

## *Divine Manifestation and Rock Art*

### *—Reading Eliade's "Patterns in Comparative Religion"*

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**Abstract:** Eliade's book "Patterns In Comparative Religion" depicts the divine manifestation of holiness in the common world. It combines phenomenology and historical methods to interpret religious symbols. His research method, which aims at deciphering the structure and significance of various divinities, is in common with the Research Paradigm of rock painting, which starts with the image phenomena, in order to get new enlightenment in the exploration of rock art methodology.

#### **1. Purpose of research**

The starting point of Mircea Eliade's religious studies is to depict the various manifestations of the divine in the secular world, which he calls divine manifestation, and which includes all kinds of divine phenomena, both ancient and modern, at home and abroad. These phenomena constitute a wide range of religious facts. Almost all human activities are connected with the symbolic system. Thus all religious facts are symbols or symbols, codes of rich meaning. The religious significance of deciphering these codes is the direct goal and task of Eliade's phenomenology of religion. The various forms of divine manifestation are detailed in the book, and Eliade argues that divine manifestation can be of natural things, such as stones, trees, and rivers, and even of the universe as a whole. He believes that the history of religion is the history of the "divine manifestation" entities of witchcraft.

I think rock art are a form of divine manifestation. Although it is the result of man-made activities, it is people who give the stone a special meaning. Many of the images in the rock art are believed to be manifestations of the divine, and are often associated with beliefs and religions. These images are also the carrier of rich meaning of symbols and symbols, "any practice is in the time and space structure..." rock art exist in the field is a sacred space. In the absence of more archaeological evidence and ethnographic data, rock art scholars have tried a variety of disciplines to try to decipher the meaning of rock art, including comparing the images of different periods in different places. This is in contrast to the method used in Eliade's comparative religion. In this process, many problems will be encountered, such as the difficulty of diachronic study of rock art, and the process of deciphering rock art is consistent with what Eliade had to face in his study of divine manifestation. In the later period, people's reflection and criticism on Eliade's religious studies, such as lack of systematic argumentation on methods, rationality of citing materials, subjectivity, etc. Therefore, I hope that through the analysis of Eliade's book "Holy Existence-The Model of comparative religion", we can form a relationship of mutual care and learn from each

other. There are many dimensions to the study of Eliade, such as the study of rituals, myths, and so on. Because of the limited space and the author's ability, this article only discusses the methodology he used.

## 2. Stone worship and divine manifestation

Some of the images in the rock art represent the divine manifestation. Rock art are not made by accident. We can see from the rock art found so far, not all areas can be found rock art, and the same area is not all rock art. The places where the rock art are located have their own characteristics. People make rock art on landscapes and rocks of their own choice. Even the quality and orientation of the rock are screened for authentication, along with the content and type of the image. This constitutes the sacred field of the whole rock painting. "In many places, people who are still working on rock art are considered saints, and some of these places are still secret and not accessible to non-related people. "

Rock art also belong to a type of "stone worship". Because of the reliance on and worship of the rock, so people make rock art on the rock. And in "rock worship", not all stones are sacred. We always find that certain stones are revered, either they have certain shapes, or they are very large, or because they are associated with certain rituals. The worship of this stone is not really the point, the worship of this stone is that it is not only a stone but also a divine manifestation, something of the paranormal. "A divine manifestation is a choice. It means making a clear distinction between that which is divine and everything else around it. "The stone face chosen for the rock art also distinguishes this stone from the others. Eliade believed that the rock itself had a basis for worship, and that its hard, enduring nature embodied a power. But one stone is sacred because it has spirituality that distinguishes it from other stones. It can protect the energy centers of people or the dead, as is the case with rock art.

The rock which the rock art were painted was chosen to distinguish it from other rocks. These images are carved in stone, showing the rich spiritual beliefs of people of different regions and eras, expressing people's attitudes and perceptions of the world. From the beating stone tools of Paleolithic to the grinding stone tools of the new period, human beings have constantly improved the manufacturing technology of stone tools, and from the improvement of stone tools technology, aesthetic art has emerged. In the observation and experience of human beings from their own life history, the stone has produced a primitive belief and some kind of God view. From the dependence on the material world of stone, gradually sublimated into the spiritual world trust rock. In his book, Eliade argues that jade in China exhibits a wiccan-religious character, but that this character is not the whole symbolic system of jade. Jade also has a symbolic language meaning, because the number, color and arrangement of jade worn by a woman not only make the woman and the universe and the four seasons become one, but also further imply her "identity", for example, whether she is a girl, a young woman or a widow, what kind of family or social class she belongs to, whether she comes from anywhere, whether her husband or future husband is menstruating, and so on. There are many unrecognized symbols in the images of rock art. These symbols can't be judged by their shapes. They are also symbolic symbols. These symbols bear people's belief and worship at that time. The content of the rock art reflects people's belief life, and the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau rock art mostly reflect the content of Bon religion and Buddhism. The northern prairie rock art reflect people's worship of animals and nature. The rock art in southwest China reflect people's sacrificial life to a great extent. The size and delicacy of the scene can reflect the sacredness of the rock painting. The 290-meter-high and 150-meter-wide cave paintings in Hua Mountain, Guangxi province, contain huge sacrificial paintings of more than 1,800 individual images, reflecting the sacredness and importance of the region to the people of the time. Helan Mountains mouth rock art in Ningxia are

densely distributed and exquisitely made, which must have symbolized a certain belief of the people at that time."Apparently, they chose to paint in places where they thought they could generate magical powers. "Therefore, the symbolic study of rock art can reveal a lot of cultural connotations. Why to express through the rock painting and how to symbolize through the rock painting are the questions we want to explore.

According to Eliade, the system of symbols contains the dialectic of divine manifestation, in that it transforms things into something different from what they seem in secular experience, such as a stone becoming a symbol, representing the center of the universe, and so on. As it becomes a symbol, it becomes a symbol that transcends reality. These symbols remove their physical constraints, and are no longer isolated fragments, but become a complete system. Or rather, despite their uncertain, fragmentary nature, they represent the totality of the relevant system. As Eliade said, symbols form a system. When the rock painting has its sacredness and becomes a symbol of the power of belief, it will transcend the symbol of reality and form an expression system of its own.

### 3. Reflection and inspiration

Eliade has made remarkable achievements in the study of religion, but many scholars have criticized his research. Most of all, "Eliade was uncritical in his methodology, or presented some supercilious, arbitrary, and subjective generalizations that were not based on particular historical and empirical observational material. Critics also accuse him of thinking influenced by a variety of normative judgments and a postulated ontological view. This view is biased towards the religious, non-historical mode of existence and ancient phenomena with a bias toward the East", which focuses on the rationality of Eliade's cross-temporal and cross-cultural approach to the structure of certain phenomena.

This problem also exists in the study of rock art, comparative method is the most commonly used method by many researchers when studying rock art. We usually compare rock art from one site with similar images from other regions (native or continental countries), or similar images from adjacent or distant archaeological sites, or compare it to some of the images that are still popular today. These comparative paths allow us to get a lot of ideas in our research. In the absence of more evidence, this comparison is an effective research tool we can use. However, the rationality of comparison, which can't help but be criticized, is directly related to the conclusion. There are many universal motifs in the painting. We often through cross-cultural, cross-regional comparison to study the cultural connotation of rock art. The key issue is not cross-cultural, but rather comparative. If Eliade was able to see a common structural similarity between the different materials on the surface, why not compare them together? How can one discover something new if one imprisons material in a certain area for ever, according to the differences of time and space, of cultural traditions? But on the other hand, the comparison should be based on the common level. We must make a targeted comparison on the premise that we have something in common. This comparison can't be made without reference to geography, culture, and time.

Eliade's phenomenological and historical methods are worthy of our study of rock art. On the one hand, we should actively use intuitive methods to find the structure of certain phenomena. On the other hand, we should refer to the modern inductive method, take into account some counter-examples, try to get the essence and structure, and keep a humble attitude to our conclusion. In other words, be prepared to make some corrections to your conclusions based on new findings in the course of the study and reasonable criticism from others. On this basis, combined with the historical situation of the phenomenon to examine how the phenomenon is formed, so as to have a more comprehensive and profound understanding of the phenomenon. In the study of rock art, it is necessary to search for similar phenomena and cultural structure, but there should also be a kind of

reverse thinking, looking for its counter-examples and exploring the causes of various phenomena. Beyond that is Eliade's claim to be a global comparative researcher, based on a traditional worldview, seeking a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of religion, integrating human thought and experience to do their utmost for the renewal of Western culture. Of course, this foothold is very difficult. Because of tradition, but also to take care of the world's phenomena, suffering and easy to be questioned. However, the deep-rooted culture, with a world-wide vision, the study of this field of vision is also to be learned.

Although Eliade focused on ancient mythology and religion, he paid particular attention to the significance of the study of religious history for Contemporary Society. He says, religious history is no longer a museum of fossils, ruins and outdated marvels, but what it should have been to the investigator in the first place. A series of messages waiting to be deciphered and understood, and interest in such messages is not entirelyly historical. They not only speak to us of the long dead past, but also reveal to us some of the basic conditions of existence that are directly related to modern man. The hermeneutic effort to decipher the meaning of myths, symbols, and other traditional religious structures would greatly enrich and enrich human consciousness. In his view, myth and symbol is not just a few curios, but an extremely important key to understanding human beings. Eliade saw himself as a man closely connected to the ideas and cultures of his time, who used his knowledge of the ancient and the east to raise and reflect on the great problems facing society today. Eliade also links the study of the history of religion to the globalization of culture, arguing that the history of religion can play a fundamental role in the globalization of culture and contribute to the detailed description of a universal culture. We should also link our research with the current national destiny and the issue of the times. We should think, how do we know ourselves? What can we do for spiritual advancement and self-understanding? At the same time, we should make our own contributions to these issues in a down-to-earth manner. In the process of studying rock art, how to have a sense of mission, put forward an effective point of view on the interpretation of rock art in contemporary culture, do not confine themselves to the scope of the age and region. Rock art are the primitive language of the age without writing. To decipher them is to understand the original language pattern of human beings, which will help us to explore human thinking and cognition.

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