

Questions for Fr. E. Lonergan, Myth and Theology Seminar 10/2/75

1. Is mythic consciousness a particular mode of consciousness or is it to be identified with undifferentiated consciousness? Can one operate without mythic consciousness?
2. Can we whose consciousness is differentiated ever move back into the experience of undifferentiated consciousness? of mythic consciousness? If not, do we suffer some "loss of wholeness"?
3. How does religious or sacred awareness (the experience of homo religiosus as Eliade presents it) relate to mythic consciousness? Can one have mythic consciousness which is not sacred?
4. In the primitive what is the relationship between and the distinction between mythic consciousness and common-sense consciousness?
5. Myth explains for the primitive why things are as they are; science for us is also explanatory. What is the difference between these two ways of explaining things?

Questions for "Myth + Theology"

Johannes Metz in his book A Theology of the World seems to applaud the secularization that is taking place in the world. It is his contention that the process of secularization that is taking place is precisely the result of the "irruption of the sacred" which has taken place in the Incarnation. Not only is the sacred manifested as the wholly other, the world too is manifested as "wholly other than the sacred and divine." The divine hypostasis is the expression of the mystery of the divine love and what we must avoid at all cost is an attempt to numinize the world and fall into a monophyism. The world must remain world and continue to become more worldly in dialectic with the divine. Basically, then, what Metz is saying seems to be at odds with what Eliade is saying, that the profane from the Christian point of view (and especially from the point of view of incarnational theology) is the real manifestation of the divine wholly other.

Would you comment on this?

[I am not sure that I have done justice to Metz's position. Perhaps the problem is a false one and can be resolved by a closer look at their starting points and over all purpose, yet I can't help being somewhat amazed at their different conclusions.]

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