which say the same—for example, several of the reviews in the symposium on the Encyclopedia in Annals of Scholarship, 5(Winter 1988):229-68. To say that the Encyclopedia is bound to reflect the views of its Editor-in-Chief would be to miss the point: that Eliade became the Editor-in-Chief because of the popularity of his views.

Finally, suppose that Eliade alone held the one tenet that I ascribe to religionists everywhere. Are Quentin Skinner’s strictures against ahistorical approaches to history any less telling against him? That was the subject of my article.

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NOTES


RESPONSE TO G. L. EBERSOLE’S CRITICISM OF MY CRITIQUE OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION

I am flattered that Professor Gary Ebersole read my review article ("The Encyclopedia of Religion: A Critique from the Perspective of the History of the Japanese Religious Traditions") in the pilot issue of MTSR, and I am grateful to him for taking the time to write a lengthy response to it. It is clear from the tone of his letter that Professor Ebersole is not simply in disagreement with some of the statements in my article, but that he is angry about it. I agree with Professor Ebersole that some of the matters raised in my review—and much that goes on and does not go on under the rubric of Religious Studies—are worth being angry about: we simply disagree on which things those are.

On my reading of his letter, Professor Ebersole addresses four points: 1) Eliade "bashing"; 2) Eliade’s "co-religionists"; 3) the Divinity School connection of the History of Religions Program at the University of Chicago; and 4) the "Committee on Social Thought" at the University of Chicago. These points will be addressed sequentially.

Regarding the first point, much of Professor Ebersole’s outrage appears to be directed at what he considers to be my lèse majesté (cf. "Eliade rex"), i.e., at my impiety toward M. Eliade. This is a tiresome
topic. My article was not a personal attack on Eliade, and a rereading of it shows that it contains no disparagement of Eliade as an individual. In this context Eliade qua person is of no importance; it simply does not matter how nice he was or how graciously he would have accepted criticism. Eliade was the main spokesperson for a way of doing the study of "religion" (definition begged—the word is part of the problem), and it is that "way" that is at issue.

As for the second point, it is true that Professor Robert Segal, the author of another piece in the first issue of MTSR, and I "lump" Eliade together with

two amorphous . . . groups—his "fellow 'religionists'" . . . and/or his "co-religionists" . . .

Let us not be too literal here, or given to suspicions about a "secret code": I—and I assume Professor Segal—were using those terms (and, in my case, the expression "the Chicago school") somewhat metaphorically. That is, M. Eliade's "co-religionists" and "the Chicago school" stand for a way of doing the study of "religion," which I criticized. Professor Ebersole asserts that "Chicago graduates have if anything been characterized by methodological diversity." Yes and no: within the perimeter of the predominant way in which "religion" is studied in the academy there is a diversity within the bounds of a unity, and there are always those who escape the fold, but the question at issue is not the range of variations on a theme but the theme itself. Namely: what is the "shape" of the regnant Religious Studies discourse, why does it have the shape that it does, and what/whom is being served by it?

Regarding the third point, in addressing my observation that the History of Religions Program at Chicago (and, by the way, at other universities) "is centered, significantly [G. E.'s emphasis], at the Divinity School," Professor Ebersole explains that this arrangement is "a function of the university's institutional history and the bureaucratic structure of the university when the program was initiated." This is no doubt true as far as it goes, but it does get to the heart of the matter for it does not problematize the locus of the Religious Studies discourse in the academy. In this regard Professor Ebersole asks if I know "some dark secret even those of us who were at Chicago didn't know?" There is no mystery here: it is simply that the "university's . . . bureaucratic structure" did not fall out of the sky but was formed for certain reasons at a particular time, and these are the questions that must be addressed. There is no need to go on here about the other-