, and since Jerusalem was the

19 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, 144.
Holy City of the Hebrews after King David, whom Dante regards as the real founder of the Hebrews, it seems that Dante's Jerusalem, too, was a place sanctified by hierophanies and signs of divine favor to the Hebrews.

Adding the Hebrew hierophanies related to Jerusalem to the relationship of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and realizing that Dante accepted all these as authentic revelations, especially, of course, Christ, it seems clear that Jerusalem was a city sanctified by hierophanies in Dante's view.

20 For Dante there were two chosen peoples, the Hebrews, descended from David, and the Romans, descended from Aeneas (who was a contemporary of David) and the Trojans. See, e.g., Dante, Conv. IV, v, in Dante's Convivio, trans. William W. Jackson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 205-206: "And since at His coming into the world it was meet that not only the Heaven but the Earth should be in their best frame, and Earth is in her best frame when she is a monarchy, that is, when the whole earth has one Prince, as has been said above, divine Providence ordained the people and the city which should fulfil this condition, namely, glorious Rome. And since it was meet that the lodging into which the King of Heaven was to enter should be most clean and pure, a most holy family was ordained from which, after many good deserts, there should be born a woman far better than all the rest of mankind to become the abode of the Son of God. And this family is the family of David of which was born the pride and honour of the human race, namely, Mary. Therefore it is written in Isaiah, 'a rod shall grow out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall spring from its root.' Now Jesse was the father of the aforesaid David. And all this, the birth of David, and the birth of Rome, happened at the same juncture, namely, at the coming of Aeneas from Troy into Italy, which was the origin of the most renowned city of Rome, as the records testify. Thus the divine choice of the Roman empire is sufficiently proved by the birth of the holy city which was contemporaneous with the root of the family of Mary."
His acceptance of hierophanies makes it superfluous to consider any signs that might have shown the city's sacredness—these would only be important if there were no hierophanies. 21

Jerusalem as *Axis Mundi* and Meeting Place Of Earth, Heaven, and Hell

When we ask ourselves what the meaning of Jerusalem was for Dante we are struck less with the few mentions of the city treated in the last section than with the place of Jerusalem in his cosmology of earth, hell, purgatory, and the heavens in the *Commedia*. The details about the construction of the universe are scattered through the three books of the *Commedia*, but I have not found evidence of any disagreement on the picture that emerges when all these details are pasted together into one picture of the universe. Dante visualizes the universe as a set of concentric spheres, the outermost being the Empyrean heaven and abode of God himself, the innermost being the earth, a stationary globe which contains Hell and whose center is the farthest point from God, the deepest point of Hell, and the spot where

21 There are at least four more references which should perhaps be considered here for the sake of completeness: 1) *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, I, vi, 53-59, where Dante speaks of the early history of the Hebrew language, 2) *Vulq. Eloc.*, I, vii, 68-70, where he explains the origins of the *populus Israel*, 3) *Conv.*, II, vi, 4-5, on the Hebrew knowledge of angels, and 4) *Inf.*, iv, 59, where he calls Jacob by the name "Israel."
Lucifer is frozen in place. There are ten heavens in all, each of which revolves around the stationary earth, the first seven being the spheres of the moon, the sun, and the five visible planets known to Dante's age, the eighth being the sphere of the fixed stars, the ninth being the primum mobile or Crystalline heaven, the sphere whose rapid motion imparts to the spheres below (and through them to the earth) the motion, energy, or being given the universe by its Creator and Governor, God, who is located in the tenth heaven, outside time and space. The earth itself is inhabited only in the Northern Hemisphere, while the Southern Hemisphere is all water except for the island-mountain Purgatory. At the top of Purgatory is situated the Garden of Eden, the closest point to the heavens of all the places on earth. Purgatory and Eden are placed exactly in the center of the Southern Hemisphere and directly opposite Jerusalem, which is the center of the Northern Hemisphere. Hell is a vast funnel-shaped cavity symmetrically positioned beneath Jerusalem, with its smallest point at the center of the universe and a narrow passageway connecting the center of the universe with the shores of Purgatory at the opposite side of the earth.

The first things that we should notice about this cosmology are 1) that Jerusalem is the center of the land hemisphere, and 2) that Jerusalem is the one point in the part of the world inhabited by live human beings that is
situated on the *axis mundi*, Jerusalem being connected in a straight line with Hell and the center of the universe, then with the passage that leads from the worst regions of Hell out to the shores of Purgatory, and then up through the middle of Purgatory to the Garden of Eden at the top of the island–mountain, and finally into the heavenly spheres up to the Empyrean where God is. Surely this place allotted to Jerusalem is highly significant, but to establish exactly how it is significant is more difficult. As we have noted above, Dante says little about Jerusalem in his works. Yet, as we have also seen, Jerusalem and the Holy Land were fraught with meaning for the medieval man; here the Old Testament figures lived their lives under the providential care of the Christian God; here occurred the events of Christ's days on earth, his birth, teaching, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension; here lies the basis for the symbolism of the Celestial Jerusalem; and the actions of medieval men attest to their regard for the city, thousands of medieval men having made pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and the Crusades having been organized to wrest the Holy Land from the infidel Moslems. It seems likely that Dante meant to express the meaning of Jerusalem in medieval tradition by the single but powerful symbol of locating Jerusalem at antipodes with the mountain of Purgatory.22 There are, after all, many instances of such

22For textual evidence see *Purg.*, iv, 68.
condensed symbolism in the *Commedia*. Further, there was really no reason for Dante to develop long descriptions of the meaning of Jerusalem to him or to the Christian of his period. This would be like a person of today launching into a long description of the arguments for believing that the earth is round and that earth revolves around the sun rather than the sun around the earth. If a contemporary writer needed to construct a universe in his poem he would locate the earth and sun according to modern astronomy and say nothing, thereby implicitly showing his acceptance—conscious or unconscious—of the methods and outlook of modern science and of profane space; it would be surprising if he would even question his construction of the universe this way. Much the same, we can speculate, Dante put Jerusalem in the center of the land hemisphere and at antipodes with Purgatory because it obviously (obviously to him, that is) belonged there, thereby showing his implicit acceptance of the scientific and theological opinion of the time about the meaning of Jerusalem. What was obvious to men of Dante's culture is no longer obvious, however, and we wish that Dante had said more about Jerusalem so that we could understand with some precision and assurance what it meant to him. Nevertheless, it is classic to say that Dante's *Commedia* was a poetic *summa* of medieval tradition; so, to see what Jerusalem might have meant to him, let us see some of the traditions that were or could
have been current in his period concerning that city. In this section we will explore only part of these traditions, those that concern Jerusalem as center of the land hemisphere and those that are related to Jerusalem's position on an axis mundi.

Approaching the problem first on the general level, we find Eliade encouraging us to think that the Center-of-the-World symbolism was still evident and probably even strong in the Middle Ages, and that the idea of Jerusalem as Center was likewise important.

The symbolism of the Center . . . survived in the Western world down to the threshold of modern times. The very ancient conception of the temple as the imago mundi, the idea that the sanctuary reproduces the universe in its essence, passed into the religious architecture of Christian Europe; the basilica of the first centuries of our era, like the medieval cathedral, symbolically reproduces the Celestial Jerusalem. As to the symbolism of the mountain, of the Ascension, and of the "Quest for the Center," they are clearly attested in medieval literature, and appear, though only by allusion, in certain works of recent centuries.23

One of the examples cited by Eliade from medieval literature repeats the idea common among Hebrews and other traditional societies that at the place they regarded as Center the sun's rays fell perpendicularly from the heaven on the day of the summer solstice. "A tradition preserved by Peter Comestor," Eliade tells us, "related that at the summer solstice the sun casts no shadow on the 'Fountain of Jacob'."24

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23 Eliade, *Cosmos and History*, 17.
which is in central Palestine near Mount Gerizim. It does not seem wise, however, to try to glean quantitative statements from Eliade; notice that he does not comment about the degree to which the symbolism of the Center and of the Celestial Jerusalem were important in medieval Europe. He says only that these symbolisms are "clearly attested" in medieval literature, in other words, that there are many positive examples of these symbolisms. There is no attempt to find negative examples or other options open to medieval men, nor, therefore, to assert that the traditional view of space was or was not dominant during the medieval period.

There are other researchers, fortunately, on whom we can rely for substantiation of Eliade's statements, although none of them answers the quantitative problem. In "Stars over Eden" Charles Singleton reports that there was good Scriptural authority for recognizing Jerusalem as the center of the inhabited part of the world, citing Ezekiel 5:5 as that authority. M. A. Orr corroborates this statement of Singleton, using the same Scriptural reference and offering other pertinent evidence as well.

Another favourite Church doctrine was that Jerusalem was the centre of the earth: this idea, which it will be remembered has a place in Dante's cosmogony, was based on the words in Ezekiel 5:5: "This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of

the nations and countries that are around her."
Good bishop Arculf, and other pilgrims, were shown a pillar "on the north side of the holy places, and in the middle of the city," which marked the exact spot and were told in proof of the assertion that at midday at the summer solstice this pillar cast no shadow. How this proved its central position is a mystery, and if true the pillar must have been deplorably crooked, for the sun can never pass overhead in Jerusalem, in a latitude of nearly 32° north. 26

For those of us who have read Eliade, Miss Orr's last statement is somewhat beside the point, for the location of Jerusalem in the center took place in existential rather than geometric space; it is true, however, that the gradual development of scientific methods of measuring latitude and longitude and the corresponding conception of geometric space would eventually challenge the existential conception of space, and challenge it by misinterpreting it as a scientific statement just as Miss Orr has.

Turning now to traditions concerning Jerusalem as axis mundi and their possible influence on Dante, Singleton gives convincing evidence for believing that Dante was following the authority of Augustine when he constructed a cosmology with Eden and Jerusalem opposite each other. Singleton's argument is based principally on Augustine's interpretation of Genesis 3:24, where it tells of Adam's expulsion from the earthly paradise: "No less an exegete of Genesis than St. Augustine had understood the sacred

26 M. A. Orr, Dante and the Early Astronomers, with an introduction by Barbara Reynolds (2nd ed. revised; London, Allen Wingate, 1956), 129.
text [Genesis 3:24] to affirm that when Adam was expelled from Eden for his sin he was placed 'opposite' Eden. Augustine believed Genesis 3:24 described a literal, historical event, but nowhere did he "remember to say just what contra paradisum could mean actually, i.e., geographically, in a literal sense." Singleton suggests that

... the poet [Dante] too was familiar with that text telling where Adam had been placed after sin; and that Dante, as poet, simply made bold to say where that place opposite Eden would be in literal geographical fact. To be placed opposite Eden in his geography meant to be placed in those Old Testament lands that have Jerusalem at their center.  

Again there is a correlation between Orr and Singleton. 

Augustine upheld as an article of faith that in no case could any antipodean inhabitants exist. For they could not be descendants of Adam, nor ever hear the Gospel, since everyone knew the torrid zone to be an impossible barrier between north and south.

We will later have occasion to explore more thoroughly Singleton's analysis of the Augustinian precedent for Dante's location of Eden opposite Jerusalem, noting the symbolic meaning and intellectual and poetic harmony that both Augustine and Dante saw in the construction. For the present it is sufficient to note that Dante was probably


28 Ibid., 12.

29 Ibid.

30 Orr, *Dante and the Early Astronomers*, 129.
following a tradition current in the Middle Ages when he located the two places on the axis mundi. 

Returning to Eliade's analysis of Hebrew tradition—which we are considering as a likely source of Dantesque cosmology, since Christianity built on it—Jerusalem is definitely an axis mundi, because it is conceived as connecting the three cosmic zones, heaven, earth, and hell. In another connection we have already given Flavius Josephus' description of the Temple of Jerusalem: "the court represented the sea (i.e., the lower regions), the Holy Place represented earth, and the Holy of Holies heaven."31 Eliade develops at some length the connection of earth and the underworld at the Jerusalem Temple.

In Babylon . . . the connection between earth and the lower regions was made, for the city had been built on ḫab ḫapsū, "the Gate of Apsū," ḫapsū being the name for the waters of chaos before Creation. The same tradition is found among the Hebrews; the rock of the Temple in Jerusalem reached deep into the tehōm, the Hebrew equivalent of ḫapsū. And, just as Babylon had its Gate of Apsū, the rock of the temple in Jerusalem contained the "mouth of the tehōm."

The ḫapsū, the tehōm symbolize the chaos of waters, the preformal modality of cosmic matter, and, at the same time, the world of death, of all that precedes and follows life. The Gate of Apsū and the rock containing the "mouth of the tehōm" designate not only the point of intersection—and hence of communication—between the lower world and earth, but also the difference in ontological status between these two cosmic planes. There is a break of plane between the tehōm and

the rock of the Temple that blocks its mouth, passage from the virtual to the formal, from death to life. The watery chaos that preceded Creation at the same time symbolizes the retrogression to the formless that follows on death, return to the larval modality of existence. From one point of view, the lower regions can be homologized to the unknown and desert regions that surround the inhabited territory; the underworld, over which our cosmos is firmly established, corresponds to the chaos that extends to its frontiers. 32

If we were dealing with Hebrew tradition, then, there would be little question that Jerusalem is an axis mundi for them and that communication is possible there between all three cosmic planes.

I think we can safely conclude that Dante knew many or all of the traditions we have been discussing in this section, and that his placement of Jerusalem in the center of the land hemisphere and on the axis mundi can be interpreted as a symbolic acceptance of these Jerusalem traditions. Further, while we may argue whether Dante meant his construction of the universe as literal-scientific or as poetic-symbolic truth, by placing Jerusalem where he does on the cosmological map Dante situates it essentially as a man of traditional society would. For beneath Jerusalem is the chaos of Hell and the underworld of the dead, the truly dead who are cut off forever from the life and light of God; only a thin crust of earth separates the city of

32 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 41-42.
Jerusalem and the Temple of Jerusalem from Hell, perhaps thin enough for a foundation stone of the Temple of Jerusalem to penetrate it. And above Jerusalem, just as above Purgatory, lie the ten concentric spheres of Paradise; at Jerusalem one could apparently ascend to the Celestial Father as Christ did, for the heavens are immediately above. If the picture we are getting from Dante were exactly what we would expect to get from a man of traditional society, however, Jerusalem would not only be a meeting point of earth, hell, and heaven, but also a place where a man can communicate with the divine world and the chaotic underworld. Were the channels of communication still thought to be open for Christians nearly thirteen centuries after the Crucifixion and Resurrection? Things had changed during those centuries, for the Christian Church now had its seat in Rome, and Jerusalem continued to be the ideal center of Judaism, once the blessed forerunner of Christ, now an alien faith adhered to by those obstinate persons who would not accept the reality of the revelation of Christ. This poses a real problem for our hypothetical consideration of Jerusalem as a Center of the World for Dante, a problem we will take up again in the last section of this chapter. On the other hand, looking at Dante's cosmological placement of Jerusalem in the light of the traditional society conception of axis mundi has helped us to understand Dante, to understand him better than we could if we assumed that
his view of space were essentially like ours. More than differences of scientific knowledge separate Dante from us.

If we stop to subtotal our accumulation of evidence thus far, our preliminary conclusion must here be that Dante in some ways corresponds quite well with the ideal type of traditional man. Yet he certainly does not belong right at the traditional pole of the traditional-modern continuum. We cannot parade Dante around as the perfect example of traditional man's view of space. The ways in which he belongs to and the ways in which he does not belong to the traditional modes of thought will both become clearer as we proceed.

Jerusalem as Cosmic Mountain and The Story of the Flood

In asking whether Jerusalem was a cosmic mountain for Dante it is again the location of Jerusalem on his cosmological map that is most significant. The mentions Dante makes of Jerusalem—except those which locate the city in the cosmos—are not particularly helpful. We shall have recourse, accordingly, to the traditions which were or could have been current in Dante's day concerning a cosmic mountain; by comparing these possible sources of Dantesque cosmology with Dante's actual cosmological model, I think we can decide whether or not Dante conceived of a cosmic mountain and whether or not Jerusalem was that mountain.
As we saw in chapter one the Center of the World is frequently conceptualized as a cosmic mountain, and temples are therefore often thought to be cosmic mountains. Now, according to the Judaeo-Christian tradition the first man was fashioned at Jerusalem, which was the "navel of the earth," a symbolism we have already met in the last chapter, and the spot where man was made was supposed to be atop a cosmic mountain on the axis mundi; in Hebrew tradition Palestine was apparently such a cosmic mountain, a land not submerged during the Flood because it was the highest place on earth, the place where earth touches heaven. This tradition was taken up and augmented by the Christians, for whom Golgotha was situated atop a cosmic mountain. Likewise, the idea that Adam was created at the Center of the World and at the summit of a cosmic mountain was absorbed into Christian tradition and expanded by it.

For Christians, Golgotha was situated at the center of the world, since it was the summit of the cosmic mountain and at the same time the place where Adam had been created and buried. Thus the blood of the Saviour falls

33See above, 38.
34See Eliade, Cosmos and History, 12-15.
35Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 44-45; see also this paper, 39.
36Eliade, ibid., 38.
37Ibid.
upon Adam's skull, buried precisely at the foot of the Cross, and redeems him.\textsuperscript{38} Caution is in order, however, about what the statements in this paragraph demonstrate. For one thing, in no place does Eliade—and all the statements are taken from his works—ascribe these beliefs to medieval European Christians or say how widespread they were. Indeed, in two places where he mentions the belief that Golgotha was on the summit of the same cosmic mountain where Adam had been created and buried, Eliade cites references only from Byzantine Christianity. To the passage quoted above he adds the sentence, "The belief that Golgotha is situated at the center of the world is preserved in the folklore of the Eastern Christians."\textsuperscript{39} This is not a statement which necessarily disclaims that the belief was found elsewhere than in Eastern Christian folklore, because it is cited only as an example, but in another place he says more or less the same thing.

Paradise, where Adam was created from clay, is, of course, situated at the center of the cosmos. Paradise was the navel of the Earth and, according to Syrian tradition, was established on a mountain higher than all others. According to the Syrian Book of the Cave of Treasures, Adam was created at the center of the earth, at the same spot where the Cross of Christ was later to be set up. The same traditions have been preserved by Judaism. The Jewish apocalypse and a midrash state that Adam was formed in Jerusalem.

\textsuperscript{38}Eliade, \textit{Cosmos and History}, 14.

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
Adam being buried at the very spot where he was created, i.e., at the center of the world, on Golgotha, the blood of the Saviour... will redeem him too.\textsuperscript{40}

Further, even if such traditions were passed on by the common folk, what was the opinion of the educated whose works Dante read? Here no answer can be advanced at present, because I have not searched the works of prominent medieval men for references to Jerusalem—that should certainly be done before any conclusions are drawn about the popular and educated attitudes of medieval Christians towards Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we cannot help noticing the similarities between these traditions belonging to a traditional mentality and Dante's cosmological construction. The cosmic mountain for Dante was Purgatory, with its seven terraces on which the seven deadly sins of earthly man are punished, the means of ascending from the wiles of the devil through the grace of God to the realm of the divine, and the meeting place of heaven and hell. Purgatory was a comprehensive symbol of earth, heaven and hell—it symbolically reproduced the cosmo. In Dante's construction Eden, the spot where man was made, was situated on top of this cosmic mountain, Purgatory, and Eden was therefore the highest place on earth. Although Adam was not, according to Dante, formed at Jerusalem, he nevertheless was

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, 16-17.
formed on a cosmic mountain at the center of the earth and at a point exactly opposite Jerusalem, so Dante's Jerusalem participated indirectly in these traditions concerning the cosmic mountain.

It is possible, of course, that the Northern Hemisphere had its own highest point, and that its highest point was Jerusalem; this would make Jerusalem the cosmic mountain of the land hemisphere. Unfortunately, there is not much evidence either way. In one mention of Jerusalem Dante says that it is under the highest point of the meridian circle for the Northern hemisphere. Sinclair translates the passage: "Already the sun had reached the horizon whose meridian circle covers Jerusalem with its highest point, . . . "\textsuperscript{41} The Ciardi translation is a little clearer.

\begin{quote}
The sun already burned at the horizon, while the high point of its meridian circle covered Jerusalem, . . . \textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

Perhaps we could argue that Dante thought that Jerusalem was therefore the highest point in the Northern hemisphere. To decide, one would have to research the scientific opinion of Dante's day to see if they believed that the point on


each hemisphere corresponding to the highest point of the meridian circle for that hemisphere was the highest in altitude. Since I have not done that research, I can take no position on the question at present. As far as I know there are no other mentions of Jerusalem in Dante's works which would give other hints as to what Dante thought.

Looking for related textual evidence that might be helpful we can resort to Dante's mentions of Noah and the Flood, but here again we find nothing pertinent to our purposes. One mention in the Commedia refers to the rainbow as a sign of the covenant God made with Noah never to flood the world again,\(^{43}\) while the other simply tells us that Noah and the other Old Testament patriarchs were taken to heaven during Christ's Harrowing of Hell.\(^{44}\) We remember also Dante's myth about how Hell and Purgatory were created when Lucifer was thrown down from heaven; and how the land in the Southern Hemisphere fled to the north; but that seems not to help us either, for Dante does not say that this increased the altitude in the north. We think, finally, of Dante's idea that the equator of each heavenly sphere was the nearest to the next heavenly sphere, but making the equator of the earth perhaps the highest area, that idea seems not to apply in this case, for, unlike the heavenly spheres, the earth's surface is

\(^{43}\)Par., xii, 18.

\(^{44}\)Inf., iv, 56.
irregular. And, with the thwarting of that idea, we seem to have reached a dead end on this point—we can conclude only that we do not know whether Jerusalem was considered by Dante as the highest point in the land hemisphere, nor can we say whether he thought Jerusalem and Palestine were submerged by the Flood.

It seems reasonable to conclude, then, that the traditional category of cosmic mountain is a meaningful one to Dante, because of his conception of Purgatory as a cosmic island—mountain and that Jerusalem participates in the symbolism of cosmic mountain whether or not it is itself a cosmic mountain because Jerusalem is at antipodes with Purgatory. In one more way, therefore, we have located Dante in relation to the traditional pole of the traditional-modern continuum. Our knowledge of the traditional view of space sheds considerable light on a cosmological construction that we would otherwise find puzzling and foreign. Dante did not build a cosmic mountain in the Southern Hemisphere because he had less scientific knowledge than later men; in many ways Dante simply does not belong to a modern scientific mentality but rather to the very different yet valid mythical-symbolic mentality of traditional cultures.
Jerusalem as Site of the Cosmogony
And Navel of the World

In traditional society the cosmic mountain which frequently occurs as the Center of the World is also the earth's navel, the point where Creation began and the point at which man was created; and such traditions have, indeed, been preserved in Judaism. 45 Paradise was supposed to have been the navel of the Earth, the place where Adam was created, and the Jewish apocalypse and a midrash state that this place where Adam was created was Jerusalem. 46 In other writings the foundation rock of Jerusalem was called the omphalos or navel of the earth, 47 thereby combining two ideas: 1) that Jerusalem was the site of the cosmogony, and 2) that a sacred stone is the omphalos. 48

We know that some of these traditions were current among Christians in the Middle Ages, because Peter Comestor, a twelfth century theologian, reports some of them to us. Peter indirectly states, for instance, that Gerizim was the navel of the earth, a belief that was held by many

45 Eliade, Cosmos and History, 16-17; cf. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 38.
46 Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 378; cf. Eliade Cosmos and History, 16-17.
47 Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 40.
48 Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 231-35.
Hebrews, others thinking that Jerusalem was the navel, as noted above, and still others calling Mount Tabor the Center.

Mount Tabor, in Palestine, could mean tabbūr, i.e., navel, omphalos. Mount Gerizim, in the center of Palestine, was undoubtedly invested with the prestige of the Center, for it is called "navel of the earth" (tabbūr eres; cf. Judges 0:37: "... See there come people down by the middle [Heb., navel] of the land... ").

A tradition preserved by Peter Comestor relates that at the summer solstice the sun casts no shadow on the "Fountain of Jacob" (near Gerizim).

And indeed, Peter continues, "sunt qui dicunt locum illum esse umbilicum terrae nostrae habitabilis."

Peter Comestor composed his major work Historia scholastica in the third quarter of the twelfth century, a book which was a successful systematization of the sacred history given in the Old and New Testaments. Although Peter Comestor was not a great thinker, the Historia scholastica was one of the two most popular medieval textbooks, the other being Peter Lombard's Sentences. Dante apparently was acquainted with Peter Comestor, for he placed Peter in the sphere of the sun, the heaven of the wise and of the theologians.

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49 Eliade, Cosmos and History, 13; cf. Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 375.


This is not, of course, any necessary sign that Dante had read the Historia scholastica, much less to say that Dante knew or accepted this particular tradition reported by Peter. We can say, however, that Dante apparently took one other idea from Peter, which will be discussed below: and it also seems safe to assume that at least some of the Hebrew traditions treated in this section were taken seriously by educated medieval men (Peter Comestor could not have been the only one), so probably Dante took some of them seriously, too.

Turning now to the principal textual evidence in Dante's writings, the first thing that merits our attention is where Dante located the Garden of Eden. He did, as we have noted, put this scene of the cosmogony on a cosmic mountain, in accordance with Hebrew tradition, but that mountain he put in the Southern Hemisphere rather than in the Northern Hemisphere; locating Eden in the Southern Hemisphere was in contradistinction to those Hebrew and Christian traditions which said that the earthly paradise had been situated in the Holy Land. Sinclair tells us, however, that there was much controversy about the Garden of Eden in the Middle Ages.

Medieval Christendom held much debate about the locality and present condition of the Garden of Eden and produced many accounts of it, with

52 See below, 83.
features, such as the island, the great height, the surpassing natural beauties, which became traditional and of which Dante made use.  

In "Stars over Eden" Charles Singleton summarizes the main lines of the Eden debate from Augustine to Dante, showing how Dante's placement of Eden was a logical synthesis of earlier medieval traditions, a synthesis which avoided many of the difficulties faced by other writers.

By Dante's time the remarks of St. Thomas Aquinas on the location of the terrestrial paradise may be taken as representative of opinions generally held:

The situation of paradise is shut off from the habitable world by mountains or seas or some torrid region which cannot be crossed; and so people who have written about topography make no mention of it.

Singleton also quotes Peter Lombard's view and points out how important his view was because his Sentences were so often read and glossed by medieval theologians.

Wherefore some hold that the paradise was in an eastward region, separated from the regions that are inhabited by man by a long interjacent expanse either of sea or of land, and situated in a lofty place reaching all the way to the circle of the moon: wherefore the waters of the flood did not reach there. . . .

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53 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Purgatorio, 373.
55 Ibid., 2; the quote from Aquinas is from the Summa theologica, I, 102, 1, ad 3.
56 Ibid., 3; the quote from Peter Lombard is found in Sententiarum Liber II, Dist. XVII (ed. cit., T. I, p. 385).
Albertus Magnus rejected the idea that the lofty place on which Eden was located reached all the way to the moon, but he explained this reaching to the moon in an allegorical fashion.

Respecting the next point, it may be said (always allowing for some better judgment in this) that paradise in its altitude does not reach to the lunar sphere, but is said to reach there in participating in the properties of the moon. That is, from the moon upward is the fifth essence which, as the natural philosophers say, is a region of incorruption and of immorality . . . no clouds are there, nor rain, nor thunder, nor anything of the like. But immediately beneath the moon begins the sphere of what is active and passive. And in respect to these properties, paradise is said to reach all the way to the sphere of the moon. For in paradise nothing is mortal, nothing corruptible, nothing tempestuous: and in so far as paradise partakes of these properties it is said to reach to the lunar globe, not because of the altitude of the place. I say this however without prejudice of a better judgment, because in certain very old books I have found that the first author of the above opinion, which is attributed to Bede and Strabo, was the apostle Thomas, namely that paradise is of such an altitude that it reaches to the globe of the moon.57

Singleton points out how Dante has absorbed these traditions and gives expression to them in his construction and situation of Eden.

Dante, in fact, agrees with Albert. His Eden is not so high as to reach to the moon; yet it has about it those qualities that are properly assigned to the lunar and translunar region of the universe. It is situated on a lofty place, on what must surely be the highest mountain peak on the earth. . . . In the Garden everywhere are

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57 Ibid., 3-4; from Albertus Magnus, Summa theologica, P. II, Tr. XIII, Q. 79, in Opera Omnia, ed. Bougnet (Paris, 1895), 112.
the signs of immortality, of what does not fall into decay. Here, as in the region above the moon, the warring of the elements ceases. There is no disturbance even of the weather, ... In his depiction of the terrestrial paradise, its nature and its whereabouts, Dante has paid his respects to an established body of opinion, and this is a fact certainly of no surprise for us. His Eden is therefore situated in a remote part of the earth, atop the highest mountain and "with a long interjacent stretch of water," as Peter Lombard had it, separating it from the regions inhabited by man. In fact, in the geography of the Comedy, Eden is literally as remote as may be from the inhabited part of the earth, if we take the measure of its distance from what was held to be the center of that region. That center is Jerusalem, and for this there was good Scriptural authority. Eden, moreover, in Dante's conception, is located in a "southern" hemisphere of water, as distinguished from a "northern" hemisphere of land.  

Whether he was following current medieval ideas or whether Dante was alone in placing Eden in the Southern Hemisphere, he had good reasons for his choice. For one thing, his choice fit in with his scientific conception of the universe, making a coherent whole of his cosmological beliefs. This is seen in two places in the Purgatorio, one where Matilda is explaining how the perfect natural processes of Purgatory work, a scene set in the earthly paradise itself, and the other some less important comments on the same subject (by Statius) in an earlier canto. For another reason, the earthly paradise was no longer to be found in the inhabited world, and Dante thereby explained

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58 Ibid., 4-5.  
59 Purg., xxviii, 88-133.  
60 Purg., xxi, 40-73.
that it still existed but at the same time explained why it was not known anymore to living men. In addition, it made theological sense to locate Eden at the top of Mount Purgatorio, because, in order for fallen man to recover his lost innocence and to repair the effects of original sin, he must cooperate with grace and do penance, either on earth or in Purgatory. Creation was perfect in Adam and in Christ, but has been imperfect in all other human beings, who therefore need to do penance and receive grace and forgiveness in order to repair their deficiencies and restore themselves. Another theological reason was the correspondence between the means of man's redemption after death—Purgatory (for those who are not taken directly to Paradise)—and the place where the redemption events took place while Christ was on earth. What other place in the Northern hemisphere, the known world of Dante, would more appropriately stand at antipodes with Purgatory? Singleton comes to approximately the same conclusion.

Eden indeed is at the exact center of its hemisphere, even as Jerusalem is at the center of the other. Thus the mountain which has Eden on its summit is directly opposite Jerusalem on the globe of the earth.

In "finding" Eden situated in such perfect antipodal balance to Jerusalem, the poet's eye was no doubt delighted with the order that was thus apparent not only in the geography of the earth, as God in His wisdom had established it, but in man's history and in the drama of salvation as well. In this way Eden, the place of man's first happy condition of perfect righteousness and of his first sin, could be seen to be

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61 Par., xiii, 52-88.
counterbalanced by Jerusalem on the other side of the earth, as in a great pair of scales, that place of man's redemption from his first sin and of righteousness restored.62

In Dante's handling of the Garden of Eden myth there is a strange mixture and conflict of mythic and scientific elements. Eden is placed as far as possible from the habitable world, because men of Dante's day had been making some scientific attempts to explore and map out the world, and no one had yet found Eden. This was already a problem for Augustine, who tried to reconcile known geography with the account in Genesis of the four streams which flowed out of Eden from a single source, two of which were supposed to be the Tigris and Euphrates.63 We have seen that Albertus Magnus also struggled to reconcile traditional-mythic and scientific beliefs, the traditional-mythic idea that paradise reached all the way to the moon and the philosophic-scientific explanations of the universe, a reconciliation he achieved tentatively in his allegorical interpretation of reaching to the moon; this struggle should not surprise us in Albert, since he was one of the eminent names in medieval science. Dante, too, took great pains to give scientific explanations of the phenomena in the earthly paradise. Dante had the fair lady in Eden explain to him the natural causes of the perfect natural processes of that place.

63 Ibid., 1.
In order that the disturbance which the exhalations of land and sea make of themselves below beneath Eden, following the heat as far as they may, should do no injury to man, this mountain rose thus far towards heaven and stands clear of them from where it is barred. Now, since all the air revolves in a circuit with the first circling, unless its revolution is interrupted at any point, that movement strikes on this height, which is all free in the living air, and makes the wood, because it is dense, resound; and the smitten plants have such potency that with their virtue they impregnate the air, which in its circling then scatters it abroad, and the other land the northern hemisphere according to its fitness in itself and in its sky, conceives and brings forth from diverse virtues diverse growths. Were this understood it would not then seem a marvel yonder when some plant takes root without visible seed, and thou shouldst know that the holy ground where thou art is full of every seed and has in it fruit that is not plucked yonder. The water thou seest does not spring from a vein which is restored by vapour that cold condenses, like a river that gains and loses force, but issues from a constant and sure fountain which by God's will regains as much as it pours forth, . . . here the human root was innocent, here was lasting spring and every fruit, . . . 64

To us the Garden of Eden is definitely a myth, capable of expressing certain truths about man but not literal or historic truth; Dante's attempt in the above passage to put together scientific questioning and myth seems to us a hopeless venture. But Dante, it seems, did not see the conflict; at least he was able to keep the two mentalities together in an uneasy synthesis, whereas later thinkers could not.

64Dante, Purg., xxviii, 97-126 and 142-43, trans. Sinclair, 369 and 371; see also Statius' speech in Purg., xxi, 40-60.
Dante, we are convinced, believed that the Adam and Eve myth was fact. As one indication of this we see that he places the pair in Paradise next to the Virgin Mary; and it does not seem likely that he would do so unless he thought them real historical persons; on the other hand, he used mythical monsters and fictitious characters as conscious poetic devices in Hell and Purgatory (one wonders how many of these he also thought had really lived, Ulysses and Proserpine and others, for example). In his prose work the Convivio he talks about all men's having descended from one man, Adam, and in Dante's conversation with Adam in Paradise, Adam is quite clearly not just a poetic or theological symbol but a real human being. In that conversation between Adam and Dante, Adam reveals some interesting Dantesque conceptions of Eden and the first parents, certainly worth noting here.

"In the place /Limbo/ from which thy Lady /Beatrice/ sent Virgil I longed for this assembly /Paradise/ during four thousand, three hundred and two revolutions of the sun /from 4268 B.C./, when Adam died and descended into Limbo, to A.D. 34, when Christ descended to Hell, and I saw it return to all the lights on its track nine hundred and thirty times while I lived on earth /from 5198 B.C. until 4268 B.C./. The tongue I spoked was all extinct before Nimrod's race gave their mind to the unaccomplishable task; for no product whatever of reason—since human choice is renewed with the course of heaven—can last forever. It is a work of nature

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65 Par., xxxii, 4-6 (Eve) and 121-23 (Adam).
66 Conv., IV, xv.
67 Par., xxvi, 81-142.
that man should speak, but whether in this way or that nature then leaves you to follow your own pleasure. Before I descended to the anguish of Hell the Supreme Good from whom comes the joy that swathes me was named I on earth, and later He was called El, and that is fitting, for the usage of mortals is like a leaf on a branch, which goes and another comes. On the mountain that rises highest from the sea I lived, pure, then guilty, from the first hour to that following the sixth, when the sun changes quadrant. ⁶⁸

We should make note here of the chronology of Adam's birth, death, and salvation from Limbo to Paradise. If Dante does not believe that Adam and Eve were historical persons, he is certainly going to a lot of bother to give his poetic figures verisimilitude. I tend to think Dante accepted the Adam and Eve myth as a real historical event.

If Dante were living today and asserted the truth of the Adam and Eve story we would laugh at him. Nevertheless, it seems to me that his attempts to combine myth and science make perfect sense if we assume that his was an age when myth was still a vital way of knowing and expressing truth. Eliade clearly summarizes the nature of myth in traditional society.

We are at last beginning to know and understand the value of the myth, as it has been elaborated in "primitive and archaic societies—that is, among those groups of mankind where the myth happens to be the very foundation of social life and culture. Now, one fact strikes us immediately: in such societies the myth is thought to express the absolute truth, because it narrates a sacred

⁶⁸Par., xxvi, 118-142.
history; that is, a transhuman revelation which took place at the dawn of the Great Time, in the holy time of the beginnings (in illo tempore). 69

The myth of Adam and Eve is just such a myth, a myth about the time of beginnings, Creation; it should not surprise us much if Dante accepted it as absolute truth. Further, it should not surprise us that he should try to combine the truths of scientific questioning and such "truths" as the story of the Garden of Eden.

Dante's attempt to give scientific explanations for myth makes perfect sense for another reason, too. The mythical-traditional mentality was a very meaningful way of looking at reality. This becomes clear if we follow up Adam's statement about having spent six hours in Eden. According to Dorothy Sayers that sentence may be interpreted as follows.

Adam now answers the second question: how long did he reside in Eden? The answer is six hours, from the first hour to the seventh, when the sun, having run through a quarter, or 90°, of his circle, moves into his second quadrant. Of the many views put forward by medieval theologians concerning the duration of Adam's stay in Eden, Dante chooses that of Petrus Comestor (cf. Canto xii. 134). The hour of the Fall is thus made to coincide with the hour of Christ's death. (cf. Convivio IV. xxiii, where Dante quotes St. Luke as saying that "it was about the sixth hour when he died.") Since all three synoptists put the last cry from the Cross at the ninth hour, Dante must mean that Christ entered into death at the sixth hour (noon), whereas at the ninth hour the act was completed. Six hours is also the length of time spent by Dante in the Earthly Paradise, and in the eighth heaven. 70

69 Eliade, Myths, Dreams, and Mysteries, 23.
70 Sayers, notes on Par., xxvi, 139-142, p. 290.
Dante and his contemporaries delighted in discovering such correlations as this; in another place we see that the correlation between Adam's stay in Eden and Christ's suffering on the Cross goes further, because both Creation and the Easter events took place at the same time of the year (Dante's journey takes place at this time also). Ciardi explains this well in a note to a passage from the *Inferno*, canto i. First the passage from Dante and then Ciardi's note; as background for the passage, Dante has just been describing his experience in the dark wood, and now he tells us when this took place.

This fell at the first widening of the dawn
as the sun was climbing Aries with those stars
that rode with him to light the new creation.

Thus the holy hour and the sweet season
of commemoration did much to arm my fear
of that bright murderous beast with their good omen.

The medieval tradition had it that the sun was in Aries at the time of the Creation. The significance of the astronomical and religious conjunction is an important part of Dante's intended allegory. It is just before dawn of Good Friday 1300 A.D. when he awakens in the Dark Wood. Thus his new life begins under Aries, the sign of creation, at dawn (rebirth) and in the Easter season (resurrection). Moreover the moon is full and the sun is in the equinox, conditions that did not fall together on any Friday of 1300. Dante is obviously constructing poetically the perfect Easter as a symbol of his new awakening.

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We have wandered into the border zone between the view of time and the view of space, but it is almost impossible to divorce the two from each other in this particular problem. In traditional society the moon's death for three days as the new moon and its rebirth as a full moon and consequent degeneration back to new moon, this cycle of degeneration, death, and rebirth or regeneration, is very meaningful—the cycle corresponds with man's degeneration after each ritual repetition of the cosmogony, then his reversion to chaos and his recreation or regeneration as a reborn creature, innocent as he was at the first creation. In line with this traditional society cyclical view of time and history, Dante had to have a full moon for this perfect Easter. Easter and Dante's journey also had to take place at the spring equinox, the time of the New Year festivals of traditional society, the time when the principal cosmogonic ritual took place, the time when all things were created anew and the past wiped out. We could pursue this topic much further, for there are many indications of a traditional view of time and history in Dante's works, and Dante's view of time can, as we have said, be distinguished from his view of space only for discussion—the two are integrally related. Nevertheless, to say anything further here about Dante's view of time and its connection with the traditional view of time would be a bothersome digression; the point that we must note is only the elaborate temporal correspondence
that Dante has constructed.

In the context of such temporal correspondences Dante's location of Jerusalem at antipodes with Purgatory takes on new levels of meaning. Jerusalem had its environs comprise the sacred place of the redemption events, the place where Christ founded the sacrament of baptism, the waters of rebirth or regeneration (incidentally, baptism is seen to wipe out past time and restore man to his original condition at Creation, regenerating time as well as person—cf. the waters of Lethe and Eunoe in Eden); the place where Christ—called the "second Adam" in the Middle Ages—atoned for the damage done by the first Adam and his mate in the Garden of Eden (located fittingly, then, at antipodes with the place of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection); Christ was born in the Holy Land of the Hebrews and of the Virgin Mary, called the "new Eve" by medieval people; Christ died between the sixth and the ninth hours, and it was during the same time of day several thousand years before that Adam and Eve had been expelled from Eden; the Easter events occurred exactly at the same time of the year as Creation; atonement and restoration of man by Christ and the regeneration of mankind in traditional society through springtime repetition of the cosmogony (the New Year festivals at the

73See Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 129-36; also Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion, 188-215.
So we begin to see the unification of all these various elements into pairs and then into one process: baptism and original sin, Christ and Adam, Mary and Eve, redemption through penance on earth and redemption through penance in Purgatory after death, Christ's death on the Cross and Adam's and Eve's expulsion from Eden, the creation of man and the re-creation of the "new man" through Christ, Jerusalem and Eden—all these pairs becoming one process, the creation and re-creation (re-demption) of man, the one process being accomplished by one being, Christ, Maker of the universe and Redeemer of mankind, the one process being located spatially on one axis mundi, that which connects the Holy Land with the Garden of Eden. In conclusion, it seems to me that, of all the places in the land hemisphere which Dante could have chosen, no place could unite more effectively all these elements of the process into One-Process-of-Creation-and-Redemption than could Jerusalem.

A final connection should be drawn, however, a connection which can be introduced by asking the question, Where did Adam and Eve go after they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden? If they were placed in the general area of Jerusalem then Jerusalem thereby absorbs the meaning of Creation and Redemption as thoroughly as it would if

74Eliade, Cosmos and History, 49-92.
Jerusalem had been itself the site of Creation and the Fall rather than being only at antipodes with the site of Creation and the Fall. It seems reasonable to believe that Dante did hold that Adam and Eve were transferred to what later became Jerusalem, and for this opinion we can advance several pieces of evidence. First, from Dante's construction of Purgatory, Eden, and the sea surrounding the island-mountain of Purgatory, we can be sure that Adam and Eve did not stay in the Southern hemisphere but were instead transferred to the part of the earth that has been the only supposed home of living human beings ever since the Fall: the Northern hemisphere. But we want to know precisely where in the Northern hemisphere, and it seems that the Holy Land must be our answer. A principal indication of that is found in Adam's speech to Dante, which we quoted above, the part beginning, "The tongue I spoke was all extinct before Nimrod's race gave their mind to the unaccomplishable task; . . ." Sinclair's commentary on that passage is very helpful.

Dante's query, meaningless for us, about Adam's language was perfectly natural for him. Not only was Adam a solid historical personage for him, but Dante was a student of language and its history, and he had written, some fifteen or sixteen years before, part of a Latin treatise, never finished, on the vernaculars of Italy. A comparison of his statements on these subjects shows that in the years between he had changed his mind and had reached what we may

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75 See above, 81-82.
fairly call a more scientific view of the conditions of human speech. In the De Vulgari Eloquentia /Sinclair takes this passage from Book I, vi, 40-41 and 49-59/ he wrote: 'A certain form of speech was created by God along with the first soul. . . . In this form of speech Adam spoke; in this form of speech all his posterity spoke, down to the building of the Tower of Babel, by interpretation the Tower of Confusion; this form of speech the sons of Heber, who are called Hebrews, inherited. After the confusion it continued with them alone, in order that our Redeemer, who in His humanity sprang from them, should use, not the language of confusion, but that of grace.' And as to the question of 'the first word uttered by the first speaker' he had said in the same context that it is only reasonable to hold that 'it was the equivalent of God, that is, El, . . . since man was made by Him and for Him.' Dante gives five stanzas to the correction of his earlier views, and the difference springs from his new sense of time and history. Here, in the Starry Sphere, near the source of time itself, referred to in the next canto, Dante reflects that 'human choice is renewed with the course of heaven' and 'the usage of mortals is like a leaf on a branch, which goes and another comes.'

If Dante had still held the opinion expressed in his De Vulgari Eloquentia when he wrote the Commedia, it would seem probable that Dante believed that Adam and Eve lived in the Holy Land, or at least very near to it; for Dante sees the Hebrews as the pre-eminent descendents of Adam

76Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, 384-85. Dante's view of time is changing, becoming less cyclical and less concerned with temporal symbolisms and correspondences and more appreciative of the role of human freedom and the evolution of mankind in working out God's purposes. An excellent indication of this is found in De Monarchia, I, ii-iii, where Dante says that the purpose of human civilization is intellectual growth; this development in Dante's thinking is from the traditional society view of time to a modern view. Because the view of time and the view of space are integrally related, we can expect Dante's view of space to be changing or on the brink of changing in the direction of the modern view also.
and Eve (though all people came from these two first parents, he thought, making mankind one). The alteration of his opinion in the Commedia, nevertheless, does not seem to affect his belief that the Hebrews were the pre-eminent descendents of Adam and Eve.

Charles Singleton has researched the same problem from a somewhat different point of view.

What happened to Adam and Eve when they were driven forth from the Garden? Are we to think that they continued to live for some time on the steep slopes of this mountain island? Or were they somehow transferred to the hemisphere of land in the north (which had been there since Satan's fall) and that they were thus removed from the southern hemisphere itself, which would mean, of course, removal from the sight of these skies over Eden and these stars /the four stars which Dante says had not been seen by living human beings since Adam and Eve (Purg. I, 22-27), stars which may be interpreted allegorically as the four cardinal virtues/? . . . Dante nowhere answered the questions.

Singleton goes on to consider Augustine's interpretation of Genesis 3:24, an interpretation, he argues, which Dante apparently accepted. Singleton's analysis rests on the difference between Jerome's Vulgate translation from the Hebrew and the older Latin Translation from the Septuagint. Singleton quotes the two versions in Latin and translates them, then draws his conclusion.

The two versions thus differ significantly only in what must have appeared to Jerome to be a spurious interpolation by some scribe: those

words telling where the Lord had placed Adam when he expelled him from the Garden. Contra paradisum, "opposite paradise." What would that mean anyway? Jerome rejected the words with the result that their message is quite unfamiliar to most readers of Genesis. But for all of Jeromé's harsh dealing with them, they are words that remained familiar to many in the Middle Ages and understandably: St. Augustine himself, in his writings on Genesis, had chosen to follow, not Jerome's version, but that which Jerome had rejected, that older Latin translation from the Septuagint. And we must conceive that even if Augustine knew of Jerome's version, he must still have preferred that older one, because to him it made good sense. These words about Adam and how he was placed opposite Eden when he was expelled therefrom were rich in meaning for Augustine.78

Singleton then quotes a passage from De Genesi ad Litteram, a work which he points out was very well known and authoritative for Western Christendom, and also a passage from De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, giving both the Latin and English for both passages. We will cite only the English.

And He thrust Adam forth and placed him opposite the paradise of delights. And this was done for the sake of signifying, and yet it was done, that the sinner should live opposite paradise (by which the blessed life is signified also spiritually), as in misery.79

Furthermore, because of this Adam was driven from paradise and lived opposite Eden, that is, opposite the place of delights, that it might be signified that in labors, which are opposed to

78 Ibid., 11.
79 Ibid., 11-12; from Augustine, De Genesi ad Litteram, XI, 40 (in J. P. Migne, Patrologia Latina, XXXIV, 451) and passim.
delights, the flesh of sin should be instructed, which had not observed obedience in the midst of delights and before it was the flesh of sin.

Augustine does not say exactly what contra paradisum means, even though he was "alert to protect the literal and historical sense of Genesis."81 Dante, however, did tell us what "opposite paradise" means in literal historical fact.

To be placed opposite Eden in his Dante's geography meant to be placed in those Old Testament lands that have Jerusalem at their center. For it is there, of course, that one conceives the unfolding of history to take place in the first times, following the Fall. Or better, taking it the other way round: if those regions of the northern hemisphere are in fact where one conceives the early progeny of our first parents to have lived and continued to sin until the Deluge, and if Adam was placed in those regions of the earth following his expulsion from Eden (and if not, then how did his progeny get there?) and if, furthermore, this meant ipso facto that Adam was thus placed "opposite Eden," then it must follow, in reverse, that Eden is directly opposite this region wherein sits Jerusalem, the holy city, "in medio gentium." Thus a poet's geography may be seen to rest after all on some authority, indeed on quite the best, on words in the Book of Genesis itself.82

Singleton explores the symbolic meaning of this placement of Eden opposite to Jerusalem considering at the same time the lines in Purgatorio, i, where Dante laments that in the

80Ibid., 12; from Augustine, De peccatorum meritis ex remissione, II, 22 (in J. P. Migne, Patrologia Latina, XLIV, 183).

81Ibid.

82Ibid., 12-13.
northern hemisphere one cannot see those four beautiful stars symbolizing the four cardinal virtues.

The placing of our first parents opposite Eden was due punishment for sin, and if they were deprived of delights, that was a rightful consequence and deserved. There is good reason for lament. Loss of Eden meant loss not only of a garden of delights, it meant loss of something so precious that we have almost forgotten that the human race was originally endowed with it in Adam: immortality of the body and a perfect inner rectitude. . . . And thus the place "opposite" Eden is a place of mortality, . . .

The ejection from Eden and the necessity of dying are one and the same thing. Thomas Aquinas had agreed when he maintained that Eden, though now uninhabited would still exist on this earth: immortality or God's kindness to man is the thought that comes immediately in that connection, and Eden exists to signify that.83

This placement of Jerusalem and Eden at antipodes is, in fact, a matter of such symmetry and perfect balance that we might easily suppose that Dante was here simply making use of his poetic freedom rather than following an authority.84

We can adduce a final piece of evidence from Dante, a place85 where he says that the first parent of the human race was planted in the eastern lands, by which he probably

83 Ibid., 14; cf. 6-9 and 12-15.
84 Ibid., 5; cf. above, 79.
85Vulg. Elog., I, viii, 5-11: "Et quum radix humanae propaginis principalis in oris orientalibus sit plantata; nec non ab inde ad utrumque latus, per diffusos multipliciter palmites, nostra sit extensa propago, demumque ad fines occidentales protracta, . . . ."
means the area around the Holy Land, and that the human race spread out from that point in all directions, reaching finally to the western limits of the inhabited world. This passage is ambiguous, but putting it together with the other evidence we have collected I think we can safely assume that Dante would therefore locate the home of Adam and Eve somewhere in the region surrounding Jerusalem, even at the time when he wrote the Commedia. It is even possible that Dante believed that Adam was buried at Golgotha after his nine hundred and thirty years on earth—we have already noted that some Christians thought this. If so, there would be a reinforcement of Jerusalem as the sacred place not only of the Redemption events but also of the Creation events.

Let us reiterate, then, our previous conclusion: that Jerusalem was a one-word spatial symbol summarizing the creation-redemption process. Further, I would suggest that the Creation half of that process was of less existential import to medieval Christians than were the events of Redemption. The renewal of life in spring and the rituals which were supposed to reactualize the time and events of Creation were certainly important, especially to the peasants, whose life cycles and concerns were intimately bound up with the cycle of the seasons, and to whom Christianized or non-Christianized fertility rites must have been extremely meaningful and even crucial for their raison
d'être. But to non-agricultural medieval Christians especially the events of the Redemption contained and went beyond the Creation. Christ was He who created the universe and held it in motion, and Christ was also He who redeemed fallen man, who atoned for the sins of Adam and Eve and their descendents. Christ thus promised not only natural life but grace, a new life, for all who followed Him, and it was through baptism and the frequent re-enactment of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ's life that a person found this regeneration and new life.

The traditional society re-enacted the cosmogony, but Christians re-enacted the Passion and Resurrection, which was also by implication the cosmogony, in the Christian liturgy. For traditional society the prime reactualization of the cosmogony occurred during the New Year celebration every spring, but the ritual cosmogony could be celebrated throughout the year whenever necessary—for a new building, for healing the sick, for conquering and cultivating new land. The Christian Mass took over the existential functions of the cosmogonic rituals of

traditional society, took them over and transcended them. The Easter celebration of medieval Christians was the principal ceremony of the year for the regeneration of life and occurred at the same time of the year as the New Year rites of traditional society; and, like its counterpart in traditional society, the Mass could be dedicated to special intentions, such as the consecration of a building, for healing of the sick, for the cultivation of new lands, and so forth. But the Christian Mass was more than the celebration of the Creation; it was the celebration also of man's redemption and opportunities for everlasting life through Christ who created the world and created man. There is no doubt that the events of Redemption centered around Jerusalem, the Holy City of the people God chose to prepare the way for His Son. Because Jerusalem is the Sacred Place of Christ, Creator and Saviour of the world, it does not seem to matter too much whether or not Adam and Eve once lived there too.

In conclusion, Dante accepted certain mythical-symbolic views of space and time because they were extremely meaningful to him. We have examined, specifically, Jerusalem as axis mundi, as participating in the cosmic mountain symbolism of its antipodal counterpart, Purgatory, and as navel of the world and a sacred place summarizing the creation-redemption process. It would be impossible to understand Dante's view of space, therefore, without seeing it in terms of the
traditional pole of the traditional-modern continuum. On the other hand, there are many ways in which Dante does not fit the ideal type of the traditional view of space. Whereas Augustine had been content to expound the symbolic content of Jerusalem's being placed contra paradisum, Dante felt compelled to locate Jerusalem opposite paradise in actual geographical fact, even explaining how Eden's natural processes could function perfectly though Eden was situated on an earth whose processes caused man much pain. Similarly, Dante did not simply construct a symbolic cosmology (as had the Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, and other peoples of a traditional mentality), but he attempted also to give logical-scientific-philosophical reasons for the plan of the universe. It is not just Dante; it is all the medieval men who attempted to find the Garden of Eden, who tried to discover the length of time Adam and Eve had spent there, who gave allegorical meanings to Scriptural and Classical passages whose literal meaning they could not accept (not that they did not also give allegorical interpretations of what they considered literal and historical facts)--the whole spirit of fides quaerens intellectum was an enterprise which would eventually lead to open conflict with myth and the final demise of the mythical views of space and time. Dante is remarkable for so successfully holding in tension contradictory elements from both poles of the traditional-modern continuum.
A Special Problem: Dante's Non-spatial God
Spatially Located "Out There"

One of the most interesting topics that can arise in a discussion of Dante's view of space is his conception of God, who, according to orthodox Christian theology, is immaterial, omnipresent, and beyond the limitations of spatial representations and conceptions. In traditional modes of thought it is possible to get nearer to or farther from the sacred space which marks the Center of the World, and thus to get nearer to or farther from the heavens and from God or the gods. The Hebrews' Ark of the Covenant was a throne which Yahweh occupied at will; one could pass from profane space to sacred space by crossing the threshold of the temples of archaic cultures; people in traditional cultures have always wanted to keep sacred stones and relics with them, wearing them, kissing them, being close to their power; many primitive tribes have returned periodically to the home of their ancestors in order to be at the source of sacred power of the place—these are but a few of the examples we could cite of traditional man getting closer to or farther from sacred space. The traditional man combines the idea of sacred space as a transcending of the limitations of profane space and yet as a definable space or object occupying space which he can easily enter or contact. To the modern Western point of view this is a curious combination, for
space is homogeneous for us—finite space is everywhere just that, finite space, and it is therefore for us a contradiction in terms to speak of occupying finite space and transcending finite space at the same time. Likewise, for us it is a contradiction in terms to conceive of an immaterial God who can be located in space. If God does not occupy space or time then is He not both everywhere and nowhere? If God is omnipresent and immaterial then how could anyone locate Him "out there" in the heavens? Yet, I shall contend in this section that this is precisely what Dante attempted to do: spatially locate a non-spatial, immaterial God. Further, I do not think he saw the contradiction that we see in this combination.

**Dante's God is an immaterial God beyond time and space**

First we ought to see whether Dante did indeed view God as an immaterial Being who does not occupy time or space. There are several passages in the *Commedia* which are particularly pertinent. In the first, which has its setting in the Crystalline sphere, God is described as a point of intense light.

> I saw a point which radiated a light so keen that the eye on which it burns must close for its piercing power; and the star that from here seems the least would seem a moon if put beside it like star with star in conjunction.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{87}Par., xxviii, 17-21, trans. Sinclair, 403.
Dante goes on to describe the circles of fire wheeling around this point at an incredible speed, nine circles of the nine orders of angels who govern the nine material spheres. The smallest circle and the one nearest the point governs the largest of the material spheres, the ninth or Crystalline heaven, whereas the largest circle of fire governs the smallest heaven, namely the sphere of the moon. In his commentary Sinclair describes this point as "a symbol of the immateriality and indivisible unity of Him who 'is light'" and goes on to interpret the circles of fire in a similar fashion: "The circles, seen in their immediate relation to the point of light, are pure spirit, . . ."88 In commenting on this canto Karl Witte offers an excellent observation.

We have been depicting the whole God-filled heaven, wherein is his city and his lofty throne, as the outermost, embracing all the others. But again, God is the sole kernel of the universe, round which the whole creation must revolve in a widening series of circles. God, says one of the Schoolmen, is indeed a circle; but a circle whose centre is everywhere and its bounding circumference nowhere. Thus, if we picture the heaven of God as stretching beyond all conceivable extension, yet may God equally be conceived as the absolutely indivisible unit, the mathematical point which occupies no space at all. 89

88 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, 413.

Dante's God is certainly not confined by the limits of finite space when He can be at the same time infinitely large and infinitely small.

Rather than use the term "omnipresent" to describe Dante's God, I think it would be more precise to speak of God's "omnipresent influence." The nine orders of angels govern the nine heavenly spheres, and the heavens, in turn, cause and govern the natural processes that occur on earth. Dante draws an analogy, for instance, between God and an artist.

It must be pointed out that nature, like art, may be considered under three aspects. In the case of art these are the mind of the artist, the instrument he uses and the material on which he works. In nature the corresponding aspects are the mind of the first mover, who is God, and then the heavens, which are a sort of instrument for communicating the image of eternal goodness to the third aspect, that of fluctuating matter. . . . Whatever is good in things here below cannot come from their matter (which in itself is a mere potency) but primarily from the divine artist and secondly from the heavens, which are the instrument of divine art and are commonly called 'nature.'

Through these instruments God rules all creatures and processes of the universe, not desiring that which contradicts the intention of nature. Through the

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90 This point could be very well documented. See, for instance, Conv., II, xiv, 26-30; Conv., IV, xxi, 9-99; Mon., I, ix; Par., vii, 133-43; Par., viii, 94-135; Par., xxii, 112-23; Purg., xvi, 65-105.


92 Mon., III, xvi.

93 Mon., III, ii.
intercession of the saints, particularly the Virgin Mary, God answers prayers and exercises providential care over men which takes into account not only their nature-determined being but also their free will, a faculty whose reality Dante emphatically defends. Because God orders all things, both spiritual and temporal, it is accurate to speak of God's "omnipresent influence" on Creation. Whether God is "omnipresent" in the way that term is usually used today—in a way that is close to pantheism, I think—is uncertain; I tend to think not.

In another significant place Dante speaks of his vision of the saints residing in the Empyrean, constructing imagery which dramatically shows that in the Empyrean one is beyond the limits of space.

I was conscious of rising beyond my own powers, and such new vision was kindled in me that there is no light so bright my eyes would not have borne it. And I saw light in the form of a river pouring its splendour between two banks painted with marvellous spring. From that torrent came forth living sparks and they settled on the flowers on either side, like rubies set in gold; then, as if intoxicated with the odours, they plunged again into the wondrous flood, and as one entered another came forth.

'The high desire that is now aflame and urgent in thee to have knowledge of that which thou seest pleases me more the more it swells; but first thou must drink of these waters before this great thirst of thine can be satisfied.' Thus she /Beatrice/ spoke to me who was the sun of my eyes; then she continued: 'The river and the topazes that pass into it and out and the

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94Purg., xvi, 65-105.
laughter of the flowers are shadowy forecasts of their truth; not that these things are imperfect in themselves, but the defect is in thyself, that thy vision is not yet so exalted.'

No infant, waking long after its hour, throws itself so instantly with its face to the milk, as I, to make still better mirrors of my eyes, bent down to the water that flows forth for our perfecting; and no sooner did the eaves of my eyelids drink of it than it seemed to me out of its length to have become round. Then, like people who have been under masks and seem other than before if they put off the semblance not their own in which they were hid, the flowers and the sparks changed for me into a greater festival, so that I saw both the courts of heaven made plain.

O splendour of God by which I saw the high triumph of the true kingdom, give me power to tell of what I saw there!

Light is there above which makes the Creator visible to every creature that has his peace only in seeing Him, and it spreads to so wide a circle that the circumference would be too great a girdle for the sun. Its whole expanse is made by a ray reflected on the summit of the Primum Mobile, which draws from this its life and potency; and as a hillside is mirrored in water at its foot as if to see itself adorned when it is rich with grass and flowers, I saw, rising above the light all round in more than a thousand tiers, as many of us as have returned there above. And if the lowest rank encloses within it so great a light, what is the expanse of this rose in its farthest petals? My sight did not lose itself in the breadth and height, but took in all the extent and quality of that rejoicing; there, near and far neither add nor take away, for where God rules immediately natural law is of no effect.

An interesting feature of this Empyrean sphere is that the saints are to appear in their bodies after the last judgment; how that can happen in a place which is "beyond the limiting conditions of time and space" it is hard

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96 Par., xxx, 43-45.
97 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, 443.
to imagine, for bodies are material and the Empyrean is beyond the ninth and last material sphere; but Dante is repeating orthodox Christian tradition on both points.

A final significant passage is Dante's description of his Beatific Vision in the final canto of the *Commedia*.

My sight, becoming pure, was entering more and more through the beam of the lofty light which in itself is true.

From that moment my vision was greater than our speech, which fails at such a sight, . . .

I think, from the keenness I endured of the living ray, that I should have been dazzled if my eyes had been turned from it; and I remember that for this cause I was the bolder to sustain it until I reached with my gaze the Infinite Goodness. O abounding grace, by which I dared to fix my look on the Eternal Light so long that I spent all my sight upon it! In its depth I saw that it contained, bound by love in one volume, that which is scattered in leaves through the universe, substances and accidents and their relations as it were fused together in such a way that what I tell of is a simple light. I think I saw the universal form of this complex, because in telling of it I feel my joy expand. . . . By my sight gaining strength as I looked, the one sole appearance, I myself changing, was, for me, transformed. In the profound and clear ground of the lofty light appeared to me three circles of three colours and of the same extent, and the one seemed reflected by the other as rainbow by rainbow, and the third seemed fire breathed forth equally from the one and the other. O how scant is speech and how feeble to my conception! 98

In such an eloquent description of the Beatific Vision, need we doubt anymore that Dante's God was immaterial and beyond spatial limitations and forms?

Does Dante's cosmology in any way contradict his immaterial God?

Let us turn, then, to Dante's construction of the universe and see if it in any way contradicts his conception of an immaterial God. It is most convenient to begin with his portrayal of Hell. Here we rely on a summary from John Sinclair.

In Dante's cosmology the earth is at the centre of the universe and Hell a vast funnel-shaped cavity or reversed cone reaching from near the earth's surface to the centre, which is the centre of the universe, the farthest point from God. The sides of the cavity form a succession of concentric levels in diminishing circles as they approach the central depth, and on these levels the successive classes of the impenitent are punished, each lower circle punishing more severely a worse offence. [Italics added]”

What is essential for our purposes here is that there is a qualitative direction in Hell, that is, the sins get worse the closer one gets to the center of the universe and the farther one gets from God. Unless this is a poetic device—and we shall consider this possibility below—what would be a contradiction for us is not a contradiction in Dante's mind: here we have seen that it is possible to get closer to or farther from this immaterial God who is beyond time and space.

99 John D. Sinclair, commentary on Dante's *Inferno*, in Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. with commentary by John D. Sinclair (New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Books, 1961), 17; for textual evidence, see Inf., ix, 27-29, trans. Sinclair, 121: "... the circle of Judas, ... /is/ the deepest and darkest place /in the universe/, farthest from the heaven that encircles all."
The same thing happens in Purgatory. As Dante and Virgil climb higher up the island-mountain from ante-Purgatory up to and through the seven terraces of Purgatory proper, the sins decrease in gravity and the penitents are placed closer to or farther from this non-spatial God depending on the seriousness of their sins. At the top is the Garden of Eden, the point on earth where man can be the closest to God because there he is free from sin; either he was free from sin because he was there before original sin, which applies only to Adam and Eve, or he has been freed from sin because he has done penance for all his sins and has been redeemed by Christ.

Again in Paradise there is a hierarchy of sins and virtues, and the various saints are placed in different heavens closer to or farther from God, depending on how close they are spiritually to God. This is Sinclair's summary of the plan of Paradise.

Following the Ptolemaic astronomy of his time Dante conceived of the earth as stationary and central in the universe, with the sun and moon and the five visible planets revolving about it at various speeds. Each of these seven heavenly bodies has its own sphere, or 'heaven'; beyond them is the sphere of the fixed stars, and beyond that the ninth and last of the material heavens, called the Crystalline because it is transparent and invisible, or the Primum Mobile because from its infinite speed the other lower heavens take their slower motions. These nine spheres are severally moved and controlled by the nine orders of the angels, and all the spheres and the heavenly bodies in them have certain spiritual significances and certain influences on human life and character.
As Dante passes upward with Beatrice the souls of the blessed appear to them in the successive heavens according to their corresponding predominant character in their earthly lives. Beyond the nine material spheres is the Empyrean, outside of time and space, the heaven of God's immediate presence and the only real home of the angels and the redeemed, whose blessedness consists in their eternal vision of Him.\textsuperscript{100}

There is a qualification that should be made concerning the construction of Paradise, however, as Sinclair indicates rather vaguely in his last sentence: the souls only seem to be present in the various spheres, while actually they are all in the Empyrean sphere and therefore outside time and space. Dante explains it himself in the words of Beatrice.

'Not he of the Seraphim that is most made one with God, not Moses, Samuel, or whichever John thou wilt—one, not Mary herself, have their seat in other heaven from these spirits that have now appeared to thee, nor for their being have more years or fewer; but all make fair the first circle and hold sweet life in different measure as they feel more and less the eternal breath. These have shown themselves here in the sphere of the moon, but the same applies to all the material spheres, not that this sphere is allotted to them, but in sign of the heavenly rank that is least exalted. It is necessary to speak thus to your faculty, since only from sense perception does it grasp that which it then makes fit for the intellect. For this reason Scripture condescends to your capacity and attributes hands and feet to God, having another meaning, and Holy Church represents to you with human aspect Gabriel and Michael and the other who made Tobit whole again.'\textsuperscript{101}

\textsuperscript{100}Sinclair, commentary on Dante's \textit{Paradiso}, 13.
\textsuperscript{101}Par., iv, 28-48, trans. Sinclair, 63.
It would seem, in light of the above statement, that there is no closer to and farther from God in heaven. Here Dante is following Christian tradition, especially as expounded by Aquinas.

Is Dante's cosmology, then, just an accommodation to our sense faculties?

We must entertain the possibility that what applies to heaven—where God condescends to Dante's sense capacities to show him the various ranks of the saints in the nine material spheres—applies to Dante's entire cosmology; perhaps the whole construction of the universe in the Commedia is simply an accommodation to our sense faculties, a structure of poetic imagery not meant to convey literal truth but to symbolize truths that are difficult to state in other than metaphorical language. Perhaps in actuality every point in the universe is equidistant from God because there can be no far or near in relation to an immaterial God who is beyond time and space. Corroborating such a position would be the opinion of Dorothy Sayers.

He /Dante/ did not really suppose that Hell was a pit extending from a little way below the foundations of Jerusalem to the centre of the earth, or that Purgatory was a mountainous island in the Antipodes, or that a person could go from one to the other in his mortal body in the space of two and a half days; nor did he really imagine that Heaven was located among the celestial spheres. He takes the utmost pains to make his geographical details plausible and scientifically correct; but that is just the novelist's method.
of giving verisimilitude to the story. Dante knew better, and from time to time he warns his readers against mistaking a work of imagination for a bald statement of material fact.  

Sayers protects Dante in this way from charges of ignorance and "medieval superstitions," and we could all feel more "in tune" with Dante if he had the same, or nearly the same, view of space as we have. But I am personally very skeptical about Dante's cosmology being a consciously-constructed poetic image, because of what he says in the Convivio to support this cosmology. Not only is the commentary on the canzone in the Convivio stated in essay style—just as the works of a philosopher, for instance—but in the pertinent chapters from which we will quote Dante is discussing the scientific opinion revered in his day, that of Aristotle and Ptolemy.

Concerning the number and position of the heavens different opinions are held by many, although at the last the truth be discovered /italics added/. Aristotle, merely following the ancient misapprehension of astrologers, believed that there were only eight heavens, the outermost of which, containing the whole, was that in which are the fixed stars, namely, the eighth sphere; and beyond this he thought that there was no other. . . . Afterwards Ptolemy perceived that the eighth sphere was swayed by several movements, as he saw that its circle deviated from the true circle which turns everything from East to West. Constrained by the principles of Philosophy, which necessarily demands the simplest primum mobile, he therefore assumed that another heaven lay beyond that of the

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stars, and that this caused the revolution from East to West. This revolution, I say, is completed in about twenty-four hours, that is to say, in twenty-three hours and fourteen-fifteenths of an hour, roughly reckoned. So that, according to him, and according to the opinion current in Astrology and in Philosophy since these movements were perceived, the heavens in motion are nine in number, and their position is manifest and determined, as the senses and reason apprehend by the aid of Perspective, Arithmetic and Geometry, and of other sensible experience.\textsuperscript{103}

Dante goes on to explain his own conclusions—"although at the last the truth be discovered" seems to refer to his own opinion on the matter—and this philosophic-scientific account of the cosmology of the heavens matches that poetic account given in the Commedia (of course, this does not by any means automatically prove that he would also have described Hell and Purgatory the same in a philosophic or scientific treatise).

And the order of their position is this. The first heaven which is reckoned is that which contains the moon, the second is that which contains Mercury, the third that which contains Venus, the fourth that which contains the sun, the fifth that which contains Mars, the sixth that which contains Jupiter, the seventh that which contains Saturn, the eighth is that of the fixed stars, the ninth is not perceptible to sense except for the movement mentioned above. This heaven many call the Crystalline, that is to say, the diaphanous, or wholly transparent heaven. However, outside all these, Catholics place the Empyrean heaven, that is to say, the luminous heaven, or heaven of flame; and it is held to be immovable because it has in itself in each several part that which its matter desires. And this gives the reason why the

\textsuperscript{103}Conv., II, iii and iv, trans. Jackson, 77-78.
primum mobile has the swiftest movement, because on account of the most fervid longing which each part of that ninth heaven adjoining the former has to be united with each part of that heaven, namely, the divinest tenth heaven which is at rest, it turns round therein with such desire that its velocity is almost inconceivable. And peaceful and at rest is the abode of that highest Godhead who alone completely beholds Himself. This is the abode of the blessed spirits as Holy Church maintains who cannot lie. And Aristotle also, to one who rightly understands him, seems to be of this opinion in the first part of Heaven and the World. This is the sovereign edifice of the world, in which all the world is enclosed and beyond which there is naught. And it exists not in space, but received form only in the Primal Mind which the Greeks call Protonoe.

This extremely interesting passage shows two seemingly contradictory ideas of God. On the one hand, in line with Holy Church "who cannot lie" and with Aristotle also, "to one who rightly understands him," God is described as at rest and as not existing in space. On the other hand, the primum mobile spins around at an incredible speed because each part of it wants to be as close as possible to God, who is, as we have seen from the Commedia, an immaterial point in space. How can one be nearer or farther from a God who is immaterial and who does not exist in space? Further, how can God be spatially located in a tenth heaven, when He is supposed not to exist in space and to be immaterial? Apparently Dante did not see any contradiction here, but can we say the same for ourselves?

If this is not enough to be convincing, let us follow Dante's argument further, here discovering some things he has not told us in the *Commedia*.

Now we should know that each heaven below the Crystalline has two poles fixed as regards itself, while in the ninth heaven they are fixed and stationary, and not changeable from any point of view. And they each, the ninth as well as the rest, have a circle which may be called the Equator of its own proper heaven, and in every part of its revolution is equally removed from both poles, as any one can see by the use of his senses, if he spins an apple or any other round body. And in each heaven this circle is more rapid in its motion than any other part of its heaven, as any one who rightly reflects can perceive. And each part moves the more rapidly the nearer it is to this circle, and the more remote and the nearer to the pole it is, the more slowly it moves, inasmuch as the circle of its revolution is smaller, and must of necessity be completed within the same time as the larger. I say, moreover, that the nearer a heaven is to the circle of its equator, the more noble it is in comparison with its poles, because it has the more movement and more actuality and more life and more form, and more nearly adjoins that heaven which is above it, and consequently has more of virtue. Whence the stars of the starry heaven have more of virtue in comparison with each other the nearer they are to this circle. /Italics added./

In this passage we have an elaborate description of how and where one heavenly sphere is closer to the next largest one, and thus by implication closer to God, though Dante does not say this directly. Yet, does he not say so indirectly, by arguing that the equator of the sphere has "more movement and more actuality and more life and more

form," considering Thomas Aquinas' idea that God is pure actuality and pure form and pure being, and considering that Dante had read Aquinas and accepted his general outlook and also much of the detail of Thomistic thought. (It would certainly be interesting to compare Dante's conception of a spatially located God who nevertheless does not exist in space with the Prime Mover of Thomas.)

So far we have talked only of part of Dante's cosmology, that of the heavens; what of Hell and Purgatory? It seems to me that we must conclude that Dante intended the organization of the heavenly spheres in Paradise to be taken literally as an accurate scientific representation. But perhaps Hell and Purgatory are conscious poetic images? Again, I believe that the preponderance of the evidence goes against Sayer's opinion.

Here we need to add some more textual evidence and review what we already have. First of all, concerning Hell, as we have seen, Dante places the worst part of Hell at the center of the universe, the farthest point from God. In Canto xxxiv of the Inferno Dante describes passing the center of the universe, telling how difficult it was because of the tremendous pull of gravity at the center, and explaining the change of perspective that made Lucifer seem upside down when Dante and Virgil had passed into the Southern hemisphere when he had seemed right side up while they were on the northern side of the center. In the same
place Virgil tells how Hell and Purgatory were created when Lucifer, the fallen angel, was expelled from heaven.

"And this gross Fiend and Image of all Evil who made a stairway for us with his hide is pinched and prisoned in the ice-pack still.

On this side he plunged down from heaven's height and the land that spread here once hid in the sea and fled North to our hemisphere for fright;

and it may be that moved by that same fear, the one peak that still rises on this side fled upward leaving this great cavern here." 106

In commenting on this evidence—the center of the universe being the worst part of Hell, the greatest pull of gravity being at the center of the universe, and the myth about how Hell and Purgatory were created when Lucifer plunged from heaven—it is necessary first to note its consistency with the description of the heavens. Geometrically the center of the earth had to be also the center of the universe, for the earth was thought by Dante to be stationary, and the surrounding heavens were concentrically nested in each other (all having a common point for their center). How appropriate it also seems that the center of the universe is the frozen lake in which Lucifer is lodged, the coldest, darkest, and most lifeless place in the universe. Even in the heavenly spheres it is possible to get nearer to or farther from God, and the nearer one is to the equator of each sphere, the closer one is to God who is a point of

pure light; also, the closer one is to the equator and to the next higher sphere "the more movement and more actuality and more life and more form" one has. Consequently, the farther one is from God, the less movement (can there be any less movement than there is when frozen in a block of ice?), the less actuality (can there be any worse nothingness than Lucifer's plight?), and less life (what an epitome Lucifer is of the world of those who will be forever dead!), and less form (form implies order and harmony and beauty—what a disordered world Hell is, and what a gross, ugly, and misdirected creature Lucifer is). Throughout the *Commedia* Dante uses the symbolism of light to refer to God—the sun as knowledge of God, the angels as fiery circles surrounding the point of intense light which is God, the saints as a river of light which becomes a round celestial rose of light when looked at with higher powers of vision, the angels as dazzling light too bright to look at directly,

Further evidence can be adduced to support the statements in this paragraph. For example, there is a passage in *Par.*, i, 1-3, trans. Sinclair, 19: "The glory of Him who moves all things penetrates the universe and shines in one part more and in another part less." Also cf. *Inf.*, ix, 27-29 quoted in footnote 99 above. Finally, we should keep in mind Dante's conception of how God actualized the universe in accord with natural law (excluding miracles): Dante believed that the nine orders of angels govern the nine spheres, and that the nine spheres, in turn, cause the earth to be and to function; the *primum mobile* is the fastest of the nine material heavens, and causes the motion of the others in a descending order of speed, so the center of the universe would be the part where there was least motion; see on this point *Conv.*, IV, xxi and II, v and vi.
the saints as surrounded by a halo of radiant light, and on and on—so how consistent it is to locate Hell within the earth, where no light can get to it!

The greatest pull of gravity at the center of the universe is likewise consistent with the rest of the cosmology. Sin pulls one down to mere earthly things and eventually pulls one down into the kingdom of the lost, the forever dead and separated from God. In Purgatory, by contrast, Dante felt lighter as each "P" was wiped from his brow by the angel and he could advance to the next higher terrace. Finally, in Paradise, with all the "P's" removed Dante ascends effortlessly from sphere to sphere, rising like a helium balloon in this atmosphere, the helium rising because it is its nature to be lighter than air, while Dante rises because he is filled increasingly with desire for God. The closer he and Beatrice get to God, the more intense and the purer Dante's desire and thus the more glorious and effortless their ascent until they have reached their destination in the Empyrean.

The myth about how Hell and Purgatory were created is apparently not meant as literal truth, for there is a discrepancy between the account Dante gives of the formation of the land hemisphere in the Quaestio de aqua et terra and the myth of Satan's fall. In the former case, Dante

attributes the formation to the attraction of the stars pulling the land up to the north, forming a protuberance of land out of the water which made a place where all the four elements could meet and combine into every possible form. In discussing this discrepancy John Freccero asserts that Dante is describing the same event from different points of view, in the one case as a scientist and in the other as a poet-theologian. He even suggests a possible reconciliation of the discrepancy.

It might well be that angels and stars are here equivalent, by an association as old as the Timaeus (cf. Gregory, Moralia XXVIII, 14; PL 76, 468), and that it was the fall of Satan and his followers from status gloriae, the South, that caused the imbalance in the distribution of the stars. We need only recall the verse of the Apocalypse, universally read as describing Satan's fall, telling us that when draco, the devil, fell to earth, "cauda eius trahebat tertiam partem stellarum caeli, et misit eas in terram..." (Apoc. 12, 4). When the demons (who are stars) fell to earth, did they not leave a greater number of stars (who are angels) on the other side? If the land moved as a result of this, was the efficient cause the repulsion of stars/angels or the attraction of angels/stars? Freccero considers this a rather fanciful speculation, but the possibility of reconciliation he holds as sound; he believes that the Quaestio is an authentic treatise and that the difference between the two accounts must be understood as the difference between a scientific view and a poetic-

109 Ibid., 110.
110 Ibid., 113.
theological one. It is still difficult, however, to decide what Dante accepted as literally true. It is fitting that there should have been no Hell until Lucifer had gone against God. Further, Dante believed in the tale of the fallen angels—he thought with Augustine that man was created to take the place of the fallen angels in heaven, a belief attested by the fixed number of places in the Celestial Rose and by Dante's stating in a philosophic style in the Convivio that man was created to replace the fallen angels. Further, Paradise would appropriately have been placed atop a cosmic mountain such as Purgatory, because there man in his perfection could have been closer to God than anywhere else on earth. There ought to have been no Purgatory before Lucifer's fall, because man had not as yet been created nor had he fallen. Before there was a Hell there would be no reason to have a hollow place in the earth, so it is logical that Hell was hollowed out when Lucifer fell, and that the displaced ground, which had to go somewhere, would be piled in a huge pile, just as a man would pile up dirt on the edge of a hole he was digging.

111 Par., xxx, 131-32.

112 Conv., II, vi, trans. Jackson, 87: "I say that of all these Orders [nine Orders of angels] a certain number were lost as soon as they were created, to the amount perhaps of one tenth, and in order to replace these mankind was afterwards created."
Why there should have been earth in the Southern hemisphere before Lucifer fell, and why it "fled" to the Northern hemisphere, and how it was combined with the ground already in the Northern hemisphere—all of these details are more puzzling and seemingly not necessary for the consistency of the myth with Dante's cosmology as a whole. Dante seems to have thought this was a poetic way of expressing just what did happen.

So, we ask ourselves at last whether we should take Dante's cosmology on a literal as well as on a poetic level. We have seen how the details of the system all fit together into a single cosmological system with a surprising amount of inner coherence, and a surprising correlation with the best scientific opinion available to Dante. There can be no ironclad proof in matters of this kind, but I am personally of a mind to accept quite literally what Dante says about the general construction of the universe. As for details such as the specific punishments of sinners in Hell and penances in Purgatory, the appearance of the shades, the geographical features of Hell and Purgatory like the number and arrangement of the rings and terraces, the devices of rings and terraces themselves, which sins were punished where, who was punished for what, the image of the Celestial Rose and the River of Light in the Empyrean, the imagery of the Beatific Vision, and so forth—such details are, in my opinion, conscious works of imagination,
concrete images with appeal to the senses used by Dante to convey spiritual realities. The idea of the journey, as well as the length of time it took for the various legs of the journey—these details, too, are, in my view, conscious works of imagination, effective poetic images which were not meant by Dante to be taken literally. Nevertheless, there is too much inner coherence about the general construction of the universe—the placement of Hell in the center of the earth (forgetting what it might look like down there, which is strictly a matter of speculation), the idea of Purgatory as a cosmic mountain (forgetting also what it might look like), and the system of the heavens as described in the Convivio—and too much correspondence between this general construction and the Scriptural and scientific ideas Dante believed: I can only conclude that this is really how Dante thought it was.  

What is a contradiction for us was not a contradiction for Dante

If we can assume that Dante meant his cosmology literally, and I think we now can, for the most part, then we have laid bare a curious line of thinking in Dante's works. On the one hand, we have an immaterial God beyond time and

113 See H. R. Patch, The Other World According to Descriptions in Medieval Literature (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950) for information on precedents for Dante's location of hell and purgatory on the axis mundi. I did not have access to this book in time for inclusion in the thesis of information it might contain.

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space; on the other hand, we have an apparently serious construction of the universe in which one can get nearer to or farther from God.

We wonder how Dante can think as he does. Does he not see the problems and contradictions we see in his construct? It seems to me that we can understand Dante's outlook only by seeing it in comparison to the view of traditional man. I would like, accordingly, to introduce a pair of interesting examples given by Eliade and taken from traditional societies.

The Javanese temple of Borobudur is itself an image of the cosmos, and is built like an artificial mountain (as were the ziggurats). Ascending it, the pilgrim approaches the center of the world, and, on the highest terrace, breaks from one plane to another, transcending profane, heterogeneous space and entering a "pure region."\footnote{Eliade, \textit{Cosmos and History}, 14 and 15.}

Properly speaking, the ziggurat was a cosmic mountain, i.e., a symbolic image of the cosmos, the seven stories representing the seven planetary heavens (as at Borsippa) or having the colors of the world (as at Ur).\footnote{Ibid., 13.}

The second passage is brought in only to explicate the first, explaining how an artificial cosmic mountain is constructed to be an image of the cosmos. Concentrating, then, on the pilgrim climbing the Javanese temple of Borobudur, let us substitute Dante's climb through Purgatory and Paradise.

\footnote{Eliade, \textit{Cosmos and History}, 14 and 15.}
Let us assume that the temple of Borobudur uses the cosmic symbolism of the colors of the world, as does the Mesopotamian ziggurat at Ur, and then let us substitute for these colors the various sins of the world, apportioned out among seven terraces. As we climb from terrace to terrace we get lighter and lighter, for at the gate to each higher terrace an angel cleanses us symbolically of the sin corresponding to the terrace we have just been on. The farther we go up the closer we get to the axis mundi which passes through Jerusalem, the center of the universe, and the Garden of Eden; and when we get to the top of the mountain we no longer have to climb. Now our desires have been purified, and from desire for God alone we rise, float, ascend into Paradise, the home of the blessed, of peace, of order, of God, of rest, completion, and perfection.

Or let us assume instead that the temple of Borobudur uses the cosmic symbolism of the seven planetary spheres, as does the Mesopotamian ziggurat at Borsippa. We travel, as did Beatrice and Dante, through the seven heavenly spheres of the moon, Mercury, Venus—these three all still darkened by the earth's shadow—and then on through the spheres of the sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Then add to these seven planetary spheres the eighth sphere of the fixed stars and the ninth sphere, the Crystalline sphere or the primum mobile. Then, from the primum mobile, which is on the frontier of time and space, we ascend into the
Empyrean, the sphere where God Himself is at rest, the sphere where we get beyond the limitations of space and time, the realm—dare we make the explicit connection?—of "pure space."

Have we misrepresented Dante's outlook by using this symbolism from traditional society? I am personally inclined to answer no. We must point out that Dante's cosmology and his conception of an immaterial God spatially located in the outermost sphere of the universe make sense existentially and from within the outlook of traditional society. That Dante's spatial location of an immaterial God makes no sense within the context of the modern Western view of space as homogeneous profane space and its scientific thinking—this should not trouble us. Let me repeat: Dante's view and that of traditional man make sense existentially. Both Dante and traditional man were putting in symbolic form their experience of the insufficiencies of profane space, their desire to transcend that profane space to a pure space, and, finally, their experiences of that pure space in religious ritual or mystical visions. It is missing the point to crab about the illogical error of putting an immaterial God in a defined space, just as it is missing the point to call traditional societies "backward" because they do not express their experiences in metaphysical and scientific
language but rather use symbols and myths. From the viewpoint of the Ptolemaic system, in which the earth was seen as stationary and the infinite expanse of stars seen as fixed in the eighth sphere of the heavens, to locate God beyond the ninth sphere was not to confine him, for beyond that ninth sphere was beyond the universe (in modern terms, it is like the space beyond the universe as we know it—what kind of space exists where the galaxies of stars leave off?—just try to imagine it). When once we have hypothetically assumed the truth of the Ptolemaic system, it does not seem a spatial confining to locate God beyond the ninth sphere, and thus it seems to do no harm to our experience of the transcendence and mystery of God and of the mystery and ecstasy of experiencing release from the limitations of profane space and flight into pure or sacred space. The experience is what is important, and in that experience I think Dante was much closer to traditional society than he was to modern Western society. To a great extent modern man, in contrast, has lost the ability to experience sacred space. We may argue that modern man is impoverished by comparison or that he is richer for being more realistic. In either case it seems clear that Dante's experience is here closer to the traditional pole than to the modern in our hypothetical continuum.

116 Ibid., 3.
As we saw in the first chapter, man in traditional society wanted more than to know where the Center of the World was; he wanted to live as near as possible to it, locating his temple, his country, his city, and even his house at the Center. We also explored somewhat the possible motivations for this desire of traditional man, following Eliade's argument that the man of traditional society wanted to live in the pure and holy cosmos, just as it came from the Creator's hands, and that complementing this positive desire was a negative one, the terror of chaos and nothingness. Traditional man wanted to be in sacred space because he wanted to be at the source of energy, life, and being, this sacred space being sacred essentially because it was the scene of the cosmogony, the victory of order and being over chaos and nothingness, the work of the gods in mythical times. In the section on Jerusalem as navel of the world we concluded that Jerusalem symbolized the Redemption and implicitly was also a reactualization of Creation: Jerusalem was the sacred place of the Creation and of the more-than-Creation, the renewal of life through forgiveness and grace. Did Dante,  

117 See above, 36-37 and 42-43.  
118 See above, 24-26 and 34-35.
then, orient himself in relation to Jerusalem, not only in his intellectual theories about the cosmos but also existentially within the cosmos? In other words, did Dante assimilate cathedral, house, Italy, and the entire inhabited world to Jerusalem as traditional man assimilated his temple or sanctuary, his city, his house, the territory inhabited by his people, and the entire inhabited world (as he conceived it) to the Center of the World? And, if Dante did assimilate the detail within the cosmos to the Center of the World, Jerusalem, were his motivations similar to those of traditional man? In other words, did Dante strive to be at the Center of the World so that he might be at the source not only of life, energy, and being (what Creation offered) but also of grace, new being, and eternal life (what Redemption offered)? And did he want to be at the Center as much as possible because he might thereby avoid the terrible nothingness and chaos of profane space?

More than any other section of this paper, this section represents incomplete research. I will report the evidence I have found so far, but it is too insufficient to be conclusive. A second problem in this section is that it overlaps with a similar section in the next chapter. Jerusalem is not the only possible Center of the World for Dante, for Rome is of probably greater existential import to him than Jerusalem. Did Dante assimilate the details of the
cosmos to Jerusalem or to Rome or to both or to neither? If we would argue that secular things were assimilated to Rome and religious things to Jerusalem the division would be overdone, above all because Rome had become the head of the Christian Church in the West, as well as being the seat of the Roman Empire and retaining the mystique of the Classical Age in the ideal of the Holy Roman Empire. With these problems in mind we will move forward more cautiously.

Let us tackle first the question of the entire inhabited world as Dante conceived it—was it coextensive with Christendom and was Jerusalem therefore the Center of the World for all men? In partial answer, Dante did not think that all men had become Christians and yet he believed that Christ came to redeem all mankind; and therefore Dante yearned for the day that all men would be converted to the Christian faith and united in one Christendom governed by one emperor and one pope, both ruling from Rome—yes, from Rome not Jerusalem, so already the overlap. If we could argue that Jerusalem as well as Rome was the focal point of Christianity, than we could say that in an ideal world all men would have in common at least two Centers of the World, Jerusalem and Rome.

What, then, did Dante think about the territory beyond what were than the boundaries of Christendom? If he were a member of traditional society he would consider that territory beyond "our world" to be a chaotic land full of
ghosts, demons, and foreigners; according to M. A. Orr the men of the early medieval period imagined that such monstrous races of people dwelt in the remote regions of the earth, but there is no hint of such imaginings in Dante. The one possible exception to Orr's statement lies in Dante's treatment of Mohammed in Hell, portraying him as a barbarian and cause of disorder, and his exaltation of the Crusades against the Saracens. But Dante's attitude towards the Moslems is not so different from many Americans' attitude towards Communists, the Communists being their enemies rather than people, monstrous Russians spending most of their time plotting to conquer the world and thus posing an almost insuperable threat to the cosmos of Americans. Dante's attitude towards Moslems is therefore not peculiarly traditional. Instead of looking upon non-Christians as barbarians, indeed, Dante had a great respect for those non-Christians who lived in accord with reason and who developed their natural capacities as much as they could without baptism and grace. He was deeply grieved by the idea that pagans and other non-Christians would perish in Hell for what was not their fault, their having never heard of Christ. He took the orthodox viewpoint on the issue, nevertheless, suppressing his sorrow and compassion with the idea that a just and loving God would not condemn

\[119^{119}\text{Orr, Dante and the Early Astronomers, 224-25.}\]
these non-Christians unjustly. One of the best examples of Dante's handling of the problem of why non-Christians must go to Hell is found in the speech of the eagle to Dante in Paradise.

'For thou saidst: "A man is born on the bank of the Indus, and none is there to speak, or read, or write of Christ, and all his desires and doings are good, so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or speech. He dies unbaptized and without faith. Where is this justice that condemns him? Where is his fault if he does not believe?" Now, who are thou that wouldst sit upon the bench and judge a thousand miles away with sight short of a span? Assuredly, for him that would reason it out with me, if the Scriptures were not set over you there would be abundant room for question. O earthly creatures, gross minds! The Primal Will, which in itself is good, from itself, the Supreme Good, never was moved; whatever accords with it is in that measure just; no created good draws it to itself, but it, raying forth, creates that good.'

Sinclair points out that Dante was following the teaching of St. Paul in this matter, declaring the question unanswerable because God, while infinitely good, is unfathomable to men's small minds. He takes the same stance as he has taken throughout Hell, where he chastised himself through the mouth of Virgil every time he felt pity for the condemned sinners, for to feel pity was implicitly

120 Par., xix, 70-90, trans. Sinclair, 275. Cf. Mon., II, viii, 28-37, where Dante says that a person who has never heard of Christ cannot be saved no matter how perfectly he has acquired and practised the moral and intellectual virtues. Reason is powerless to understand why this is so—only faith can "understand" it, or at least accept it.

121 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, note 6 on 280 and 283.
to hate God's justice and goodness. The only place where he deviates from this position and allows himself and Virgil to feel pity and sorrow is in Limbo; the Hebrews had been saved from Limbo during Christ's Harrowing of Hell and yet the virtuous pagans whose writings Dante loved so much had been condemned to go on living in desire but without hope in Limbo, and it seems unfair. Dante is consistent in his grief over all virtuous non-Christians who have been condemned to the Inferno, for his strong sense of the unity of humanity and his high respect for men who live according to reason makes him feel uneasy over their treatment; but he manages to suppress the sense of injustice in all cases except that of the Classical authors whom he loved so much.

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122 *Inf.*, iv, 31-45; also Sinclair, commentary on Dante's *Inferno*, 68.

123 See, e.g., Dante, *Mon.*., I, viii.

124 For the contrast between the views of Aquinas and Dante see Gino Rizzo, "Dante and the Virtuous Pagans," *A Dante Symposium: In Commemoration of the 700th Anniversary of the Poet's Birth (1265-1965)*, ed. William De Sua and Gino Rizzo ("University of North Carolina Studies in the Roman Languages and Literatures," No. 58; Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 117-19. Rizzo points to a difference between Dante and Aquinas in their attitudes toward adult unbelievers. Both men agree that unbaptized infants go to Limbo, and they also agree that non-Christians fail to attain the light of revelation. But Aquinas sees the non-Christian's failure as a personal sin of omission to be added to original sin and therefore excludes pagans from Limbo. Dante, in contrast, sees this failure as occurring because human nature cannot attain revelation without the help of divine grace, so he confines pagans to Limbo.
The evidence assembled indicates, therefore, that Dante believed that 1) there were sincere, good non-
Christians living within and beyond the geographical confines of Christendom, and 2) these non-Christians were under the jurisdiction of the Christian God. In one sense, there is no world beyond "our world," because the Christian God is the only God and He is supreme over all peoples; yet, in another way Christendom is a world within the cosmos, since not all men are Christians. All of Creation is held in order by God, so there is no chaos except that which is caused by man's free will choosing evil; in traditional society order was not considered so stable a characteristic, and the world beyond "our world" was a wilderness of chaos and barbarians, a wilderness that might expand and cause "our world" to revert to chaos also. Since all men are under the providential care and the judgment of the Christian God, the cosmos as a whole is seen to have its Center wherever the Center is for Christians; and Jerusalem still retained some of its sacred power as the spatial symbol of the creation-redemption process, so it must also be a Center of the World for all men, not just for Christendom. However, it was plain to Dante that never in the history of mankind had all men been Christians, and, in contrast, there was a time when all men were ruled by the Roman Empire; so for a symbol that

Cf. ibid., II, xii.
would unite the entire inhabited world Rome must have been more powerful.

Let us consider now the medieval cathedral, which, according to Eliade, symbolically reproduced the Celestial Jerusalem, thereby carrying on Hebrew traditions.

A celestial Jerusalem was created by God before the city was built by the hand of man; it is to the former that the prophet refers in the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch II, 4: 2-7: "Dost thou think that this is that city of which I said: "On the palms of my hands have I graven thee"? This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with Me, that which was prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed it to Adam before he sinned. . . ." The heavenly Jerusalem kindled the inspiration of all the Hebrew prophets: Tobias 13:16; Isaiah 59:11ff.; Ezekial 60, etc. To show him the city of Jerusalem, God lays hold of Ezekiel in an ecstatic vision and transports him to a very high mountain. And the Sibylline Oracles preserve the memory of the New Jerusalem in the center of which there shines "a temple . . . with a giant tower touching the very clouds and seen of all . . . ."

But the most beautiful description of the heavenly Jerusalem occurs in the Apocalypse (21: 2ff.): "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." 126

After a similar introduction in a different work, Eliade goes on to say that these Scriptural traditions were incorporated into the medieval cathedrals and earlier Christian basilicas.

126 Eliade, Cosmos and History, 8-9.
The Christian basilica and later, the cathedral take over and continue all these symbolisms. On the one hand, the church is conceived as imitating the Heavenly Jerusalem, even from patristic times; on the other, it also reproduces Paradise or the celestial world.\(^{127}\)

I could find, however, only one example of this symbolism in Dante, where Beatrice is recommending Dante to St. James for his examination on hope in Paradise.

'The Church Militant has not a child more full of hope, as is written in the Sun that irradiates all our host; therefore it is granted him to come from Egypt to Jerusalem that he may see it before his warfare is accomplished.'\(^{128}\)

To come from Egypt to Jerusalem means to come out of the oppression and bondage of the world with all its greed and temptation and injustices and to come to the Celestial Jerusalem which is synonymous, apparently, with Paradise. As for Dante's believing that the cathedral symbolically reproduced this Celestial Jerusalem, I have not yet found any evidence either way, but I would be surprised if he did not. Such a belief would fit well with the rest of his ideas, including his calling a church "God's bosom"\(^{129}\) and similar references.


\(^{128}\) *Par.*, xxv, 52-57, trans. Sinclair, 361.

\(^{129}\) *Inf.*, xii, 119-120.
For cities as related to Jerusalem there is even less evidence, none of it textual. Medieval cities like Dante's Florence had patron saints and magical-religious items to protect them when in battle with neighboring city-states.

There was almost incessant warfare between the Italian cities: wars between Venice, Genoa and Pisa, between Florence and Siena, between Florence and Pisa, Pistoia and Arezzo. The troops might be led into battle by a sacred war-chariot, the precious palladium of their city: at Florence there was the famous Carroccio, drawn by two steers decked out with red hangings. Cremona had its Berta, Parma its Blancardo decorated with pictures of the Madonna and the town's saints on a white ground.

City walls were thought by many medieval men to enclose a sacred place, the city, and to keep out chaotic space and peoples.

Long before they were military erections, they were a magic defence, for they marked out from the midst of a "chaotic" space, peopled with demons and phantoms... an enclosure, a place that was organized, made cosmic, in other words, provided with a "centre." That is why in times of crises (like a siege or an epidemic), the whole population would gather to go round the city walls in procession and thus reinforce their magico-religious quality of limits and ramparts. This procession round the city, with all its apparatus of relics and candles, was sometimes purely magico-symbolic in form: the patron saint of the town was offered a coiled waxen taper as long as the perimeter of the wall. All these defence measures were extremely widespread in the Middle Ages.

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131 Ibid., 77-78.
Except for the reality of the patron saint(s) of Florence, however, I cannot see Dante accepting any of these ideas. He was against magic, except some forms of astrology which he considered science rather than magic,133 and he took a very dim view of the incessant warfare among Italian city-states.134 But he did believe in the saints and in their intercession in human affairs,135 so he probably also believed in patron saints for the city-states. Since these patron saints were citizens of the Celestial Jerusalem, there is a remote assimilation of the cities to the Jerusalem symbolism.

We have dealt with Jerusalem in relation to the whole inhabited world, the cathedral, and the city; there are two things remaining—the house and Italy—to explore in regard to their possible assimilation to the symbolism of Jerusalem. The Center of the World that is far stronger for Italy as a people and as a territory is, of course, Rome rather than Jerusalem. And, on whether Dante and other medieval men wanted their houses to be symbolically at the Center of the World which was Jerusalem, there is no particular evidence. There was undoubtedly prevalent

133See, e.g., Dante's treatment of the diviners and of the myths of Mantua's origin, Inf., xx; also see Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Inferno, 256-59.

134See, e.g., Purg., vi.

135See, e.g., Inf., ii and Purg., xxx, 127-41.
the custom of having the priest or bishop bless the house, and families probably adopted patron saints; but I do not know to what extent such practices meant anything to Dante as an individual.

Did Jerusalem Maintain Its Sacredness for Dante Nearly Thirteen Centuries After the Resurrection?

As we have discussed earlier in this paper, in the traditional view a place that once becomes sacred remains sacred permanently, offering an inexhaustible source of power and sacredness to those who believe in its sacredness. Jerusalem was sanctified for Christians, as we have described, by becoming the Holy City of the Hebrews from David's time on, and by being the scene of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Creator and Redeemer of the world. But did Jerusalem maintain its sacredness for the almost thirteen centuries between the death of Christ and the years when Dante was writing? For many Christians the answer was apparently affirmative, for there were many pilgramages to the Holy Land, especially by peasants, and there were also the Crusades to recapture the Holy Land from the infidel Moslems, these Crusades being essentially pilgramages to Jerusalem. (I do not mean to imply that

136 See above, 32-34.
137 Heer, The Medieval World, 52.
138 Ibid., 133.
the aim of recapturing the Holy Land was the only motivation for the Crusades.

We quoted a passage earlier in this chapter in which Dante spoke approvingly of the Crusade effort. In another place Dante appears to be for these attempts to set up Latin rule in the Holy Land, castigating Boniface VIII for letting Acre, the last stronghold of the Christians in the Holy Land, be conquered in 1291 by the Moslems. Such a defeat was a scandal for Christendom in Dante's eyes, worsened by the fact that Boniface was instead at war with Christians, motivated in these foul pursuits only by his own wickedness. In this passage Guido da Montefeltro is telling Dante why he was placed in the eighth bolgia of the eighth circle of Hell for being a false counselor.

The Prince of the new Pharisees—Boniface VIII—being at war near the Lateran and not with Saracens or Jews, for every one of his enemies was Christian and none had been at the taking of Acre or trading in the land of the Soldan—none of the Christians had deserved the attacks of Boniface, for none had fought for the Saracens at Acre; nor had traded with the Saracens as a previous pope had forbidden them to do—regarded neither the supreme office and holy orders in himself nor, in me, that cord which used to make its wearers lean—Guido was a Franciscan—He asked counsel of me, and I was silent, for his words seemed drunken; and then he spoke again: "Do not let thy heart mistrust; I absolve thee henceforth, and do thou teach me how I may cast Palestrina to the ground. I have power to lock and to unlock Heaven, as thou knowest, for the keys are two which my predecessor did not hold dear."140

139 See above, 51.

Dante gives a high place to those knights and warriors who fight for Christ, putting them in a sphere above the theologians and the wise. When Dante and Beatrice rose from the sphere of the sun into that sphere the cross of Christ flamed forth, made up of those who had in their earthly life each taken up his cross and followed Christ. From the souls comprising the cross of lights came a beautiful hymn of high praises, including the words "Arise" and "Conquer." Sinclair's apt commentary on the passage would help us here.

The sphere of Mars into which they pass is described as 'higher blessedness.' For greater than all knowledge of God in itself is spiritual fortitude, the daring and bearing of pain or death for the love of God and the service of men. Mars, the planet of war, glows redder at their coming, and in its depths, white against its redness, is 'the venerable sign' of sacrificial love, the mark of the crusader. The spirits there are God's soldier-martyrs who have contended for the faith and whose life and death have been a costly sacrifice.141

In accord with his exaltation of these crusaders Dante honors some of the greatest of those who fought against the Saracens:142 Duke Godfrey, leader of the First Crusade and King of Jerusalem, Charlemagne and Roland, who fought in the ninth century against the Moslems in Spain, Count William of Orange and Renouard, who also both fought against the Saracens in the ninth century, and Robert Guiscard, who fought both Greeks and Saracens in the

141 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, 211.
142 Par., xviii, 43-47; also Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Paradiso, notes 5 and 6 on 264.
eleventh century. In yet another place Dante honors his ancestor Cacciaguida, who fought against the Moslems in the Second Crusade, in this same place criticizing (through Cacciaguida) the popes again for neglecting the Holy Land and letting it remain in possession of the infidel Moslems.

Later, I [Cacciaguida] followed the Emperor Conrad, and he girded me of his knighthood, so greatly did I win his favour by good service; I went after him against the iniquity of that law [Islam] whose people, by fault of the shepherds, usurp your right.  

We ought at this point to make clear why the control by the Moslems of the Holy Land was such a terrible thing for Dante. Sinclair discusses Dante's placement and gory punishment of Mohammed in the eighth circle, that of the fraudulent.

Islam was regarded as 'the main force of antichrist in the world of the time, the very spirit of disorder and dispeace, and Mahomet, especially in the character of the greatest renegade from Christianity, as historically the chief divider of humanity; and the comparison of his person to a burst wine-cask, and the butchery of him, described with deliberate coarseness of phrase, butchery completed, as it were, in Ali, express not only Dante's judgment of the enormity of Mahomet's crime, but the common reflection of Christendom on the barbarism and beastliness of an alien faith, regarded as a kind of reversal of Christianity. Any approach to a real historical judgment of Mahomet was, of course, wholly impossible for Dante and his age, and the effrontery of Mahomet's action and the rudeness of his speech are the marks of a barbarian.  

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143 Par., xv, 139-44, trans. Sinclair, 221 and 223.
144 Sinclair, commentary on Dante's Inferno, 355.
Since Mohammed was seen as the chief divider of humanity, he could not help but win Dante's most intense hatred, because Dante just as intensely wanted the unity of mankind in peace and order under one emperor and one (worthy) pope. So, Dante was distressed by the Moslems' control of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory. However, a qualification is in order, for Dante felt it was just as virtuous to fight the infidel Moslems in Spain as in the Holy Land—that we can gather from his honoring of men like Charlemagne and Roland as well as Cacciaguida and Duke Godfrey. But nevertheless, Dante apparently did feel strongly about the virtue of winning Jerusalem and Palestine back for Christendom, and I think we can conclude that the city had maintained its sacredness for him, at least to some extent.

On the other hand, we must look at a strange bit of evidence, Dante's belief that Titus was carrying out God's plan when he destroyed Jerusalem. This revelation of God's plan comes through the mouth of Justinian in Paradise.

"But what the standard of the Roman Empire, which was governed by Providence to carry out God's Plan, and which was carried forth by many different standard-bearers that moves my speech had done before and was yet to do approximately before the Resurrection and after it throughout the mortal kingdom that is subject to it, comes to seem small and dim if with clear eye and right affection we look at it in the hand of the third Caesar Tiberius, under whom Christ was crucified; for the Living Justice that
inspires me granted to it, in his hand of whom I speak, the glory of doing vengeance for His wrath /against mankind for original sin/. And now marvel at what I unfold to thee: that afterwards it ran with Titus to do vengeance on the vengeance for the ancient sin.\[145\]

According to Dante Tiberius did God's will by crucifying Christ; someone had to do it so that Christ might offer just and sufficient compensation for mankind's sins, and he who did crucify Christ must be a just human authority that ruled all mankind. Dante believed that the Roman Empire had ruled all mankind under Augustus and his successors, so Christ, therefore, had ransomed not just some men but all men by submitting to the punishment of a Roman Emperor. In line with this reasoning, someone was required to do vengeance also on those who crucified Christ, namely the Jews and especially Annas, Caiaphas, and Judas Iscariot. In the last sentence of the above quote the "ancient sin" is original sin, and the "vengeance for the ancient sin" is the Crucifixion; the "vengeance on the vengeance for the ancient sin" is the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Add to this honoring of Titus for the destruction of Jerusalem another bit of evidence: in the passage above\[146\] where Guido da Montefeltro is castigating Boniface VIII, he


\[146\]See above, 137.
implies that Boniface VIII should have been at war with Saracens or with Jews, both being enemies of Christendom.

To put these ideas into context, the analysis of W.H.V. Reade serves well.

To bring the great Pagan Empire within the Christian scheme was no small achievement, but what of that other people, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, acknowledged in the most venerable of all traditions as the chosen instrument of salvation? Was there no royal line in Israel, no glory in the House of David, to outshine the dubious lustre of a Trojan ancestry or a Roman crown? I will not say that Dante wilfully evades this issue: much less does he question the authority of the Old Testament of the Jewish origin of the true Messiah. Nevertheless he admits nothing that could impair the majesty of the Empire. Only to the Romans does he allow the title of popolo santo (Conv. iv. 4. 103), and the noblest of earthly cities is not Jerusalem but Rome. In his most considered account of the preparation for the advent of the Saviour (Conv. iv. 5. 16-54) Dante synchronizes the birth of David with the foundation of Rome, and declares that the santissima progenie, the root of Jesse from which the Mother of Jesus was, in due time, to spring, was manifested at the same hour as 'the divine election of the Roman Empire for the birth of the Holy City.' The albergo mondissimo e purissimo, where the Heavenly King was first to lodge, it was, indeed, for a Jewish maiden to provide; but without the sheltering aegis of Augustus, without the peace on earth secured by his ordained dominion, the message of the herald angel could not have been proclaimed. Moreover, the Jewish task was then finally accomplished. If the new dispensation did not destroy the old, it did fulfil it, and those who denied the consummation thereby forfeited their ancient rights. Henceforth Jerusalem is
abased and Rome exalted: the Jew becomes a wanderer and an outcast, the Roman wears the crown. 147

I think Reade exaggerates his case somewhat, for after all Dante placed Jerusalem and not Rome on the axis mundi, and there are the other textual evidences of the sacredness of Jerusalem for him; nevertheless, what Reade says is basically true, I think, and his perspective helps explain why it has been somewhat difficult to adduce much evidence to demonstrate that Jerusalem was a Center of the World for Dante. Rome was able to take over most of the functions that Jerusalem had once carried out, for Rome was the seat of the papacy as well as of the Empire, of the Christian Church as well as of the secular government. There are a number of places, in fact, where Dante uses Scriptural passages about Jerusalem or the Hebrews to metaphorically refer to Rome or to the restoration of the Roman Empire by Henry VII. In his letter to the Italian cardinals, for instance, the lamentations over the destruction of Jerusalem symbolize the lamentations Dante makes and wants the cardinals to make over the sad state of affairs in Rome.

'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! She is become as a widow that was great among the nations.' The greed aforetime of the chiefs of the Pharisees,

147 W. H. V. Reade, "Dante's Vision of History" (Annual Italian Lecture to the British Academy, June 14, 1939), Proceedings of the British Academy, XXV (1939), 198-99.
which made the ancient priesthood an abomination, not only did away the ministry of the children of Levi, but moreover brought siege and destruction on the chosen city of David. And when He, who alone is eternal, beheld this thing from his eternal watch-tower on high, by his Holy Spirit He laid his command upon the mind worthy of God of a man what was a prophet, and in the words above written, alas! too often repeated, lamented over holy Jerusalem as a city undone.

We too who confess the same Father and Son, the same God and Man, yea, the same Mother and Virgin, we for whose sake and for whose salvation thrice was the question repeated concerning love and it was said: 'Peter, feed my sheep,' that is to say the sacred fold, Rome, to which, after so many triumphs and glories, Christ by word and deed confirmed the empire of the world, that Rome which the same Peter, and Paul the preacher to the Gentiles, by the sprinkling of their own blood consecrated as the Apostolic See, over her, widowed and abandoned, we, who come not after the woes we have to bewail, but now mourn in consequence of them, are, like Jeremiah, constrained to lament. 

A similar application of Scripture is found in Dante's letter to Henry VII, where Dante uses the term child of Jesse to refer to Henry, the Babylonian exile to refer to the troubles of Dante's own age, and the Jews hopes for the restoration of Jerusalem to refer to Dante's hopes that Henry VII will restore the Roman Empire and inaugurate a new Golden Age.

Up then! make an end of delay, thou new scion of Jesse, and take confidence from the eyes of the Lord God of Hosts, in whose sight

thou strivest; and overthrow this Goliath with the sling of thy wisdom and with the stone of thy strength; for at his fall night and the shadow of fear shall cover the camp of the Philistines—the Philistines shall flee and Israel shall be delivered. Then our heritage which was taken away, and for which we lament without ceasing, shall be restored to us whole again. But even as now, remembering the most holy Jerusalem, we mourn as exiles in Babylon, so then as citizens, and breathing in peace, we shall think with joy on the miseries of Confusion.149

There are other places150 in which Dante honors Rome by applying Scriptural references to the city making, in effect, a new Jerusalem of Rome. Rome had once united all men under its rule, Dante thought, and he hoped that one day it would again be the ruling city of all men, a time when all men would be Christians. It was, in fact, common for medieval men to compare Jerusalem and Rome, Christians and Jews, and to find the Jews and Jerusalem lacking. Measured against the standard of Christian universalism the Jews were found wanting: "it was not for a chosen people but for all men that Christ died on the Cross."151 The demise of the Synagogue and the victory of the Christian Church was an important theme in medieval art and literature.


150 Dante, Ep. vii, 104-105 and 183; Mon., I, xiv, 66-73.

151 Male, The Gothic Image, 142-43.
By His death Jesus not only founded the Church, but abolished the authority of the Synagogue. At the very hour when He gave up His spirit on Calvary, the Jewish church with her sacrifices of blood which were symbols and with the Bible whose meaning she did not understand, faded away before the newly created church of Christ. From that moment the Church alone had power to celebrate the Sacrifice, and she alone could explain the mysteries of the Book. The defeat of the Synagogue and the victory of the Church at the foot of the Cross had been too often celebrated by theology for the thirteenth-century artists (always obedient to tradition) to fail to include them in their representations of the Crucifixion. To the right of the Cross they placed the Church, to the left the Synagogue. On the one side the Church, crowned and wearing a nimbus and with a triumphal standard in her hand, receives in a chalice the water and blood that flow from the Savior's side. On the other side the Synagogue with blindfold eyes, her crown falling from her head, still grasps in one hand the broken staff of her standard, and lets fall from the other the tables of the Law. . . . 

Variant ways of representing this scene are discussed. A legend which was very popular in the Middle Ages forcibly sums up these ideas on the demise of the Jews and the Synagogue and the victory of Christianity. It was said that the Cross was placed in such a position that Rome was in front of the Saviour and Jerusalem behind Him. In the hour of death He turned away from the city which had killed the prophets to look towards the Holy City of the new era.

Dante was thus by no means alone in his preference of Rome over Jerusalem; Jerusalem had existential import for Dante and for medieval men—I think we have established that fact in this chapter—but next to Rome her light shone dimly.

152Ibid., 188-93.
Conclusion

We return now to the methodological problems posed in the introduction of this paper, asking whether the morphological analysis and traditional-modern continuum of Eliade can be appropriately and successfully applied to a culture as complex and advanced as high medieval culture. In other words, if we posit certain forms of thought as belonging to traditional cultures and other forms of thought as belonging to modern cultures, can we speak of the Middle Ages as a transitional culture, one displaying both traditional and proto-modern forms of thought? Do we in any way misrepresent the Middle Ages by viewing it in this way?

We have been dealing in this chapter with a small segment of the larger problem, concentrating on one form of thought -- the Center of the World conception in traditional culture -- looking for this one form in one principal thinker of the High Middle Ages, namely Dante, and dealing only with one aspect of Dante's thought, his placement of Jerusalem in his cosmology. In spite of these limitations of our scope, our analysis has led us to a point where we can make some general observations about traditional and modern forms of thought in the Middle Ages.

To begin with we will remember that traditional cultures, according to Eliade, located their centers of the world in existential rather than geometric space. We will also
recall that Dante's positioning of Jerusalem and of its antipodal counterpart, the Garden of Eden and Purgatory, were done in geometric as well as existential space. The significance of this change can hardly be overestimated, since the statement that Jerusalem is located at the geometric center of the land hemisphere is a proposition that is empirically verifiable or refutable. With the development of science and mathematics in the early modern period, men increasingly interpreted ideas like Jerusalem being the center of the land hemisphere as literal rather than symbolic statements, and it was increasingly evident that such statements taken literally were incorrect or even absurd. It makes sense to say, then, that Dante's location of Jerusalem as the center of the land hemisphere is an act which bears resemblances to both the Center of the World conception in traditional culture and to the scientific conception of space peculiar to modern Western culture, and yet it is an act which belongs neither to traditional nor to modern culture but lies somewhere in between.

The same holds for other details of Dante's treatment of Jerusalem. The Garden of Eden is for Dante the navel of the world and the place where man was created, and because Jerusalem stands at antipodes with Eden in Dante's cosmology (and was traditionally itself the location of Eden) it participates through Eden in the navel-of-the-world symbolism. In the section on Jerusalem as navel of the world we saw to
what an extent Dante found meaning in the symbolism of a spatial center of the creation-redemption process; in that sense he resembles traditional man. But we also saw that Dante felt compelled to locate Eden literally, to locate it in geometric space as well as to expound its symbolic meaning; in that sense he is closer to modern man.

We have looked at Dante's allegorical interpretation of Jerusalem, and we have seen that Jerusalem on one level was interpreted as the Heavenly Jerusalem. This allegorical method, which was employed so widely by medieval scholars, again resembles both traditional and modern modes of thinking and yet belongs to neither. The allegorical method of interpretation was created to resolve those conflicts when it was impossible to take a symbolic statement literally, and it was created by men who were tremendously interested in determining what were the literal truths about the universe. This openness to and thirst for literal truth are not qualities one would expect to find in a traditional culture.

Probably one of the most successful sections in this chapter has been that which deals with Dante's cosmological construction and how Dante could assign a spatial location to a non-spatial God, comparing the ascent of the temple at Borobudur to Dante's ascent of Purgatory and to his journey through the heavenly spheres up to the Empyrean. Dante's spatial location of a non-spatial God would make no sense to men of modern culture, nor would Dante's interest in scientific explanations of cosmological processes make sense to a
traditional man; on the other hand the existential experience of ascending to pure space in traditional culture bears strong resemblances to Dante's ascent to God, and the location of God in the Empyrean sphere makes existential sense even though the ten-heavenly-spheres scheme of the universe was soon disproved by modern science.

Jerusalem also participated in the cosmic mountain symbolism to some extent through its antipodal counterpart Purgatory; but once again Dante's construction would not be totally at home in traditional culture, because to ascend the cosmic mountain Purgatory was an interior psychological process for Dante rather than a concrete ritual such as the literal ascension of the steps of the temple of Borobudur. Such a ritual was a repeatable act for traditional man, but, while Dante saw the sacrament of penance as a repeatable act, he was also conscious of the historical character of human life and felt that one could not wipe out the effects of past sins and experiences even though they could be wiped clean in the sense that they were forgiven. For Dante the symbolical ascension of the cosmic mountain Purgatory (one could not ascend it literally until after death) was a lifelong peregrinatio, much the same as for modern Christians.

The least successful attempts to connect Dante with traditional culture were that which dealt with Jerusalem as axis mundi and that which treated the assimilation of the details of the cosmos to Jerusalem as Center of the World.
That Jerusalem was an *axis mundi* for the Hebrews seems likely, but, although the medieval Christians accepted the Old Testament as revelation, they felt that the Jews and the Synagogue had forfeited their previous favored position before God. It is quite true that pilgrimages were made to the Holy Land and that there were Crusades to wrest the Holy Land from Arabic control, but is this necessarily an indication that the channels of communication to heaven and the world of the dead were still open at Jerusalem? We may compare the phenomenon of Americans visiting Mt. Vernon and Independence Hall and Paul Revere's home — Americans would certainly not want these historic sites to fall into the hands of the Russians or even of the Canadians to whom they would be hated or at most meaningless. It is not that the plots of ground on which these scenes of American history took place are considered sacred or that the bricks and glass and pewter used by our forefathers are holy. Rather it is that these symbolize our tradition; to let these things and places go to another country or to let the buildings be torn down and replaced by new buildings would be to fail to affirm the meaning of the past for us today and to lose a source of solidarity for the American nation. Eliade would contend that this behavior on the part of contemporary Americans is an example of traditional forms of thought breaking through to present consciousness, as these thought forms of the past had an independent life of their own. One
wonders to what extent it is valid to speak of such forms as if they were the same creatures reappearing in a different place at a different time. Granted that Dante's Purgatory bears strong resemblances to the cosmic mountain of traditional cultures, but is Dante's Purgatory a cosmic mountain? We can say that an ape bears strong resemblances to a human being, but is a human being an ape or an ape a human being? Where two forms are similar but not exactly the same, how does one decide whether the two forms belong to the same species or structural category or to different species or structural categories?

The same type of criticism must be leveled at the section on assimilation of the details of the cosmos to Jerusalem as Center; here again positive conclusions would seem contrived. Jerusalem does not seem to have sufficient existential import for Dante for him to need to relate everyday objects and events to it in order to invest them with meaning.

Although we may conclude that Jerusalem fulfilled for Dante a number of the functions that a Center of the World fulfilled for traditional man, nevertheless I do not think that Jerusalem was a Center for Dante. There are too many differences between Dante's view of Jerusalem and the traditional man's view of the Center for us to ascribe the title "Center" to it. In other words, I am quite willing to admit that Dante's view of space and Jerusalem's place in
that view evolved from the Center of the World conception in traditional culture, in the same way that human beings are said to have evolved from the apes; but I am not willing to agree that we see the structure of thought called "Center of the World" interacting in Dante's mind with other forms and emerging in his treatment of Jerusalem. It seems to me that such structures of thought are not metaphysical entities but rather are abstractions, and that they are not changeless but ever-evolving.

To be sure, Eliade is not contending that the Center of the World conception appears in exactly the same way in medieval culture as it does in traditional culture, nor that it even appears exactly the same way in any two particular traditional cultures. Eliade is definitely aware of the vast differences between the various cultures' formulations of the experience of the Center. Yet behind these different formulations, he would say, lies a changeless entity, an archetypal Center. This archetype is embodied in various forms, forms which may suffer mutilation, hibernation, evolution, and historical diffusion, but which nevertheless survive.153

And, not only do they survive, but they also apparently tend to approximate as nearly as possible to their archetype.

Any local goddess tends to become the Great Goddess; any village anywhere is the "Centre of the World," and any wizard whatever pretends, at the height of his ritual, to be the Universal Sovereign. It is this same tendency towards the archetype, towards the restoration of the perfect form—of which any myth or rite or divinity is only a variant, and often rather a pale one—that makes the history of religions possible. Without this, magico-religious experience would be continually creating transitory or evanescent forms of gods, myths, dogmas, etc.; and the student would be faced by a proliferation of ever new types impossible to set in order. But when once it is "realised"—"historicised"—the religious form tends to disengage itself from its conditions in time and space and to become universal, to return to the archetype.\(^{154}\)

According to Eliade, there are historical and non-historical aspects of such a structure as the Center of the World, just as there are historical and non-historical aspects of man. The historical aspects of the Center are all of those features which undergo change, all the ways in which the medieval experience of Center differed from that of the Hebrews and the Greeks and earlier cultures, all the ways in which the Indian experience of Center differed from the Chinese and from the Mesopotamian. The non-historical aspects of the Center is the archetype Center, the experience of Center common to all men in all times, the experience which arises

out of man's situation in the world. Eliade leaves open the question of whether theories of historical diffusion might account for the similarities that exist among the different cultural variants of structures like the Center of the World, but he provisionally accepts the archetypal explanation, an explanation that seems the most reasonable to him at this early stage of scholarly investigation of these problems.

Provisionally, then, let us accept the hypothesis that at least a certain zone of the subconscious is ruled by the archetypes which also dominate and organise conscious and transconscious experience. Hence we are entitled to regard the multiple variants of the same complexes of symbols (such as those of "ascension" and of "binding" and of "Center") as endless successions of "forms" which, on the different levels of dream, myth, ritual, theology, mysticism, metaphysics, etc., are trying to "realise" the archetype.

Because Eliade believes that there are probably archetypes which explain the similarities, and that there is a non-historical part of each human being where these archetypes reside, he uses a method in his research which correlates with his assumptions. This method is his morphological analysis, a method which is helpless to deal with the evolution of culture but which can deal with the similarities that may or may not exist between the thought structures of human beings in different cultures and at different periods of time.

155 Ibid., 117-18.
156 Ibid., 118-120.
157 Ibid., 120.
Eliade, I repeat, is looking for the stable and enduring structures of thought that underlie changing cultures, for the non-historical rather than the historical aspects of man's existence and experience. In all his works he spends little analysis on the differences and emphasizes the similarities that exist between similar structures of thought in different cultures and periods. In the particular problem with which we have been dealing he admits but deals extremely cursorily with the vast differences between the medieval Christian and the man of traditional culture: "It is needless to insist upon the radical differences that divide Christianity from the archaic world: they are too obvious to give rise to misunderstandings." In other words, Eliade gives almost no space to an analysis of the historical evolution of the Center of the World concept, to that which changes. Instead he devotes his research almost exclusively to an analysis of the manifestations of the archetypal Center as if these manifestations were all of the same species.

To what extent can we accept Eliade's methodology and the consequences of using it on our study of Jerusalem as a possible Center of the World for Dante? A person's answer to that question is dependent on his acceptance or rejection of the existence of a non-historical portion of

the human being and of archetypes. It depends, that is, on whether one has the Hellenistic urge to seek the underlying changelessness in the world of flux -- as Eliade seems to display -- or whether one is an "historicist," one who believes that there is nothing in the universe that is immune to the processes of change, growth, and decay. I cannot answer the question for anyone else, but I personally am an historicist, and I therefore am uneasy with morphological analysis. Anthropologists and other scholars are learning in recent years to create methods which can handle the phenomena of historical change, that can deal with processes of cultural evolution; I cannot at this time suggest any alternatives to Eliade's approach, but I am definitely not satisfied with it and I believe that there are or will be found alternative methods of cross-cultural comparison which are superior, and which are superior precisely because they deal with change, even where that change is slight.

Eliade's morphological analysis has helped us, I think, to shed considerable light on Dante's view of Jerusalem, but to take his analysis as yielding more than imprecise insights would be to ask too much of it. The Middle Ages were very different from traditional culture, and since a morphological analysis cannot deal with historical change, it cannot deal with the Middle Ages. In a sort of contrived way we could pin the label "Center of the World" on Dante's Jerusalem, but, as we have seen, there is so much
that is not explained by such a label; to reiterate our previous example, it is much like calling a human being an ape.

It is still theoretically conceivable at this point of our paper, however, that Rome was a Center of the World for Dante; to the medieval Christian Jerusalem had been abased and Rome exalted, so perhaps Rome had simply taken over the functions of Center forfeited by Jerusalem. Nevertheless, in the next chapter we will discover that Rome has even less claim to the label "Center of the World" than has Jerusalem. Rome was a spatial symbol with tremendous power for medieval men -- the city had much greater existential import than Jerusalem -- but Rome did not approximate the functions of a traditional Center as nearly as did Jerusalem.
CHAPTER III

ROME AS CENTER OF THE WORLD

FOR DANTE

I originally intended to divide the material in this chapter into sections similar to those of the previous chapter on Jerusalem, assuming that there was even more evidence for calling Rome a Center of the World than for calling Jerusalem a Center. In the course of collecting and organizing my research, however, it became increasingly clear to me that it would be exceedingly difficult to fabricate a case for "Rome as Navel of the World," "Rome as Cosmic Mountain," or "Rome as Axis Mundi." I have chosen, therefore, to divide the material into sections which better accommodate the role played by Rome in the thought of Dante. Rome was a spatial symbol with a great deal of meaning for medieval Christians, but Rome was not, in my opinion, a Center of the World; Rome does not closely enough approximate the structural aspects of Center as they have been outlined by Eliade, though, like Jerusalem, it bears certain resemblances to Eliade's structural category. The reasons for such statements will, I hope, become clear as we proceed.

Dante Considered Rome Sacred:
The Textual Evidence

What originally led me to believe that Rome might be a Center of the World for Dante were several statements in
which Dante speaks of Rome as a sacred city. Dante refers in one place, for example, to ancient Rome as "urbe sancta"\(^1\) of "holy city." In two other places he uses the adjective almus in connection with Rome: "alma Roma,"\(^2\) which again refers to ancient Rome, and "almae Urbis,"\(^3\) which he uses in connection with the Rome of his own day in a salutation to one of his letters. In his translation of the letters of Dante, Toynbee assures us that the adjective "almus was commonly used by mediaeval writers as a synonym of sanctus,"\(^4\) and he has no doubt that it should be translated as equivalent to sanctus in both of the instances we have cited here, i.e., to mean "sacred" or "holy" in English.

There are several more places in Dante's works where the city Rome is referred to as sacred, holy, glorious, or most noble. All these remaining mentions come in a single chapter of the Convivio, where Rome is variously called "la gloriosa Roma"\(^5\) or "Glorious Rome," "nobilissima Citta Romana"\(^6\) or "most noble city of Rome," and "santa Citta,"\(^7\)

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\(^1\) Dante, \textit{Mon.}, II, v, 106.
\(^2\) Dante, \textit{Inf.}, ii, 20.
\(^3\) Dante, \textit{Ep.} v, salutation trans. Toynbee, 58: "To all and singular the Princes of Italy, and the Senators of the Sacred City, . . . ."
\(^4\) Toynbee, notes on Dante's letters, in Dante, \textit{The Letters of Dante}, 46 (footnote 2).
\(^5\) Dante, \textit{Conv.}, IV, v, 32.
\(^6\) \textit{Ibid.}, 49.
\(^7\) \textit{Ibid.}, 53 and 179.
"sacred city" or "holy city." The conclusion to this chapter of the Convivio climaxes all of these references.

Wherefore we need demand no more in order to see that a special birth and special progress, thought out and ordained by God, was that of the holy city /Rome/. And verily I am of firm opinion that the stones that are fixed in her walls are worthy of reverence, and the soil where she sits more worthy than man can preach or prove.8

This sounds very much like the attitude towards sacred space that we have been surveying in traditional cultures, for Rome seems to be for Dante quite literally a sacred place.

Dante's attitude towards the Avignon papacy should also be considered here, for Dante seems to have objected so strongly to the Avignon papacy precisely because he believed the pope must rule from sacred Rome. Dante condemns Philip IV, calling him "the new Pilate"9 and "the pest of France,"10 and he associates Philip with imagery drawn from the Apocalypse, thereby portraying him as the savage lover and abductor of a harlot Church and papacy.11 Clement V is even more severely and explicitly indicted than is Philip. In the third bolgia of the eighth circle of Hell, Pope Nicholas III reveals that Pope Boniface VIII and, later, Clement V are soon to join him.

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8Ibid., 176-84.
9Dante, Purg., xx, 91.
10Ibid., vii, 109.
11Ibid., xxxii, 148-160.
Beneath my head are dragged the others who went before me in simony, flattened through the fissures of the rock, and down there I shall fall in my turn when he [Boniface VII] comes for whom I took thee when I put my hasty question [Pope Nicholas had mistaken Dante for Boniface VII]. But longer already is the time I have roasted my feet and stood thus inverted [in 1300 Nicholas had already been in Hell twenty years] than he shall stay planted with his feet red [Boniface would only have to wait eleven years until Clement V would come to Hell]; for after him shall come a lawless shepherd from the west of yet fouler deeds [Clement], one fit to cover both him and me. He shall be a new Jason, like him we read of in the Maccabees, and as with that one his king dealt softly, so shall he that rules France [Philip IV] do with him.¹²

Clement, like Boniface and Nicholas, was accused of simony by Dante, for Clement owed his election to Philip. But a principal reason for the severity of the denunciation seems to be that Clement removed the papal seat from Rome to Avignon. After the death of Clement, Dante had written a letter to the six Italian cardinals who were meeting with the remaining eighteen cardinals (all French and mostly Gascons) to elect Clement's successor. In that latter Dante reveals his feelings about the fact that neither the Papacy nor the Empire had its seat in Rome any longer.

Keep before the eyes of your mind, according to the measure of your imagination, the present condition of the city of Rome, a sight to move the pity even of Hannibal, not to say others, bereft as she now is of the one and the other of her luminaries, and sitting solitary and widowed, as is written above.

¹²Dante, Inf., xix, 73-87.
And this most chiefly is the concern of you who have known sacred Tiber as little children. For although it is the duty of all Italians to love the capital of Italy as the common source of their civility, yet is it justly held to be your part most especially to reverence it, since for you it is the source also of your very being. And if at the present time misery has consumed with grief and confounded with shame the rest of the inhabitants of Italy, who can doubt but that you must blush with shame, and must grieve, who have been the cause of so unwonted an eclipse of Rome or rather of her Sun? . . .

There will be amendment, however (although it cannot be but that the scar of infamy will disfigure with its mark the Apostolic See even until the fire for which the heavens that now are and the earth have been reserved), if you all, who were the authors of this deviation from the track, with one accord shall fight manfully for the Spouse of Christ, for the seat of the Spouse, which is Rome, for our Italy, and, to speak more at large, for the whole body politic now in pilgrimage on earth, so that from the wrestling-ground (surveyed on every side from the shores of ocean) of the contest that is already begun, offering yourselves with glory, you may be able to hear 'Glory in the highest,' and that the reproach of the Gascons, who, burning with abominable lust, strive to usurp for themselves the glory of the Italians, may be an example to posterity for all ages to come. [Italics added.]

The appropriate question is whether Dante considers the papal throne to be vacant when it is not located in Rome, that is, whether ruling from Rome is a necessary condition for the

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validity of papal power. That is a question which is, as far as I know, impossible to answer. Dante believes that Boniface was an invalid pope even though he ruled from Rome. In the Paradiso St. Peter refers to the simonist Boniface, saying that "he that usurps on earth my place, my place, my place, which in the sight of God is empty [Italics added]. has made of my tomb a sewer of blood and filth."\textsuperscript{14}

Clement also got his office by simony, so his position was likewise invalid regardless of where he ruled from. Dante does not consider the hypothetical case of a pope being elected legitimately and then moving the seat from Rome to Avignon (or to some other place), so it is impossible to say if ruling from Rome was necessary for the validity of papal power. In any case it seems clear that Dante thought it was a very terrible thing for the papal seat to be moved away from the "sacred Tiber," and that God himself would punish those who were responsible for moving the Papacy to Avignon, the Gascons and those cardinals who elected the Avignon popes.

There are similar themes involved in Dante's treatment of Rome as the seat of the Empire. In Dante's view there had been no emperor since 1250, when Frederick II died, Frederick being "the last emperor of the Romans (I say the last up to the present time, notwithstanding that Rudolf and

\textsuperscript{14}Dante, Par., xxvii, 22-26, trans. Sinclair, 387.
Adolf and Albert have been elected since his death and that of his descendants). . . ."\textsuperscript{15} Sinclair explains what he considers to be Dante's reason for seeing the imperial throne as vacant.

For Dante, not only was the Papacy morally vacant at this time, but also the throne of the Empire had been vacant ever since the death of Frederick II in 1250, the nominal Emperors of the past half-century never having appeared in Italy and not having been crowned in Rome. But 'not for all time shall the eagle be without heir' \textsuperscript{Purg.}, xxxiii, 37-38, and when Dante wrote a new Emperor, the chivalrous and ambitious Henry of Luxemburg, had been elected, had undertaken his momentous expedition to Italy, and had already crossed the Alps. . . . Henry's coming was the confirmation of his \textsuperscript{Dante's} dearest hopes and the assurance of their glorious fulfilment. Dante sent an appeal to the princes and peoples of Italy which began: 'Behold, now is the accepted time, when signs are rising of consolation and peace; for a new day brightens, showing dawn, which already thins the shades of long calamity' \textsuperscript{Ep. v}, 1-5. Guelph Florence was the centre of resistance to Henry and Dante wrote in bitter indignation as 'Florentine and exile undeservedly to the accursed Florentines within,' who, 'first and only, fearful of the Yoke of liberty, rage against the glory of the Roman Prince, the King of the world and God's minister' \textsuperscript{Ep. vi}, salutation and 30-32. A third letter he wrote to 'the most holy conqueror and sole lord, the Lord Henry, by divine providence King of the Romans, ever Augustus' \textsuperscript{Ep. vii}, salutation\textsuperscript{7}, . Henry was crowned in Rome in 1312 . . . \textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{16}Sinclair, commentary on Dante's \textit{Purgatorio}, 444-45.
It seems fair to say that Dante thought that the emperor must be crowned in Rome in order to have legitimate power, and that he ought also to rule from Rome (though ruling from elsewhere would probably not invalidate his power, in contrast to failure to be crowned in Rome which would invalidate his power).

A similar case is presented by Dante's attitude towards Constantine's moving the seat of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople; in Dante's opinion that action was contrary to the will of God, an opinion voiced through Justinian in the Paradiso.

After Constantine turned back the Eagle against the course of heaven which it had followed behind him of old that took Lavinia to wife Æneas, who married the Latin princess Lavinia, journeyed from East to West, i.e., from Troy to Italy, for two hundred years and more the bird of God remained on the bounds of Europe, near the mountains from which it first came forth; and there it ruled the world under the shadow of the sacred wings, passing from hand to hand, and, so changing, came into mine [Justinian's].

Charles Davis interprets this passage and related passages in the following comments.

The spark of Empire begins at Troy rather than in Latium; the bird of God comes first from the Asian mountains and finds its destination on the Tiber; the movement of the sky is from East to West and so should be the movement of the Empire; Constantine commits a grave error when he makes himself a Greek and reverses this direction. Perhaps

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17 Dante, Par., vi, 1-9, trans. Sinclair, 87.
Dante is attempting here to make clear-cut the distinction between the civilizing, creative people and the barbarians who resisted or accepted its mission. The symbol of the fire is revealing; the Trojans were its first bearers and it grew brighter until with Augustus it gave light to the whole world. But Rome is its destination rather than its beginning, and it was Constantine's blunder to have reversed a process which had already reached its culmination.\(^{18}\)

It is the will of God for the world to be united under one imperial power, and that imperial power ought to rule from Rome, from the sacred city chosen by God himself. Rome is unquestionably a chosen city, a city elected in past time to be sacred, yet a city which continues to be sacred. According to Dante, we have seen, both the pope and the emperor ought to rule from Rome not temporarily but permanently. Constantine was wrong to move the seat of the empire in the fourth century, and the popes were wrong to move to Avignon in the fourteenth century.

In conclusion, then, we have seen that Rome was for Dante a sacred city, sacred when it was originally chosen by God — a process which began with the Trojans and culminated in the reign of Augustus, during which Christ was born — and sacred still in Dante's own day — we have seen this both in his attitude towards the proper seat of the

Empire and the Papacy and also in his use of phrases such as "santa Citta" to refer to the Rome of his own day. Dante also hoped for a restoration of Roman rule, for a time of reformation and renewal based on the model of the Golden Age of Augustus and Christ. Dante believed at first that Henry VII might be the figure who would accomplish this restoration, and, although Henry's death only one year after his crowning in Rome destroyed Dante's hope for a restoration within his own lifetime, it nevertheless did not dampen his hope for a new age to come. In this age Rome would continue to be the sacred city, the seat of the two rightful world rulers of the world monarchy, a reformed pope supreme over all men on earth in religious affairs and a Roman emperor supreme over all men in secular affairs. As we will remember from the first two chapters, one of the characteristics of a Center of the World is that it is permanently sacred. In Dante's Rome we have found such a place, sacred in the time of Classical Rome, sacred in the time of Constantine, sacred in Dante's own age, and sacred in the entire future to come. But being permanently sacred is only one characteristic of a Center; how does Dante's Rome appear when compared with other features of traditional man's view of space?

19 We can see this also in Dante's delineation of only three kinds of pilgrims: 1) those traveling to the Holy Land, 2) those going to St. James' tomb in Galicia, and 3) those journeying to Rome. See Dante, La Vita Nuova, xli, 51.
How Rome Had Been Sanctified
According to Dante

According to Eliade's analysis a Center of the World in traditional cultures is sanctified by the gods in mythical times, in *illo tempore*. Dante's Rome, in contrast, was sanctified *in historical time* and sanctified by a God who chose to act through history (i.e., profane time) rather than to act only in sacred time. In his letter to the Italian princes and the senators of Rome, Dante argued that Providence "at times has wrought through man as though through new heavens" and that God had worked through the Romans during the establishment of the Roman Empire and in its continuation in Dante's own time.

Be ye not like the ignorant, deceiving your own selves, after the manner of them that dream, and say in their hearts, 'We have no Lord.' For all within the compass of the heavens is his garden and his lake; for 'the sea is God's, and He made it, and His hands prepared the dry land.' Wherefore it is made manifest by the wonders that have been wrought that God ordained the Roman Prince beforehand, and the Church confesses that He afterward confirmed him by the word of the Word. Verily if 'from the creation of the world the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,' and if through the things that are known those that are unknown are revealed to us, it is without doubt within the capacity of human understanding to comprehend the Mover of the heavens, and His will, from the motion thereof. This pre-ordination then will be readily apprehended even by such as are but casual observers. For if we survey the past, from the first tiny spark of this fire, namely from the day when hospitality was denied to the Argives by the Phrygians, and, if time allow, review the events of the world's history down
to the triumphs of Octavian, we shall see that certain of them have altogether transcended the highest pitch of human effort, and that God at times has wrought through man as though through new heavens. For it is not always we who act, but sometimes we are the instruments of God; and the human will, in which liberty is by nature inherent, at times receives direction untrammelled by earthly affections, and subject to the Eternal Will oft-times unconsciously becomes the minister thereof. Italics added.

This passage aptly introduces the two tasks at hand in this section. We must seek to understand, first of all, why Dante sees in the establishment of the Roman Empire a set of events that "transcended the highest pitch of human effort"; that is, what is Dante's conception of the providential role in the founding and continuation of the Roman Empire? The second task is basically an epistemological problem: starting with Dante's assumption that "it is without doubt within the capacity of human understanding to comprehend the Mover of the heavens, and His will," we go on to ask: What are Dante's arguments in support of his thesis that Providence ordained the Romans and only the Romans to govern the entire world population?

"God ordained the Roman Prince beforehand," says Dante in the above passage, "and the Church confesses that He afterward confirmed him by the word of the Word." Dante describes this process of Roman sanctification in considerable detail in his De Monarchia and also in his Convivio (a

\[ \text{Dante, Ep. v, 110-41, trans. Toynbee, 61-62.} \]

\[ \text{Dante, Mon., II.} \]
more popularized account)\textsuperscript{22} to it in his letters\textsuperscript{23} and in
the \textit{Commedia}.\textsuperscript{24} The process of Roman sanctification begins
with the founding of the Trojan–Roman people by Aeneas and
culminates in the golden age of Christ and Augustus; Dante
explains this very concisely in the \textit{Convivio}.

When the immeasurable divine goodness willed
to reconform to itself the human creature (which
was parted from God by the sin of the disobedience
of the first man, and thereby deformed), it was
appointed in the most lofty and united divine
consistory of the Trinity that the Son of God
should descend to earth to effect this harmony.
And inasmuch as at his coming into the world it
was meet that not only heaven but earth should
be in its best disposition,—and the best dis­
position of earth is when it is a monarchy, that
is to say, when it is all subject to one prince,
as aforesaid,—therefore that people and that
city who were destined to bring this about, (to
wit the glorious Rome), were ordained by the
divine providence. And because the abode wherein
the celestial king must enter ought to be most
clean and pure there was likewise ordained a most
holy family from the which after many merits
should be born a woman supremely good amongst
all the rest, who should be the treasure house
of the Son of God. And this family is that of
David. And the triumph and honour of the human
race, May to wit, was born from it. Wherefore it
is written in Isaiah 'a rod shall spring out of
the root of Jesse and a flower shall spring up
from his root.' and Jesse was the father of the
above-said David. And it was all at the same
point of time wherein David was born and Rome
was born, that is to say Aeneas came into Italy
from Troy, which was the origin of the most noble
city of Rome, as testify the scriptures. \textit{Whereby
the divine election of the Roman empire is manifest

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\textsuperscript{22}Dante, \textit{Conv.}, IV, iv, 83-131, and v, 21-79.
\textsuperscript{24}Dante, \textit{Inf.}, ii, 20-24; \textit{Purg.}, xvi, 106; \textit{Par.},
xxvii, 61-63.
\end{flushright}
enough: to wit by the birth of the holy city being at the same time as the root of the family of Mary. And incidentally we may note that since the heaven itself began to roll it ne'er was in better disposition than at the time when he who made it and who rules it came down below; as even now by virtue of their arts the mathematicians may retrace. Nor was the world ever so perfectly disposed, nor shall be again, as then when it was guided by the voice of one sole prince and commander of the Roman people, as Luke the evangelist beareth witness. And therefore there was universal peace which never was before nor shall be, and the ship of the human fellowship was speeding straight to the due port in tranquil voyage. Oh ineffable and incomprehensible wisdom of God, which against thy coming into Syria didst make so great preparation beforehand in heaven above and here in Italy! \(^25\) Italics added: the final exclamation point conforms with the punctuation in the original (Moore and Toynbee edition of the Opere) rather than with the Wicksteed translation.

We need to focus our attention on the two phases of the sanctification process which are delineated in the above passage. One of these is the coincidence of the beginning of the Trojan-Roman line and the beginning of David's line; Dante construes these two events to have taken place at the same time in history, a coincidence he then interprets as highly significant. The coincidence of the origins of these two peoples is an event which "transcended the highest pitch of human effort," an event which must be interpreted as being willed by Providence rather than just by man, \(^26\) an event in


\(^26\) Cf. Dante, Inf., ii, 20-24, where Dante claims that "in the heaven of the Empyrean he [Aeneas] was chosen to be father of glorious Rome...."
which God accomplished his purposes through history. The other and third phase which Dante describes in the above passage is the reign of Augustus, a period of universal peace and unity during which Christ was born. Again Dante finds meaning in a coincidence of events; here the coincidence of Augustus and Christ, and he interprets the events as having been willed by God to occur simultaneously.

In between these two phases—the first and the third—lies another, the period of the development of the Roman people, the time between the founding of the Trojan-Roman line and the reign of Augustus Caesar during which Christ was born. Dante describes this second phase concisely in the same chapter of the Convivio which we have been quoting.

Not only had she [Rome] a special birth from God but special progress; for briefly beginning from Romulus, who was her first father, until her most perfect age, that is to say the time of the aforesaid emperor, she advanced not by human but by divine activities. For if we consider the seven kings who first governed her, Tomulus, Numa, Tullus, Ancus and the Tarquin kings, who were like the guardians and protectors of her childhood, we may find from the scriptures of the Roman histories, and especially from Titus Livius, that they were all of diverse nature according to the needs of the period of time which was proceeding in their day. Then if we consider her more advanced youth, when she was emancipated from the guardianship of royalty by Brutus, the first consul, even until Caesar, the first supreme prince, we shall find that she was uplifted not by human but by divine citizens, into whom was inspired not human but divine love, in their love of her. And this could not nor might not be, save for some special end, purposed by God in so great an infusion of heaven. And who shall say that it was without divine inspiration that Fabricius refused an almost infinite quantity of gold because he would not abandon his
fatherland; that Curius, whom the Samnites tried to corrupt, refused a huge mass of gold for love of his fatherland, saying that the Roman citizens desired to possess not gold but the possessors of the gold; that Mutius burnt his own hand because he had missed the blow whereby he had thought to deliver Rome? Who shall say of Torquatus, who judged his own son to death for love of the public good, that he endured this without divine help? And the above-said Brutus, in like manner? Who shall say of the Decii and of the Drusi, who laid down their life for their country? And of the captive Regulus, sent from Carthage to Rome to exchange the captive Carthaginians against himself and the other captive Romans, who shall say that when the legation had withdrawn, the advice he gave, for love of Rome, against himself, was prompted only by human nature? Who shall say of Quintus Cincinnatus, who was appointed dictator and taken from the plough, and after his term of office laid it down of his own accord, and went back to his ploughing; who shall say of Camillus, banished and cast into exile, that he came to free Rome from her foes, and when he had freed her withdrew of his own will into exile so as not to offend the authority of the senate, without divine instigation? O most hallowed bosom of Cato, who shall presume to speak of thee? Verily none can speak of thee more worthily than by keeping silence, and following the example of Jerome, who in his poem to the Bible, where he comes to tell of Paul, says that it were better to hold one's peace than to come short in speech.  

Having cited the superhuman virtues and deeds of the heroes of Roman history, Dante goes on to draw his conclusion and cite even more cases of Roman virtue and heroism.

Of a surety it must be manifest, when we remember the life of these and of the other divine citizens, that not without some light of the divine

goodness, superadded to the excellence of their own nature, such marvels were done. And it must be manifest that these most excellent ones were instruments wherewith the divine providence proceeded in the Roman empire, wherein many a time the arm of God was seen to be present. And did not God set his own hand to the battle in which the Albans fought with the Romans, at the beginning, for the headship of rule, when one only Roman held in his hands the freedom of Rome? Did not God interpose with his own hand when the Franks had taken all Rome and were seizing the capitol by stealth at night, and only the voice of a goose gave notice of it? Did not God interpose with his own hand when in the war of Hannibal so many citizens had perished that three bushels of rings were carried off to Africa, and the Romans were ready to abandon their land had not that blessed Scipio, young as he was, undertaken his expedition into Africa for the deliverance of Rome? And did not God interpose with his own hand when a recent citizen, of small estate, Tully to wit, defended the liberty of Rome against so great a citizen as was Catiline? Yea, verily. Wherefore we need demand no more in order to see that a special birth and special progress, thought out and ordained by God, was that of the holy city. And verily I am of firm opinion that the stones that are fixed in her walls are worthy of reverence, and the soil where she sits more worthy than man can preach or prove. 28

Although we are now only part way through our analysis, we can already predict our eventual conclusion, extrapolating this conclusion from the context in which we find Dante saying that the very stones of Rome's walls and the ground on which Rome sits are worthy of reverence. This context concerns historical events, not mythical ones, and historical persons, not gods and goddesses. 29 It is true that God


29For a necessary qualification on the historicity of the ancient Romans as Dante views them, see the conclusion to this paper.
is here seen to be manipulating the historical process to some extent, but the founding and continuation of the Roman people up to their culmination in the period of Augustus constitute no extra-temporal hierophany; rather they are examples of God's working through history to accomplish his purposes.

A fourth phase of the process of sanctification prepares the way for the transformation of the Roman Empire into the Holy Roman Empire. It begins with the birth of Christ and His establishment of the Church and the Papacy, and it also notably includes the Crucifixion—the vengeance on the ancient sin of Adam—and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus—the vengeance on the vengeance. These latter two events were explicated adequately in the last chapter, where we spoke of the debasement of Jerusalem and the exaltation of Rome, the debasement of Jerusalem occurring because the Jews forfeited their title of chosen people by refusing to accept Christ. There would be no point in repeating any of that analysis here. The important thing is only to realize that there is a period between the beginning of Christianity and the conversion of the Roman emperors when, as Dante conceived it, the Empire was still carrying out God's will but doing it unawares.

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30 See above, 140-46.
A fifth phase is the transformation of the Roman Empire into the Holy Roman Empire and the continuation of the Church and the Holy Roman Empire into Dante’s own period and beyond, into the future hoped—for restoration of twofold Roman rule, worthy pope and worthy emperor.  

The gracious providence of the Eternal King, who in his goodness ever rules the affairs of the world above, yet ceases not to look down upon our concerns here below, committed to the Holy Roman Empire the governance of human affairs, to the end that mankind might repose in the peace of so powerful a protection, and everywhere, as nature demands, might live as citizens of an ordered world. And though the proof of this is to be found in holy write, and though the ancients relying on reason alone bear witness thereto, yet is it no small confirmation of the truth, that when the throne of Augustus is vacant, the whole world goes out of course, the helmsman and rowers slumber in the ship of Peter, and unhappy Italy, forsaken and abandoned to private control, and bereft of all public guidance, is tossed with such buffeting of winds and waves as no words can describe, nay as even the Italians in their woe can scarce measure with their tears . . . .

But you, who transgress every law of God and man/Dante is writing to the "iniquitous" Florentines/, and whom the insatiable greed of avarice has urged all too willing into every crime, does the dread of the second death not haunt you, seeing that you first and you alone, shrinking from the yoke of liberty, have murmured against the glory of the Roman Emperor, the king of the earth, and minister of God; and under cover of prescriptive right, refusing the duty of submission due to him, have chosen rather to rise

Cf. Dante’s denunciation of the degenerate Church in Purg., xvi, 106-12, trans. Sinclair, 215: “Rome, which made the world good, used to have two suns which made plain the one way and the other, that of the world and that of God. The one has quenched the other and the sword is joined to the crook, and the one together with the other must force go ill, since, joined, the one does not fear the other.”
up in the madness of rebellion? Have you to learn, senseless and perverse as you are, that public right can be subject to no reckoning by prescription, but must endure so long as time itself endures? Verily the sacred precepts of the law declare, and human reason after inquiry has decided, that public control of affairs, however long neglected, can never become of no effect, nor be superseded, however much it be weakened. For nothing which tends to the advantage of all can be destroyed, or even impaired, without injury to all—a thing contrary to the intention of God and nature, and which would be utterly abhorrent to the opinion of all mankind. Wherefore, then, being disabused of such an idle conceit, do you abandon the Holy Empire, and, like the men of Babel once more, seek to found new kingdoms, so that there shall be one polity of Florence, and another of Rome?32

Here we have a clear statement of Dante's reasons for maintaining the continuing sacredness of Rome in this fifth phase.

To emphasize the permanent character of this sacredness we could bring in two sets of evidence. The first set of evidence concerns the continuing extension of Roman power through space.

The glorious dominion of the Romans is confined neither by the frontiers of Italy, nor by the coast-line of three-cornered Europe. For although it has been constrained by violence to narrow the bounds of its government, yet by indefeasible right it everywhere stretches as far as the waves of Amphitrite, and scarce deigns to be circumscribed by the ineffectual waters of the Ocean. For it is written for our behoof: 'From the fair line of Troy a Caesar shall be born, who shall bound his empire by the ocean, his glory by the stars'.33

Dante thus looks at Emperor Henry VII as "the sole ruler of the world," and he exhorts Henry, "for whom the whole world is looking, be ashamed to be entangled in such a narrow corner of the world." 

The second set of evidence concerns the continuance of Roman dominion temporally, i.e., into the future. Dante hoped that Henry VII would restore proper Roman dominion, and after Henry's death he still hoped for the same restoration through some other, yet unknown instrument of divine providence: "the high Providence which by Scipio saved for Rome the glory of the world will, as I conceive, bring speedy succour." In Dante's view there was no future time in which the Romans would not be the rightful world rulers.

Because there never was, nor shall ever be, a nature more sweet in the exercise of lordship, more firm in its maintenance, nor more subtle in acquiring it than the nature of the Latin folk (as may be seen by experience), and especially that of the hallowed people in whom the high Trojan blood was infused, God chose that people for such office. So we see that since it might not be attained without the greatest virtue, nor exercised without the greatest and most humane benignity, this was the people who was best disposed to it. Wherefore at the beginning the Roman people got it not by force, but by the divine providence which transends all reason. And herein doth Virgil agree, in the first of the Aeneid, where, speaking in the person of God, he says: 'To

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34 Ibid., 125-26, trans. Toynbee, 103.
them (to wit, to the Romans) I assign no limit of things nor of time. To them have I given empire without end.  

The process of Roman sanctification which began in historical time thus continued in historical time; the process of Roman sanctification which was first carried out by historical individuals (the Trojans and Romans were, of course, pagans, so they were in no sense saints; nor did Dante consciously regard them as mythical heroes or supermen was continued by historical individuals.) There are a couple of possible objections to this conclusion, one concerning the semi-manipulative role assumed by God in his "historical" process—does this destroy the historical nature of this process and make it instead very much like a hierophany in traditional culture? Also, could it be that the Trojans and Romans were not seen as people but were instead mythicized and therefore assumed the functions of traditional gods and goddesses? With these objections we will contend in a later section of this paper.  

Let us turn, then, to the other primarily epistemological problem we isolated in the early pages of this section: What arguments does Dante elicit in support of his thesis that Providence ordained the Romans and only the Romans to govern the entire world population? Dante, we know

\footnote{Dante, \textit{Conv.}, IV, iv, 98-119, trans. Wicksteed, 244.}

\footnote{See conclusion to the paper.}
from his own admission, had not always believed that God had chosen the Roman people and guided them to world leadership. Nor was he furthering a common opinion of medieval scholars when he argued that the right of imperium belonged only to the Romans; other medieval writers disagreed, notably Augustine and Orosius. So it was necessary for Dante to argue in considerable detail on behalf of his thesis; he does just this in Book II of his De Monarchia. Our approach, then, will be to analyze the arguments he puts forth in Book II of De Monarchia.

There are at least two different ways in which we might classify Dante's arguments: by distinguishing 1) arguments based on rational principles from arguments based on principles of the Christian faith and 2) arguments which show God acting through history or through nature from arguments showing God acting by supernatural, extra-historical intervention. The first way is Dante's own distinction, by

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39 Dante, Mon., II, i, 11-27, trans. Wicksteed; in Dante, The Latin Works of Dante, trans. A. G. Ferrers Howell and Philip H. Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1904), 173-74: "Time was that I, too, marvelled that the Roman people had been raised to supremacy on the terrestrial globe, with none to resist. For it was my thought, as I looked upon the surface only, that they had gained it by no right but merely by force of arms. But now that I have pierced with the eyes of my mind to the marrow of it, and have seen by most convincing signs that it was divine providence which effected this, my wonder has vanished, and a certain derisive contempt comes in its place when I understand how the nations muttered against the pre-eminence of the Roman people, when I see the peoples meditating vain things, as I myself was once wont to do; when, moreover, I see the grievous sight of kings and princes agreeing in this alone, to oppose their Lord and his anointed Roman prince."

which he divides the first eleven chapters of Book II from the last two chapters.

Hitherto this proposition has been established by arguments which find their chief support in the principles of reason; but from this point forward it must be demonstrated once again from the principles of Christian faith. 41

The latter way is one more appropriate to the purposes of this chapter, for through this distinction it becomes clear that for Dante both nature and history are basically independent of their Creator. A stone is not sacred because it fell from heaven or because a god used it to kill an enemy of his people; a stone is good because it exists, and although all being comes from God, being is good in itself and independent of its Creator. Likewise with history. An historical event is not important only if it is a hierophany or can be related to the gods or God; although God created time and governs history, He seldom or never intervenes in a way which contradicts man's free will, and therefore history is also basically independent of its Creator. In other words, Dante's view of nature and history make it possible to demarcate him decisively from traditional man; let us turn, then, to the data and see how it supports our preliminary hypothesis.

We will deal here with Dante's arguments one by one, indicating Dante's classification of it as well as our own. Our arrangement will tend from the more historical, rational, and

41 Dante, Mon., II, xi, 81-85, trans. Wicksteed, 216.
secular to the more religious, non-historical arguments requiring faith for their acceptance.

1) According to one argument, "whosoever purposes the good of the commonwealth, purposes the goal of right," an assumption Dante demonstrates by quoting Tully and Seneca. Dante goes on to measure Roman intentions by this standard.

Now that the Roman people, in subjecting the terrestrial globe to itself, did contemplate the aforesaid good, their deeds declare; for in those deeds, banishing all greed, which is ever hostile to the common weal, and loving universal peace, with liberty, that people, holy, compassionate, and glorious, is seen to have taken no thought for its own advantage so long as it might look to the weal of the human race. Whence it is well written, 'The Roman empire springs from the fount of compassion.'

To substantiate this generalization, Dante draws testimony from Cicero and Livy concerning the apparent intentions of the Roman Senate, Cincinnatus, Fabricius, Camillus, Brutus, Mucius, the Decii, and Cato. Dante concludes the argument with some passages reasoning that whoever contemplates rightgoals does right; in other words, that right ends imply right means to those ends. By Dante's own classification this is an argument according to rational principles rather than principles based on acceptance of the Christian faith.

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42 Ibid., v, 1-2, trans. Wicksteed, 188.
43 Ibid., 15-30.
46 Ibid., vi.
According to our classification it is a secular, historical argument, first of all because it shows God acting through history and through nature rather than by supernatural, extrahistorical intervention. Secondly, it is an argument which is verifiable or refutable by empirical facts; whatever we might think about the historical accuracy of Livy's and Cicero's estimation of Roman motives, Dante thought Livy and Cicero were reporting historical fact. He also thought that his assumption that "whosoever purposes the good of the commonwealth, purposes the goal of right" was a statement ascertained by natural reason (as opposed to revelation).

2) By a second argument Dante again affirms that the Romans are the rightful world rulers on what he considers purely rational principles and what we consider historical-natural grounds. Dante summarizes his proof as follows:

It was meet for the noblest people to be set above all others. The Roman people was the noblest. Therefore it was meet for it to be set above all others.

That the noblest people should be set above all others Dante demonstrates by reason, employing quotes from Aristotle, Juvenal, and Scriptures. That the Roman people was the noblest he proves by testimony of the ancients on the nobility of Aeneas, the founder of the Trojan-Roman line. We may

47 Ibid., iii.
48 Ibid., 5-9, trans. Wicksteed, 179.
argue with his premises, and we may argue considerably with
the "factual" data on which he bases his ideas, (especially
with a) the idea that nobility could be passed on hereditarily
from Aeneas to his descendent, and b) the historicity and
nobility of Aeneas) but the point is that Dante thought he
was reporting historical fact and conclusions logically
reasoned from historical facts. Further, God is again shown
here acting through nature and through history rather than
by extrahistorical and supernatural means.

3) A third argument shows God acting through nature
and to a lesser extent through history but again not acting
through extrahistorical or supernatural intervention.

Nature . . . clearly ordains things with refer­
ence to their capacities, and this reference
is the foundation of Right on which things are
based by nature. From this it follows that
natural order in things cannot come to pass
without Right, since the foundation of Right
is inseparably bound to the foundation of
order. The preservation of this order is
therefore necessarily Right. . . . As nature
cannot attain through one man an end necessi­
tating a multiplicity of actions and a
multitude of men in action, nature must produce
many men ordained for diverse activities. To
this, beside the higher influence, the virtues
and properties of the lower sphere contribute
much. Hence we find individual men and whole
nations born apt for government, and others for
subjection and service, . . . There is no
doubt but that nature set apart in the world
a place and a people for universal sovereignty;
otherwise she would be deficient in herself,
which is impossible. What was this place, and
who this people, moreover, is sufficiently ob­
vious in what has been said above, and in what
shall be added, further on. They were Rome
and her citizens or people.49

49Dante, Mon., II, vii, 14-22, 42-55, and 59-66; in
Dante, The De Monarchia of Dante Alighieri, edited with trans­
lation and notes by Aurelia Henry (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin
and Company, 1904), 100-103.
What is non-historical about God's actions as Dante has here depicted them is that there is only one people and city chosen for universal sovereignty; it makes much more sense to talk of God acting through history prior to the reign of Augustus than it does to say that God is acting through history from Augustus to the time of Dante and in the future years after Dante. Nature, which is God's instrument, nevertheless does not act arbitrarily in either its development of Rome from Aeneas to Augustus or in its preservation of the rightfulness of Roman world-rule; rather Nature always acts according to its ordinary and regular processes. In other words, there is no hint here of supernatural intervention; nor does Dante appeal to revelation to substantiate his argument but instead limits himself to natural reasoning. Whatever we may think about the truth or falsity of Dante's ideas on natural law, we must admit that, by constructing his arguments according to rational principles, Dante leaves himself open to empirical verification or refutation.

4) With this fourth argument we enter into a different realm than we have been in for the past three arguments. God is here conceived as intervening in the historical process in what appears to us to be a supernatural way. God decides duels and contests, claims Dante, so therefore God must have decided those preeminently important duels and contests by which Rome won the race for world dominion. First of all, regarding contests:
That people, then, which was victorious over all the contestants for Empire gained its victory by the decree of God. For as it is of deeper concern to God to adjust a universal contention than a particular one, and as even in particular contentions the decree of God is sought by the contestants, . . . therefore undoubtedly among the contestants for the Empire of the world, victory ensured from a decree of God. That among the rivals for world-empire the Roman people came off victor will be clear if we consider the contestants and the prize or goal toward which they strove. This prize or goal was sovereign power over all mortals, or what we mean by Empire. This was attained by none save by the Roman people, not only the first but the sole contestant to reach the goal contended for, as will be at once explained. [Italics added]

Dante goes on to enumerate the various contestants for world empire over whom Rome triumphed: the Assyrians under King Ninus, the Egyptians, under their king, Vesoges, the Persians, first under Cyrus and later under Darius, and Alexander, the Macedonian king. Dante draws testimony concerning these contests from Orosius, Ovid, Lucan, and Livy; Vergil, Lucan, Boethius, and Luke are his witnesses to the claim that "the jurisdiction of the Romans embraced the whole world." In respect to duels, Dante's comments are similar. "Whatever is acquired by single combat is acquired with Right," he says, though duels are a last resort: "When

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50 Ibid., ix, 1-21, trans. Henry, 110-111.
51 Ibid., 22-80.
52 Ibid., 81-105.

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we have exhausted all other ways of obtaining judgment in a dispute, we may finally turn to this remedy by single combat, compelled thereto by the necessity of justice."\textsuperscript{55} Dante again enumerates\textsuperscript{56} a number of duels by which Romans won wars with other peoples, cases in which battles were finally decided by duels between representatives of the two sides. Needless to add, in all these cases, the Romans were the victors, and Dante concludes that the hand of God was present in the repeated ascendancy of the Roman individuals over their non-Roman competitors.

Who is then so dull of wit that he fails to see that this splendid people gained the crown of a world-wide realm by right of single combat? Verily, a Roman might say with the Apostle addressing Timothy, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness"—that is to say, laid up in the eternal providence of God.\textsuperscript{57}

For purposes of analysis it would be helpful to schematicize Dante's differentiation of the various ways in which man can know God's will.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{I. God's judgment is frequently manifest to human reason.}

A. Human reason can attain unaided to knowledge of the laws of nature.

B. Human reason cannot by itself understand but can be lifted by faith to understand those things which are revealed in Scripture.

\textbf{II. God's judgment is frequently hidden, so that man needs some special grace in order to know it.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.}, 26-30, trans. Henry, 117.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Ibid.}, xi, 8-63.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Ibid.}, 64-71, trans. Henry, 123.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Ibid.}, viii.}
A. Some cases of hidden judgment are cases of simple revelation.

1. Simple revelation can be by a spontaneous act of God.
   a. This spontaneous act may be expressed directly.
   b. This spontaneous act may alternatively be expressed by a sign.

2. Simple revelation can be an answer to prayer.

B. Other cases of hidden judgment are cases of judicial award.

1. Of cases of judicial award, some are decided by lot.

2. Of cases of judicial award, others are decided by contest.
   a. One kind of contest is that in which there are many compatants or contestants, such as an athletic race.
   b. The other kind of contest is a duel, where there are only two contestants.

In regard to epistemology, then, Dante here distinguishes clearly between cases in which it is possible to know God's will by natural reason alone and cases in which grace is necessary—either indirectly, in the sense that grace is required for faith which is, in turn, required to understand many parts of Scripture; or directly, in cases where God's judgment is hidden. According to this analysis, both duels and contests fall within the category of cases in which God's judgment is hidden and in which man therefore needs some special grace in order to know it. However, this
analysis (the one schematized above), found in chapter viii of De Monarchia, conflicts somewhat with the distinction Dante draws at the end of chapter xi.

Thus far the argument has progressed through reason based chiefly on rational principles, but from now on it shall be re-demonstrated through the principles of Christian faith. \[Italics added.\]^59 Dante is referring back to all arguments discussed up to the end of chapter xi as arguments based on rational principles, and among these previous arguments is that concerning duels and contests, which comprises chapters viii through xi. What significance are we to draw from this inconsistency on Dante's part?

Apparently this argument concerning duels and contests is for Dante on the borderline between two different classes, the class based on rational principles, and the class based on revelation; and his indecision reinforces our own uneasiness about certain tendencies of his mind. How can Dante believe that duels and contests are decided by God and that man can know God's will in these matters by reason? This seems to be another case similar to that of the Garden of Eden,\(^60\) where reason was invading the area of myth and magic. Just as medievals frequently assumed that the Garden of Eden existed in literal fact, and spent much rational and empirical effort trying to figure out where it was and what

\(^{59}\)Ibid., xi, 81-85, trans. Henry, 123.

\(^{60}\)See above, 74-97.
it was like, so also Dante is here mixing magic and reason. To us it seems that the outcome of duels is determined solely by natural causes and has nothing at all to do with God, so determining God's judgment by duel or contest seems to us a lamentable form of magic (with the qualification that most modern men's attitude towards the war, is hardly different from Dante's, with right supposedly prevailing in the eventual outcome of wars). But by asserting that duels and contests were decided by God and that God's judgment in these matters could be known by reason, Dante was making his claims vulnerable to refutation by empirical-rational methods, just as he was in the case of Eden.

With Dante we see occurring a separation of the human, natural domain from the divine, supernatural domain; in other words, secularization is occurring. Dante is trying to differentiate between those things which can be known by reason and those which require grace, between the natural and supernatural, between free will and Providence, between the human and the divine, meanwhile enlarging the human domain of reason, nature, and free will and jealously guarding its independence. One step in this secularization process seems to be to extend the human domain into what used to be the divine realm, in this case by classifying the argument concerning duels and contests in the category of arguments based on rational principles. A second step is to use reason to deny the truth or reality of such divine
actions as deciding duels and contests, but this further step is one which Dante did not take.

5) Dante's fifth argument has the same problems as the fourth.

Whatever is brought to its perfection by the help of miracles is willed of God, and therefore comes to pass by Right. The truth of this is patent from what Thomas says in his third book against the Heathen: "A miracle is that which is done through divine agency beyond the commonly instituted order of things." Here he proves that the working of miracles is competent to God alone, . . . And it is established through the testimony of illustrious authors Dante goes on to cite supernatural occurrences reported by Lucan, Livy, and Vergil that God revealed His will in miracles in order that the Roman Empire might be brought to completion. 61

On the basis of these classical authors' reports, Dante concludes "that the Roman Empire gained its perfection with the approval of miracles, that it was therefore willed of God, and consequently that it was and is by Right." 62 Here again we have an argument which, by the classification system delineated in chapter viii ought to require grace for acceptance, and which, by the classification given at the end of chapter xi, is called an argument based on rational principles. The same comments directed to the fourth argument are appropriate here.


6) This argument is one which Dante says is based on principles of the Christian faith rather than on principles of reason. Basically the argument runs as follows:

I affirm, therefore, that if the Roman Empire did not come to be with Right, Christ in His birth authorized an injustice. This consequent is false; therefore the contradictory of the antecedent is true, . . .

The falsity of this consequent need not be proved to those of the faith; for he who is of the faith will concede its falsity; if he does not do so, he is not of the faith; and if he is not of the faith, this argument concerns him not.63

In other words, Christ's choosing to be born under the aegis was a kind of hierophany or preeminent sign by which Rome was sanctified. Comments on this argument are the same as for the seventh and eighth.

7) Dante's seventh argument is the second of two based on principles of the Christian faith rather than principles of reason.

And if the Roman Empire did not exist by Right, the sin of Adam was not punished in Christ. This, however, is false; so the contradictory from which it follows is true.64

In other words, Christ's choosing to be crucified under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire was a kind of hierophany or preeminent sign by which Rome was sanctified.

8) Although Dante does not use this as an argument in the De Monarchia, he refers several times in his works to

63Ibid., xii, 24-34, trans. Henry, 125-26.
64Ibid., xiii, 1-5, trans. Henry, 128.
Rome as the burial place of the two greatest apostles, Peter and Paul, and also as the scene of the martyrdom of many other saints. Peter and Paul were, according to Dante, the two who together put Rome on the good path. 65

We too who confess the same Father and Son, the same God and Man, yea, the same Mother and Virgin, we for whose sake and for whose salvation thrice was the question repeated concerning love and it was said: 'Peter, feed my sheep,' that is to say the sacred fold, Rome, to which, after so many triumphs and glories, Christ by word and deed confirmed the empire of the world, that Rome which the same Peter, and Paul the preacher to the Gentiles, by the sprinkling of their own blood consecrated as the Apostolic See, over her, widowed and abandoned, we, who come not after the woes we have to bewail, but now mourn in consequence of them, are, like Jeremiah, constrained to lament. 66

Thus writes Dante to the Italian cardinals in reference to the sanctification of Rome by Peter and Paul.

Even though these last three arguments—numbers six through eight—depend on acceptance of the Christian faith, nevertheless, even with these arguments do we stay within the historical-natural human domain. This is so for two reasons. One is that there is implicit in these three arguments the assumption that reality is rationally ordered by natural law, that is, that God chooses to act through nature, and that man can understand these natural laws by reason ordered by logic. All of this is evident from Dante's prominent use of logic in the sixth and seventh arguments. The

65Dante, Par., xxiv, 61-63; cf. ix, 139-41 and xxvii, 25.

other reason is that Dante's God reveals himself through history: in Christ, who entered the historical process as a time-bound human being, and in such men as Peter, Paul and other martyrs, apostles, and saints of Christianity. So even in the least historical and least rational-natural of Dante's arguments, still the rational-natural-historical elements dominate.

In conclusion, we have seen that Dante's Rome was sanctified in historical time by a God who chose to act through history and through nature rather than to act only in sacred time. We have seen this in Dante's conception of the providential role in the founding and continuation of the Roman Empire. And we have seen it in Dante's arguments in support of his thesis that Providence ordained the Romans and only the Romans to govern the entire world population. Therefore, it seems that we must sharply demarcate Dante's Rome from traditional man's Center of the World; traditional man's Center was sanctified by the gods in mythical time, but Dante's Rome was sanctified through history and through nature.

Rome: Sacred Place, Sacred People, Sacred Empire, Sacred Church, Or Heaven?

At this point in the paper we should clarify an important matter germane to our discussion. When Dante speaks of the "santa Citta" or "la gloriosa Roma" it is by no means certain that he is referring to a spatial entity, in other
words, that he is referring to the city Rome in the narrow sense of the word "city." Indeed, Rome for Dante is not solely a city occupying a certain number of square miles but also a people, an empire, a church, and even heaven. At the end of this section we will turn to the problem of evaluation, but for the time being let us suspend judgment on the possible significance of this multi-dimensional meaning of Rome for Dante.

Proceeding, then, to consideration of the data, let us first take up the problem of Rome meaning a people, the "populus Romanus." In our discussion of the sanctification of Rome we have frequently referred to the Trojan-Roman line as if that people might be the Rome Dante was talking about, the city Rome perhaps just being the city of the chosen people. Such a position would be reinforced by Dante's frequent references to the Roman people like "divini cittadini non umani," divine citizens, not human, or simply "divini cittadini." To take other examples, Dante speaks of the Romans as "popolo santo," meaning holy people, or, even more emphatically, "populus ille sanctus, pius, et gloriosus." In other places he asserts that the Roman people were the

67 Dante, Conv., IV, v, 101-102.
68 Ibid., 147.
69 Ibid., iv, 103.
70 Dante, Mon., II, v, 37.
the noblest,⁷¹ and that a strong testimony to their nobility is found in "our divine poet Virgil, who throughout the Aeneid testifies in everlasting remembrance that that most glorious king Aeneas was father of the Roman people."⁷² In two similar places he refers to the Trojans as the "noble seed of the Romans," or "de' Romani il gentil seme,"⁷³ and says that "the father of the Roman people, and consequently that people itself, was the noblest under heaven."⁷⁴ In yet other places he calls the Romans a splendid or glorious people, "gloriosum populum,"⁷⁵ and speaks of individual Romans with similar epithets.⁷⁶

This list of extravagant titles attached to the Roman people or to individual Romans brings up the question of exactly what constituted Roman citizenship. Who belongs to the Roman people and how does one gain membership? One possible position is that of Nancy Lenkeith, described in her treatise Dante and the Legend of Rome.

⁷¹Ibid., iii, 7-8.

⁷²Ibid., 28-32: "... divinus poeta noster Virgilius, per totam Aeneidem, gloriosissimum regem Aeneam, patrem Romani populi fuisse testatur in memoriam sempiternam."

⁷³Dante, Inf., xxvi, 60.

⁷⁴Dante, Mon., II, iii, 119-22: "... cui non satis persuasum est, Romani populi patrem, et per consequens ipsum populum, nobilissimum fuisse sub coelo?"

⁷⁵Ibid., xi, 65-66.

⁷⁶Ibid., iii, 32-33; Conv., IV, v, 118 and vi, 112-14.
For Dante, as for all other Italians, "Romanism" was primarily a racial issue; it was a question of blood. The good people were of Roman descent: non-Romans were barbarians, i.e., bad people. We have seen in the first chapter how this myth was fostered in the earliest days of Italian history and how it has survived to the present time. Dante shares all the prejudices of his fellow-countrymen.  

Lenkeith cites the appropriate cases, where Dante "attributes the political confusion of Italy to the Lombards," where he says that the corruption of his "native Florence is the doing of the 'beasts from Fiesole' who have supplanted the holy seed of the Roman founders of the city," and where he asserts the moral superiority of the Roman people.

Nevertheless, Lenkeith's position seems to me to be too simplistic, too prone to read modern nationalism and racism into places where it does not exist.

An alternative and more sophisticated interpretation of this same evidence is offered by Charles Davis, who concludes that membership in the *populus Romanus* is a matter of will.

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77 Nancy Lenkeith, *Dante and the Legend of Röme* ("medieval and Renaissance Studies," Supplement II; printed in Leiden, The Netherlands for the Warburg Institute, University of London: E. J. Brill, 1952), 92; cf. 3-4 and 98.  
80 Ibid., 92-93; Lenkeith cites Dante, *Conv.* , IV, iv.
The Fiesolans were set over against the Romans, and the Christian Baptistry against the unhallowed idol of Mars; for Dante these were the images of a contemporary struggle between a disorderly barbarism and the restraints and creative energy of civilization. 81

At a later point Davis expands this analysis.

When Dante, moreover, speaks of the *altosangue troiano* which changes the *gente latina* (admitting all its virtues for the tasks of government and conquest) into *quello popolo santo...cioe Roma*, he is talking about something at the same time narrower and wider than Italy. It is as narrow as the meeting in the underworld between Aeneas and Anchises and as wide as the whole human race. The word *sangue* is to be taken figuratively, as symbolizing civilization, and not literally, in any crude racial sense. Aeneas's blood was mixed from the people of three continents; it was in no way 'pure.' Universality rather than exclusiveness determined its nobility. A clue to Dante's viewpoint is also given by his contrasting of *Latinos* with *Turnos* [*Ep. vii, sec 5*]. It denotes no difference in race, for Turnus drew his followers from all the tribes of central Italy, including some of the subjects of King Latinus; it rather separates those who rebelled against civilization from those who accepted it and were willing to participate in its blessings.

The similar terms *Fiesolani* and *Romani* have already been discussed; with them a like principle holds. One faction is able to see the blessings of a rational liberty, which consists in serving rightful authority. The other prefers the slavery of selfish desires. Only the members of the first group belong to the *populus Romanus*, an association of wills rather than of blood, depending *ab unitate que est in voluntatibus* [*Mon., I, xv, 66*]. It is limited by no city walls or national boundaries, and the terms *Italian* and *Latin* do not express its whole meaning. For Virgil, these adjectives are interchangeable with *Roman*; for Dante, those Italians

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81Davis, Dante and the Idea of Rome, 100. It seems necessary to qualify what Davis is claiming here. I think it is basically true that the dichotomy in Dante's works between the barbarians and the Romans represents the dichotomy
who resist Rome are barbarians and those foreigners who serve Rome are Romans. Albert is tedesco, for he neglected her; Justinian and Charlemagne and Henry are her citizens and the heads of her people. They are heirs of the fire kindled at Troy and the bearers of law and civilization.32

between the forces of disorder and the order and creative energy of civilization. However, for Dante there was no clearcut distinction between metaphysical structure and symbolic meaning; the symbolic meaning (order versus civilization) has its cause in the metaphysical structure of reality (descent from the Roman people or descent from the barbarian tribes). I am basing my interpretation of Dante on his argument in Convivio IV on the relationship between nobility and virtue and on the causes and nature of nobility. Dante rejects the opinion of the emperor and of the majority of his contemporaries that nobility is a matter of hereditary wealth (chapters i, iii, and viii, especially viii, 71-79). Nobility is not a matter of wealth but of virtue. But, can nobility be inherited? Dante nowhere explicitly considers this question, but it seems that inherited nobility is a necessary but not a sufficient cause of nobility in the offspring. Not all who descend from noble races are noble, but all who are virtuous are noble; therefore nobleness has a larger scope and extent than virtue, and virtue thus proceeds from nobility (chapter xix). "No one, because he can say 'I am of such and such a race,' should believe that he has nobleness, unless these fruits of virtue are in him. . . . Wherefore let not him of the Uberti of Florence, nor him of the Visconti of Milan, say: 'Because I am of such a race I am noble;' for the divine seed falls not upon the race, that is the stock, but falls upon the several persons; and, as will be shown below, the stock does not ennable the several persons, but the several persons ennable the stock." (Chapter xx, 21-24 and 38-46, trans. Wicksteed, 326.) God grants the grace of virtue and blessedness to those persons whose bodies and souls are disposed to receive it; the receptivity of the person to virtue depends, in turn, upon several factors: 1) the composition of the impregnating seed (determined by the nobility of the father?), 2) the disposition and virtue of the impregnator, and 3) the celestial influences operative at the time of impregnation, determining the way in which the ovum is physically prepared to submit to the action of the generative virtue, the way in which the generative virtue acts in articulating the foetus, and the way in which the celestial virtue draws into actuality the potential life-principal contained in the seed. Then by special divine act the intellectual soul is infused into the foetus. The better all these factors, the more virtuous and more noble the person.
By this analysis, then, Rome becomes a spatial symbol for civilization and civilizing forces, a spatial symbol for order.

The same analysis could be extended to Rome as seat of the Papacy, as Church and Apostolic See. "The populus Romanus is not separate from the populus Christianus," and one has only to study the Paradiso to see that Christian faith, hope, and love are the preeminent ordering influences at work in the world and in each individual's life. Dante's journey begins, by the grace of God, with visions of disorder (=sin) in the Inferno and continues with visions of order in the Purgatorio and culminates with the mystical vision of the Perfect Order in the Paradiso. The Christian way of life is the ordered way. Rome as seat of the Papacy and head of the Church becomes a spatial symbol for the ordering forces thus created. Apparently Dante thinks that God worked through special actions and through the celestial influences (the varying effects of the changing constellations) to produce a race of people, the Roman people, whose many noble and virtuous individual members produced and virtuous and noble race, a race tending to perpetuate itself through factors 1 and 2 above. The symbolic meaning of Roman versus barbarian is therefore based on the metaphysical structure of reality.

82 Ibid., 113-14; cf. 169 and 208ff. Also cf. Dante, Ep. vi, 90-92, where the term "civitas gloriosa" is used to describe Saguntum because of loyalty to Rome, Saguntum having suffered much for nine months on account of this loyalty, yet remaining loyal in spite of the suffering which the loyalty entailed.

83 Ibid., 195.

84 For references to Rome as seat of the Papacy and Church see Dante, Ep. viii, 22, 142, 164, and 179; Purg., xvi, 106-12 and 127; Purg., xix, 107.
of the Creator, for Christ the Logos; Rome even takes on the meaning of heaven: "that Rome of which Christ is Roman;"85 Rome, in a sense, then, is the Perfect Order, in addition to being the orderial instrument on earth of the Perfect Order.

The same analysis could be extended, finally, to Rome as seat of the Empire. Without the Roman Emperor the world reverts to chaos, says Dante.

The gracious providence of the Eternal King, who in his goodness ever rules the affairs of the world above, yet ceases not to look down upon our concerns here below, committed to the Holy Roman Empire the governance of human affairs, to the end that mankind might repose in the peace of so powerful a protection, and everywhere, as nature demands, might live as citizens of an ordered world. And though the proof of this is to be found in holy writ, and though the ancients relying on reason alone bear witness thereto, yet is it no small confirmation of the truth, that when the throne of Augustus is vacant, the whole world goes out of course, the helmsman and rowers slumber in the ship of Peter, and unhappy Italy, forsaken and abandoned to private control, and bereft of all public guidance is tossed with such buffeting of winds and waves as no words can describe, . . . 86

85 Dante, Purg., xxxii, 100-102.

86 Dante, Ep. vi, 1-18, trans Toynbee, 77; cf. Conv., IV, ix, 100-108, and Purg., vi, 76-151; cf. also Ep. vii, 1-24, trans. Toynbee, 100-101: "As the boundless love of God bears witness, the heritage of peace was left to us, that in its wondrous sweetness the hardships of our warfare might be softened, and that by its practice we might earn the joys of the triumphant Fatherland. But the envy of the ancient and implacable enemy, who ever secretly plots against the prosperity of mankind, having dispossessed some of their own free will, has, owing to the absence of our guardian, im­ piously stripped us others against our will. Wherefore we have long wept by the waters of Confusion, and unceasingly
With this in mind, it should not surprise us that many extravagant titles are applied to the Empire and to the Emperor, especially to Henry VII to whom Dante looked for the inauguration of a new age. The Empire is called "sacrosancto imperio Romanorum" and "pium . . . imperium," and Dante speaks similarly of "the glory of the Roman Emperor, the king of the earth, and minister of God," of the glorious dominion of the Romans," "Romanorum gloriosa potestas," and of "Romana nobilitas." All manner of extravagant epithets and addresses are attached to Henry VII: "the anointed One, the Roman Prince (meaning specifically Henry VII) the "most auspicious passage of the holy Henry into Italy," "the most glorious and most fortunate Conqueror, prayed for the protection of the just king, who should destroy the satellites of the cruel tyrant, and should establish us again under our own justice. But when thou, the successor of Caesar and of Augustus, o'erleaping the ridge of the Apennines, didst bring back the venerated Tarpeian standards, forthwith our deep sighing was stayed, and the flood of the long-awaited Sun, a new hope of a better age shone abroad upon Italy. Then many, going before their wishes in their joy, sang with Maro of the reign of Saturn, and of the return of the Virgin."

87 Dante, Ep. vi, 4.
88 Ibid., 50-51.
89 Ibid., 31, trans. Toynbee, 77.
90 Dante, Ep. vii, 53-54.
91 Dante, Mon., II, iv, 58.
92 Ibid., i, 27.
and sole Lord, the Lord Henry, by Divine Providence King of
the Romans, and ever Augustus," 94 "the guardian of the Roman
Empire, the triumphant Henry, elect of God, thirsting not for
his own but for the public good," 95 "minister of God, the son
of the Church, and the furtherer of the glory of Rome," 96 and
"lofty Henry, who shall come to set Italy straight before she
is ready." 97 Dante alludes to Henry as the new Moses 98 and
exhorts his fellow Italians to accept him and his rule, going
as far as to apply Isaiah's prophecy of the Redeemer to him 99
and to address Henry with the words which St. John spoke to
Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins
of the world." 100

It is highly significant that these extravagant
titles are also applied to laws. To the "iniquitous Florent­
tines," those perverse in will, those barbarians descended
from Fiesole, Dante writes:

Wherefore let all who in mad presumption have
risen up against this most manifest will of God
the committing to the Holy Roman Empire of the
right of world dominion, now grow pale at the

94 Ibid., salutation, trans. Toynbee, 100.
95 Dante, Ep. vi, 180-82, trans. Toynbee, 81.
96 Dante, Ep., vii, 36-38.
98 Dante, Ep. v, especially 10-22.
99 Dante, Ep., vi, 184-89.
100 Dante, Ep., vii, 44-46.
thought of the judgement of the stern Judge, which is nigh at hand, if so be the sword of Him who saith, 'Vengeance is mine,' be not fallen out of heaven.

But you, who transgress every law of God and man, and whom the insatiable greed of avarice has urged all too willing into every crime, does the dread of the second death not haunt you, seeing that you first and you alone, shrinking from the yoke of liberty, have murmured against the glory of the Roman Emperor, the king of the earth, and minister of God; and under cover of prescriptive right, refusing the duty of submission due to him, have chosen rather to rise up in the madness of rebellion? have you to learn, senseless and perverse as you are, that public right can be subject to no reckoning by prescription, but must endure so long as time itself endures? Verily the sacred precepts of the law declare, and human reason after inquiry has decided, that public control of affairs, however long neglected can never become of no effect, nor be superseded, however much it be weakened. For nothing which tends to the advantage of all can be destroyed, or even impaired, without injury to all—a thing contrary to the intention of God and nature, and which would be utterly abhorrent to the opinion of all mankind. Wherefore, then, being disabused of such an idle conceit, do you abandon the Holy Empire, and, like the men of Babel once more, seek to found new kingdoms, so that there shall be one polity of Florence, and another of Rome? 

Continuing the argument further on in the same letter, Dante explains to his sinful fellow Florentines what the sacred laws are.

The most sacred laws /sacratissimis legibus/ . . . are those laws made in the likeness of natural justice, the observance whereof, if it be joyous, if it be free, is not only no servitude, but to him who observes with understanding is manifestly in itself the most perfect liberty. For what else

is this liberty but the free passage from will to act, which the laws make easy for those who obey them? Seeing, then, that they only are free who of their own will submit to the law, what do you call yourselves who, while you make pretence of a love of liberty, in defiance of very law conspire against the Prince who is the giver of the law? Italics added.

Several things are important to notice here. First of all, in line with what Davis argued about the populus Romanus being a matter of the will rather than of race, Dante here speaks of the necessity of men obeying the sacred laws of their own free will. Secondly, it is essential to note that to obey these sacred laws one must give one's allegiance to the Roman Empire and to the Roman Prince, the Empire being apparently the embodiment of "laws made in the likeness of natural justice" and the Roman Prince being the "giver of the law." Finally, we can compare the extravagant titles assigned to Emperor Henry VII and what Dante says about Emperor Rudolf and Emperor Albert.

O German Albert, who abandonest her that is become untamed and savage Italy and shouldst bestride her saddle-bow, just judgement from the stars fall upon thy blood and be it so strange and manifest that thy successor may have fear of it! For thou and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{102}Ibid., 155-67.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{103}Dante, Purg. vii, 91-96, trans. Sinclair, 99: }\]

"He that sits highest and has the look of having been heedless of his duty and does not move his lips with the singing of the rest, was Rudolph, the Emperor, who might have healed the wounds of slain Italy, so that it is now too late for another to restore her."
thy father, held back yonder by greed, have suffered the garden of the Empire to be desolate. . . . Come and see thy Rome, that weeps, widowed and solitary, and cries night and day: 'Caesar, my Lord, why dost thou deny me thy companionship?'

Henry VII wins Dante's highest praise because he wills to act in accordance with the sacred laws; he himself becomes sacred because he wills to cooperate with God rather than fight his Creator. Rudolf and Albert, on the other hand, win no such praise from Dante but only criticism. They do not belong to the populus Romanus or the popolo santo because they—who never come to Rome but instead leave the city abandoned and desolate—will to sin instead of surrendering themselves to God's will.

We may say, therefore, that Rome as Empire is a source of order in the world, a source of order that comes from the Perfect Order. God himself willed that Rome and the Romans should rule the earth, and therefore without the Roman Emperor the world reverts to Chaos. The embodiment of order is found in the sacred laws and in the Roman Emperor as giver of the law. The man who wilfully cooperates with the sacred laws belongs to the populus Romanus, and he who does not cooperate is a barbarian. All of these various elements find their culminating expression in the symbol of the Eagle in the Paradiso.

The Eagle is a Roman Eagle and represents a divine and perfect order among men, the model on which human order

104 Ibid., vi, 97-105 and 112-14, trans. Sinclair, 85 and 87.

105 Dante, Par., xviii, 70-136, and xix, 1-148.
ought to be patterned, and the promise of the world's final order and peace. It is no coincidence that the rulers condemned by the Eagle are those who have gone against the Holy Roman Empire, including Emperor Albert, whom we have already discussed. Nor is it a coincidence that the Eagle speaks of Adam, the common father of the human race and therefore a source of the unity of all men, and of the judgment of non-Christians by Divine Justice. The Roman Empire is the one institution which, according to the purposes of God, at one time comprised all mankind and ought to continue to do so. Not only is Rome the twofold ordering instrument of the Perfect Order on earth—God orders human affairs through the Church and through the Empire—Rome is also the Perfect Order itself, and again in a twofold sense: the Roman Eagle represents heaven in the sense of Empire and the Church Triumphant represents Rome in the sense of Church.

We can draw two conclusions from the analysis we have carried out in this section. First of all, when Dante says that the stones in Rome's walls are worthy of reverence and that the very ground on which the city sits is holy, we are hesitant to take him too literally. We are in agreement on this with Davis' interpretation of the same statement of Dante's.

This reference to the city itself as a physical fact, to the walls and stones of Rome, is especially interesting in view of the total absence in Dante of the cult of 'ruin-worship,' that adoration of the tangible remains of the past which would later find in Petrarch so
indefatigable an exponent. There is also a lack of any reference to municipal theories of the special privileges of the Roman townsfolk and of their presumed right to elect the emperor. Indeed, Dante seems to have felt for them contempt rather than admiration; he denounced not only their speech, 'non vulgare, sed potius tristiloquim—ytalorum vulgarium omnium esse turpissimum,' but also their customs, 'nec mirum, cum etiam morum habituumque deformitate pre cunctis videantur fetere.'

Rome was not important to him archaeologically or constitutionally, but historically. She was chosen by God to prepare the world for Christ, and the patriotism of her citizens was divinely inspired. Divine, too, was the aid that had saved her Capitol from violation, and her pagan walls themselves were hallowed. Such awe before Rome's past was not new. Yet it had never been expressed with more force, and certainly never with more emphasis on its providential meaning.

It is not simply sacred space we are dealing with in Dante, it is sacred people, sacred empire, sacred church; and it is sacredness inasmuch as individual men fulfill the plan of their Creator.

Second of all, we may conclude that all of these various meanings of sacred Rome—as people, as empire, as church, as heaven—merge into one symbol. An important indication of this merging is that Dante fails frequently to distinguish between these various meanings of Rome. Just as the sacred fold, the Church as populus Christianus, is Rome, so also is there frequently no distinction made between the Roman Empire, the populus Romanus, and the city


107 Dante, Ep. viii, 22.
Rome. Sometimes only two of these entities merge rather than all three, so that the Empire and the Roman people are not distinguished, or so that the city Rome and the Roman Empire are spoken of as if they were identical. In other places however, Rome is spoken of as "seat of the Empire," making clear the distinction between Rome as city and Rome as Empire. Dante likewise draws the distinction sometimes between Rome as city and Rome as citizens or people.

There is no doubt but that nature set apart in the world a place and a people for universal sovereignty; otherwise she would be deficient in herself, which is impossible. What was this place, and who this people, moreover, is sufficiently obvious in what has been said above, and in what shall be added further on. They were Rome and her citizens or people.

108 Dante, Mon., II, ix, 81, and xi, 58. In both of these cases, Dante uses the word Roma in a way that could mean either the Roman Empire or the Roman people under the jurisdiction of the Empire. See also Purg., vi, 112-14.

109 Dante, Conv., IV, iii, 39, and iv, 87.

110 Ibid., iv, 124-31, trans. Wicksteed, 244-45: "And thus not force but reason, and moreover divine reason, was the beginning of the Roman Empire [Sic] Empire [del Romano Imperio] and that this is so may be seen by two most manifest reasons, which show that this city [quella citta] was imperial, and had special birth and special progress from God." See also Inf., ii, 20-24, trans. Sinclair, 35: "In the heaven of the Empyrean he [Aeneas] was chosen to be father of glorious Rome and of her Empire, and both of these were established—if we would speak rightly of them—to be the holy place where sits the successor of the great Peter."

111 Dante, Mon., II, x, 4; Conv., IV, v, 30-32; Ep. viii, sec. 10.

Sometimes, then, Dante distinguishes the facets of meaning of the symbol Rome, and other times he speaks of Rome as if it were one entity. From this fact and from the meanings of the various facets, it seems that Rome to Dante is an integrating, centripetal force, order in the midst of chaos, civilization as opposed to barbarism, a united humanity as opposed to disunity, justice instead of corruption, the way of salvation as opposed to sin, Order instead of Disorder.

Since Rome is basically a spatial concept, and since Rome symbolizes order out of chaos, it is in some ways similar to the functions of Center of the World in traditional society. Can we agree with Eliade that there is an archetypal Center at work here? Using the example of the construction of a mandala, Eliade explains how the Center of the World experience of traditional man can become refined and sophisticated but how that experience basically remains the same as traditional man's.

It is unnecessary, then, to insist that the history of religions records a considerable number of ritual constructions of a "Centre." Let us, however, note one thing which is of importance in our view: to the degree that the ancient holy places, temples or altars, lose their religious efficacy, people discover and apply other geomantic, architectural or iconographic formulas which, in the end, sometimes astonishingly enough, represent the same symbolism of the "Centre." To give a single example: the construction of a mandala. The term itself means "a circle"; . . . In fact a mandala represents a whole series of circles, concentric or otherwise, inscribed within a square; and in this diagram, drawn on the ground by means of coloured threads or coloured
rice powder, the various divinities of the Tantric pantheon are arranged in order. The mandala thus represents an *imago mundi* and at the same time a symbolic pantheon. The initiation of the neophyte consists, among other things, in his entering into the different zones and gaining access to the different levels of the *mandala*.

But every Indian temple, seen from above, is a *mandala*. Any Indian temple is, like a *mandala*, a microcosm and at the same time a pantheon. Why, then, need one construct a *mandala*—why did they want a new "Centre of the World"? Simply because, for certain devotees, who felt in need of a more authentic and a deeper religious experience, the traditional ritual had become fossilised: the construction of a fire altar or the ascent of the terraces of a temple no longer enabled them to rediscover their "centre." Unlike archaic man or the man of Vedic times, the Tantric devotee had need of a personal experience to reactivate certain primordial symbols in his consciousness. That is why, moreover, some Tantric schools rejected the external *mandala*, and had recourse to interiorised *mandalas*. These could be of two kinds: first, a purely mental construction, which acted as a "support" for meditation, or, alternatively, an identification of the *mandala* in his own body.

As we have seen, the *mandala* can be used in support, either at the same time or successively, of a concrete ritual or an act of spiritual concentration or, again, of a technique of mystical physiology. This multivalency, this applicability to multiple although closely comparable planes, is a characteristic of the symbolism of the Centre in general. This is easily understandable, since every human being tends, even unconsciously, towards the Centre, and towards his own centre, where he can find integral reality—sacredness. /Italics added./ This desire, so deeply rooted in man, to find himself at the very heart of the real—at the Centre of the World, the place of communication with Heaven—explains the ubiquitous use of "Centres of the World."\(^{113}\)

\(^{113}\) *Eliade, Images and Symbols*, 52-54.
Eliade goes on later to analyze the legend of the quest of the holy grail in the Middle Ages, showing one way in which the symbolism of the Center was active in the medieval mind.

We should not like to terminate this study without having recalled one European myth which, though only indirectly concerned with the symbolism and rites of the Centre, combines and integrates them in a still vaster symbolism. We refer to an episode in the legend of Parsifal and the Fisher King, concerning the mysterious malady that paralysed the old King who held the secret of the Graal. It was not he alone who suffered; everything around him was falling into ruins, crumbling away—the palace, the towers and the gardens. Animals no longer bred, trees bore no more fruit, the springs were drying up. Many doctors had tried to cure the Fisher King, all without the least success. The knights were arriving there day and night, each of them asking first of all for news of the King's health. But one knight—poor, unknown and even slightly ridiculous—took the liberty of disregarding ceremony and politeness: his name was Parsifal. Paying no attention to courtly custom, he made straight for the King and, addressing him without any preamble, asked: "Where is the Graal?" In that very instant, everything is transformed: the King rises from his bed of suffering, the rivers and fountains flow once more, vegetation grows again, and the castle is miraculously restored. Those few words of Parsifal had been enough to regenerate the whole of Nature. But those few words propound the central question, the one question that can arouse not only the Fisher King but the whole Cosmos: Where is the supreme reality, the sacred, the Centre of Life and the source of immortality, where is the Holy Graal? No one had thought, until then, of asking that central question—and the world was perishing because of that metaphysical and religious indifference, because of lack of imagination and absence of desire for reality.

That brief episode of a great European myth reveals to us at least one neglected aspect of the symbolism of Centre: that there is not only an intimate interconnection between the universal
life and the salvation of man; but that it is enough only to raise the question of salvation, to pose the central problem; that is, the problem— for the life of the cosmos to be for ever renewed.\textsuperscript{114}

If Eliade can extend the analysis of the Center as far as this, then it seems certain that he would interpret Dante's Rome symbolism as a symbolism of the Center. But is this valid— can we agree with his interpretation?

It seems to me that to extend the archetypal Center experience so far is to dilute it to the point of meaninglessness. We might as well call it an experience of order, and comment that the experience of order and disorder is, as far as we can tell, common to all men in recorded history. We could add that, since men exist in time and space, man experiences order and disorder temporally and spatially, and temporal and spatial symbolisms are therefore used to express this experience of the nature and causes of order and disorder. Dante used a symbol, Rome, that was basically spatial and yet also temporal to express his experience of order, but that is no reason to argue that his use of the symbol, Rome, resulted from an archetypal Center imbedded in his unconscious. That appears to me to be too rigid an explanation, where such rigid detail is not necessary to account for the phenomenon. To repeat myself, it is enough to say that the experience of order and disorder is fundamental to mankind, and that one part of this is man's need to find order in space and in time  

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Ibid.}, 55-56.
(and also to come to some kind of satisfactory understanding of the cause of order and disorder in space and time). At this point in our discussion I see no reason why one must postulate an archetypal Center in order to understand the workings of Dante's mind concerning Rome.

The Role of Italy in Dante's View of Space

There is one final avenue of analysis whereby we might adduce evidence of Dante's affinity for the traditional view of space, and that lies in his attitude towards Italy. While Dante is not an Italian nationalist, he does give Rome and Italy a preeminent spot in his universalist scheme.

The poet Dante was jealous of his nation's cultural, political, and religious prestige. Was he therefore already an Italian nationalist?

If we interpret nationalism not merely as patriotic pride in a region or language or ethnic group but also as devotion to a national state, to a political entity which embodies and intensifies these loyalties, our answer must be negative. For Dante Italy was not a state. She was rather the heart and origin of the greatest state, the universal Empire. Separateness and autonomy would have destroyed her unique position, far loftier than that of independent kingdoms like England or France, though in the absence of a strong emperor more wretched. Italy was the jurisdictional head of the world; her king was the emperor and she needed no other, if he could be persuaded to rule from Rome as his rightful capital, and if she could be persuaded to submit to his residence. In his political letters Dante urged her inhabitants to receive Henry VII as their rightful lord and to bow to his regimen /Ep. v, sec. 6/. His title was not King of Italy but King of the Romans, of those willing to submit to his authority both
inside and outside of Italy. But the Italians were closer to Rome, more intimately a part of Roman history and civilization, than any other people. Italy was the cradle of the Empire, and that Empire, at least in Dante's theory, was worldwide. The poet's firm belief in the universality of Roman power made any exclusive theory of nationalism impossible. Dante condemned France for her usurpations and Florence for her intransigence; he reacted violently against the growing strength of particularist sentiment in his own time. In his great invective against Italy he attributed her anarchy not only to the desertion of Rome by the Emperor but also to the refusal of the Italians to recognize their rightful master. As long as she continued to follow her selfish desires, Italy, he said, would be a ship without a helmsman, devoid of justice and peace.115

Italy for Dante is the noblest region of Europe, "Europae regione nobilissima."116 And she is the noblest region not because Italians are a superior race or a superior nation, but rather because Italy was closer to Rome and therefore closer to the source of civilization.117 This is reminiscent


116 Dante, Mon., II, iii, 116-17.

117 Davis, Dante and the Idea of Rome, 187-89: "It is doubtful whether Dante had any concept of a 'kingdom of Italy' in the sense alleged by Ercole and his followers; Italy to him was certainly a geographical and cultural unity, but not a self-sufficient political one, for it was the centre of the greatest polity, the Empire, and separateness would have cost it glory rather than added it. It was more intimately the emperor's than any other part of his domains, but the difference was less of kind than of degree. Italy was simply closer to Rome and therefore more susceptible to the influences of her culture and her law. There

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of some elements we have met in traditional society, where one tries to get as close as possible to the sacred space which marks the Center of the World. In a description of some elements in traditional culture that is similar to Eliade's analysis, Eric Voegelin points out that the traditional man views a diminution of being and order as one gets farther away from the Center.

The stream of divine being that flows from the divine source through the omphalos into social order thus will not penetrate the world evenly into the farthest corner. The omphalos is a civilizational center from which the substance of order radiates, with diminishing strength, toward the periphery. 118

In the case of the Hebrews this meant that the people of the omphalos—namely the Hebrews—were thought to be "under a special obligation to abide by the order of the Lord.

What was pardonable in the outlying parts of the world was

is no racialism in Dante's attitude, either here, or in Letter VII when he speaks of the Gascons as burning with a fierce cupidty to usurp for themselves the glory of the Latins /Ep. viii, sec. 9/. The Trojan and Latin semen is the ability to receive and transmit civilization; the barbarism of the Lombards, like the lust of the Gascons, is unwillingness to submit to rightful authority and to make use of the blessings of the legitimate rule of Rome. For Dante the word Latin generally means Italian but with overtones of culture and history which join the ancient past to the present. It can also be used to indicate not the member of a people, but the follower of an ideal /Ep. vii, sec. 5/;

... Thus, paradoxically to our eyes and yet quite naturally to Dante's Rome and her universalism are the basis of his Italian pride. . . . There is no contradiction between Dante's 'nationalism' and 'universalism' for one depends on the other and both are united by the glory and authority of Rome."

an unpardonable offense if committed by the people of the center.\textsuperscript{119} This reminds us of Dante's letters of the Italian cardinals, to the Florentines, and to the people and princes of Italy, wherein he exhorts the Italians to accept their responsibilities of world leadership, through election of an Italian pope, acceptance of the Roman Emperor Henry VII, and cessation of factionalisms in favor of a universal world empire. For the ancient Romans the "milestone on the forum, in the shape of an omphalos, was the symbol of the world empire,"\textsuperscript{120} and for Dante, too, Rome was the center of the world empire, Italy as the nearest area to the omphalos being the noblest region of the world empire. Italy is therefore "pulcerrima,"\textsuperscript{121} "most beauteous one," and Dante has strong words against Italians who depreciate their mother country or the Italian language, calling them such names as "detestable wretches of Italy."\textsuperscript{122}

In line with the passage from Charles Davis, it is easily substantiated that Dante closely identified Rome and Italy. Sometimes, it is true, Dante called Rome the "capital of Italy," "Latiale caput,"\textsuperscript{123} but more frequently the two

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{121} Dante, Ep., v, 30.
\textsuperscript{122} Dante, Conv., I, xi, 1-10 and 147.
\textsuperscript{123} Dante, Ep. viii, 148-54, trans. Latham, 171: "And to you [Italian cardinals] who as little children knew the
concepts merge. In one place, for instance, Dante quotes from Vergil on how it is the Roman's task to rule the world, then proceeding to show that the place Vergil was referring to was Italy.\textsuperscript{124} In other places Dante uses the word \textit{Latium} or the phrase \textit{terra Latina} to refer to the Italian language,\textsuperscript{126} in seven places including the stem from which Italian is derived—\textit{Italica lingua}, \textit{volgare Italico}, \textit{vulgare Italum}, \textit{vulgare Italiae}, \textit{Italica loquela}, \textit{Italiae loquela}, \textit{parlare Italico}—and in six places using the term \textit{Latinum} (five instances of \textit{vulgare Latinum}) or \textit{Latinorum} (one instance of \textit{Latinorunm vulgare}) and in seven more places using the sacred Tiber are my words chiefly addressed; for although the capital of Latium ought dutifully to be loved by all Italians, as the common source of their civility, with reason is it accounted your part to cherish it most carefully, since it is also the source of your very being.\textsuperscript{124} Dante, \textit{Mon.}, II, vii, 71-85. Other pertinent evidence on the relationship of Rome and Italy includes \textit{Mon.} II, xi, 52-61, where there is a close identification of Romans and Italians; \textit{Ep.} vii, sec. 4, which speaks of the "kingdom of Italy and the land of the Romans"; \textit{Ep.} viii, sec. 11, where Dante tells the Italian cardinals to fight manfully for the seat of the Spouse of Christ, which is Rome, and for "our Italy," and where he bemoans the Gascons being eager to usurp the glory of the Latins—"Latinorunm"—a term that Dante sometimes uses to mean Romans and other times to mean Italians; \textit{Ep.} viii, sec. 10, where Dante speaks of Rome, Italy's Sun in eclipse; \textit{Purg.}, vi, 105, where Italy is called "garden of the Empire"; \textit{Ep.} v, sec. 4, on the reputed descent of some Italians from the Trojans and the Latins; and the appeals to the Italians to accept the Roman emperor in \textit{Ep.} vi, sec. 6, and \textit{Ep.} vii, secs. 1 and 3.\textsuperscript{126} Dante, \textit{Vulg. Eloq.}, I, x, 39; xiv, 5; xvi, 59; \textit{Ep.} vii, 20.\textsuperscript{125} Dante, \textit{Inf.}, xxvii, 26-27; xxviii, 71.\textsuperscript{127} Paget Toynbee, \textit{A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante} (rev. ed.; London, Oxford University Press, 1968), entry under "Italica lingua," 318.
customary Italian usage *si* as the defining characteristic—six instances of *lingua di si* and one instance of *volgare di si*. Assembling the evidence in a more comprehensive fashion, we frequently find Dante using the terms *Latialis*, *Latium*, *Latino*, and *Latinus* to mean *Italian* or *Italians*. 128

Can we then conclude from this close identification of Rome and Italy that Italy takes its preeminence in Dante's scheme from its close location to Rome? The answer to this question is related to the problem of who belongs to the *populus Romanus*. If, as we have concluded in the last section, the *populus Romanus* is a matter of will, then it should not surprise us that, when Dante constructs the illustrious Italian language, this language is not the language of Rome but instead a language which is common to all Italian towns but not peculiar to any one. Of the dialects of individual Italian towns (Dante distinguishes fourteen major dialects in

Italy and says that these fourteen could be subdivided into varieties a thousand or even more in number), neither the dialect of Rome nor the dialect of Dante's native Florence receive highest acclaim—rather Dante judges the dialect of Bologna to be relatively the best of the dialects (though the Bolognese dialect is not the illustrious Italian language itself). Indeed, not only does the dialect of Rome not qualify as the best of the dialects, but Dante actively disdains the Roman dialect.

As the Italian vernacular has so very many discordant varieties /many dialects/, let us hunt after a more fitting and an illustrious Italian language; and in order that we may be able to have a practicable path for our chase, let us first cast the tangled bushes and brambles out of the wood. Therefore, as the Romans think that they ought to have precedence over all the rest, let us in this process of uprooting or clearing away give them (not undeservedly) precedence, declaring that we will have nothing to do with them in any scheme of a vernacular language. We say, then, that the vulgar tongue of the Romans, or rather their hideous jargon, is the ugliest of all the Italian dialects; nor is this surprising, since in the depravity of their manners and customs also they appear to stink worse than all the rest.

The Italian language does not derive from Rome, then, as we might have predicted, but rather is a language drawn from

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130 Ibid., xv, 3-5ff.
the best that is common to all Italian dialects. Dante's metaphor (above passage) of clearing away the brush and undergrowth from the Italian wood well expresses the existence of the Italian language in the midst of the barbarians of individual Italian dialects.

In every kind of things there must be one thing by which all the things of that kind may be compared and weighed, and which we may take as the measure of all the others; . . . In what concerns our actions as human beings simply, we have virtue, understanding it generally; for according to it we judge a man to be good or bad; in what concerns our actions as citizens, we have the law, according to which a citizen is said to be good or bad; in what concerns our actions as Italians, we have certain very simple standards of manners, customs, and language, by which our actions as Italians are weighed and measured. Now the supreme standards of those activities which are generically Italian are not peculiar to any one town in Italy, but are common to all; and among these can now be discerned that vernacular language which we were hunting for above, whose fragrance is in every town, but whose lair is in none. It may, however, be more perceptible in one than in another, just as the simplest of substances, which is God, is more perceptible in man than in a brute, in an animal than in a plant, in a plant than in a mineral, in a mineral than in an element, in fire than in earth. And the simplest quantity, which is unity, is more perceptible in an odd than in an even number; and the simplest color, which is white, is more perceptible in orange than in green.

Having therefore found what we were searching for, we declare the illustrious, cardinal, courtly, and curial vernacular language in Italy to be that which belongs to all the towns in Italy but does not appear to belong to any one of them, and by which all the municipal dialects of the Italian are measured, weighed, and compared.132

What holds in a general sense—that Italy is preeminent because of its nearness to Rome—does not hold in detail within Italy: that is, within Italy itself one is not nearer the source of order, being, and civilization as one is spatially nearer to the city Rome.

Instead, Dante's view of the conflict between civilization and barbarism, between order and disorder, is more sophisticated than that of his traditional culture counterpart. Just as belonging to the populus Romanus or to a barbarian people like the Fiesolans, the Scandinavians, or the Lombards was a matter of the will, so also using the illustrious, cardinal, courtly, and curial Italian vernacular language or using barbarian tongues is a matter of choice. Dante again and again refers to the barbarisms of Italian dialects in opposition to the best elements and the most civilized and beautiful phrasings of the common Italian vernacular. "Does it [the illustrious vernacular language] not daily root out the thorny bushes from the Italian wood? Does it not daily insert grafts or plant young trees?"  

In criticizing the inadequacies of the various individual Italian dialects, Dante referred to their shameful or gross barbarisms—"turpiter barbarizant" and "barbarissimum reprobatum," for instance.  

133 Ibid., xvi, 11-14, trans. Wicksteed, 60.
134 Ibid., xii, 58-59.
135 Ibid., xiv, 34-35.
136 Cf. also xv, 1-27, where the barbarian Lombards are given as a source of the roughness, harshness, or sharpness of certain dialects.

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Let us lay bare what we mean by the epithet illustrious, and why we call the common Italian vernacular language illustrious. Now we understand by this term 'illustrious' something which shines forth illuminating and illuminated. And in this way we call men illustrious either because, being illuminated by power, they illuminate others by justice and charity; or else because, having been excellently trained, they in turn give excellent training, like Seneca and Numa Pompilius. And the vernacular of which we are speaking has both been exalted by training and power, and also exalts its followers by honor and glory.

Now it appears to have been exalted by training, inasmuch as from amid so many rude Italian words, involved constructions, faulty expressions, and rustic accents /cum de tot rudibus Latinorum vocabulis, de tot perplexis constructionibus, de tot defectivis prolacionibus, de tot rusticannis accentibus/ we see that it has been chosen out in such a degree of excellence, clearness, completeness, and polish as is displayed by Cino of Pistoja and his friend in their canzoni.¹³⁷

Those who belong to the populus Romanus are those who will to cooperate with the forces of order, being, and civilization, while those who belong to the barbarian peoples are those who are perverse in will. Similarly those who use the illustrious, cardinal, courtly, and curial Italian vernacular are those who are cultured, civilized, and refined, while those who use shameful barbarisms are to be reproved for their lack of culture. One is not more Italian as one is closer to Rome, therefore; one is more Italian as one chooses to be more civilized, refined, and cultured, that

is, as one chooses to cooperate with the forces of order, being, and civilization.

What, then, of the relationship between Italy and the land beyond the boundaries of Italy? In what sense did Dante see non-Romans or non-Italians as living in chaotic space? In partial answer to this question it should be noted that there are qualifications on the preeminent place of Italy in Dante’s cosmos. In one place Dante refers to Italy as "this tiny corner of the world," and in several places Dante refuses to give preference to the vernacular Italian in comparison to the vernaculars of other regions.

It is meet for us to make investigation concerning that language which that man who had no mother, who was never suckled, who never saw either childhood or youth, is believed to have spoken. . . . For whoever is so offensively unreasonable as to suppose that the place of his birth is the most delightful under the sun, also rates his own vernacular (that is, his mother-tongue) above all others, and consequently believes that it actually was that of Adam. But we, to whom the world is our native country, just as the sea is to the fish, though we drank of Arno before our teeth appeared, and though we love Florence so dearly that for the love we bore her we are wrongfully suffering exile—we rest the shoulders of our judgment on reason rather than on feeling. And although as regards our own pleasure or sensuous comfort there exists no more agreeable place in the world than Florence, still, when we turn over the volumes both of poets and other writers in which the world is generally and particularly described, and take account within ourselves of the various situations of the places of the

138Ibid., x, 82-83.
world and their arrangement with respect to the two poles and to the equator, our deliberate and firm opinion is that there are many countries and cities both nobler and more delightful than Tuscany and Florence of which we are a native and a citizen, and also that a great many nations and races use a speech both more agreeable and more serviceable than the Italians do. Returning therefore to our subject, we say that a certain form of speech was created by God together with the first soul.

In this form of speech Adam spoke; in this form of speech all his descendants spoke until the building of the Tower of Babel, which is by interpretation the tower of confusion; and this form of speech was inherited by the sons of Heber, who after him were called Hebrews. With them alone did it remain after the confusion, in order that our Redeemer (who was, as to his humanity, to spring from them) might use, not the language of confusion, but of grace. Therefore Hebrew was the language which the lips of the first speaker formed.

In another place Dante divides the languages of southeastern Europe into three kinds, according to what word they use as an adverb of affirmation, *oc*, *oil*, or *si*. Each of these languages, says Dante, has its own claims to preeminence, including the language of *si*, that is, the Italian vernacular language. Dante, however, declines to give judgment as to which is the best, although in his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia* he has chosen to limit himself to his beloved Italian vernacular. In a third place Dante has

139 Ibid., vi, 5-8, 11-41, and 49-61, trans Wicksteed, used as an excerpt in Dante, *The Portable Dante*, 633-34.
140 Ibid., x, 1-38.
141 Dante, Conv., I, x-xiii, especially xii, 30-48.
harsh words for Italians who do not prize their mother tongue, yet he points out that a man by nature always loves his own vernacular, be he Italian or not.

If by non-Romans or non-Italians we mean those living beyond the spatial boundaries of Italy, we must conclude that Dante did not think they were living in chaotic space. Dante was a universalist—he was universalist in his belief that Rome had once united all humanity under one government and ought to continue to do so; he was universalist in his interest in Adam as the common father of a united humanity, Adam having lived in a natural righteousness currently symbolized by the Roman Empire; he was universalist even when he asserted that the vernacular was superior to Latin, arguing that Latin had limited and artificial (learned from books) use among scholars and ecclesiastical officials while the vernacular was learned naturally and used by all men; and he was universalist when he drew significance from the report that Aeneas had either descended directly or had marital ties from all parts of the world, surely evidence of his divine predestination. This universalism was of a type which did not contradict the giving of the central place in

142 On Adam as common father and Eve as common mother, see Dante, *Purg.* xi, 63; xii, 71; xxx, 52; *Par.* , xxvi, 92-93; xxxii, 4-6, 121-23, and 136.


144 Dante, *Mon.* , II, iii.
this universalist scheme to the Italians and the Romans. This is so because, as we have seen, membership in the populus Romanus as well as use of the illustrious Italian vernacular was a matter of choice, a matter of voluntary cooperation with the forces of order, civilization, and being. The central position of Rome and Italy in Dante's cosmos seems to be basically not a spatial matter; rather it seems to be primarily a use of spatial symbols to represent the processes of order and civilization which go on within the hearts and minds of men.

If we may speak at all of the influence of an archetypal Center in Dante's view of Italy, then it must be only in the sense of a highly interiorized process of (vis a vis the process of ordering in traditional man's Center) ordering. We must bring up the same question here that we posed at the end of the last section: whether we need have recourse to the hypothesis of an archetypal Center to explain the symbols Dante chooses to express order in the cosmos. We shall deal with this question in the next sections of the paper.

A possible exception to this statement is found in Dante, Vulg. Elog., I, xv, 61-70, trans. Wicksteed, 51: "The towns of Trent and Turin, as well as Alessandria, are situated so near the frontiers of Italy that they cannot possess pure languages, so that even if their vernaculars were as lovely as they are hideous, we should still say that they were not truly Italian, because of their foreign ingredients." Yet, Dante is here speaking as we would today, and pointing out that areas near the border of a linguistic area tend to mix their own language with elements from the language(s) of nearby areas. For example, on the border between France and Germany the people tend to speak a combination of the two languages rather than a pure form of either. This observation of a natural occurrence does not seem to have relevance to the problem we have been dealing with.
Comments on Methodology

At the beginning of this chapter we asserted that the characteristics of the Center of the World outlined by Eliade did not fit Dante's Rome, and we gave this as a reason for examining Dante's Rome according to categories which corresponded more accurately with Dante's view of the Holy City. Let us now be more explicit about what happens when we try to fit Rome into Eliade's categories. Was Rome sanctified by hierophanies and signs like the Center of the World? Yes, according to Dante; the poet points to many pieces of evidence for his belief that God chose Rome and governed the Holy City and its people from the time of Aeneas's founding of the Trojan-Roman people to the Golden Age of Augustus and Christ to Dante's own day and even into the future. Was this sacred place permanently sacred? Yes again, for it was supposed by Dante to still be the Holy City, the stones of whose very walls should be held in reverence, and it was supposed to be the Holy City in the new age of the future. Was Rome an axis mundi where one could communicate with heaven and with the world of the dead? In answer to this we might mention Dante's comment in Purgatory that the souls coming to Purgatory sail from Rome, that is, from the Church; we can assume that the channels to Paradise from the Roman Church were also open. As for the channels of communication to Hell, there were, of course, those practices of exorcising demons, as well as St. Peter's
having the key to lock and unlock the gates of Hell and Heaven for Christians. Does the earthly Rome have a plan, a form, or a double in heaven? Yes again, for there is a celestial Rome, the Rome of which Christ himself is a Roman. Was Rome a navel of the world, the point from which Creation began and spread outwards? Perhaps we could argue that Adam's fall necessitated re-Creation and this re-Creation started from two points, Aeneas and David, and that the two lines from these points met and merged in Rome, Rome as Church and Rome as Empire. Finally, we may ask about the chaotic world beyond "the cosmos" or "our world" for Dante—in what sense were there foreign peoples, monsters, and barbarians living beyond the world of which Rome was Center? Here we run into a complete dead end. Dante was a universalist, and he believed that there were no peoples beyond the boundaries of the world of which Rome was Center. Once Rome had ruled the entire land hemisphere, and it was still the rightful ruler of the entire land hemisphere; although Dante knew that there were non-Christians in the remote corners of the world and that Christendom did not in his day extend to the four corners of the Northern Hemisphere, nevertheless the entire universe was governed and ordered by God. Barbarians were not those who lived beyond the boundaries of Christendom; barbarians were those perverse in will, those who had heard of Christ and yet chose to sin and not follow Him. Dante had a great respect
for those non-Christians who lived in accord with reason and who developed their natural capacities as much as they could without baptism and grace. Although he took the orthodox viewpoint and put non-Christians in Hell, Dante had a difficult time believing that a just and loving God could condemn pagan Romans and Hindus for what appeared to not be their fault, their never having heard of Christ.\textsuperscript{146}

This whole way of thinking seems highly contrived, and it is only reasonable to conclude that the external structure of the Center of the World symbolism cannot be applied to Dante's Rome. The only way in which the concept of Center might fit Dante's Rome would be in the sense of an underlying identity or similarity, an archetypal Center. Whether or not an archetypal Center might validly be postulated in the case of Dante's Rome is a problem in itself; we shall leave it to the next chapter, where we offer a methodological critique of Mircea Eliade's work as applied to spatial orientation in Dante.

\textsuperscript{146}See this paper, 127–32.
CHAPTER IV

MIRCEA ELIADE'S ANALYSIS OF THE TRADITIONAL AND
MODERN VIEWS OF SPACE: PROFITS AND
DRAWBACKS OF ITS APPLICATION
TO MEDIEVAL THOUGHT

A General Methodological Critique
Of Mircea Eliade

As an aid to organizing this critique I would like to return to the grid we used in the introduction to this paper. Again the numbers of the sections will correspond to the numbers of the boxes in the grid.

I. Comparison of cultures at similar levels of development with regard to their historical aspects

Beyond acknowledgement of the fact that all religious phenomena, including symbols and myths, are conditioned by the historical moment in which they appear, Eliade pays almost no attention to the historical aspects of cultures or to the differences between one culture and another, or even one myth or symbol and another.

Are we in fact condemned to be content with exhaustive analyses of "particular versions" of symbols and myths which, when all is said and done, represent local histories? Have we no means of approach to the Image, the symbol, the archetype, in their own structures; in that "wholeness" which embraces all their "histories," without, however, confusing them? . . . I am not
denying the importance of history, . . . for the estimation of the true value of this of that symbol as it was understood and lived in a specific culture: . . . But it is not by "placing" a symbol in its own history that we can resolve the essential problem—namely, to know what is revealed to us, not by any "particular version" of a symbol but by the whole of a symbolism. We have already seen how the various meanings of a symbol are linked together, interconnected in a system, as it were. The contradictions one can discover between the various particular versions are in most cases only apparent; they are resolved as soon as we consider the symbolism as a whole and discern its structure. Each new valorisation of an archetypal Image crowns and consummates the earlier ones: . . .

Eliade is thus not interested in culture as such, but only in those universals which are valid for all men.

All culture is a "fall" into history, and is, by the same token, limited. Let no one be misled by the incomparable beauty, nobility and perfection of Greek culture; even this does not make it universally valid as a historical phenomenon. Try, for instance, to reveal the Greek culture to an African or to an Indonesian: it is not the admirable Greek "style" that they will understand; it is the Images that the African or Indonesian will rediscover in the classical statuary or literature. . . . If we neglect this unique spiritual foundation of the various cultural styles, the philosophy of culture will be condemned to remain no more than a morphological and historical study, without any validity for the human condition as such. If the Images were not at the same time an "opening-out" into the transcendent, one would ultimately become suffocated in any culture, however great and admirable one might believe it to be.

1Eliade, Images and Symbols, 163–64.

2Ibid., 173–74; cf. 21–22, where Eliade explains that his treatment of the Center of the World symbolism is one which ignores the "complications of 'history'."
Precisely because he is not interested in cultural differences he tends to lump together cultures which it would be better to keep separate; thus his oversimplified categories of "traditional" and "modern" societies. Oscar Lewis speaks of Robert Redfield's "lumping together" of contemporary primitive peoples and precivilized, pre-urban peoples (prior to 6000 B.C.) as a global comparison which "tends to neglect differences."

Perhaps this weakness, if it is a weakness, is inevitable when working on such a high level of abstraction without the controls inherent in the more limited kinds of comparisons. . . .

If it is a weakness to lump together prehistoric and contemporary primitives, what a weakness it is to lump together everything from Australian aborigines to contemporary India! Nevertheless, as Lewis points out, such broad comparisons have their satisfaction in the searching for general laws and broad developmental hypotheses which the more limited and controlled kinds of comparisons lack.

Another problem with Eliade's comparison of traditional cultures with each other or his comparison of modern Western cultures, is that the research is based solely on library work rather than on first-hand field work. What is worse in Eliade's case is that he frequently relies on documents from questionable sources, a problem which he himself

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3 Lewis, "Comparisons in Cultural Anthropology," 269.
4 Ibid., 278.
recognizes but fails nonetheless to circumvent. Considering the scope of Eliade's analysis it is perhaps understandable that he could not always bother to use his documents critically; his work is based on a prodigious wealth of detail from ethnographic and other writings.

A related criticism arises from both the scope of the comparison and the fact that Eliade is solely interested in discovering religious universals: he uses a methodology of selecting examples which tend to substantiate his hypotheses, almost totally ignoring negative examples, those examples which would tend to disprove his hypotheses. Nor does he attempt to relate the illustrations he cites to the cultural context in which they belong, and for the same two reasons (the scope of the comparison and the search for universal archetypes). It would have been much better for him to consider each society as a whole and see any single cultural trait in functioning relationship to the other aspects of the culture to which it belongs, for the same cultural form may mean one thing in one society and something very different in another. In defense of Eliade, however, two things should be pointed out. First, to consider each cultural symbol in functioning relationship to the whole culture to which it belongs and to take into account the negative examples would have made a herculean task out of Eliade's research. To accomplish all this for the number of societies considered by Eliade would have taken a large
team of researchers many, many years; even then the research would only be as good as the fieldwork on which it was based. Eliade's research, like that of any random global comparison, may be taken as providing preliminary insights of a valid but imprecise nature, useful for posing further hypotheses and prompting further research. Secondly, if one accepts Eliade's theory of archetypes then such meticulous consideration of the parts of culture which suffer historical change is unnecessary. The validity of the theory of archetypes and of morphological analysis of symbolisms is, however, a question which must be dealt with separately.

III. Comparison of cultures at similar levels of development with regard to their non-historical, archetypal aspects

The history of religions is concerned not only with the historical becoming of a religious form, but also with its structure. For religious forms are non-temporal; they are not necessarily bound to time. We have no proof that religious structures are created by certain types of civilisation or by certain historic moments. All one can say is that the predominance of this or that religious structure is occasioned or favoured by a certain kind of civilisation or by a certain historic moment. When we consider religious structures historically, it is their statistical frequency which matters. But religious reality is more complex: it transcends the plane of history. . . . Civilisations, societies and historical moments furnish opportunities for the manifestation or the predominance of these non-temporal structures. Yet, being non-temporal, the religious structures never triumph in a definitive manner.6

6Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, 178.
This is an important statement by Eliade of his position and it deserves to be read carefully. He is certainly not oblivious to the objections which could be brought against his position, for he asserts his statements tentatively:

"We have no proof that religious structures are created by certain types of civilisation or by certain historic moments."

Eliade is well aware of the historical conditioning of religious symbols, a good example of this being found in the following passage.

Let us come now to the subject of the present study: the symbolism of the "Centre." A historian of religions has the right to ask us: What do you mean by these terms? What symbols are in question? Among which peoples and in what cultures? And he might add: You are not unaware that the epoch of Tylor, of Mannhardt and Frazer is over and done with; it is no longer allowable today to speak of myths and rites "in general," or of a uniformity in primitive man's reactions to Nature. Those generalisations are abstractions, like those of "primitive man" in general. What is concrete is the religious phenomenon manifested in history and through history. And, from the simple fact that it is manifested in history, it is limited, it is conditioned by history. . . . You speak of the "symbolism of the Centre"—what right have you, as a historian of religions, to do so? Can one so lightly generalise? One ought rather to begin by asking oneself: in which culture, and following upon what historical events, did the religious notion of the "Centre," or that of immortality become crystallised? How are the notions integrated and justified, in the organic system of such and such a culture? How are they distributed, and among which peoples? Only after having answered all these preliminary questions will one have the right to generalise and systematise, to speak in general about the . . . symbols of the "Centre."
These are precisely the sort of objections that I would like to make to Eliade's method, and, although Eliade does not regard them as insurmountable,\textsuperscript{8} he does not really satisfactorily confront these objections except to mention them.

As I understand Eliade, he has two reasons for maintaining the validity of the morphological analysis as a method for dealing with religious symbolisms and myths. One reason concerns the great similarities that exist between myths and symbolisms. For instance, in one place\textsuperscript{9} he surveys various examples of the symbolism of "binding": the Tao as "the chain of the entire creation," the labyrinth sometimes conceived as a "knot" that must be "un-tied," people speaking of deliverance from illusions as untying the "knots" of existence, the use by a man (acting on a magical plane) of amulets of knots to protect himself from spells of demons and sorcerers, the feeling of a man that he is "bound" by God, and so forth. From these various apparently related (related in what way?) phenomena, Eliade makes the following conclusion.

This multivalency of the "binding" complex—which we have now observed on the planes of cosmology, magic, religion, initiation, metaphysics and soteriology—is probably due to man's recognising, in this complex, a sort of archetype of his own situation in the world. . . . We can feel

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Ibid.}, 31.

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{Ibid.}, 115-19.
the presence of an archetype of "binding"
which is trying to realise itself upon the
different planes of magico-religious life.¹⁰

What impresses Eliade is the similarities between these
various symbolisms—how to explain it?

All these operations /Eliade is here using
the example of symbolisms of "binding," but
it could be applied to any set of symbol­
isms/ are of the same structure. In the
present state of our knowledge, it is diffi­
cult to specify whether their uniformity
proceeds from imitation—from "historic"
borrowings, in the sense given to this term
by the historico-cultural school—or whether
it is to be explained by the fact that they
all follow from the very situation of man in
the world—so that they are variants of one
and the same archetype realising itself on
many planes and in different cultural areas.¹¹

If we re-iterate our objection, voiced by Eliade himself,
that the historical conditioning of these symbols must be
explained, that the differences between the various symbol­
isms must be accounted for, and that each symbol must be
placed in its historical and functioning context, then we
must give equal weight to the other and more difficult
problem of how to account for the similarities. I think it
is unfair to criticize Eliade for not telling us much about
the differences; that is not the question he is asking
himself. Rather, he wants to understand the similarities,
and the two questions—"Why the differences?" and "Why the
similarities?" are separate issues, making it possible to

¹⁰Ibid., 117-118.
¹¹Ibid., 118.
ask one question and not the other. Nevertheless there is a moot question still remaining: "In what ways can we account for these resemblances? Must we infer from these similarities that traditional men all have in common certain archetypes houses in a non-historical unconscious?" Eliade says, "We have no proof that religious structures are created by certain types of civilisation or by certain historic moments." What proof do we have that religious structures are caused by archetypes beyond certain similarities that exist between myths and symbols from all over the world?\textsuperscript{12}

The problems of identities among men—which is phrased more simply as the question, What do all men have in common? or What is human nature?—is an exceedingly difficult one, and we will take it up again when we consider box IV in the grid, that dealing with universals common to all men, traditional and modern. For the time being we might only register the observation that Eliade does not seem to have solved the problem of identities either, unless one is satisfied with his mystical apprehensions of truth, conditioned as they are by Western man's Christian or secularized Christian belief that all men are equal.

There is a second reason why Eliade maintains the validity of morphological analysis for dealing with religious

\textsuperscript{12}Claude Lévi-Strauss would agree, that myths are similar all over the world: "The Structural Study of Myth," \textit{Journal of American Folklore}, LXVIII (1955), 429.
symbolisms, namely that all men, even history-conscious contemporary Western man, experience non-historical time.

What distinguishes the historian of religions from the historian as such is that he is dealing with facts which, although historical, reveal a behaviour that goes far beyond the historical involvements of the human being. Although it is true that man is always found "in situation," his situation is not, for all that, always a historical one in the sense of being conditioned solely by the contemporaneous historical moment. The man in his totality is aware of other situations over and above his historical condition; for example, he knows the state of dreaming, or of the waking dream, or of melancholy, or of detachment, or of aesthetic bliss, or of escape, etc.—and none of these states is historical, although they are as authentic and as important for human existence as man's historical existence is. Man is also aware of several temporal rhythms, and not only of historical time—his own time, his historical contemporaneity. He has only to listen to good music, to fall in love, or to pray, and he is out of the historical present, he re-enters the eternal present of love and of religion. Even to open a novel, or attend a dramatic performance, may be enough to transport a man into another rhythm of time—what one might call "condensed time"—which is anyhow not historical time. It has been too lightly assumed that the authenticity of an existence depends solely upon the consciousness of its own historicity. Such historic awareness plays a relatively minor part in human consciousness, to say nothing of the zones of the unconscious which also belong to the make-up of the whole human being. The more a consciousness is awakened, the more it transcends its own historicity: we have only to remind ourselves of the mystics and sages of all times, and primarily those of the Orient. 13

13Eliade, Images and Symbols, 32-33.
Not only do such symbolisms present non-historical time, they also frequently represent a transcending of space limitations.

Mahayana metaphysics interprets the ascension of the Buddha as an event at the Centre of the World, and therefore one that signified transcendence of both Space and Time. A great many traditions trace the creation of the World to a central point (navel) from which it is supposed to have spread out in the four cardinal directions. To attain to the centre of the World means, therefore, to arrive at the "point of departure" of the Cosmos at the "beginning of Time"; in short, to have abolished Time. We can now better understand the regenerative effect produced in the deep psyche by the imagery of ascension and flight because we know that—upon the planes of ritual, ecstasy and metaphysics—ascension is capable, among other things, of abolishing Time and Space and of "projecting" man into the mythical instant of the Creation of the World, whereby he is in some sense "born again," being rendered contemporary with the birth of the World.14

Eliade is arguing that there is a non-historical—and apparently also non-spatial—part of man, and the basis for his belief is that man is capable of experiencing a non-historical time and a pure space. But such a line of reasoning seems suspicious, for Eliade seems to be saying that man is living in historical time when he is aware of historical time, while living in non-historical time when he is not aware of the passing of historical time; likewise with space—he is living in profane space when he is aware

14 Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, 119.
of his spatial finitude and living in pure space when he ceases temporarily to be aware of profane space. Now it is certainly interesting and even mysterious that men at times lose consciousness of the passing of time and of their existence in finite space, but we must be careful what we infer from this fact. Man can, after all, only be conscious of one or a few things at any single moment. If he reads a short article in a journal he cannot think about all the thoughts in the article at once but must think the thoughts one at a time. If one is half involved with what he is doing, then it is easy for him to get bored and for him to be aware of what time it is, either time as measured by mechanical clocks or experiential time (in societies without clocks, where time is conceived in the concrete and not in the abstract). But if he is very much involved in his work or in a creative act, or in love, or in religious ritual, or in music, or in a novel or movie, then for a brief span of time his whole being is concentrated in consciousness of that single activity, and there is no room for consciousness of time or of finite space or of distracting noises or of anything else. To be ecstatic is to be transported out of oneself, to lose or perhaps transcend consciousness of oneself and of time and of spatial limitations and to become, in a sense, "totally" conscious of something or someone else. The fact that one can enter this state of ecstasy in activities other than religious ones is highly significant; in
other words, it is not only mystics and men involved in religious activities or ritual who can transcend time and space, so to speak—rather it can be a purely secular ecstasy. To say that man is not always conscious of the passing of time and history is not to say that man can actually transcend time and space, or to say that there are any moments in which man is not actually being conditioned by time and space, by his being alive in a particular place in a particular historical moment. Whether or not he is aware of this is beside the point. The point is that man is always conditioned by history and by finite space— it would take more than Eliade's argument to convince an historicist that there is a non-historical portion of man or to convince him that the unconscious is immune to the process of evolution and change. While it is true in a sense that "the more a consciousness is awakened, the more it transcends its own historicity," this would better be stated that the more a consciousness is awakened, the more the self becomes aware of the self and of reality as differentiated from the self, a reality which both temporally (past and future) and spatially (spread out over the entire globe and out into the universe beyond the earth) transcends the limitations of individuality.

II. The traditional-modern continuum and Eliade's philosophy of history

It is important to note that Eliade's ideal types
(he nowhere uses this term in describing his views, nor does he ever use the conception of a traditional–modern continuum—these are my terms) are not cultural configurations but psychological configurations, psychological configurations constructed with the realization that the individual is conditioned by his culture. In other words, Eliade is aware of social psychology, so in concentrating on the individual's mentality (using a typical generalized individual) he is by implication also dealing with the culture that is almost totally responsible for creating it. Although I am not well acquainted with the literature on Weberian ideal types or on Robert Redfield's use of them—the method has sustained considerable criticism—but at the present time I can register no objections to the method as long as the distinction is always maintained between the abstractness of the ideal type and the reality of the concrete examples of individuals and socio-cultural "entities" (society and culture are also abstractions). The problems with Eliade's use of the method involve the immensity of his categories; "traditional mentality" as an abstraction covering all cultures in world history except the modern West is particularly suspect. So also is "modern mentality" when applied to individuals in all societies of the modern Western type. The variation within these categories almost exceeds the difference between the two categories, and any person with empiricist–historicist leanings can only be
uncomfortable with such immense generalizations. To accept them one apparently must previously assent to a theory of the psychic unity of mankind such as is implied in Eliade's conception of a "non-historical part" of man or in his related theory of archetypes or paradigmatic models housed in the unconscious of both traditional and modern men. Eliade's research does not establish the psychic unity of all men nor any theory remotely approaching such a generalization, though his juxtaposition of so much data effectively poses the problem of how to explain these obvious similarities. The problem of establishing similarities or identities, however, belongs to other sections, those which deal with the non-historical part of man (boxes II and IV of the grid). I mention the problem here only because it seems that, unless one is already very kindly disposed to a theory of archetypes or of the psychic unity of man or of the universal need of man for religion of the traditional type, he is likely to be somewhat aghast at the simplism of the distinction between "traditional" and "modern."

Regarding the theory of unilinear evolution, either psychic or cultural, I feel unqualified to make a judgment, for I am here again not well acquainted with the literature. If one presupposes a psychic unity of mankind, then unilinear evolution makes sense within that frame of reference. One can think of the growing sense of the temporal-historical process while retaining also the early man's way of
experiencing time, the symbols of sacred time consequently surviving also in the unconscious; correspondingly, one can see the development of a more abstract conception of geometric space during the process of evolution, while at the same time positing the survival of early man’s way of experiencing space, including such symbolisms as the Center of the World. Eliade draws an analogy (quoted in section IV) on the cultural level from Freud's idea of the infancy period being determinative of adult life: "for man there is a 'primordial' epoch in which all is decided," a primitive past which is more or less constitutive of mankind's being in modern culture. Eliade sets up a dichotomy between traditional and modern views of space and time, and this, along with the assertion of the survival of the traditional views in the unconscious of all modern men, seems to indicate a conception of a unilinear psychic evolution. However, I am not certain that Eliade would support this if confronted with the question; although the theory seems to be more or less implicit in his work, he is so little interested in the changing portions of man and in the differences between various evolving cultures and cultural forms, that it is difficult to extract from his work a precise conception of evolution.

Perhaps it is unfair to criticize Eliade for concentrating almost exclusively on the question of what remains constant during evolution; but an historicist, who believes
that nothing remains constant during evolution and that nothing is immune to change (though some things change so slowly that they give the appearance of remaining constant, at least within the period of recorded history), can at least feel disturbed with Eliade for attempting to deal with history without giving more consideration to the differences between symbolisms and the changes in the meaning of a symbolism according to the historical context in which it appears. To clarify the latter point with an example, although Dante's placement of Jerusalem at the center of the land hemisphere is similar to the traditional Center of the World (to the extent that the Center of the World is a common symbolism even for the so-called "traditional" cultures), the meaning of such a symbolism in the context of medieval culture is different from the meaning of the similar symbolism of Center in the context of traditional culture. Instead of glossing over differences and inferring too easily an equivalence of meaning from an equivalence or similarity of form or structure, an historicist would wish that Eliade had concentrated on discovering the meaning of the same or similar symbols in different cultural contexts; if there is any theory of psychic unity or unilinear evolution it must be based on an equivalence of meaning and not an equivalence of form.

A final matter to be treated in this section regards Eliade's attitude towards historicism and secularism, which,
from the viewpoint of the historicist, represents an advance over previous stages in the development of Western Civilization. Although Eliade believes that the acceptance by Christianity of the temporal-historical process marks an advance of Western man over his traditional counterpart—he speaks frequently of traditional man's "refusal" or "disregard" of concrete time, of his "hostility" to history—Eliade thinks that historicism leads to despair or to the heroism of courage in the face of absurdity. Eliade exhorts modern men to work for the reawakening of the symbols he houses in his unconscious, a revival of that which he has in common with traditional man. Eliade's philosophy of history is one in which there is no genuine interaction or interpenetration between time and eternity. On the one hand we have the eternal, the non-historical, that which is essentially the same for all men of all times in all cultures of the world, regardless of what historical clothing it wears. On the other hand, we have the traditional-modern continuum, the culmination of which is historicism, secularism, existentialism, the rejecting of the eternal. This view of Eliade's is similar to that of Augustine's philosophy of history. For Augustine there were five ages which were progressive and which culminated in the Incarnation; in these five ages God worked through history. Beginning with Christ there were two ages occurring simultaneously to the end of time: the sixth age, which was the passage of time on earth
for Christians, and the seventh age, which was the eternal reality for which the Christian always longed, and which was constantly available to him with the aid of grace and faith. The Christian ought to try to transcend the changing aspects of reality, to subordinate all temporal, passing aspects of existence to the quest for the eternal. Eternity could be known to the Christian, said Augustine, while the Christian was still on earth, for the eternal truths were visible to all men who bothered to look. One could therefore transcend the temporal, changing world through mysticism while still in the world; that is, a person could contact the seventh age while in the sixth. Of course, one was only able to gain permanent entrance to the seventh age after death, after release from this world of change to a changeless existence.

Without trying to push the parallel too far, it seems that there is this same separation between time and eternity in Eliade's thinking. There is, on the one hand, a traditional-modern continuum, the world of change and history. There is, on the other hand, the changeless, non-historical world of archetypes; it is the latter which modern man is trying to ignore and which he must recontact. It almost seems that the closer man gets to the "modern mentality" pole of the continuum, the farther one gets from what really counts, the eternal. What, then, does history mean? It seems that history takes us away from God.
It is interesting that Dante had a similar problem with history. Like Augustine, he could see God working through history in the preparation of the world for Christ; but the working-through-history process stops then, and Dante's own age (or any time between Christ's time and his own day) compared unfavorably with the Golden Age of Christ and Augustus. On the other hand, Dante thought that the purpose of making and of human civilization was intellectual growth. Further, the poet was intrigued with Joachism, and he therefore tended to look for a new age of the future which would at least be equal with the Golden Age of Christ and Augustus and which might even transcend it. Meanwhile, the seventh age of Augustine had its appeal, for Dante had mystical inclinations and longed for the Beatific Vision after death. There are tensions in Dante's combination of attitudes towards time, history, and eternity, tensions which he could not satisfactorily resolve.

The same kinds of tensions exist in the thought of Eliade or in any Christian who tries to retain traditional Christianity in the modern world. In a very real sense Eliade rejects history after Christ, rejects its accomplishment, rejects the idea that it has come closer to the meaning of human existence, closer to an understanding of the transcendent, and closer to a refinement of religion. Without rejecting the secular accomplishment of the modern world, Eliade would want modern man, who is trying to live
only in the sixth age and deny the seventh, to re-acknowl-
edge and rediscover the seventh age, the eternal age. There
is, I repeat, no real interaction between time and eternity;
history has no real relevance to man's deepest desires and
history offers man no meaning. Historical man can find
meaning and satisfy his metaphysical longings only by trans­
cending history to the non-historical age which always is
open to him, regardless of culture, race, or historical
period. Historical man can only find meaning in non-history.
The traditional-modern continuum has produced historicism,
an attempt to find meaning only in the sixth age; therefore,
a study of the traditional-modern continuum would tell us
nothing about religion, and for that reason Eliade can not
only afford not to bother with it, but he cannot afford to
spend any time with it. In the deepest sense it has no
meaning—all it does is confuse the person who tries to
discover meaning in it, who looks for eternity but finds
immediately visible only the historical clothing in which
eternity dresses.

The historicist, in contrast to Eliade, looks for
meaning in the process of history itself, and he sees Eliade's
position as a hopeless attempt to escape from time and his­
tory. Truth is a process, a gradual growth of man's con­
sciousness of himself, of human nature, and of the world;
through the process of truth man is increasingly able to
differentiate self from world and to conceptualize and
organize the reality beyond the self. Modern man's spatial and temporal-historical conceptions represent a heightened consciousness of the nature of space and time, and of man's place in space and time. There is meaning in the growth of man's consciousness—as Dante put it, the purpose of mankind is intellectual growth—and man transcends his limitations through the future and not in an attempt to escape time and space in "eternity." We can speak of life as a never-ending struggle for growth, growth that finds its meaning in the future fulfillment or actualization of man. In such a view religion is a theology of hope, hope in the future, hope that helps give man present strength to struggle so that the future might indeed be born.

An historicist can see meaning wherever aspects of man have found fulfillment or are finding fulfillment. There need be no unilinear evolution in such a view, but instead a multi-linear or multi-branch evolutionary process. One might see the cultures and civilizations of the world as having brought out different aspects of man's potential and squelched others. Western Civilizations, for instance, has goaded its members towards a bringing-to-consciousness of the evolutionary process in which mankind, even primitive mankind, is participating; man has always been conditioned by history, but he has only recently come to realize it, and even now he is frequently unaware of it. Western Civilization has also provided the context in which men like
Dante have struggled to understand the spatial conceptions inherited from earlier men, and in the process of struggling to understand have created the beginnings of a new view. In Dante we can see the beginnings of a scientific, abstract, geometrical view of space trying to make sense of a mythical view; Dante and his fellow medieval thinkers had a creative effect on the tradition which they inherited. In that creative effect there is meaning. There are other cultures whose unique historical configurations have prompted their members to develop a greater sensitivity to rhythm, a deeper feeling for non-human life, a more profound appreciation of sexuality, a more realistic view of death than has Western Civilization. Eliade is right that modern Western man has much to learn from men in other cultures. He is wrong to reject one of the West's greatest contributions: the discovery of the meaning of the historical process.

IV. Universals common to all men--traditional survivals in the modern unconscious

Depth analysis has discovered the repressed but surviving religious symbols in the modern unconscious, and these symbols belong to a non-historical portion of each and every human being of past, present, and probably also future: this is Eliade's view. To understand this we ought first to uncover the basic assumption that Eliade makes: that if he can discover the behavior in the most archaic man known and in modern man (through depth analysis) then it is
common to all men. This assumption can be demonstrated by citing a series of related passages.

Freud's was a most audacious undertaking: it introduced Time and History into a category of phenomena that had previously been approached from without, rather in the way that a naturalist treats his subject. One of Freud's discoveries above all has had portentous consequences, namely, that for man there is a "primordial" epoch in which all is decided—the very earliest childhood—and that the course of this infancy is exemplary for the rest of life. Restating this in terms of archaic thinking, one might say that there was once a "paradise" (which for psychoanalysis is the prenatal period, or the time before weaning), ending with a "break" or "catastrophe" (the infantile trauma), and that whatever the adult's attitude may be towards these primordial circumstances, they are none the less constitutive of his being. One would be tempted to extend these observations to take in Jung's discovery of the collective unconscious, of the series of psychic structures prior to those of the individual psyche, which cannot be said to have been forgotten since they were not constituted by individual experiences. The world of the archetypes of Jung is like the Platonic world of Ideas, in that the archetypes are impersonal and do not participate in the Time of the species—even of organic Life itself.  

For Eliade, symbolic thinking reveals the non-historical man, the part of man that is better than the historical man. The following passage is an exceedingly important one for understanding the basic thrust of Eliade's work and the values implicit in it.

Symbolic thinking . . . is consubstantial with human existence, it comes before language and discursive reason. The symbol reveals certain aspects of reality—the deepest aspects—

15 Ibid., 54.
which defy any other means of knowledge. Images, symbols and myths are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfill a function, that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being. Consequently the study of them enables us to reach a better understanding of man—of man "as he is," before he has come to terms with the conditions of History. Every historical man carried on, within himself, a great deal of prehistoric humanity. . . . Today we are beginning to see that the non-historical portion of every human being does not simply merge into the animal kingdom, as in the nineteenth century so many thought it did, nor ultimately into "Life"; but that, on the contrary, it bifurcates and rises right above Life. This non-historical part of the human being wears, like a medal, the imprinted memory of a richer, a more complete and almost beatific existence. When a historically conditioned being—for instance, an Occidental of our own days—allows himself to be invaded by the non-historical part of himself (which happens to him much oftener and more completely than he imagines), this is not necessarily a retrogression towards the animal stage of humanity or a redescent towards the deepest sources of organic life. Often he is re-entering a paradisiac stage of primordial humanity (whatever its concrete existence may then have been; for this "primordial man" is admittedly an archetype never fully "realisable" in any human existence at all). In escaping from his historicity, man does not abdicate his status as a human being or abandon himself to "animality": he recovers the language, and sometimes the experience of a "lost paradise." Dreams, waking dreams, the images of his nostalgias and of his enthusiasm, etc., are so many forces that may project the historically-conditioned human being into a spiritual world that is infinitely richer than the closed world of his own "historic moment." \[Italics added\]

\[\text{Eliade, Images and Symbols, 12-13.}\]
No matter how much modern man attempts to suppress or repress his non-historical part, it continues to find a channel for expression through his dreams, images, symbols, and so forth. The essential human condition is this non-historical part, the part which modern man has in common with archaic man. "By directing attention to the survival of symbols and mythical themes in the psyche of modern man" the historian of religions, says Eliade, shows "that the spontaneous rediscovery of the archetypes of archaic symbolism is a common occurrence in all human beings, irrespective of race and historical surroundings." 17

Myths decay and symbols become secularised, but . . . they never disappear, even in the most positivist of civilisations, that of the nineteenth century. Symbols and myths come from such depths: they are part and parcel of the human being, and it is impossible that they should not be found again in any and every existential situation of man in the Cosmos. 18

Because Eliade believes that all men have this non-historical part in common, we find Eliade arguing as he does in the following passages; in the first he is concerned to establish the archaic character of the symbolism, its presence early in man's history.

It is important to distinguish between the borrowing of a cosmological theory elaborated around the symbolism of the Centre—such as, for example, the conception of the seven celestial spheres—and the symbolism c:

17 Ibid., 34-35.
18 Ibid., 25.
of the Center in itself. We have already seen that this symbolism is extremely archaic, . . .19

In the second passage Eliade looks for the "archaic" character of the symbolism by finding it in the unconscious of modern man.

We also know that the symbolism of climbing-up and of stairs /a kind of symbolism of the Center/ recurs often enough in psychoanalytic literature, an indication that it belongs to the archaic content of the human psyche and is not a "historical" creation, not an innovation dating from a certain historical moment (say, from ancient Egypt or Vedic India, etc.).20

If, then, Eliade can find a certain symbolism—say, the symbolism of the Center—in both archaic man and in modern man's unconscious, then he concludes that it belongs to all men, irrespective of historical surroundings.

The historicist's quarrel with Eliade can be summarized in his conception of a reality where essence precedes existence, while the historicist conceives of a reality where existence preceded essence (these are polarized aphorisms and indicate tendencies in the two positions rather than actual positions). For Eliade man already has an essential nature before he enters the historical process, or apart from the historical process: "man 'as he is,' before he has come to terms with the conditions of history,"21 or,

19 Ibid., 47.
20 Ibid., 50.
21 Ibid., 12.
"the essential human condition precedes the actual human condition."\textsuperscript{22} The same applies to symbols, which have a structure or form which precedes the variations, distortions, and mutilations visited upon the structures in the historical process, but which retain their essential nature throughout history and in spite of history: "Myths decay and symbols become secularised, but . . . they never disappear."\textsuperscript{23} For the historicist there is no essential nature of man or of his symbols except that which is produced in history. For him the essential human condition is evolving throughout man's history; in the history of man there is "an infinite series of events, all of which have made us what we are today."\textsuperscript{24} This does not mean that man is always progressing, for there is a correspondence on the individual level in personal growth and regressions, as well as biological growth and decline or decay—mankind is not at every moment of history always necessarily going forward, but the movement of history has been a progressive one all told.

The historicist would be bothered also by Eliade's acceptance of Freud's belief that the early years of infancy and childhood are constitutive of the person's entire life. There are psychologists today who emphasize the adolescent and early adult years as exceedingly important in the formation of the adult person, and the ideal persons for the

\textsuperscript{22}Eliade, \textit{Myths, Dreams and Mysteries}, 54.
\textsuperscript{23}Eliade, \textit{Images and Symbols}, 25; quoted above, 92.
\textsuperscript{24}Eliade, \textit{Myths, Dreams and Mysteries}, 55.
Historicist is one who continues to grow throughout his lifetime—reorientations and reorganizations of the personality can occur even in adult life; it helps considerably if the individual is oriented towards creativity and personal growth, but "conversions" can occur even in those who are not particularly so oriented. In short, one might criticize Eliade's psychology.

Skeptical as the historicist is about there being any essential human nature apart from what is produced in and by history, the historicist would ask Eliade what he thinks is the source or cause of the psychic unity of mankind, whereby all men retain the archaic past in their unconscious. Is there, for example, a structure in the mind that is inherited biologically? I doubt very much that Eliade would support this position, considering as evidence his attitude towards Jungian archetypes. What, indeed, does he think of Jung's idea of archetypes—are Eliade's archetypes and Jung's archetypes equivalent? In *Cosmos and History* Eliade uses the term "archetypes" in a different sense than does Jung.

In the course of the book I have used the terms "exemplary models," "paradigms," and "archetypes" in order to emphasize a particular fact—namely, that for the man of the traditional and archaic societies, his various categories of behavior are believed to have been "revealed" at the beginning of time, that, consequently, they are regarded as having a super-human and "transcendental" origin. In using the term "archetype," I neglected to specify that I was not referring to the archetypes described by Professor C.G. Jung . . . .
I need scarcely say that, for Professor Jung, the archetypes are structures of the collective unconscious. But in my book I nowhere touch upon the problems of depth psychology nor do I use the concept of the collective unconscious.25

What applies to Eliade's book *Cosmos and History* seems to apply with some qualifications to his other works. This is apparently not because he disagrees with Jung—Eliade seems to have learned much from Jung, and I have found no place where Eliade takes explicit or implicit issue with Jung—but rather because Eliade avoids taking a definite stand on the causation of these "exemplary models," "paradigms," and "archetypes." Even Jung himself is somewhat ambiguous.

What are archetypes /in Jung's theory of the archetypes of the collective unconscious/: First let us remove the misconception that archetypes are *ideae innatae*—innate, inherited images. They are only dispositions to the formation of images. Archetypes cannot be encountered directly, but only indirectly through their manifestations, and especially through symbols. We might compare symbols to concrete, full-formed crystals, whereas archetypes can be compared only to the prefiguration of crystals known as their "lattice-structure." The crystals are not the "lattice" but their shapes are governed by the nature of the "lattice"—they may be larger or smaller, transparent or opaque, of this shape or that, corresponding to the nature of the original "lattice." Thus "Mother" is a single archetype which may be compared with such a "lattice"; yet it may be "crystal-lised" in countless forms—e.g. goddesses, mother-images of all sorts can crystallize in the minds of different individuals but

also in the minds of different peoples. . . . Just as instincts give rise to particular types of reactions, so do archetypes in the psychological sphere. If we admit the factor of heredity—if, for instance, we admit that musical talent may be inherited, as in the Bach family—then we have little cause for surprise when we hear Jung say that archetypes are "inherited together with the brain structure," and that "they are in fact its psychological aspect." . . .

It would be wrong, of course, to imagine that it has been found possible to establish comprehensively either the origin or the nature of the archetypes: they are as deep as the unconscious itself and for this reason can never be made conscious in their entirety. 26

In Eliade's thinking, the archetypes are paradigmatic structures which traditional man tries to imitate as closely as possible, but Eliade also uses the term "archetypes" in a sense which comes very close to Jung's meaning of the term, albeit that Eliade puts forth his theory of archetypes tentatively.

All these operations of any set of similar symbolisms are of the same structure. In the present state our knowledge, it is difficult to specify whether their uniformity proceeds from imitation—from "historic" borrowings, in the sense given to this term by the historico-cultural school—or whether it is to be explained by the fact that they all follow from the very situation of man in the world—so that they are variants of one and the same archetype realising itself on many


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planes and in different cultural areas. Here, let us be content with the conclusion that we have to do with non-historical expressions of the same archetypal symbolism manifesting itself in a coherent and systematic manner on the plane of the "unconscious" (of dream, hallucination or waking dream) as well as upon those of the "trans-conscious" and the conscious (aesthetic vision, ritual, mythology and philosophumena) . . . . Provisionally, then, let us accept the hypothesis that at least a certain zone of the subconscious is ruled by the archetypes which also dominate and organise conscious and trans-conscious experience. Hence we are entitled to regard the multiple variants of the same complexes of symbols (such as those of "ascension" and of "binding") as endless successions of "forms" which, on the different levels of dream, myth, ritual, theology, mysticism, metaphysics, etc., are trying to "realise" the archetype.

These "forms," it is true, are not all spontaneous; not all of them depend directly upon the ideal archetype; a great many of them are "historical" in the sense that they result from the evolution or the imitation of a previously existing form. . . . What seems more reliable is the tendency of every "historical form" to approximate as nearly as possible to its archetype, even when it has been realised at a secondary or insignificant level: this can be verified everywhere in the religious history of humanity. 27

Thus, when Eliade attempts to explain the causes of the similarities in symbolisms instead of just to describe the attempts of traditional man to imitate the archetypes, he comes very close to a Jungian theory of archetypes, yet without taking an absolute stand.

It is my contention that Eliade's theory of psychic unity and such conceptions as the structure of the Center of

27Eliade, Images and Symbols, 118-20.
the World and the archetypal Center rest or fall on his explanation of the cause of this psychic unity and non-historical part of man. We can argue that morphological analysis of symbols is valid if there are identities at the heart of these sets of symbolisms, that is, that there are archetypes which manifest themselves in somewhat different historical forms but which always retain an essential identity by tending to approximate their corresponding archetypes. The archetypes, in turn, are a valid explanation of the similarities between symbolisms if they can be empirically verified and are only a hypothetical explanation of similarities, one can accept the theory of archetypes only by faith, only if it seems to mesh with the rest of one's intellectual conceptions of reality and with one's experience. For an historian of religions such a theory is justifiable, providing that he makes only limited claims to the scientific (history as science) nature of his research. For an anthropologist or an historian such a theory is questionable and requires improvement, improvement in the direction of honesty about the relativity of all human knowledge.

The revision I would recommend is along the lines suggested at the end of the chapters on Jerusalem and on Rome. The similarities between various symbolisms are real and require explanation, but one may ask where these identities dwell and where lie the constant factors in the evolution of these symbolisms. Do these identities and constants reside
in the structures of the symbols themselves, in the structures of the mind (archetypes), in both, or in neither? Eliade's answer would, I think, be a qualified "both." As we have seen, he points to characteristics of a symbolism like the Center of the World, characteristics which tend to be found in any given historical example of the Center (any symbolism tends to approximate its archetype); yet the historical form may be very different in one culture than in another, and in one period of the same culture than in another. When Eliade alludes to causes of these identities and constants, as he almost never does, it seems to be in the direction of agreeing with Jungian archetypal theory; yet Eliade does not seem to want to take a definite position, a fact indicating his own doubts about the precise causes of these identities and constants or of these similarities. An historicist's answer to the problem of possible identities and constants is likewise a somewhat non-committal one, for he would not want to rule out absolutely the possibility of constants and identities behind what seem to be only similarities; but until he sees more evidence for such constants and identities he will maintain that the similarities are only similarities and nothing more.

The consequences of accepting similarities but not identities or constants (this applies to both the structure of symbolisms and to their mental or psychological causes) is that the explanation of these similarities must be a more
general, more abstract, and more psychological one. For instance, instead of speaking of the fixed or usual characteristics of the Center of the World symbolism, an historicist might interpret this symbolism as evidencing an experience of order and disorder, order and disorder *experienced* in the three dimensions of finite space, and order and disorder *expressed* in spatial representations and symbols. In such a view, this experience of order and disorder might be related to psychological research on the biological basis of creativity. For instance, Edward Sinnott, who is a biologist interested in the psychology of creativity, has written an article in which he points out—in an admittedly speculative way—certain parallels between the ordering force of life in non-human creatures and the ordering force in man's brain. Sinnott starts first with the creativeness of life in the order of a single-celled organism. Such a one-celled creature is able to take the various molecules which it comprises and to organize them, to order them into a living being; at death, however, the cell will decompose and return to "chaos." In a more complex creature there are organs and tissues, all ordered for as long as the creature lives into a purposeful unity, not only organized at any one moment, but also ordered

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teleologically to the actualization or fulfillment of the creature in time. On the highest level of life we can observe the creative functions of the human brain, which, even while we are asleep, is constantly patterning the data fed into it, constantly ordering the experiences of the human being into different patterns. This is why people frequently get "insights" in the middle of the night or during some unrelated activity. Lawrence Kubie says something similar.

In recent years our concepts of the interplay between conscious, preconscious, and unconscious processes in human psychology have changed in a direction which will lead to more precise clinical and experimental work. We now look upon the brain not as a device to do work but as a communications machine to transmit information. At the core of this process is a continuous stream of subliminal, i.e., "preconscious," activity which goes on both during sleep and when we are awake and is carried on without conscious symbolic imagery. Analogous to a computer, it processes "bits" of information by scanning, ordering, selecting and rejecting, arranging in sequences, by juxtapositions and separations on the basis of chronology, by condensations on the basis of similarity, dissimilarity and contrasts, proximity and distance, and finally summatting and coding.

This preconscious processing of data proceeds at an extraordinarily rapid rate and with great freedom, as it assembles and disassembles many diverse patterns. . . . The stream is fed by a continuous bombardment of messages which are signalled from changes in every aspect of the body's functions. It is fed also by an incessant bombardment of signals from changes in the outer world which reach us through our distance receptors.29

Using this psychology of creative behavior as a lead, we might discuss patterning in space—such as the Center of the World and such as Dante's Jerusalem or his Rome—as one example of a larger process of creative ordering of experiences and perceptions. In the creative process there is an interplay between what man creates and the influence of man's previous creations. In other words there is a continuity in evolution, a continuity which Eliade tries to explain with his theory of archetypes. There is also a phenomenon of near-identities between certain of man's creations; this also can be discussed in relation to the psychology of creativity, in particular the biological basis of creativity. Herbert Gutman offers an interesting hypothesis on this little researched subject.

Wherein lies the ultimate source of creative activity? It is the thesis of this article that human creative activity is rooted in the general life principle of self-duplication. This principle accounts for growth and reproduction as well as for man's creative behavior, as we have tried to demonstrate. The subjective experiences of men engaged in creation testify to a link between the process of reproduction and creation, as has been suspected by various philosophers, psychologists, and biologists. . . . The link, the common denominator, we claim, is the principle of self-duplication, a principle apparently unique to life, manifested first on the level of cell-duplication, growth, and reproduction, and culminating in the creative activity of man; a theme played over and over again in the symphony of life. \(^{30}\)

A little further on in the same article, Gutman relates the creative process in man to its larger context in the "symphony of life" and in "the cosmos of the inanimate world."

The principle of self-duplication, . . . while a unique characteristic of the world of living things, . . . is a manifestation of a still more universal principle, a principle which lies at the base of the whole cosmos. This principle is that of periodicity. A periodic or cyclic process is one which repeats or reduplicates itself over and over again. Cyclic processes are not only the foundations of life but also of the non-living world. . . .

Thus, life may be understood as a unique utilization of the principle of periodicity, turning it into the principle of self-duplication, which is at the root of all creative processes. Through creativity, life "extraverts" cosmic principles, picks up these principles as themes on which it plays a myriad of variations.

Man's creativity is related to his own biological nature, as life is related to the cosmos of the inanimate world. In his creative activity, he extraverts his biological nature and uses the principles he finds in it as themes upon which he elaborates. But, since his biological nature, in turn, is founded upon inanimate cosmos which constitutes the material basis of his soma, he shares in all of cosmos.31

If Gutman and scholars pursuing similar research are on the right track, then we might explain universals in terms of biology—all men being possessed of a human body and brain with roughly identical functions and capabilities—and in terms of closely similar situations in the cosmos—all men live in a world of space and time, are related to an environment from which they must extract their food, and so forth. Thus, instead of a "Mother" archetype, we would argue that

31 Ibid., 32.
the biological nature of man is such that the human individual is for many years dependent on other human beings, and that most human beings thus have had many experiences, and usually strongly emotional experiences of their mother. All these bits of data are fed into the brain and there it is creatively patterned into symbols and myths, values and attitudes, conceptions and theories about mothers. This creative process within the individual is reinforced by cultural continuities, by what Gutman calls the "feedback of man's creations upon himself."

The world which man has created becomes part of his environment and, thus, he is in turn influenced by it. In other words, his own creations feed back on him. It is through this process of feedback that cultural evolution has become possible. Whatever cultural products a given generation finds handed down by the preceding generations, it uses as a stepping-stone to build on. Each new creation serves not only as a step forward, but as a platform on which to continue the building process. . . .

Once these creations have been born into man's environment, they have become independent of their creator. . . .

This feedback process becomes more and more important the more civilization evolves. While man, in his own evolution, started out with a nature-made environment, he finds himself more and more surrounded by his own products. In modern present-day urban civilization, nature-made environment has been largely crowded out or has become overgrown by man-made products, a man-made environment. This man-made environment is material as well as social. Man finds himself surrounded not only by a bewildering array of objects and gadgets, but also by complex social organizations manned by a dense population of his own kind. The increased complexity of his environment and the stepped-up interaction with his fellowmen places heavy demands upon his powers of adjustment and, in turn, poses a challenge to his ingenuity and creativity. Thus,
a positive feedback circuit has been established in which man is connected with his civilization in a vicious circle. The more man creates the more he has to keep on creating.32

There is the linear process of cultural evolution and the periodic or cyclic processes of the cosmos—symbols are passed on by the first and re-created over and over again in similar forms by similar men in similar life situations by the second. In such a scheme symbols of spatial orientation such as the Center of the World may be transmitted by historical diffusion. A near-identical symbolism may also be created in a culture where there has been no historical contact—a basically identical creative ability patterning a similar array of experiences into a near-identical symbolism. In such a view we could speak of man's creative patterning of spatial experiences as part of his experience of order and disorder in the world, and of this experience of order and disorder as arising from the interplay of the ordering and creative force of life with the periodic cycles of the cosmos.

The term "archetype" is a useful term, therefore, only when it represents a generalized experience of men in different cultures. Here we may draw support from theorist Severyn Bruyn's analysis of sociological rhetoric, where he assesses the value of the term "archetype" in the language of the social sciences.

32Ibid., 30-31.
The archetype may be tentatively formulated on the basis of interpreting a limited number of cases of human behavior (e.g., as with Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung), but they must eventually be verified by careful systematic study of hundreds of empirical studies from around the world. Efforts have already been begun in this direction by G. P. Murdock, Clyde Kluckhohn, and others to document the intuitive leadings of clinical theorists. The archetype, . . . is a rational construction of what is believed to be a recurrent theme in the culture of man. It is therefore subject to rational and empirical criticism. For example, how universal the Oedipus myth actually is depends upon what elements should theoretically be allowed to enter into its description. Present anthropological studies indicate that if all the elements which have been found to be important in psychoanalytic theory are included in the definition of the Oedipus myth, this myth may be found in very few cultures, but if the definition is broadened or made more highly abstract, it can be found in the widespread existence of similar allegorical content in other myths, such as in the stories of creation, of world flood, of sibling rivalry, of incest, and other types of myths which Clyde Kluckhohn has recently summarized in "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking," in Myth and Mythmaking, ed. Henry Murray (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960), 46-60. The archetype, then, functions in the world of sense and abstraction. It is a rational image of many stories with allegorical quality (fables, myths, folk-tales) in diverse cultures. In this way, the archetype produces a different, yet no less important, kind of sociological truth than the allegory which functions more as an expressive truth of man's moral life.33

The more rigidly the archetype is applied, the more it carries with it certain definite characteristics, the less applicable

it becomes. Eliade is perhaps pushing in this direction when he speaks of uniformities among symbolisms and myths as arising from "the very situation of man in the world."\textsuperscript{34} In application of the concept, however, Eliade is more literal than we might have hoped; rather than penetrating to the psychological experience and using the term "archetype" to indicate similarities arising from the situation of man in the world, similarities expressed in a highly abstract and general way, Eliade usually looks for external structures of symbols. In other words, Eliade tries to find similarities or identities in form or structure of the symbolisms and myths, and from these he reasons to a common psychological experience of sacred space and time. It would be much better to explore these examples of similar structure carefully, asking for the nature of the psychological experience expressed in them, then drawing equations and similarities where they exist in psychological meaning. In other words, similarities or identities ought to be on the level of psychological meaning rather than form: equivalence of meaning and not equivalence of form.

Profits and Drawbacks of Applying Mircea Eliade's Method to Dante's View of Space

Eliade's work has provided us with questions to ask ourselves in our analysis of Dante's view of space, and without

\textsuperscript{34}Eliade, \textit{Images and Symbols}, 118; quoted above, 97.
these questions we would not have looked for the same things; perhaps we would not have had important questions to ask at all and would therefore not have discovered what we have, including our disagreements with his method and with what his method tells us about Dante's view of space. To put it succinctly, Eliade's work is thought-provoking and challenging, and its systematization makes it easy to extend the method to areas which he has not himself researched. If I have ended up disagreeing with him it is not because I am not grateful to him for providing the original impetus for the project.

Looking back over our work in the chapters on Jerusalem and on Rome, we can now see that we were asking ourselves three different but related questions, not always kept distinct: 1) Are there structural similarities or similarities in form between Dante's symbols of spatial orientation (Jerusalem and Rome) and the traditional man's symbols of spatial orientation (Center of the World)? 2) Are there mental archetypes held in common by all men, or at least by traditional men and by Dante, that explain the similarities in form? In other words, if there are similarities in form between the symbolisms of Dante and of traditional man, do not these similarities indicate a hidden equivalence in mental structure or a "psychic unity" of all men? 3) Where do the structural aspects of Dante's symbolisms of spatial orientation belong on a traditional-modern continuum? In other words, to what extent have Dante's spatial views become secularized?
In regard to the first question—Are there equivalences in form between Dante's symbols of spatial orientation and the Center of the World?—we have seen in both our research on Jerusalem and on Rome that some strong and some weak similarities exist. It is possible to take the characteristics of the Center of the World outlined by Eliade and to apply them to Jerusalem with some success (Jerusalem as site of the cosmogony and navel of the world, Jerusalem as sanctified by hierophanies and signs), but even with Jerusalem the effort is often a strained one (Jerusalem as axis mundi, as cosmic mountain, as the place where the traditional man desires to symbolically build his house and to which he desires to relate the secular aspects of his existence, and Jerusalem as permanently sacred). As we have seen in the conclusion to the chapter on Rome, to apply Eliade's structural characteristics of Center to Rome would have been a highly contrived sort of enterprise, an enterprise which we therefore abandoned in favor of an analysis which better fit Dante's own conceptions of the Holy City of Rome. When the approach is applied rigorously it shows more differences than similarities, indicating that perhaps the structural characteristics were force-fit even where they seemed to work. In other words, I feel a certain uneasiness about seeing Jerusalem as "navel of the world," for instance, wondering whether we have not distorted Dante's own conceptions of Jerusalem by forcing the preconceived category of omphalos (with all of Eliade's implications) onto
Dante's thought. If this hunting for characteristics comes up with close similarities at all it could only do so within Eliade's grouping "traditional cultures." Even here an historicist has a right to balk, but since I have not made a study of spatial orientation and symbolism in the cultures which Eliade labels "traditional," I am in no position to offer explicit qualifications or reasons for rejection of the term "Center of the World" as applied to traditional cultures. As we have already discussed in the general methodological critique of Eliade, his failure to consider negative examples and the gross oversimplification of lumping together so many levels of culture into one category evoke strong suspicions.

In fairness to Eliade, it should be pointed out, however, that he might not approach medieval spatial symbolisms by comparing these symbolisms so meticulously with the characteristics of the Center of the World. In most of the examples he draws from modern or medieval Western culture he works on a generalized and intuitive level.  

35 For example, see Eliade, Images and Symbols, 163; also see ibid., 37-38: "In archaic and traditional societies, the surrounding world is conceived as a microcosm. At the limits of this closed world begins the domain of the unknown, of the formless. On this side there is ordered—because inhabited and organised—space; on the other, outside this familiar space, there is the unknown and dangerous region of the demons, the ghosts, the dead and of foreigners—in a word chaos or death or night. . . . The destruction of an established order, the abolition of an archetypal image, was equivalent to a regression into chaos, into the pre-formal, undifferentiated state that preceded the cosmogony. Let us note that the same images are still invoked in our own days when people want to formulate the dangers that menace a certain type of civilisation: there is much talk of 'chaos',
should have worked on a more intuitive level also, looking
for structural resemblances to the Center of the World but
jumping more easily to the conclusion that we are seeing
evidences of the archetypal Center at work. It is quite ob­
vious that Eliade would not find the Center at work in so many
places if he did not accept a theory of psychic unity of man­
kind and of archetypes.

Going on, then, to our second question—Is there a
common archetypal Center at work deep in the unconscious of
traditional man and of Dante (and of modern man) that causes
greater or lesser similarities in the structure of symbolisms
of spatial orientation?—my final conclusion is to play the role
of the agnostic and refuse to assent to a theory which has
not had sufficient empirical verification. The word "arche­
type" is imprecise, and as an imprecise term used to describe
a mental process we understand imprecisely (the psychology of
creativity, and particularly studies of the biological basis
of 'disorder', of the 'dark ages' into which 'our world' is
subsiding. All these expressions, it is felt, signify the
abolition of an order, of a Cosmos, of a structure, and the
re-immersion in a state that is fluid, amorphous, in the end
chaotic.

The conception of the enemy as a demonic being, a
veritable incarnation of the powers of evil, has also survived
/italics added/ into our days. The psychoanalysis of these
mythic images that still animate the modern world will per­
haps show us the extent to which we project our own destructive
desires upon the 'enemy'."

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of creativity, seem, as stated in the previous section of this chapter, to offer the most hope for the advance of knowledge on this problem) I have no strong objections to it. But the term frequently implies a theory, a theory which no historicist would accept unless and until it has been sufficiently demonstrated (and with grave doubts about the possibilities of positively verifying it). I take the same position here that David Goddard takes regarding Lévi-Strauss's structuralism.

In his [Lévi-Strauss's] view models do not in any way refer to the observed material of social relations, the apparent ethnographic reality as the field worker describes it and as natives themselves experience it, but to an unconscious and hidden reality which is said to be the actual social structure of the society. This structure is arrived at by a process of abstraction and conceptually articulated in a formal model, but the model is not an abstraction, for it expresses, reflects, or represents the true structure of the society under consideration. The model is at once a true description not of the total society but of its structure, and an explanation of how the society really works, a determination of its underlying principles of operation. It will immediately be seen that this is a very strong claim. . . . The idea of some objective ground in reality which science can bring to consciousness is based on the reationalist assumption that the cosmos has a determinate structure. Unfortunately, there is no way of proving that this is (or is not) the case. In terms of social reality we can therefore never know whether the structuralist method actually does discover its underlying structure (or if it is assumed that it really has one). The 'necessary integration . . . between method and reality' which Lévi-Strauss thinks he has achieved in fact rests on no more than a subjective sense of certainty, or a resolution to look at the world in a certain way.36

If we do not accept the theory of archetypes, then awareness of the great differences between "traditional" man's spatial views and Dante's make us unwilling to assent to an underlying or causal equivalence of them. That there are cultural universals\(^{37}\) seems very probable—at least if these universals are considered as vague, highly generalized cultural forms—but that there is a conception of a spatial Center behind traditional man's view of space, medieval man's view of space, and modern man's view of space seems tenuous.\(^{38}\)


\(^{38}\) It is interesting that Lévi-Strauss's structuralism is also built on an assumption of something unchangeable and universal in man. For Eliade it is an unchangeable non-historical part of man with unconscious archetypes correspondingly unchanging. For Lévi-Strauss it is the unchangeable abilities of man's mind. See for instance, Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brook G. Schoepf (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), 227: "What makes a steel ax superior to a stone ax is not that the first one is better made than the second. They are equally well made, but steel is quite different from stone. In the same way we may be able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well; the improvement lies, not in an alleged progress of man's mind, but in the discovery of new areas to which it may apply its unchangeable and unchanging powers." /Italics added./ See also ibid., 21-22: "If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all
It is true, however, that Eliade speaks of archetypes as arising from the "situation of man in the world," and on this imprecise and general level it could be valid to call Jerusalem and Rome Centers of the World for Dante; they do seem to be points of orientation, spatial symbols of order and civilization, and sacred or religious space. If this is all Eliade meant by his universal archetypes, then it would seem to fit Dante's case well.

Yet, even if we were to travel this far with Eliade, the question remains, Why does it fit Dante's case well? Is it because all men consciously or unconsciously know points of spatial orientation, spatial symbols of order and civilization, and sacred or religious space? Or is it because Dante stands historically between the ancient world and the modern, and therefore because he inherited a cultural tradition which conditioned him to view Jerusalem and Rome as he did, a tradition which was still very much like traditional man's and only partially secularized?

minds—ancient and modern, primitive and civilized (as the study of symbolic function, expressed in language, so strikingly indicates)—it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs, provided of course that the analysis is carried far enough."

A number of scholars have pointed out the revival of cyclical and despairist views of history in the 20th century Western world, and one wonders if the popularity of Eliade's works and those of Lévi-Strauss is not part of a larger rejection—probably only temporary and superficial—of the Western linear view. An historicist can be a little concerned about this trend, since he values so highly the Western linear view of history. It is no surprise that Lévi-Strauss is highly critical of modern Western culture, and that Eliade bemoans secularism.
With such a thought we arrive at the last of the three questions: Where do the structural aspects of Dante's symbolisms of spatial orientation belong on a traditional-modern continuum? Eliade and I would here be agreed that Dante falls somewhere in between the two poles, perhaps approximately half-way. There would be this difference, however, that I would not want to use the traditional-modern continuum to refer to the entire history of mankind but only to Western history. At the one pole would be the ideal type of a myth-based culture comprised of traditional men "in the pure state," and at the other would be so-called "secular" man "in the pure state," and somewhere in between would be Dante, a strange mixture of traditional and modern, of mythical and scientific outlooks, of "religious" and "secular"... in between would be Dante in typically Gothic poise.

Even with this restricted application of the traditional-modern continuum qualifications should be made. One would be the criticism of Eliade's "sacred" versus "profane" or "religious man" versus "secular man" as applied to the Western development. What this amounts to is a rejection of Eliade's definition of religion, for "secular" religions ought to be included: an historicist theology of hope, a theistic or atheistic evolutionary humanism, Julian Huxley's religion without revelation, Harvey Cox's secular religion, Teilhard de Chardin's mystical evolutionism. Eliade's philosophy or theology of history narrows his definition of religion to
religions which see the historical process itself as devoid of transcendent meaning, and he therefore ignores the religions which have the most relevance to man in the contemporary world.

This would perhaps be a good place to offer an historicist's alternative method for treating the evolution of spatial (or temporal) views in the traditional-modern continuum. This method is suggested by Alfred Kroeber's way of treating the development of the alphabet. Kroeber says his concern was

... not to trace the space-time wanderings of a fixedly invariable unit called the alphabet, but to trace the changes of this unit or system in form and function, its derivatives, losses, and increments, invention of vowels and resyllabification, growths of systematization and simplification, non-acceptances, prestige associations, stylistic modifications, petrifications, and evolutionary change. In short, the alphabet neatly illustrates somewhere in its history, most of the processes operative in culture: it is a convenient microcosm of cultural process;...

Kroeber has outlined three stages in the development of the alphabet: "pictures (including ideograms), rebus or transitional, and wholly phonetic writing." He points out that his distinction is to be taken as meaning that these three stages were logically distinguishable, which is not the same as asserting that they normally or necessarily succeed each

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40 Ibid.
other." As a matter of historical fact, however, 1) there were many nations which entered the stage of pictography, 2) of these many only five or six at most and perhaps only two proceeded on their own initiative to the transitional or part phonetic stage, and 3) completely phonetic writing occurred only once in the history of mankind, that once being the creation of the alphabet. So historically the three stages did succeed each other, though that could not have been predicted from the mere logical distinction. Furthermore, one can see why, psychologically why, the stages appeared in the order that they have.

Not only do the historical facts show that the succession of styles has been pictograph-ideogram-rebus-phonogram in the known instances, but an argument could well be adduced that that order is psychologically irreversible in a free internal development uninfluenced by alien inventions. There is every reason to believe that a visible mark, sign, or figure would first evolve an association of a visible form, and might readily become construed or accepted socially as a symbol of a visible object or visible act. But there is no known or conceivable psychological mechanism by which such a figure would spontaneously evoke a consistent auditory association and directly become a symbol for a sound cluster. Psychologically the chain must be: made visible figure or picture, symbolic pictogram (or ideogram), spoken word for the object or idea, transfer of reference to a similar-sounding word happening already to function as an audible symbol of another object or idea, further transfer of relevance to any similar sound-group irrespective of semantic meaning. . . . It is in this way that we may legitimately speak of the developmental process

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41Ibid., 6-7.
implied in the three stages as being irreversible; the one-wayness is on the psychological, not on the cultural level.

The distinguishing of logically or psychologically possible stages is perhaps related to what Milke has called a "typology of possible developments whose causal conditions remain largely unknown." . . . .42

This method has good possibilities for application to spatial and temporal views: the object would be to construct typologies of logically distinguishable stages in the development of spatial orientation, for instance, and then to test these stages on historical facts, and finally, to ask about the psychological necessity of these stages following one another as they do in the historical cases. It seems likely that the same stages would apply not only to Western Civilization but to other civilizations and cultures as well, perhaps to all mankind throughout history. Near the beginning of the continuum would probably be a view similar to that of the Ojibwa Indians of Canada, as described by A. I. Hallowell43 in an article on "Cultural Factors in Spatial Orientation." The Ojibwas have names for the places within their territory that have relevance to their lives as landmarks for their journeys, and so forth; they can draw accurate maps comprised of these significant places, showing accurate observation on this level.

42Ibid., 7-8.

The larger world beyond, however, is a symbolic construction of cosmic space in which the four winds, the four cardinal directions, the land of the dead, and so forth have their place. At the modern pole of the continuum there would be a conception of abstract space as well as a continuing experience of existential space (place names for significant or personally relevant places); for the most part symbolic constructions of cosmic space would have been replaced by geometric, abstract, scientifically observed space. In between would be Dante, in whose thought the symbolic cosmic space is still very important but giving way gradually to scientific conceptions of space. In the future, it would be assumed, man might create a yet higher level of space-conception. An historian of religions might profitably do this kind of study, for a people's view of cosmic space (the view of space within their own territory would be relevant only as context) does, it seems, belong to their religion. Likewise their conception of time is part of their religion, time as mystery, a metaphysics of time, the historical or evolutionary continuity which transcends the individual. But for the historian of religions to deal with spatial and temporal conceptions in this way would require a different definition of religion than Eliade has—it would require an evolutionary definition of religion in which man's expanding consciousness has meaning, and in which the historical conditioning of the religion is dealt with but reductionism avoided.
Towards a Rapprochement

The source of the historicist's disagreement with Eliade is, as has been said before in this paper, the difference in the philosophical and theoretical presuppositions which they bring to their research. In order to understand each other and work towards a resolution of their differences it is necessary to lay bare these presuppositions and honestly recognize and admit how they color their perceptions and analysis.

Eliade's is a reformer in the precise meaning of that term: one who "re-forms" something of the past in an attempt to preserve what is of value in it and yet to make it relevant to the present. Eliade recognizes something of value in the previous stages of Western man's history, something shared by our non-Western contemporary counterparts, and yet something which contemporary Western man is trying to suppress or ignore. Eliade wants to revive what is fast being lost to Western man today, his ability to experience sacred time and sacred space, his ability to experience that which transcends the here-and-now ceaseless flux and which gives meaning to everyday existence. Eliade is not to be accused of a kind of

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"infantile regression," of a desire to escape or regress to the past, for he is well aware of the superior consciousness modern man has of profane space and time; but for all that modern man has gained in sophistication about profane space, he has, in Eliade's view, correspondingly but unnecessarily lost touch with the deepest and richest symbols of the unconscious.

There are a number of passages which aptly show Eliade's attitude towards modern man versus traditional man, and his desire to help modern man rediscover sacred time and space.

What has become of the myth of the Lost Paradise, for instance, or the Image of the perfect Man, the mystery of Woman and of Love, etc.? All these are to be found (but how desecrated, degraded and artificialised!) among many other things in the semi-conscious flux of the most down-to-earth existence—in its waking dreams, its fits of melancholy, in the free play of images, when consciousness is "taking time off" (in the street, the underground railway or elsewhere), and in all kinds of distractions and amusements. There it lies hidden, the whole treasury of myths, "laicised" and "modernised." What has happened to the images is what happens, as Freud has shown us, in the case of over-crude allusions to sexual realities— they have changed their "form." In order to survive, the Images take on "familiar" shapes.

They are of no less interest for all that. These degraded images present to us the only possible point of departure for the spiritual renewal of modern man (italics added). It is of the greatest importance, we believe, to rediscover a whole mythology, if not a theology, still concealed in the most ordinary, everyday life of contemporary man; it will depend upon himself whether he can work his way back to the source and rediscover the profound meanings of all these faded images and damaged myths.45

45Eliade, Images and Symbols, 18.
Myths reveal the real structure of the world, says Eliade;46 the nineteenth century did not realize this but instead considered them so many untruths, superstitions, and examples of backwardness and ignorance and barbarism. Today, in contrast,

our world is . . . returning to a point of view that was general in Europe until the eighteenth century and is, moreover, connatural to the other, non-European cultures, whether "historic" (like those of Asia or Central America for instance) or archaic and "primitive". . . . Today we are well on the way to an understanding of one thing of which the nineteenth century had not even a presentiment—that the symbol, the myth and the image are of the very substance of the spiritual life, that they may become disguised, mutilated or degraded, but are never extirpated. It would be well worth while to study the survival of the great myths throughout the nineteenth century: one would then see how they were humbled, inimised, condemned to incessant change of form, and yet survived that hibernation, thanks chiefly to literature.47

Eliade is a person who has experienced the terror of history and found a world unknown to the historicist, a non-historical, spiritual world that "is infinitely richer than the closed world of his own 'historic moment.'"48 This non-historical world lies dormant within each human being, no matter how secularized, a world accessible to all who, like Augustine or like Socrates, look within themselves to find the latent truths in their souls.

46Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, 14-16.
47Eliade, Images and Symbols, 9 and 11.
48Ibid., 12.
This maieutics effected with the aid of religious symbolism would also help to rescue modern man from his cultural provincialism and, above all, from his historical and existentialist relativism. For, as we shall see, man is opposing himself to history even when he sets out to make history, and even when he pretends to be nothing but "history." And in so far as man surpasses his historic moment and gives free course to his desire to relive the archetypes, he realises himself as a whole and universal being. In so far as he opposes himself to history, modern man rediscoversthe archetypal positions. Even his sleep, even his orgiastic tendencies are charged with spiritual significance. By the simple fact that, at the heart of his being, he rediscoversthe cosmic rhythms—the alterations of day and night, for instance, or of winter and summer—he comes to a more complete knowledge of his own destiny and significance.

Still with the aid of the history of religions, man might recover the symbolism of his body, which is an anthropocosmos. What the various techniques of the imagination, and especially the poetic techniques, have realised in this direction is almost nothing beside what the history of religions might promise. All these things still exist even in modern man; it is only necessary to reactivate them and bring them to the level of consciousness. By regaining awareness of his own anthropocosmic symbolism—which is only one variety of the archaic symbolism—modern man will obtain a new existential dimension, totally unknown to present-day existentialism and historicism: this is an authentic and major mode of being, which defends man from nihilism and historical relativism without thereby taking him out of history. For history itself will one day be able to find its true meaning: that of the epiphany of a glorious and absolute human condition. We have only to recall the value attached to historical existence by Judaeo-Christianity, to realise how, and in what sense, history might become "glorious" and even "absolute."49

There is a certain heroism in the historicist view—"one cannot be unmoved by this grandiose asceticism that the European

49 Ibid., 35-36.
mind has thus imposed upon itself— but how much richer life is when one opens himself to the deeper realities expressed in religious symbols.

Eliade himself alludes to the possibility that his position is a kind of escapism.

The man of archaic societies becomes conscious of himself in an "open world" that is rich in meaning. It remains to be seen whether these "openings" are but so many means of evasion, or whether, on the contrary, they constitute the only possibility of attaining to the true reality of the world.51 Nevertheless, for Eliade such ideas are but passing doubts, while for the historicist they are constant problems. To him Eliade's position is a kind of escapism, although the historicist may value many of the same experiences Eliade does—the rediscovery of the cosmic rhythms and the symbolism of the human body, for instance—but there is no reason why these experiences cannot be had on a "secular" level. Nor is there a lack of meaning in the historicist view. There is meaning, because there is meaning and beauty in growth, in evolution, in process—meaning because of the future fulfillment of present growth towards "total" fulfillment. The individual who wills to cooperate with the life-growth-evolutionary process can have a creative influence on reality, albeit at the cost of enormous struggle—growth is painful,

50 Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries, 56.

51 Eliade, Images and Symbols, 178.
painful because it requires relinquishing the old order, painful because that new order is so uncertain when the old is relinquished—it is like groping in the dark and not even being sure what one is groping for, painful because it involves risk that the new order one constructs will be a retrogression rather than a progression, painful because growth requires constant effort and offers no rest from the ceaseless flux. Mankind can create its own hell—by annihilation in nuclear war, for instance—or man can take increasing responsibility for being the spearhead of the evolutionary process, responsibility for striving for greater consciousness of reality (truth as process), responsibility for justice, for peace, for love, for beauty. The historicist is no idealist, for he sees misery, failure, disappointment, sadness, injustice, war, meaninglessness, anxiety; he sees decay and he sees death, death as the ultimate absurdity, the ultimate tragedy. He sees meaning in the ceaseless flux, meaning not in eternal verities or changeless universals, but meaning in growth and meaning in men who use their short time on earth to creative rather than destructive purposes.

We may respect Eliade's search for experiences which involve the whole man, for an experience of time that is organic rather than mechanical, for an experience of space that restores unity to a fragmented universe. There is plenty wrong with contemporary Western culture, and I once thought that the answer to these problems of meaningless and
anxiety, of alienation and despair lay in a revival of religion; in short, there was a time when I agreed with Eliade, but no longer. Historicism has for me a greater meaning because it is more realistic; perhaps in time I will see fallacies in it and return to Eliade's camp. 52

So much for philosophic presuppositions separating Eliade from the historicist; though we have barely scratched the surface of the topic, this does not seem an appropriate place to launch into a philosophical debate or an emotional outpouring of emotional attitudes toward the experience of living. We must go on now to theoretical problems. On this point we have already said a great deal, and a few concluding remarks will suffice.

Recalling the article by Oscar Lewis which was cited rather extensively in the introduction to this paper, we can comment that Eliade's theoretical choice has been to carry out a global, random comparison for the purpose of discovering human universals. His choice of problem—that is, to look for similarities rather than differences—molds his

52 An important challenge to the historicist is found in Eliade, Images and Symbols, 170: "In spite of the value it accords to Time, Judaeo-Christianity does not lead to historicism, but to a theology of History. It is not for its own sake that an event is valued, but only for the sake of the revelation it embodies—a revelation that precedes and transcends it. Historicism as such is a product of the decomposition of Christianity: it could only have come about insofar as we had lost faith in the trans-historical reality of the historical event."
finished product and tends to make him neglect negative evidence of his theories. His choice to work on such a broad geographical and temporal scale necessitates many gross inaccuracies and distortions and oversimplifications. Eventually the community of scholars may hope to achieve a global comparison of religions and of cultures which is based on inductive conclusions meticulously empirically tested and based on ethnographical data carefully collected by many different researchers. Such scientific approaches will, needless to say, not be possible for many years; nor will they, when they are possible, represent a job completed but only begun. For the present time, broad comparisons such as Eliade's serve the purpose of providing hypotheses to be tested, suggestions of directions to go or not to go, questions to ask of the data, and so forth.

Eliade's research is useful, I think, because it brings together things which are similar and attempts to discover the reasons for and the nature of these similarities. Although it does not satisfactorily explain either the nature of the similarities or their causes, nevertheless it provides a service in juxtaposing great masses of data that, to my knowledge, have not been put together in a single such comprehensive schema before. Eliade provides us with insights that would not have been as clear if he had loaded his works down with pages and pages of qualifications and distinctions and doubts. While I personally prefer the greater accuracy
possible when working on a small canvas with more limited problems, I see a need for speculation on a global level of comparative cultural research; without the large canvas the detail loses its perspective and its meaning.

I respect Eliade's mind and his accomplishment. I can identify with his dissatisfactions with modern secularism and historicism. I am glad I chose to follow in his footsteps for a little way. Yet, without contradicting in any way my respect, my empathy, and my gratitude, I do not want to follow him any further.
Nearly all the entries in the first two sections of this bibliography—"Bibliographies of Manuscripts" and "Other Bibliographies"—were taken from Theodore Besterman's World Bibliography of Bibliographies (4th edition revised) and from the Bibliographic Index (1937 to June, 1968).

Where the entries are incomplete it is because they were given that way in Besterman or in the Bibliographic Index. For purposes of uniformity I have taken some liberties in rearranging the information within some of the entries and completing them where I could.

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*In connection with Colomb de Batines' work:*


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In connection with Petzholdt's work:

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Commedia


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