

Powerful Eurydice: The Female Voice in Eliade's *A Spiritual Adventure*

Fevronia Novac¹

In his novella *Nineteen Roses*, Mircea Eliade alluded to a play about Orpheus and Eurydice. Mac L Ricketts discovered this play, *A Spiritual Adventure*, written in 1946, in the Eliade Special Collection of the University of Chicago library. The play is a *mise-en-abîme* of *Nineteen Roses* embedded in another *mise-en-abîme* where the female protagonist, an embodiment of Eurydice, takes control over the plot and changes its course, leaving the playwright powerless faced with his character's interpretation of his play. Eliade's unpublished play evokes his personal drama more than it does his concept of the "terror of history". Eliade was hoping for a second chance to bring back time and undo the tragic events he endured. *A Spiritual Adventure* is a sort of therapeutic exercise, one that is informed by Eliade's confessions about his private life in the *Portugal Journal*. This powerful play brings back recurrent themes in Eliade's fiction, such as the theme of Orpheus and Eurydice, and their attempt to find each other while conquering death. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2012 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS: Mircea Eliade, Orpheus and Eurydice, Eliade's Theatre, Eliade's Fiction, *A Spiritual Adventure*, *Nineteen Roses*.

In his novella *Nineteen Roses*, Mircea Eliade alluded to a play about Orpheus and Eurydice. He did indeed write this play in 1946. Mac L. Ricketts discovered it in the Eliade Special Collection of the University of Chicago library. In his introduction to the English translation (published here for the first time and before the Romanian original), Ricketts discusses the conception and writing of this play as it is described in Eliade's *Journal*. It seems that Eliade enjoyed the

¹ Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris. **Acknowledgements:** The author wishes to thank Professors Ali Zaidi and Mac Linscott Ricketts for their comments on this essay.