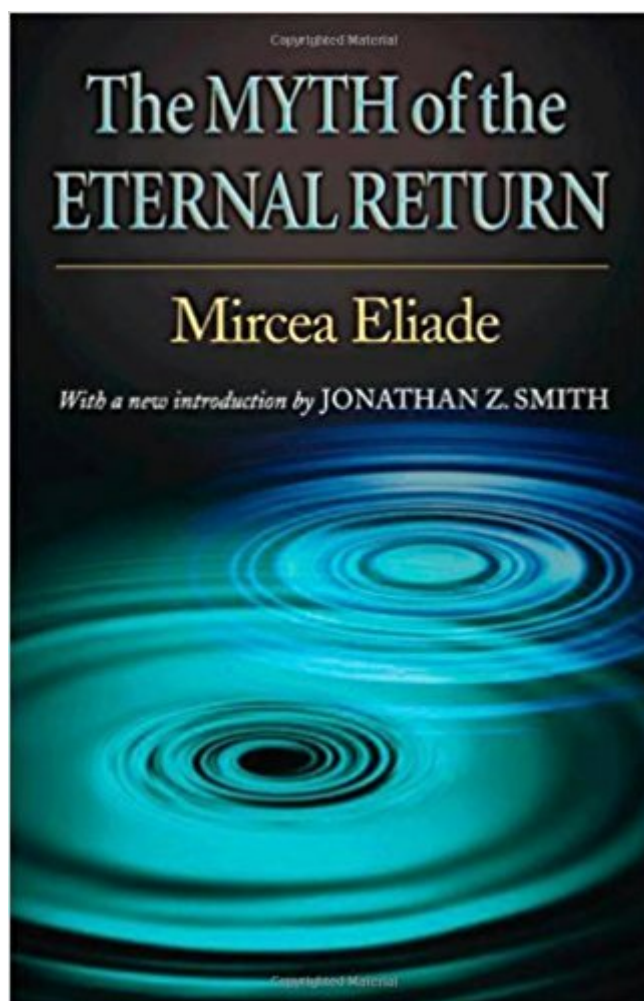




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The Myth Of The Eternal Return: Cosmos And History (Bollingen Series (General))



Synopsis

This founding work of the history of religions, first published in English in 1954, secured the North American reputation of the Romanian émigré-scholar Mircea Eliade (1907-1986). Making reference to an astonishing number of cultures and drawing on scholarship published in no less than half a dozen European languages, Eliade's *The Myth of the Eternal Return* makes both intelligible and compelling the religious expressions and activities of a wide variety of archaic and "primitive" religious cultures. While acknowledging that a return to the "archaic" is no longer possible, Eliade passionately insists on the value of understanding this view in order to enrich our contemporary imagination of what it is to be human. Jonathan Z. Smith's new introduction provides the contextual background to the book and presents a critical outline of Eliade's argument in a way that encourages readers to engage in an informed conversation with this classic text.

Book Information

Series: Bollingen Series (General)

Paperback: 232 pages

Publisher: Princeton University Press (May 8, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0691123500

ISBN-13: 978-0691123509

Product Dimensions: 5.6 x 0.6 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 23 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #98,841 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > History > World > Religious > New Age, Mythology & Occult](#) #187 in [Books > History > World > Religious > General](#) #225 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Folklore & Mythology](#)

Customer Reviews

From review of Princeton's original edition: "A luminous, profound, and extremely stimulating work. . . This is an essay which anyone interested in the history of religion and the mentality of ancient man will have to read."--Review of Religion
From review of Princeton's original edition: "Profound and pregnant research in the psychology of time and the intuitive forms of the mind as revealed by the early cultures' attitude toward history."--Nation

Born in Bucharest in 1907, Mircea Eliade was for many years Sewell L. Avery Distinguished Service

Professor of the History of Religions at the University of Chicago. He is the author of, among other books, *Shamanism, Images and Symbols*, and *Yoga* (all Princeton). Jonathan Z. Smith is Robert O. Anderson Distinguished Service Professor of the Humanities at the University of Chicago and the author of *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* and, most recently, *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion*.

So far, my favourite of Eliade's works! I tore through it in two days. Everything he writes is genius, but this one just makes me happy on so many levels!

A classic. If you care at all about reality, consider this book and Eliade in general.

great transaction. item arrived as expected.

So far, this is a very good book that has a unique vision of religion. While most religion texts focus on either A) Christianity, B) Eastern Philosophy, or C) Atheist Polemics, this is an excellent study on the actual anthropological and existential functioning of religion as an entity. Along with Ludwig Feuerbach and Daniel Dennett, this stands as a very good, detached, objective study of religion as far as not being a polemic or an apology. I would definitely recommend this to anyone interested in general religious studies, especially if you are an Atheist and still have an interest in non-Dawkins literature on religion.

The "Eternal Return" or "Eternal Recurrence" as Nietzsche labelled it, is the simple but lethal formulation of a philosophy of history essential to the self-understanding of Western Man. It is, to phrase it simply, the idea that "whatever has happened will happen." There is "nothing new under the sun". If one thinks for any period of time on it, it is a perfectly nauseating idea. There is no escape from the fallacies of the past in the ideas of the present. The idea of this book is to explain the extraordinary revolution of history constituted by the Cult of Yahweh, found in the Hebrew Bible, and extending further into the Bible of Christianity. The view of "linear" history was invented by the Cult of Yahweh, and those who believe still look forward to the "Omega Point" of all time, at the Parousia, or the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. History may be seen as a confrontation between the advocates of linear history and hope of mankind, and those who reject the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Jesus, and embrace (by default) the "eternal return". The consequences of this rejection of God are enormous, including a rejection of the belief in a meritocracy, an

"opportunity society", or "redemptive suffering" as embraced by Christians. The "Eternal Return" is the vision of a static and stratified society such as those embracing both Islam and Eastern Religions. To embrace this book is to embrace the very essence of what it means, whether consciously or subconsciously, to be "Western" in outlook upon the world. As Westerners, we are those who embrace and live by the findings of science and the pursuit of Truth in the love of mankind. As we dialogue with Non-Westerners, we need to understand that they reject the potentiality of mankind and science, and are Pessimists in their appraisal of mankind's prospects. Is there any wonder why we see such disparity in potentiality of our lives and our society? Is there any wonder why right next door to the West we see a hatred of the stranger that lives on for centuries in some societies, with no visible improvement of life over the span of thousands of years?

I read Eliade in college and wrote papers on him. And now I can't comprehend a single paragraph. I was pretty smart back then. Or, maybe I'm just kind of dumb now. I don't know. Read him while you're young.

I first read this book as an undergraduate in 1967. I found it very interesting then and it has reverberated with me ever since. Re-reading it from a different perspective, it still holds its fascination. It is not an easy read as it is very dense, and many of the themes are unfamiliar, at least in the way Prof Eliade discusses them. In the context of "the world will end in 2012" it is helpful and hopeful as the overall message is that the world changes, but is always there

Very heavily convoluted English language. Could have explained his theories in simpler and clearer English terms.

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