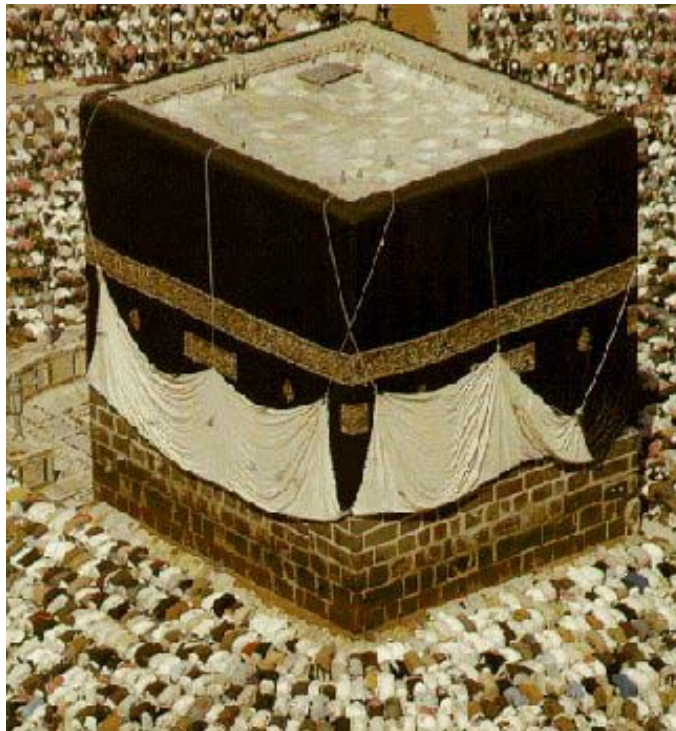


Lecture Notes, 9/5 Eliade

1. Mircea Eliade (1907-1986).
 - a. Born in Romania. Historian of religion. Taught at Univ. of Chicago.
 - b. Younger life: lived and studied in India.
 - i. Became devotee of yoga
 - ii. Very interested in “folk” religion
2. Eliade’s approach
 - a. Study religion from within its own milieu
 - b. Study religion as something sacred
3. Eliade’s method
 - a. Phenomenological
 - i. studying religions as they “appear”, as they are
 - ii. he studied the religions comparatively, finding concepts, symbols, forms common in some way to all.
4. Books
 - a. [*The Sacred and the Profane*](#) ** much of what follows is from this text
 - b. *Myth of the Eternal Return*
 - c. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*
5. Key Concepts
 - a. Archaic vs Modern Man
 - b. Sacred vs Profane
 - c. Space
 - d. Time
6. Archaic (primitive) man was religious; modern (i.e., contemporary) people are not religious. Modern man is “profane”.
 - a. The sacred is the supernatural. (opposite of Durkheim’s view) Eliade agrees with Otto’s view of the sacred as something mysterious, awe-ful, and fascinating.
 - b. The profane is the everyday (same as Durkheim)
7. In modern society, every day is “the same”. One day follows the next. No distinctions.
 - a. Archaic man made distinctions, saw differences
 - b. examples: changing of seasons, solstices – few moderns notice or are aware of this. Too busy making a living. We’re born, we live, we die. Period.
8. Archaic peoples understood and related to space and time differently.
 - a. Time – seasons had religious (sacred) character
 - b. Day and night had mystical or sacred meaning
 - c. There were observed breaks within the day, week, month, year. A sacred “tempo” was maintained and acknowledged.

- d. The religious person is aware of sacred time and distinguished it from profane time.
 - e. Modern society – time is the same. Everything is homogeneous. There tends to be no sense of sacred time.
9. Space.
- a. Archaic man perceives sacred space and perceives that space (from one's environment to the entire cosmos) *is* sacred.
 - b. Terms: *imago mundi* and *axis mundi*
 - i. *imago mundi* (latin) “image of the world”.
 - 1. Archaic peoples believed the world was created by the divine or supernatural force.
 - 2. The village is considered an “image” of the world. It “mirrors” the divine world and reflects the sacred. Everything comes into being in a sacred way, just as the cosmos did.
 - 3. “As above, so below”
 - ii. *axis mundi* “center of the world”
 - 1. The cosmos, and by extension, the village, has a sacred center.
 - 2. There is a center post, an anchor, a point around which life is oriented.
 - 3. Archaic peoples were not “directionless”. Moral, spiritual “center” was available to them as a community and as members of the community.

- c. Archaic people understood their lives to be surrounded by sacred space.
 - i. Special places (e.g., temples) and the objects within them had “double meaning”
 - ii. The Ka’ba in Mecca is a stone, but it isn’t “just” a stone.



10. Encounters with the sacred

- a. Hierophany (greek) “appearance of the sacred”
 - i. hieros = sacred
 - ii. phainein = to appear
 - iii. One kind of hierophany is a *theophany*: theos = god. Theophany = “god-appearing”
 - iv. Natural objects (trees, rocks) can be vehicles of hierophanies.
 - 1. Burning bush = appearance of the sacred, holy - hierophany
 - 2. Burning bush w/God speaking = theophany

- 11. Archaic man had ability to step in and out of the flow of sacred space and time. Able to apprehend hierophanies. Modern man largely incapable or uninterested.