

MIRCEA ELIADE AS SCHOLAR OF YOGA: A HISTORICAL STUDY OF HIS RECEPTION (1936–1954) (II)

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In the first part of this study¹ we have discussed the reception of Eliade's first two books on Yoga – *Yoga: Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne* (1936), and *Techniques du Yoga* (1948) – and of his articles related to India, published between 1932 and 1948. The second part discusses the Indological reception of his writings on the history of religions as well as that of his articles on Yoga and Indian religions published up to 1954, when his third book on Yoga – *Le Yoga: Immortalité et liberté* – appeared in Paris.

In the case of Eliade's Indological writings we took into consideration all categories of reviewers and commentators: scholars of India and Buddhism, religious studies scholars, theologians, philosophers, anthropologists, art and literary historians, as well as writers, journalists, and occultists. In the case of his writings on the history of religions we limited our attention to scholars of Indian and Asian studies who reviewed them, commented on them, or quoted them.

The concluding section attempts to give a first general picture of Eliade's reception as scholar of Yoga, from 1936 to 1954, on the basis of data collected and analysed in both parts of the article.

Keywords: Mircea Eliade; Yoga; Tantrism; shamanism; pre-Aryan origins; history of religions; reviews; reception

4. Writings on the History of Religions

In the six years between *Techniques of Yoga* and *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (1954), Eliade published four other books on the history of religions: *Traité d'histoire des religions* (1949), *Le mythe de l'éternel retour: Archétypes et répétition* (1949), *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (1951), and *Images et symboles: Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux* (1952). Naturally, Indian mythologies and religions are, more or less, represented in all of them, but they do not constitute their focus. He himself pointed this out in his journal: "It is not in my texts related to India that I have given the full measure of my thought, shall we say, and of my talents. Those writings which I value most

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highly at the present hour – *Traité, Archétypes* – are based on ethnographic material and only to a small extent on Indian data.”² It is, therefore, not surprising that only few scholars of Indian studies have reviewed these books.

Georges Dumézil (1898–1986), who – as we have seen – recommended to Gallimard Eliade’s work on Yoga, would be the one to introduce to the French public *Traité d’histoire des religions* (1949), whose title in the English translation became *Patterns in Comparative Religions* (1958). In his dense and appreciative foreword, the scholar of Indo-European mythology rebukes those Indologists who still have difficulties in detaching themselves from the theoretical “delusions” of Fr. Max Müller or those who see in the Vedic creations a simple play of mind and style.

Dumézil characterises Eliade as an enthusiastic and audacious scholar, armed with a vast culture and with a “precise training as an Indologist.” He illustrates himself not only in the study of Yoga, but also in the field of the history of religions, which the French professor prefers to call “science of religions.” To some readers – he warns – the chapter titles of Eliade’s book might evoke Max Müller’s categories, but the text itself will show how, after an immoderate reaction to the excesses of naturalism, the science of religions acknowledges today the importance of those representations, which remain the most general prime material of the mythical thinking.³ However, Eliade’s interpretation is completely different from that of the naturalism represented by Müller. His morphology of the sacred translates symbolically a “dialectic of the sacred” to which nature is a mere support.⁴

² M. Eliade, “Journal,” 18 November 1948, Mircea Eliade Papers, Special Collections Research Centre, University of Chicago Library (hereafter: M.E.P.) 15.3.

³ G. Dumézil, “Préface” (November 1948), in M. Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions: Morphologie du sacré* (Paris: Payot, 1949, new ed. fully revised and corrected, 1964), 5–10; M. Handoca, ed., “*Dosarul*” *Mircea Eliade*, vol. 6 (Bucharest: Curtea Veche, 2002), 62–70. Eliade acknowledged that the linguistic comparative approach of Indo-European religions and mythologies, discredited because of Max Müller, was rehabilitated in 1948 by Dumézil’s book *Mitra-Varuna* (a copy with autographed dedication is preserved in *Fondul Mircea Eliade*, Centre of Eurasian and Afroasiatic Studies, Metropolitan Library, Bucharest, hereafter: F.M.E.). M. Eliade, “Les religions,” in *Interdisciplinarité et sciences humaines*, vol. 1 (Paris: P.U.F., 1983), 257–270 (258, 266). See also Eliade’s review of the book, “La souveraineté et la religion indo-européenne,” *Critique* (Paris) 4, no. 35 (April 1949): 342–349; reprinted in Idem, *Briser le toit de la maison: La créativité et ses symboles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 297–308.

⁴ Initially, because of its extreme typographical compression, decided by the editor in order to use less paper, Eliade doubted that anyone will read Dumézil’s “Préface”; Eliade, “Journal,” 8 September 1948, M.E.P. 15.3.

Eliade believed that this preface determined the success of *Traité*.⁵ Soon after the publication, **Anne-Marie Esnoul** (1908–1996), student of Paul Masson-Oursel and collaborator of Louis Renou, gave a lecture on the book at the Institut de Civilisation Indienne, whose secretary she was. According to what Eliade heard, she spoke about the book in “glowing terms.”⁶ **Émile Benveniste** (1902–1976) sent again a letter which pleased Eliade immensely. The book made an extraordinary impression on **Mario Bussagli** (1917–1988), scholar of Indian and Asian art and Giuseppe Tucci’s assistant at the University of Rome, who cultivated an interest in the history of religions.⁷ Its ideas were also accepted by **Louis Renou** (1896–1966).⁸

In his review, published in the journal of the Oriental Institute of the Catholic University of Leuven, **Étienne Lamotte** (1903–1983) recalls that the author is specialised in the “most mysterious” aspects of Indian and Tibetan mysticism. According to the experts, his two books on Yoga are “the best we have on the subject.” Coming to his own expertise, Lamotte adds that, in *Techniques of Yoga*, Eliade analysed successfully the mechanism of Buddhist meditation techniques, *dhyāna* and *samāpatti*, showing their exact scope. However, he didn’t confine himself to a field of studies which, despite its infinite extensions, remains nevertheless relatively limited.⁹

As a historian of religions, writing his *Traité* in the form of a religious morphology, Eliade broke with the previous tradition of textbooks. The Belgian scholar points briefly to his more important categories: sacred and profane, hierophany, archetype. He remarks that, although the various hierophanies conserve exteriorly their type, they are subject to internal modifications which change their meaning. For example, water plays a role for both the pilgrims to the Ganges and the Anabaptists, but their respective perspectives on it are not necessarily identical. Lamotte adds quickly that the author did not ignore this “capital distinction.” But he ends by calling the attention to the difficulty of the task he assumed, since the religious psychology has unsuspected depths and it didn’t emerge exclusively on the conscious level.

Jean Filliozat (1906–1982) also points out – in the journal of the French Asiatic Society – to the delicacy of the task, but he thinks Eliade accomplished his

⁵ Ibid., 25 July 1976, M.E.P. 26.7; Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal*, ed. M. Handoca, 2 vols. (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1993), 2:236.

⁶ The lecture was scheduled for 3 March 1949, but due to a temporary indisposition, it was postponed for a week. Eliade, “Journal,” 3 and 12 March 1949, M.E.P. 15.4.

⁷ Ibid., 21 February 1949, 29 March 1951, M.E.P. 15.3–4.

⁸ L. Renou, “Heinrich Zimmer, *Maya: Der indische Mythos*, Zürich, Rascher, 1952,” *Critique* 7, no. 59 (April 1952): 378–380 (379).

⁹ E. Lamotte, “M. Eliade, *Traité d’histoire de religions ...*,” *Le Muséon* (Leuven) 62, nos. 3–4 (1949): 285–286.

duty in the most brilliant way. His book is a treatise of “religious semiotics” coming as a complement to the classical type textbooks on the history of religions.¹⁰

In the same place, the French Indologist penned a longer review of *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1949), a book which, as he remarks, took up a chapter of *Traité* for a philosophical audience. However, to support his theses, Eliade introduces in his discourse philological evidence usually ignored by “pure speculations” on the question of time. This makes the value of his work but also its weakness, since the invoked facts can be subject to different interpretations.¹¹

In order to make his point, Filliozat takes, naturally, an Indian example: the cosmic eras (*yuga*). Eliade relates their origin to some “obscure” astrological influences, probably Babylonian. The French scholar admits that a concordance exists between some astronomical Indian numbers and those given by Berosius and Heraclitus. But, retorts Filliozat – based on the authority of French astronomer Jean-Baptiste Biot (1774–1862)¹² –, the numbers from Indian ancient texts are astronomical, not astrological, belonging to a “system of scientific explanation of the Universe.” Without excluding the possibility of an inheritance by the “astronomic system” of a mythical belief in the eternal return, this changes radically the angle under which the ancient Indian ideas on the periodical return should be considered. Filliozat is tempted to think that the theory of the Indian great astronomic year is only an attempt to transpose on a cosmic scale the periodicity of lunar month and solar year.

Secondly, the French scholar points out that the Indian conception of cyclic time does not correspond to a “refusal of history.” India was not preoccupied only by mysticism and salvation from a sorrowful existence. At least, this is not the attitude of the Vedic and Brahmanic ritualistic milieu which gave birth to the speculations on the cosmos that developed later into the classical Indian astronomy. This astronomy was preoccupied to establish a rigorous chronology of events by relating them to reference marks of the astronomic time (like *Kali yuga*). Filliozat thinks that in such concern there is more “systematic spirit” than primitive myth. However he admits, in a conciliatory conclusion, that his counterarguments do not imply that the “mythic spirit” – too exclusively studied by Eliade – didn’t play an important role.

Of a very different opinion was a young French lecturer at the Anthropological Institute of Oxford, **Louis Dumont** (1911–1998), the future well-

¹⁰ J. Filliozat, “Mircea Eliade, *Traité d’histoire de religions ...*,” *Journal asiatique* (Paris) 238, no. 3 (1950): 373.

¹¹ Idem, “Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l’éternel retour ...*,” *Journal asiatique* 238, no. 3 (1950): 373–375.

¹² Jean-Baptiste Biot, *Études sur l’astronomie indienne et sur l’astronomie chinoise* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1862), 37.

known anthropologist of the Indian caste system, whose theoretical thinking is indebted – as has been shown lately – not only to Marcel Mauss, but also to René Guénon (in Sanskrit he was a pupil of Walther Schubring). His review, published in the bulletin of the French Ethnographic Society, is concerned only with one aspect of the work: the folkloric ceremonies, to whose study he thinks the author brought a fundamental contribution. Dumont has no problem accepting the common opinion that India lacks the sense of history. He considers that the opposition between “historical” and “unhistorical” cultures was brilliantly put by Eliade and that his theory has an important unifying value. All his other observations are subtle complements or refinements of Eliade’s ideas.¹³

The Myth of the Eternal Return brought Eliade an enthusiastic letter from the French Jesuit **Henri de Lubac** (1896–1991), professor of the history of religions at the Faculty of Theology of Lyon University, who in the following years would publish several books on Buddhism from a comparative perspective.¹⁴ The book exerted an influence on various Orientalists. Eliade recorded in his journal the German sinologist **Carl Hentze** (1883–1975) and the French Persianist and scholar of Islam **Marijan Molé** (1924–1963).¹⁵ It was used by many others, like for instance the Dutch scholar of Indonesian studies **Cornelis Tjenko Bertling** (1891–1970),¹⁶ or the German scholar of Chinese and Mongolian studies **Dominik Schröder** (1910–1974).¹⁷

More attention from Orientalists would be given, of course, to *Shamanism and the Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1951) – among them, several scholars of Indian and Buddhist studies. Upon receiving the book, **Louis Renou** remarked promptly that “India, as always, has brought a lot” to Eliade’s study.¹⁸

The Dutch Indologist **Jan Gonda** (1905–1991) discussed the book in a review-article dedicated to works on Indian thought. He observes that Eliade represents an exception among Western scholars of *Allgemeine Religionswissenschaft*, who neglected Indian religions, despite the fact that India is far richer in religious material than any other region of the world. His erudite, detailed work,

¹³ L. Dumont, “Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l’éternel retour ...*,” *Les mois d’ethnographie française* (Paris) 6, nos. 8–10 (October–December 1952): 61; reprinted in *Ethnologie française* (Paris), n.s., 29, no. 1 (1999): 137.

¹⁴ Eliade, “Journal,” 16 June 1949, M.E.P. 15.4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9 November 1953, 2 August 1963, 2 March 1966, M.E.P. 15.5, 16.4, 16.8.

¹⁶ C. Tj. Bertling, “Vierzahl, Kreuz und Man□d□ala in Asien,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkerkunde* (Leiden) 110, no. 2 (1954): 93–115 (104, 109, 114).

¹⁷ D. Schröder, “Hellpach Willy, *Kulturpsychologie ...*, 1953,” *Anthropos* (Fribourg) 49, nos. 5–6 (1954): 1132–1133 (1132). See also his review of the book, “Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l’éternel retour ...*,” *Anthropos* 48, nos. 5–6 (1953): 1007.

¹⁸ L. Renou’s letter of 10 September 1951; M. Handoca, ed., *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, vol. 4 (Bucharest: Criterion, 2006), 43.

written with enough reserve and precaution, is interesting not only for Orientalists and historians, but also for psychologists and psychopathologists.

Cautioning that not every ecstatic practice can be called shamanism, Gonda accepts nevertheless that Eliade's thesis about shamanistic elements being integrated in Yoga *can* be supported. Traces of shamanism could also be identified in other Indian religious practices. But, in his opinion, it is wiser to consider this only as an identity of expression or as a presence of shamanic-type practices independent of shamanism.

A shortcoming of the book, steaming from the way in which it was conceived, is that a number of phenomena, like Indian sacrifice or asceticism, are incorrectly characterised inasmuch as they are approached only with the view to discover if there is shamanism in them. *Yajña* and *tapas*, as well as Yoga and all that is related to it, are more than what they appear to be in Eliade's presentation. Furthermore Gonda regrets that the author overlooked some Dutch works, like those of the Celtists and Germanists Anton Gerard van Hamel and Paula Catharina Marina Sluijter. He would have also liked to see a discussion of the Javanese Buddhist work *Kuñjara Karnā*, published by Hendrik Kern, the first professor of Sanskrit in the Netherlands.¹⁹ Despite these, rather marginal, critical observations and reservations, the overall tone of his review remains positive and his appreciation of *Shamanism* evident.

For **Jean Filliozat** the book is the result of an admirable general and reasoned investigation of the group of phenomena called shamanic, of which it gives an "extremely precious" inventory.²⁰ But, as usual, he has several friendly corrections and objections to make. Confronting Eliade's description of shamanism with that of other scholars (such as Marcelle Bouteiller),²¹ the French Indologist wonders whether the choice of traits considered specific to shamanism doesn't imply a certain arbitrariness. Moreover, sometimes, through hypothetical interpretation, Eliade tends to identify these characteristics in phenomena where they are not directly attested.

¹⁹ J. Gonda, "Indisch Denken," *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* (Leuven) 13, no. 4 (December 1951): 728–729.

²⁰ J. Filliozat, "Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme ...*," *Journal asiatique* 240, no. 3 (1952): 406–407.

²¹ Eliade received the book of M. Bouteiller, *Chamanisme et guérison magique* (Paris: P.U.F., 1950), from the author herself, on 10 January 1951, with the following autographed dedication: "Au monsieur Mircea Eliade, spécialiste du «Chamanisme»" (F.M.E.). In his review of it, he points out that Bouteiller approaches the subject mainly from a psychological point of view and ignores the perspective of history of religions; *Revue de l'histoire des religions* (Paris) 140, no. 2 (October–December 1951): 247–249.

Another important observation relates to Eliade's attempt to find "shamanic implications" scattered in the myths and religious practices of great civilisations, like India, giving them the character of "survivals." Accepting the possibility of inheriting or even borrowing from a "primitive" culture, and, therefore, recognizing the value of Eliade's typological comparatism, Filliozat warns that the question is more difficult than it appears to be. The "truly primitive" character of a phenomenon is not always unquestionably established. On the basis of his own researches on the Santhal Indian tribe,²² he asserts that it does not suffice for an idea to be present in the culture of "backward peoples" in order to be primitive. These peoples, as they are known to us, are modern and sometimes they borrow things from the "civilised," bringing them to their own cultural level and making them their own.

Distinguishing between the primitive and borrowed elements of shamanism is a very delicate task. If shamanism is indeed – as indicated by the etymology of its name – partially rooted in India, some of the characteristics of Indian "shamanic" phenomena which are believed to be survivals (because they are found among less civilised people) can be, on the contrary, borrowings from India. Although not explicitly, Filliozat renews here his attack on the theory of pre-Aryan sources of Yoga. Taking the example of "magic powers" (*siddhi*), equally attested in Yoga and shamanism, he advances the opinion that some of them might have been borrowed by shamanism from Yoga or inherited by both of them from a common background in magic. Therefore, he thinks, "we must separate Yoga itself from the manifestations of marvellous powers of shamanic type, even if they were supposedly borrowed from India."

A very positive review was published, in the journal of religious studies of Columbia University, by the Jewish-German scholar **Rolf Alfred Stein** (1911–1999). Reputed Tibetologist and Sinologist, he was naturalised in France, where he taught at École Pratique des Hautes Études. Stein considered it the best book on shamanism published so far and an indispensable instrument. With "extraordinary erudition" and "penetrating thought," Eliade offered a keen analysis of shamanic phenomena followed by a synthesis. The facts are well described, giving attention to every aspect of the problem, and the comparisons are full of interesting suggestions.

It did not escape his attention that Eliade was led to the study of shamanism by his previous researches on Yoga practice, as well as his opinion of the Oriental (especially Iranian) influences in the representations of the Siberian shaman's initiation. Stein's only objection is directed to the author's "resolutely idealistic

²² J. Filliozat, "La médecine et la magie des Santals," *Journal asiatique* 227, no. 4 (October–December 1935): 277–284; reprinted in Idem, *Laghu-prabhandāh* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 193–200.

standpoint,” which determines the way the facts are presented, a position of which Eliade is actually quite conscious. That’s why, to the question “Were the purely spiritual forms debased or were the material forms spiritualised?,” he preferred the former alternative. Therefore, Stein thinks that a certain number of statements need to be re-examined, without however diminishing the book’s value.²³

The volume received more critical attention from another Jewish-German scholar, **Walter Ruben** (1899–1982), who, after an exile in Turkey and Chile, returned to communist East Berlin, in 1950, as director of the Institut für Indienkunde of Humboldt University. Specialised in Indian literature and philosophy, but indebted to Marxism-Leninism after the war, his review smacks a little of this ideological orientation.

Ruben, who authored a study on shamanism in ancient India, starts by pointing out that Eliade’s approach to the subject is that of a historian of religions (as highlighted by himself in the introduction of his book). He reproaches him – as “unscientific” and “inaccurate” – the generalisations, the comparisons of phenomena belonging to different classes (the “archaic” and the “oriental”), as well as labelling “archaic” all stages of primitive societies. He considers “historically impossible” to place on the same level similar phenomena from distant cultures, like South America, Siberia, and India. In order to reconstruct the ancient form of shamanism, one must compare in a much more accurate way the South American and Asian material.

In his view, the claim that shamanism was known to the early Indo-Europeans is not supported by enough material. The alleged Iranian traces in shamanism are not proved to be sufficiently old. In India, also, one must distinguish the few and questionable old-Vedic elements from the later ones, in the same way Eliade has done, justly, for the pre-Aryan material. Therefore, he thinks, based on a frail and too heterogeneous material, the author couldn’t prove this claim.

Nevertheless, he is grateful to him for such a comprehensive and erudite survey of shamanism. Ruben welcomes the fact that Eliade brought closer to Indology the question of the pre-Aryan ecstatic, shamanistic, roots of Yoga – an idea which, as he thought, imposes itself gradually²⁴ –, since many philologists are notoriously against any emphasis on the cultural elements of the archaic societies. He expresses the hope that the unsolved problems in Eliade’s book would stimulate

²³ R. A. Stein, “*Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l’extase*, by Mircea Eliade ...,” *The Review of Religion* (New York) 16, no. 1 (1952): 35–37.

²⁴ Ruben cites some recent authors (Adris Banerji, himself, Ernst Waldschmidt, and H. von Glasenapp), but seems to ignore Eliade’s earlier books on Yoga.

the production of a clearer historical representation of these difficult matters, which would also take into account Soviet research.²⁵

Shamanism was reviewed by several other scholars of Asian studies.²⁶ It was promptly translated into Italian by the esotericist **Julius Evola** (1898–1974), who was also the author of a number of books on Yoga and Tantrism, and a personal correspondent of Eliade.²⁷

The volume *Images and Symbols* (1952) – in which Eliade included an article on “Indian Symbolism on Time and Eternity” and other texts referring to Indian religious material from a comparative perspective – failed to attract much attention from Indologists. And this despite **Georges Dumézil**’s assurance, in his foreword, that Eliade applies there a “rigorous philology.” Especially in the article on the time symbolism in India he thought his philology was one of the “most authentic” kind.²⁸ At the time the French scholar of Indo-European studies was writing these lines, Eliade’s rigorous philology from one of the articles included in the book was already challenged. **Harold Walter Bailey** (1899–1996), professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge University, and an eminent scholar of comparative Iranian philology, pointed out that, in “The ‘God of Binds’ and the Symbolism of Knots,” Eliade explained *vr̥tra* as a “binder,” but the verbal root *var-* does not mean “to bind.”²⁹

²⁵ W. Ruben, “Mircea Eliade, *Le chamanisme ...*,” *Deutsche Literaturzeitung für Kritik der internationalen Wissenschaft* (Berlin) 74, no. 4 (April 1953): 234–236.

²⁶ To cite only two: **Dominik Schröder**, in *Anthropos* 48, nos. 3–4 (1953): 671–678; **Elizabeth E. Bacon**, in *American Anthropologist* (Arlington Va.) 55, no. 4 (October 1953): 600–601.

²⁷ As the translation (Milan: Bocca, 1953) was signed with a pseudonym, Eliade thought he was only its reviser. See Evola’s letters from 1951–1955 in Handoca, *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Minerva, 1993), 275–281, vol. 5 (Bucharest: Criterion, 2007), 349–357 and in the “Addenda” to my article “The Difficult Encounter in Rome: Mircea Eliade’s Post-War Relation with Julius Evola – New Letters and Data,” *International Journal on Humanistic Ideology* (Cluj) 4, no. 2 (Autumn–Winter 2011): 125–158 (147–156).

²⁸ G. Dumézil, “Avant-propos,” in M. Eliade, *Images et symboles: Essais sur le symbolisme magico-religieux* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 3–5; Handoca, “*Dosarul*” *Mircea Eliade*, 6:93–94. He was also impressed by Eliade’s wisdom, as acknowledged in his autographed dedication, dated 11 July 1953, on the book *La saga de Hadingus* (1953): “À mon cher ami et ‘commilito’ Mircea Eliade, avec mon admiration pour ses grands travaux et sa sagesse” (F.M.E.).

²⁹ H. W. Bailey, “*Analecta Indoscythica*,” pt. 1, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (London) 85, nos. 3–4 (July 1953): 95–116 (116n). He referred to the article “Le «Dieu lieur» et le symbolisme des nœuds,” *Revue de l’histoire des religions* 134, nos. 1–3 (July–December 1947): 5–36 (12). The article was reviewed, rather positively, by R. Guénon in *Études traditionnelles* (Paris), no. 277 (July–August 1949); reprinted in Idem, *Comptes rendus* (Paris: Éditions Traditionnelles, 1986), 274–275.

Even if not strictly Indological, these four books would find their way into the bibliographies of various scholars of Indian³⁰ and Asian studies,³¹ some of them belonging to the strict philological tradition.

All four were reviewed in a large article by **Jacques Masui** (1909–1975), former student of Louis de la Vallée Poussin, who didn't pursue an academic Indological career, but became a serious "dilettante" of Indian spirituality and religious studies. He sees Eliade not only as a very praiseworthy "servant of science" – Orientalist, mythologist, and historian of religions –, but also as a philosopher of history, able to go beyond the critical examination of documents and the narrow limits of his scholarly field. As a historian of religions he has an "oriental perspective," since the background of his studies and researches is Yoga. There is no other book so complete and rich on this subject as *Yoga: Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne*. In this first book, Eliade already proved his inclination towards metaphysics as well as his poetical sensibility. He owes India

³⁰ To cite only a few interesting examples: **Dirk Jan Hoens**, *Śānti: A Contribution to Ancient Indian Religious Terminology*, vol. 1 (The Hague: H. L. Smits, 1951), xiv (*Traité*); **H. G. Quaritch Wales**, *The Making of Greater India: A Study in South-East Asian Culture Change* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1951), 174 (*Traité*); **Edgar Charles Polomé**, "Zum heutigen Stand der Laryngaltheorie (Schluss)," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* (Brussels) 30, nos. 3–4 (1952): 1041–1052 (1049 – *Traité*); **Alexander W. Macdonald**, "Une note sur les mégalithes tibétains," *Journal asiatique* 241, no. 1 (1953): 63–76 (73 – *Le Mythe*); **Jan Gonda**, *Aspects of Early Vishnuism* (Utrecht: A. Oosthoek, 1954), 97 (*Traité, Images et symboles*).

³¹ Some diverse examples: **Maarten J. Vermaseren**, "The Miraculous Birth of Mithras," *Mnemosyne* (Leiden) 4, nos. 3–4 (1951): 285–301 (290, 293, 296 – *Traité*); **Guy Moréchand**, "Principaux traits du chamanisme Mèo blanc en Indochine," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (Paris) 47, no. 2 (2^e semestre 1953 [1955]): 509–546 (510–512, 515–516, 519, 524–525, 545 – *Le chamanisme*); **Paul Demieville**, "Max Kaltenmark, *Le lie-sien tchouan*, 1953 ...," *T'oung Pao* (Leiden) 43, nos. 1–2 (1954): 104–107 (107 – *Le chamanisme*); **L. Carlyle May**, "The Dancing Religion: A Japanese Messianic Sect," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* (Albuquerque) 10, no. 1 (Spring 1954): 119–137 (136 – *Le chamanisme*); **Alfred Salmony**, "Antler and Tongue: An Essay on Ancient Chinese Symbolism and Its Implications," *Artibus Asiae* (Ascona), supplement no. 13 (1954): 29 (*Le chamanisme*); **Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin**, "W. B. Henning, *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-Doctor?*, London, 1951," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London) 16, no. 1 (1954): 173–174 (173 – *Le chamanisme*); **Arthur Waley**, *The Nine Songs: A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955): 18n. (*Le chamanisme*). See also *Sinologica* (Basel) 4 (1954): 148 (*Traité*); *France-Asie* (Saigon) 11 (1955): 787 (*Traité*).

the skill to give but little weight to “personal” theories and to draw essentially on the “facts” – on those who become exemplary: the myths and the symbols.³²

5. Articles on Yoga and Indian Religions

Besides these books on the history of religions, between 1948 and 1954 Eliade published about half a dozen Indological articles in the collective volumes dedicated to Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, and Gerardus van der Leeuw,³³ and in a few journals.³⁴ But the reviews of these did not give special attention to his contributions.³⁵ More visible were his articles published in two volumes edited by Jacques Masui, dedicated to India and, respectively, to Yoga. They are also closer to our subject, since Eliade deals here with Tantrism, the origins of Yoga, and the relation between shamanism and yogic techniques – precisely the most discussed topics by the reviewers of his books.³⁶

³² J. Masui, “Mythes et symboles selon Eliade,” *Les cahiers du Sud* (Marseille) 36 (1952): 478–490; Handoca, “Dosarul” *Mircea Eliade*, 6:94–109. Eliade considered this review “very intelligent” [letter of 21 October 1953; Mircea Eliade, *Europa, Asia, America ... Corespondență*, ed. M. Handoca, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 464] and recommended it to be included in the issue of *Cahiers de l’Herne* dedicated to him; “Mythes et symboles,” in “Mircea Eliade,” *L’Herne*, ed. C-tin Tacou, no. 33 (1978): 355–363. Masui’s letter of response to Eliade, in Handoca, *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, vol. 3 (Bucharest: F.N.C.S.A., 2003), 164–165.

³³ M. Eliade, “Durohana and the «Waking Dream»,” in *Art and Thought: Issued in Honour of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. K. Bharata Iyer (London: Luzac, 1948): 209–213; “Sapta padāni kramati,” in *Shri K. M. Munshi Diamond Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, pt. 1, *Bhārātīya Vidyā*, vol. 9 (Poona: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1949), 180–188; “Les sept pas du Bouddha,” in *Pro regno, pro sanctuario. Een bundel studies en bijdragen van vrienden en vereerders bij de zestigste verjaardag van Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw*, ed. W. J. Kooiman and J. M. van Veen (Nijkerk: G. F. Callenbach, 1950), 169–176 [abstract in *Actes du XXI^e Congrès international des orientalistes, Paris, 23–31 juillet 1948* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1949), 209–210].

³⁴ M. Eliade, “Mythes indiens du temps,” *Combat* (Paris), 13 March 1952; “Le bouddhisme et l’Occident,” *Combat*, 7 August 1952; “Symbolisme indien de l’abolition du temps,” *Journal de psychologie* (Paris) 45 (October–December 1952): 430–438; “Le temps et l’éternité dans la pensée indienne,” *Eranos-Jahrbuch* (Wiesbaden – Ascona) 20 (1952): 219–252.

³⁵ See, for instance, his article “Sapta padāni kramati” mentioned in a review in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay* (Bombay), 1951: 113.

³⁶ M. Eliade, “Introduction au Tantrisme,” in *Approches de l’Inde: Textes et études*, ed. J. Masui (Marseille: Les Cahiers du Sud, 1949), 132–144; “Le problème des origines du Yoga,” in *Yoga, science de l’homme intégral: Textes et études*, ed. J. Masui (Marseille: Les

Interestingly, the two eclectic collections of authors assembled by Masui are also representative of the very expanse and diversity of Eliade's reception as scholar of Yoga.

The first volume, centred on Indian "tradition," brought together not only Western Indologists (Paul Masson-Oursel, Jean Filliozat, Mircea Eliade, Olivier Lacombe, A.-M. Esnoul, Alain Daniélou, † Heinrich Zimmer, † Ananda K. Coomaraswamy), a doctor specialised in the study of Yoga (Thérèse Brosse), and Indian scholars (Mahendranath Sircar, C. R. Srinivasa Aiyangar, Radhakumund Mookerji, Prabhat Chandra Chakravarty), but also, in a very heterogeneous way, other categories of writers who were concerned with India. There were altogether: an Indian yogi-philosopher (Aurobindo Ghose), two Christian missionary theologians (Jules Monchanin, Émile Gathier), serious "dilettantes" (J. Masui, † René Daumal), a psychologist of the rank of C. G. Jung, a spiritualist scholar (Gabriel Germain), a scientist-poet (François Le Lionnais), as well as vulgarizers of "Indian spirituality" (Jean Herbert, Lizelle Raymond), and adepts of *philosophia perennis* (René Guénon, René Allar).

In the second volume, addressing Yoga as the science of the "integral man," the proportions were changed to the disadvantage of Indologists and scholars. This book combined: an Indologist of strict academic observance (Paul Masson-Oursel) with others of broader outlooks (M. Eliade, Alain Daniélou); medical doctors who either studied Yoga scientifically (Thérèse Brosse), or who meditated on it or practiced it (Roger Godel, André Migot, Hubert Benoit, Wladimir Bischler); Indian masters addressing the West († Aurobindo Ghose, Swami Siddheswarananda); serious "dilettantes" (Jacques Masui), and spiritualist scholars (Émile Dermenghem, Gabriel Germain); writers on occult and esoteric matters (Maurice Aniane, Jean Bruno); an Orthodox bishop and spiritual director (Antoine Bloom); and adepts of *philosophia perennis* († René Guénon, Julius Evola, Frithjof Schuon).

Since 1950, when the latter volume, conceived as a "symposium on Yoga," was being prepared, two of the authors passed away. In January 1951, Masui wrote to Eliade asking him to participate directly in the preparation of the book (he also invited him to write a monograph on Tantrism). The exiled Romanian scholar accepted first, but then limited his part to giving advice on several points and making contacts with possible collaborators.³⁷

Cahiers du Sud, 1953), 11–20; "Chamanisme et techniques yogiques indiennes," in Masui, *Yoga*, 98–115. The last two would be published in English in *Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth*, ed. Pitirim A. Sorokin (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), 63–70, 71–84.

³⁷ See J. Masui's letters of 1951–1953 in Handoca, *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, 3:156–165.

In his *Introduction*, asserting that it is yet too early for a final synthesis of our knowledge about Yoga, **Jacques Masui** adds that Mircea Eliade has made a first attempt towards this goal and has given a “remarkable work” (his *Yoga* of 1936), which he intends to revise and expand.³⁸ He warns against vulgarizers and assures his readers that his intention was to assemble “the best specialists in the matter.” But his idea about specialists and vulgarizers did not correspond to that of most of the specialists. In the presentations of authors, René Guénon is not only considered an Indologist, but one of those mostly appreciated by orthodox Hindus. It is true that he never mentioned the French “Traditionalist” in his letters to Eliade, in which he only expressed a high opinion of Coomaraswamy. But, in his previously-discussed review, Masui cited him as master of traditional metaphysics and used a phraseology close to his own.

It seems as though Eliade could not avoid being reviewed and used by esotericists and vulgarizers, but also had to accept them as “colleagues” in books dedicated to Indian religions and culture. When he complained, in 1951, about the repulsive literature of occultists and theosophists, **Louis Renou** urged him to write an article in order to cleanse the atmosphere of Indian studies, poisoned by fakes such as Jean Herbert, Gabriel Monod-Herzen, René Guénon and other disseminators of a “new obscurantism.” Eliade replied that he chose to adopt an attitude of reserve regarding such people.³⁹

Both books received several positive reviews – especially in France and Italy – but few discussed closely each contribution. Most of them passed general judgements and mentioned the most important authors. This is the case, for example, with **Giuseppe Tucci**’s (1894–1984) review.⁴⁰ In the USA, Eliade’s name was highlighted by **Jeanne d’Ucel**, a French historian of art, working at the University of Oklahoma,⁴¹ but skipped by **Taraknath Das** (1884–1958), a Bengali professor of political science at Columbia University.⁴²

Paolo Daffinà (1929–2004), a young Italian historian of India and Central Asia, future professor at the University of Rome, who was doing research in India at that time, writes that Eliade’s two essays from *Yoga, science de l’homme*

³⁸ J. Masui, “Yoga, science de l’homme intégral?,” in Idem, *Yoga*, vii–xix (xi).

³⁹ Letters of L. Renou from 30 June and 10 July 1951; Handoca, *Mircea Eliade și corespondenții săi*, 4:42–43.

⁴⁰ G. Tucci, “In the library,” *East and West* (Rome) 4, no. 1 (April 1953): 41–46 (45).

⁴¹ J. d’Ucel, “Jacques Masui ed., *Approches de l’Inde ...*,” *Books Abroad* (Norman, OK) 25, no. 1 (Winter 1951): 43 (along with H. Zimmer and R. Guénon).

⁴² Taraknath Das, “Masui, Jacques (ed.), *Approches de l’Inde ...*,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (Philadelphia) 61, no. 271 (September 1950): 237–238.

intégral sum up what he has already set forth in his books.⁴³ A judgement not fully accurate: they represent, to a considerable extent, a reaction to some of the criticism of his previous works on Yoga and shamanism. The two essays also received attention from **Pierre Grison** (1926–1985), a French connoisseur of Asia and Buddhism, as well as a follower of René Guénon, who was living in Saigon. He is very appreciative of Eliade and considers him “one of the rare scholars who know to make place to knowledge within information.” A quality which he denies to Paul Masson-Oursel. But he misreads Eliade’s texts through his “Traditionalist” spectacles.⁴⁴



These are the most important and interesting responses to Eliade’s scholarship on Yoga till 1954, when a new wave of reactions would be brought by his book *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Almost simultaneously, **Paul Masson-Oursel** (1882–1956) published his introductory book on the same subject. Its treatment of the matter resembles much to Eliade’s, but he is mentioned only in two sections of the booklet: the one regarding the origins of Yoga and the conclusive chapter. This time, he calls him an “anthropological Orientalist” and is careful to put forward the sources of Eliade’s “extensive personal investigation” on the origins of Yoga: the philologists Sylvain Lévi and Paul Pelliot, and the ethnologist Sergej M. Shirokogoroff. The book ends with a footnote in which Masson-Oursel sends his reader to Jean Filliozat’s review of *Techniques of Yoga*, which criticises Eliade’s views about its origins. He justifies its importance by the fact that Eliade and Filliozat are “the best critics of Yoga.”⁴⁵ In the annexes he

⁴³ P. Daffinà, “Yoga, science de l’homme intégral ...,” *East and West* 5, no. 3 (October 1954): 233–234. In the same place, in a review of L. Renou’s book *Religions of Ancient India* (London, 1951), he appreciates that new methods of enquiry and study, such as those of Mircea Eliade, based on comparative-historical, psychological and psychoanalytical data, will contribute to a better understanding of Indian religions. *Ibid.*, 232–233 (233).

⁴⁴ P. Grison, “Formes et formules traditionnelles: IV: Valeur actuelle du Yoga,” *France-Asie* 10, no. 99 (August 1954): 1091–1098 (1093). From among the other reviews, see J. D., “Yoga, science de l’homme intégral ...,” *Monde Nouveau – Paru* (Paris) 11, no. 1 (January 1955).

⁴⁵ P. Masson-Oursel, *Le Yoga* (Paris: P.U.F., 1954; 3rd ed., 1959), 17–19, 125. Nonetheless, he adopts the pre-Aryan theory. He already cited them together in his article “La connaissance scientifique de l’Asie en France depuis 1900 et les variétés de l’orientalisme,” *Revue philosophique de la France et de l’étranger* (Paris) 143, nos. 7–9 (July–September 1953): 342–358 (354).

gives relevant texts from the works of a number of scholars,⁴⁶ including Filliozat, but ignoring Eliade. An overall ambivalent attitude indeed, which could be interpreted as implying that Masson-Oursel had no other option than to acknowledge Eliade's scholarship.

6. Some Preliminary Conclusions

At this early stage of the research any conclusions should be taken as preliminary and partial. We shall start with some quantitative, if not statistical, observations.

Both of Eliade's books on Yoga were reviewed by Western scholars, but mostly from the French-, Italian-, German-, and Dutch-speaking academic circles. The French dominance is absolute. The English-speaking scholars almost ignored Eliade's writings. There are some reviews and mentions in books published in English, but they belong to scholars of the above mentioned academic milieu. While this could reflect a classical attitude of the British science of India towards its "continental" counterpart, it may also have different explanations (such as a possible diminished interest in a subject like Yoga or the lack of competent reviewers). A defective circulation of the books in the English-speaking academia has to be ruled out since they were recorded by numerous British and American journals of Asian and religious studies. A unique exception is G. W. Briggs's review of *Techniques of Yoga*. The American T. L. Davis and the Australian Samuel Angus reacted only in their personal correspondence with Eliade.

The same could be said about Indian scholars. Leaving aside the Anglo-Singhalese Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, a personal acquaintance of Eliade, we know only a mention of *Yoga* (1936) by P. N. Roy, and a verbal appreciation of it by Swami Siddheswarananda. Both of them were living in Europe. From India we have only a brief review of *Zalmoxis* penned by S. M. Katre. This is very little indeed. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that French books didn't reach easily the subcontinent and, besides, not many Indian scholars could read them. Dasgupta remained silent for, probably, personal reasons.

Several important scholars of Yoga and Indology passed away shortly before or after the publication of Eliade's first book. But other contemporary scholars of Yoga, such as J. W. Hauer (1881–1962), Richard Schmidt (1866–1939), Poul Tuxen (1880–1955), Sigurd Lindquist (1895–1943) – all from Northern Europe – didn't have a public reaction to the book. Similarly, the scholars of Sāmākhya,

⁴⁶ Idem, *Yoga*, 95–121: P.-E. Dumont, O. Lacombe, J. H. Woods, L. Renou, J. Filliozat, L. Massignon, A. Daniélou, himself, and even J. Herbert, the "fake" decried by Renou.

like Richard Garbe (1876–1957) or Arthur Berriedale Keith (1879–1944). Direct, personal reactions from Indologists, as well as from scholars of religious studies, are by far more numerous than their reviews. It is true that both books were quoted in many important new Indological publications, but this doesn't compensate for the relatively small number of reviews.

Yoga had five reviews by important Indologists and one by a theologian specialised in Indian studies. While we could count four theologians, only one historian of religions reviewed it. *Techniques of Yoga* was reviewed by three Indologists (two of them recidivists) and, in the Italian translation, by a scholar of Indo-European studies. But it earned more attention from scholars of religion. It also received attention from esotericists, while *Yoga*, fortunately, escaped their favour. Among other categories of reviewers, there are quite a few with an interest in the occult and the esoteric. Some were influenced by the "Traditionalist" ideas of René Guénon: not only dilettantes (like Jacques Masui and Pierre Grison), but also scholars (Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Louis Dumont).⁴⁷

Since the subject under consideration has to do with religion, and specifically with non-Christian religions, it is important to take into account the religious background of the reviewers. Almost all are Christians. A considerable number of them are clergymen or committed Christians, both Catholics and Protestants. In most cases this had a significant influence on their appraisal of the matter. There are also a few Jewish-German scholars, but they were not concerned directly with *Yoga*. The *Yoga* of 1936 was reviewed by E. O. von Lippmann only with regard to its relationship to alchemy, while *Shamanism* had two reviews by Rolf Alfred Stein and Walter Ruben. However, Eliade's scholarship on *Yoga* was appreciated by Jewish scholars such as Aldo Mieli, Jules Bloch, Émile Benveniste, and Gershom Sholem. As we have seen, the reaction from Hindus was insignificant (Coomaraswamy was a Christian).

The number of reviews of *Techniques of Yoga*, including the Italian translation, surpasses only by little those of the first book (18 to 13). Many perceived *Yoga* as a "big" and erudite scholarly work, and *Techniques* as a popular abridgement of it – a judgement not entirely accurate.

The translations are also an important indicator of a book's reception. While *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* would be soon translated into English and Spanish, and further on into German and Italian, the previous two books were not in much demand with publishers outside France. An opening was made by the Italian translation of *Techniques of Yoga*, which, as already noted, risked being blocked for political reasons. The attempted English (Indian) and German translations were even less lucky (though not because of politics). In Italy again

⁴⁷ There were also anti-Guénonians among Indologists (L. Renou, J. Filliozat), theologians (E. B. Allo), as well as among esotericists (P. Le Cour).

there was one demand to translate the *Yoga* of 1936, but Eliade turned it down since he was already preparing its revised version.

A third scholarly field where his books on Yoga had a certain reception was the history of science. However they reached a far larger cultural audience, especially in France: writers, poets, art and literary critics, philosophers, psychologists, etc. read them, praised them and were influenced by them.

Among the Indologists, constant protagonists of the discussions around the two books were Paul Masson-Oursel and Jean Filliozat. While Masson-Oursel had a rather critical first reaction to *Yoga* (promptly instrumented in Romania by those antagonistic to Eliade), Filliozat was initially highly enthusiastic about it. After the war their positions were reversed: while Masson-Oursel accepted Eliade's theses, Filliozat became a constant critic of them.

We shall take now a brief comparative look at the content of these reviews. The main topics discussed in them were Tantrism – especially tantric erotic mysticism –, the thesis of a pre-Aryan origin of Yoga, and subsequently its relationship with shamanism. The relation between Yoga and alchemy naturally interested the historians of science (A. Mieli, E. O. von Lippmann), but also attracted the attention of some Indologists like Louis de la Vallée Poussin and Jean Filliozat.

The preference for translating *samādhi* as “enstasis,” rather than ecstasy was welcomed by only three of the reviewers of *Techniques*, the first place where Eliade used it (Louis Gardet, René Guénon, and Johann Knobloch). Indologists were slower to react. The term would impose itself only after the publication of *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*.

Among Indologists, the most discussed topic was, by far, the pre-Aryan origin of Yoga. In their reviews of Eliade's first book, two scholars of Yoga, Heinrich Zimmer and Jean Filliozat, accepted it implicitly. A third one, P. Masson-Oursel, called for more caution in putting forward such a thesis based on very few testimonies, but in his later writings he embraced it too. V. Papesso considered it an important and remarkable solution, with a great probability of being true. L. de la Vallée Poussin accepted the remote antiquity of Yoga, only with reserve regarding a specific dating from the Chalcolithic. Joseph Masson did not oppose it. While in his letters to Eliade, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy agreed with this theory, J. W. Hauer, who believed in the Aryan, Vedic – though non-Brahmanic – origins of Yoga, ignored diplomatically the topic. In his autobiography, Eliade added Jean Przyluski and Giuseppe Tucci to the list of those Indologists who accepted his hypothesis.

In the first two years after its publication, *Yoga* was already quoted positively in the works of fine Indologists such as Jeannine Auboyer, J. W. Hauer, Stig Wikander, and Jan Gonda. But in 1946, shortly after Eliade moved to Paris, Jean Filliozat published an article in order to refute the pre-Aryan theory,

considered to be an arbitrary construction. He put forward several arguments to support his view that Yoga developed not from some mystic resurgence of shamanic type, but from speculations based on “scientific theories” – the pneumatism of Indian medicine, rooted in the *Vedas*.

In his review of *Techniques* Filliozat came back to the same argumentation: the yogic technique is dependent on the doctrines of Indian (Brahmanic) physiology. This time Masson-Oursel agreed tacitly with Eliade’s hypothesis and urged him to publish his ideas on shamanism as a source of Yoga. The idea was also met with tacit agreement by the American scholar G. W. Briggs and it was recorded by Louis Renou without raising any criticism. It was openly welcomed by some scholars of religion (Louis Gardet) and philosophy (Aimé Patri). In the next years the book became a reference in the works of important Indologists such as Jan Gonda, E. Lamotte, and A. Minard.

In a letter to Eliade, the Swedish Indologist Stig Wikander brought forward some new arguments against the pre-Aryan theory of Yoga, claiming for the Indo-European culture the elements considered so far to be non-Aryan. Eliade was not convinced by them, as he was not impressed with Filliozat’s stronger reasoning, but he played down his commitment to this hypothesis.

The pre-Aryan theory received new life in Eliade’s *Shamanism*. Jan Gonda agreed that shamanistic elements could have been integrated into Yoga, but leaned rather towards an identity of expression or towards a presence of shamanic-type practices independent of shamanism. Filliozat also accepted the possibility of a heritage or borrowing from a “primitive” culture into Yoga, but found it much more complicated to ascertain if and when it happened. Only Walter Ruben joined Eliade in an open defence of the pre-Aryan ecstatic, shamanistic, roots of Yoga.

Finally, in his introductory booklet, in a section dedicated to the problem of origins, Masson-Oursel became an adept of the pre-Aryan theory quoting Eliade’s work. But in its conclusions he sent to Filliozat’s review of *Techniques*, which criticises precisely this theory. In doing so he probably aimed to make equally visible the opposed positions of those whom he called “the best critics of Yoga.”

Filliozat also had his own explanation for the origin of “immoral” tantric practices associated with Yoga, which according to Eliade were of “popular” provenance. For other reviewers, like L. de la Vallée Poussin, Tantrism was the most “primitive” Yoga.

The erotic mysticism of Tantrism was found to be very interesting by religious studies scholars like G. van der Leeuw and Marie Madeleine Davy, as was its imaginary world by a philosopher such as Gaston Bachelard. It also fascinated writers and esotericists. Most of the theologians expressed reservations and even rejection of tantric “deviations” and “aberrant” practices (sometimes along with those of Hatāha-Yoga). Some of them resurrected in their reviews old dogmatic standings and controversies regarding non-Christian religions. Professor

A.-M. Schmidt, not a theologian but a committed Christian, even wrote that Yoga's promise is that of the Serpent.

For one of the dogmatic theologians, Buddhism was an Aryan reaction to the spirituality of "inferior populations," including the nonsensical Yoga. The relation between Yoga and Buddhism was less discussed. Vallée Poussin appreciated Eliade's treatment of Buddhism, but disagreed with him on the question of its historical relationship to Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Lamotte had only praises for the way in which *Techniques* analysed the mechanism of Buddhist meditation. Masson-Oursel reproached him that he forgot to deal with the Buddhist school Yogācāra, "the most spectacular and the most intellectualized" application of Yoga.

Often, in the reviews of the two books, it is recalled the interest which they present for psychologists and psychoanalysts. One of the thought-provoking topics which come out in them is the "subconscious" and the comparison of Yoga with psychoanalysis. Some of the amateurs hasten to see Yoga as a "prehistory" of psychoanalysis or to assert that the "Hindus" were the first psychoanalysts of the world. Gillo Dorfles pointed out that Yoga is at the same time an anticipation and an overtaking of psychoanalysis, since it not only acknowledges the role of the unconscious, but also shows the way to free oneself from it and to achieve higher states of consciousness. As a psychiatric doctor, among other things, he warned that Yoga should not be seen as a substitute for a psychoanalytic cure.

More features of this initial reception of Eliade's scholarship on Yoga would become visible with the reviews of *Yoga: Immortalité et liberté* and of its successive translations. They shall be discussed in the next part of the present study, dedicated to the period 1954–1974, which can be called the "golden age" of Eliade's scholarly reception.