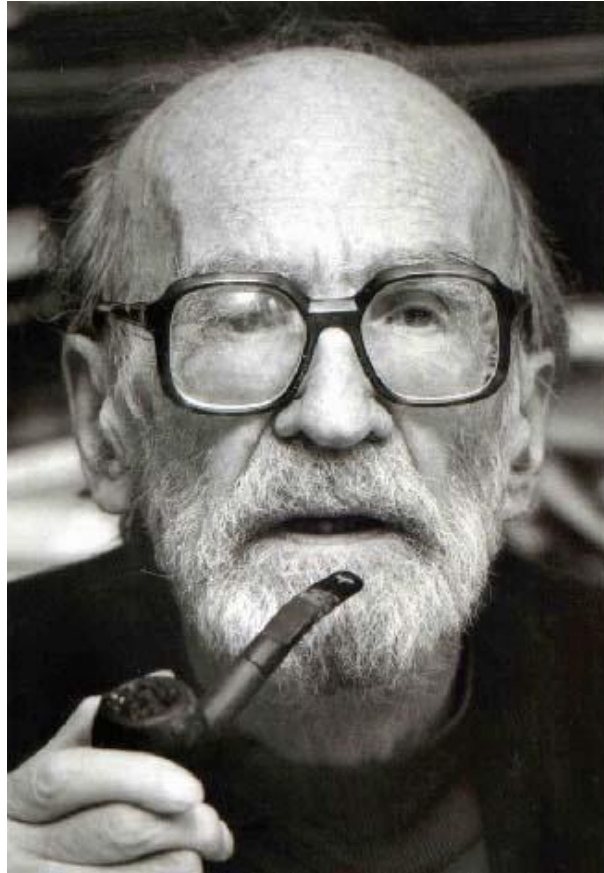


# Mircea Eliade (1907 –1986)



“Our world is a universe within which the sacred has already manifested itself”

# Four Important Things About Eliade

- Anti-reductionist = religion *in its own terms*;
- Greatly influenced by Hinduism, and in fact made Hinduism the “paradigmatic” religion;
- Religion is the symbolization through which the sacred makes itself known;
- Established an (the?) “American” approach to Religious Studies (University of Chicago);



# Phenomenology

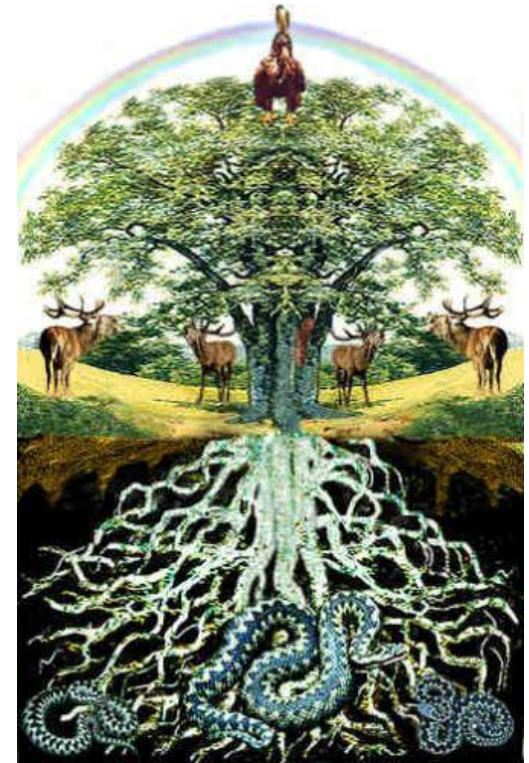
The study of structures of experience, that is, of the ways we experience things (*phenomena*), thus the meanings things have in our experience.

Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view.



# Carl Jung and Archetypes (1875-1961)

- The archetype: An innate tendency which influences human behavior as well as his ideas and concepts on the ethical, moral religious and cultural levels.
- "The archetype concept - Jung writes - derives from the often repeated observation that myths and universal literature stories contain well defined themes which appear every time and everywhere. We often meet these themes in the fantasies, dreams, delirious ideas and illusions of persons living nowadays".



*--<http://carl-jung.net/archetypes.html>*

# Four Central Idea

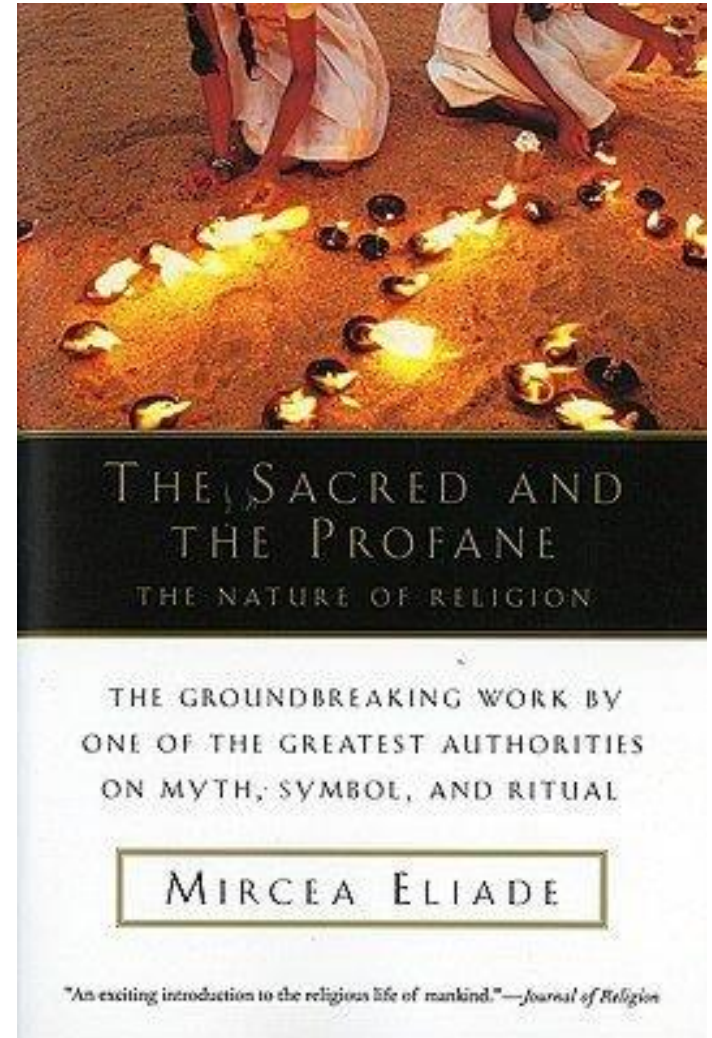
- **The Sacred** = that which shows itself as wholly different from the everyday or profane.
- **Axis Mundi** = center of the world, cosmic pillar; where sacred appears
- **Imago Mundi** = image, model or microcosm of the world; spreads from the axis mundi
- **Myth of Eternal Return** = through myth and ritual we (re-)enter sacred time and space

# Two Ramifications

- 1. Imitatio Dei** = the struggle to be like the divine; leading a holy (good) life;
- 2. Illud Tempus** = Sacred time and space; the stories of the pure origins to which we wish to return, what Eliade calls the myth of the eternal return.

# The Sacred I

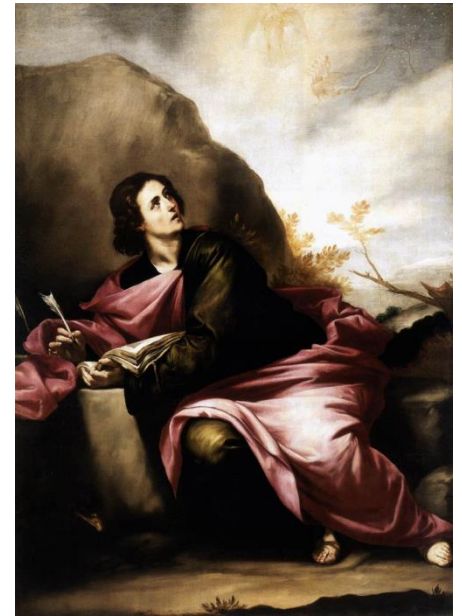
- Classical = holy; set apart; belonging to the god(s)
- Durkheim = that which is communal rather than individual and everyday (“profane”)
- Eliade = “A religious phenomenon will only be recognized as such if it is grasped at its own level, that is to say, if it is studied *as* something religious. To try to grasp the essence of such phenomenon by means of physiology, psychology, sociology, economics, linguistics, art or any other study is false; it misses the one unique and irreducible element in it — the element of the sacred.”
  - *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (1963), as translated by Rosemary Sheed, p. xiii



# The Sacred II: Hierophany

**Man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests itself, shows itself, as something wholly different from the profane.**

From the most elementary hierophany ... to the supreme hierophany ... **we are confronted by the same mysterious act — the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural "profane" world.**

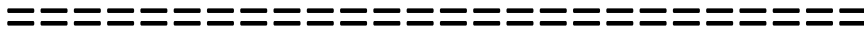


*The Sacred and the Profane : The Nature of Religion: The Significance of Religious Myth, Symbolism, and Ritual within Life and Culture* (1961), translated from the French by William R. Trask



# Creation Myths

- All “creation” myths involve the discernment of order out of chaos



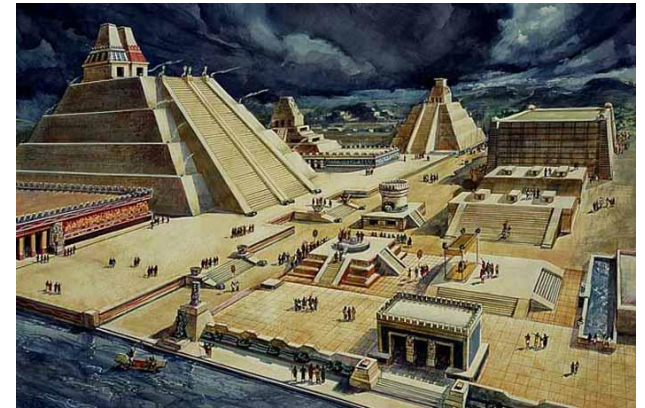
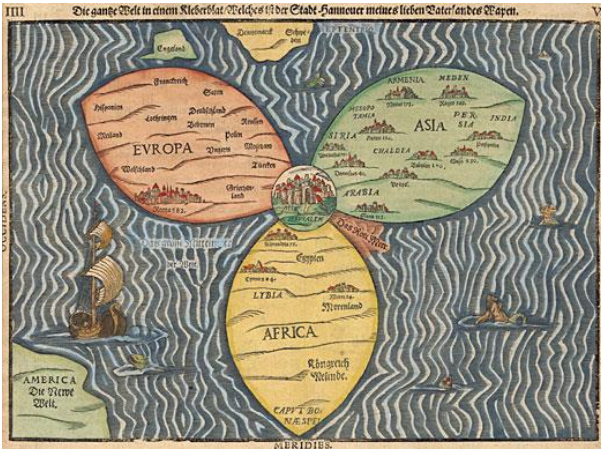
- **PSALM 24**

Of David. A psalm

1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; 2 for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.



# Imago Mundi



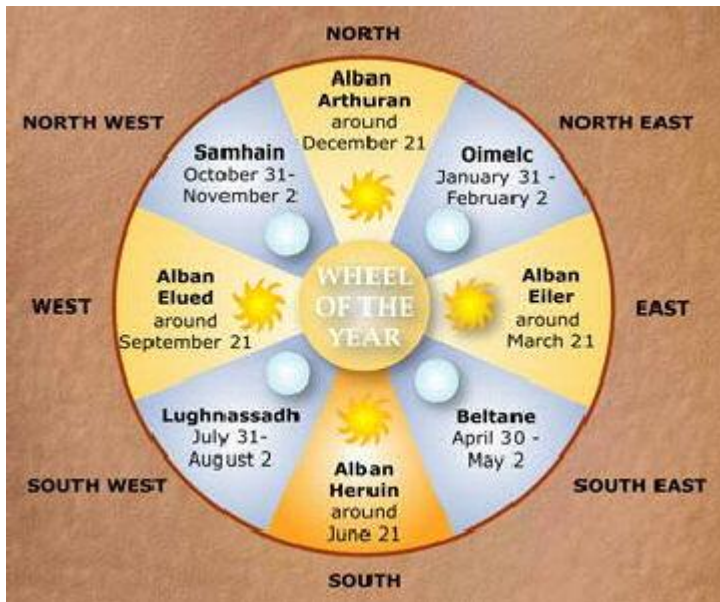
- Human world is structured according to the divine order; each human settlement is a microcosm of the sacred.

# Marking out the Sacred in the Profane



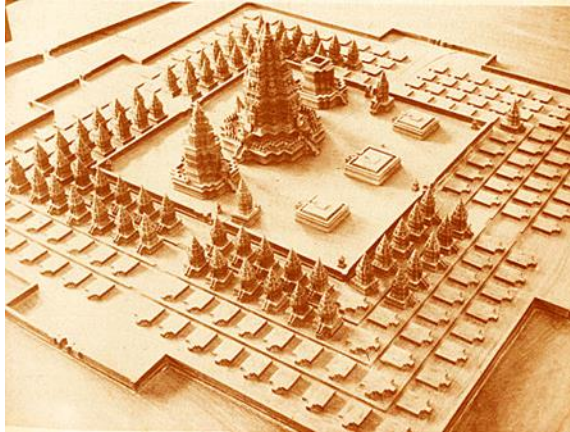
The Experience of Sacred Space makes possible the "founding of the world": where the sacred Manifests itself in space, the real unveils itself, the world comes into existence. *The Sacred and the Profane : The Nature of Religion: The Significance of Religious Myth, Symbolism, and Ritual within Life and Culture* (1961),

# Stonehenge

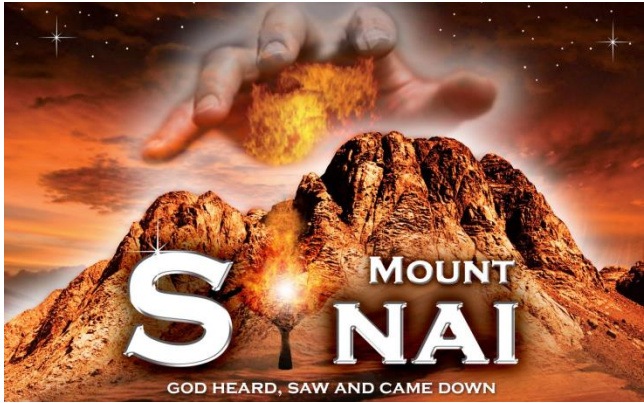


Stonehenge's fame comes not only from its archaeological significance or potential early astronomical role but also in its less tangible effect on visitors, what Christopher Chippindale describes as "the physical sensation of the place", something that transcends the rational, scientific view of the monument. This manifests itself in the spiritual role of the site for many different groups and a belief that no single scientific explanation can do justice to it as a symbol of the great achievement of the ancient Britons and as a symbol of something that continues to confound mainstream archaeology.

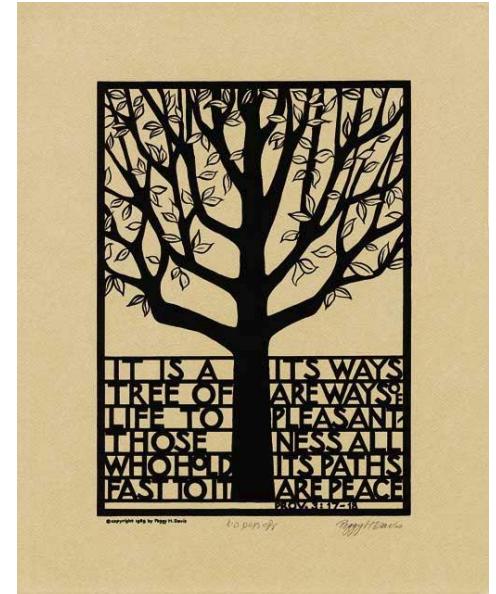
# Axis Mundi (Umbilicus Mundi) I



# Universality of Symbols of *Axis Mundi*



# Axis Mundi: "Tree of Life"



# The MYTH of the ETERNAL RETURN

---

Mircea Eliade

*With a new introduction by* JONATHAN Z. SMITH



# Premises

- The Sacred repeatedly manifests itself to human beings across time and space.
- The Sacred represents order and meaning in a world of chaos and meaninglessness.
- Humans want (need) such order and meaning and so celebrate these times and places of hierophany.
- These hierophanies are represented symbolically; and as such...
- the Sacred structures human thought, society, etc.

# Myth and Ritual



Thanksgiving derives from the story of the Pilgrims who sailed from Plymouth, England on the Mayflower in 1620 and settled at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts.

More than half of them died during the first harsh winter. The survivors learned to build shelters and grow food. Some friendly Indians taught them to hunt, fish and plant crops.

The next autumn the 53 surviving Pilgrims feasted with nearly a hundred Indians to celebrate the establishment and survival of their new world colony.



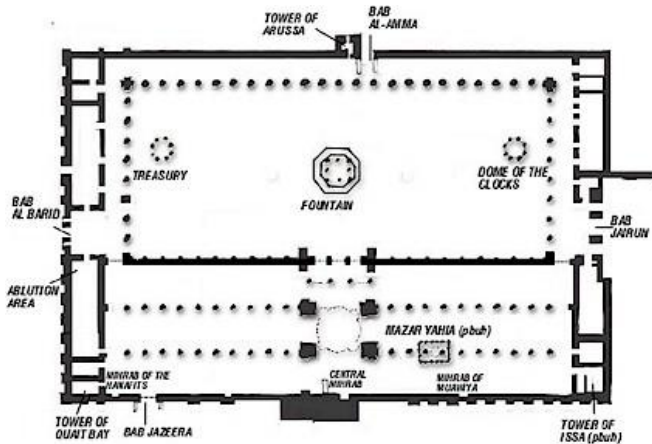
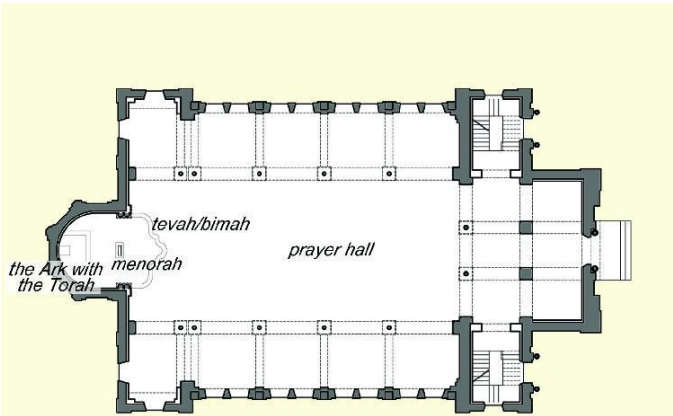
Myth = the story we tell about our rituals

Rituals = the way we reenact the myth

# Universality of rituals



# Illud Tempus: Sacred Place

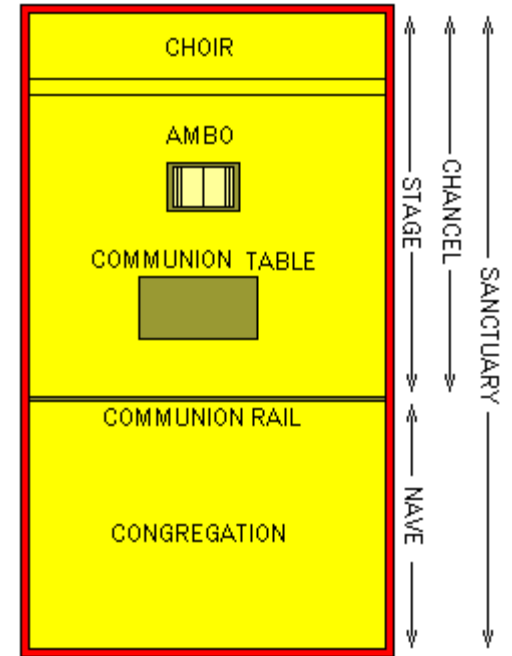
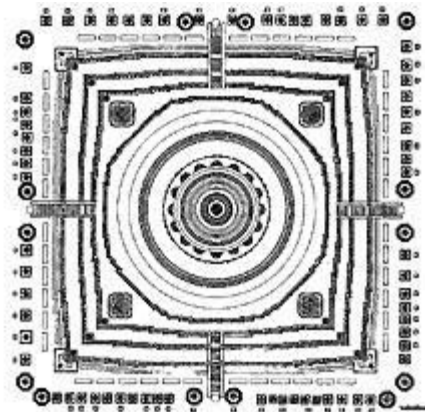


Synagogue, Bulgaria

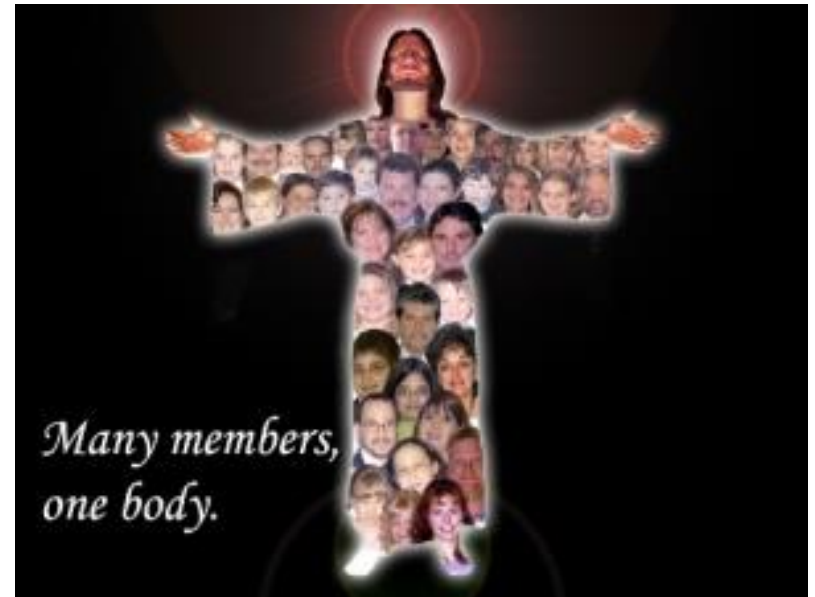
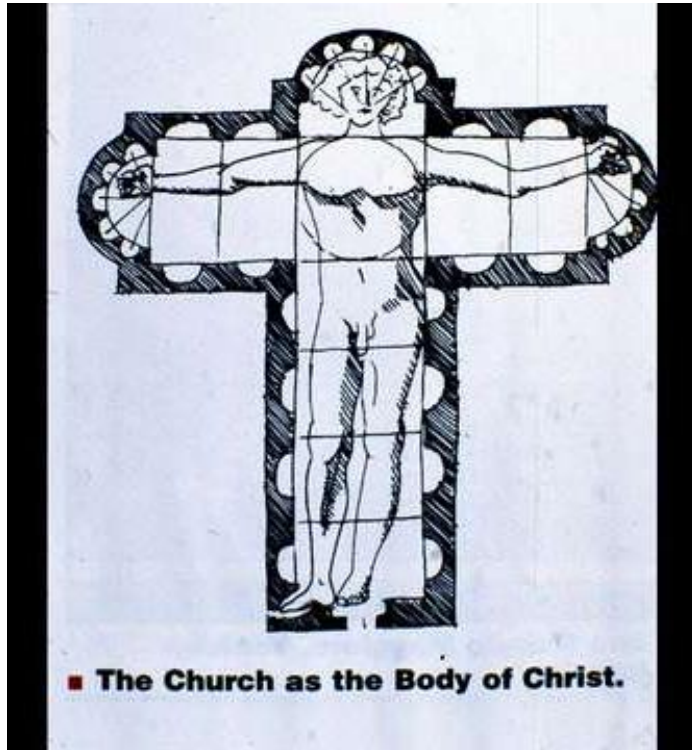
Buddhist Temple

General Protestant Church

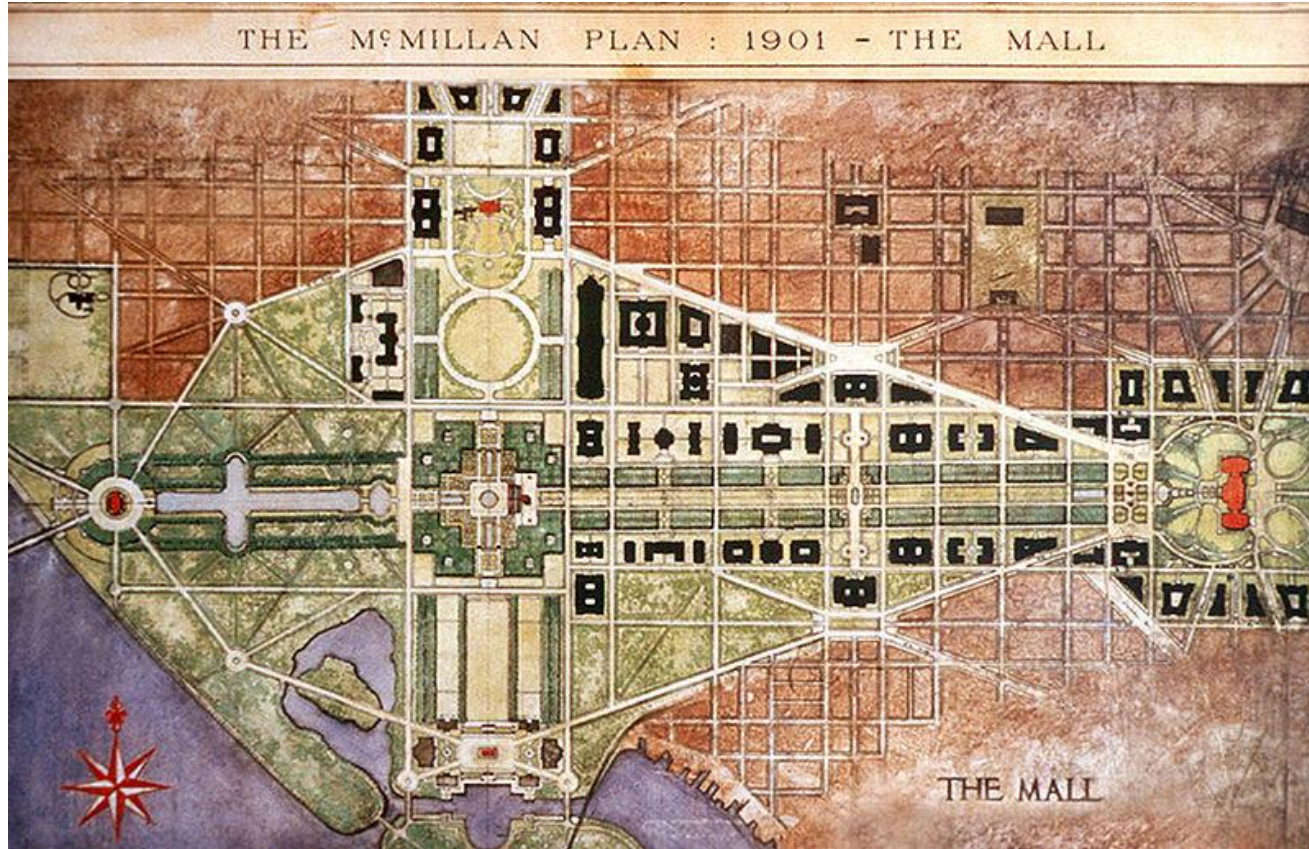
Umayyad Mosque, Syria 7c



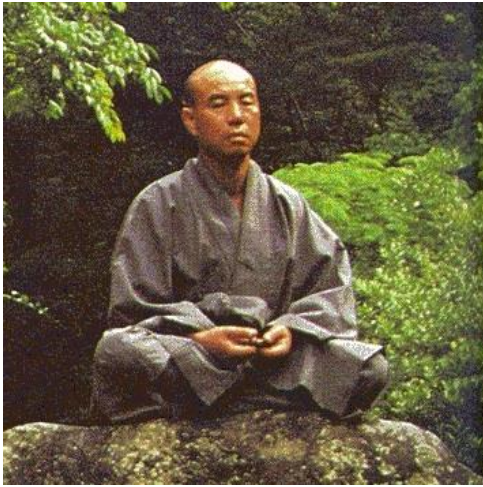
# Church as Corpus Christi



# Inscribing the sacred on the Secular



# Sacred Time



In imitating the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time.”  
[*Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, pg. 23]

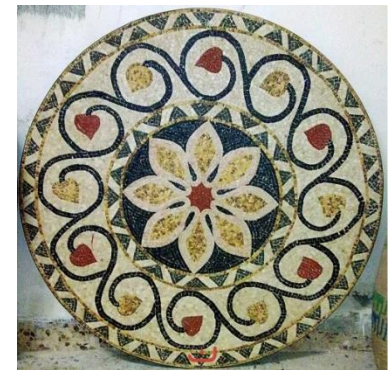
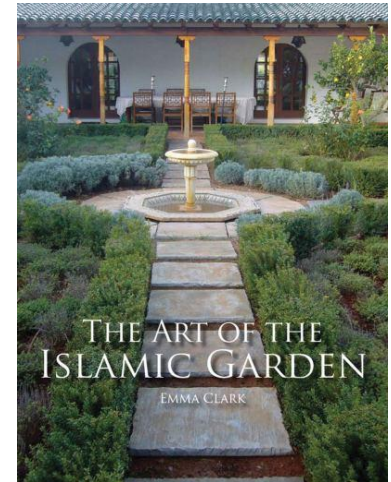
# “Church” Time

"Just as a church constitutes a break in plane in the profane space of a modern city, [so] the service celebrated inside [the church] marks a break in profane temporal duration. It is no longer today's historical time that is present—the time that is experienced, for example, in the adjacent streets—but the time in which the historical existence of Jesus Christ occurred, the time sanctified by his preaching, by his passion, death, and resurrection. [*The Sacred and the Profane*, p. 72]



# Eternal Return

- Hence all human society, ritual, myth, etc. is centered and focused on the return to the idyllic perfect time and place or meaning and order – the urge of the Eternal Return



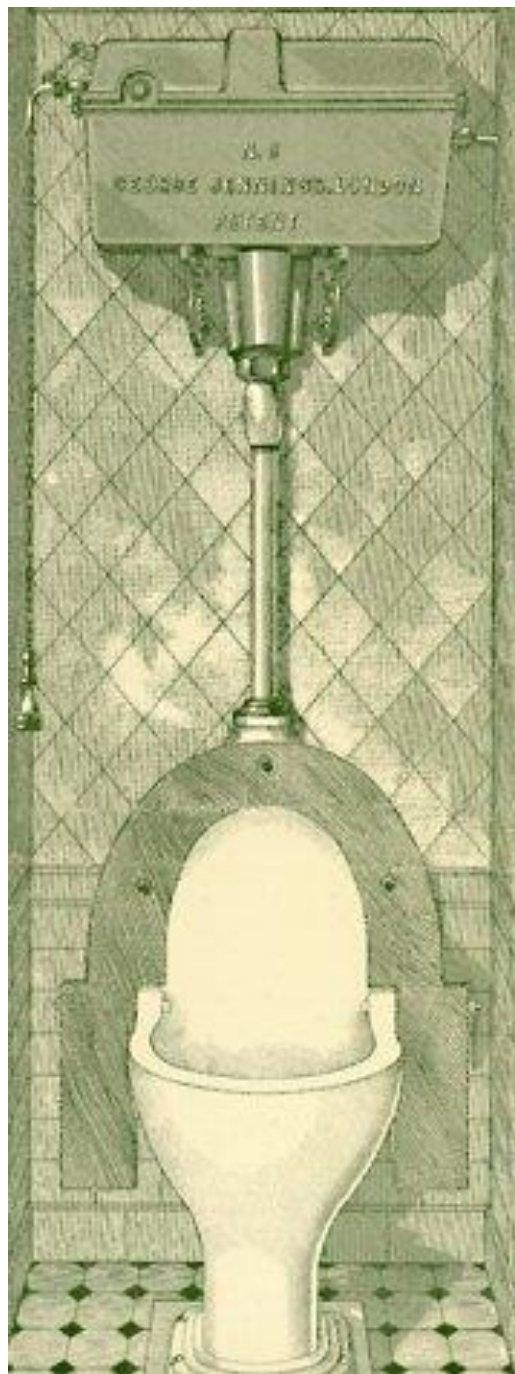
# Examples of “Return”

- Jewish New Year = birth of the world
- Christian baptism = watery death and rebirth
- Nawroz (Zoroastrian new year) = beginning of ruler
- Easter = Spring sunrise
- Hajj= return to original worship site of Abraham and Mohammad
- Buddhist Samsaric cycle = eternal return and rebirth
  
- **RESTORATION THEOLOGIES**
  - Protestant Reformation
  - Reform Judaism
  - Salafi Islam

# Questions

- Is “the Sacred” really out there, or is it an artifact of how humans think?





# THE PORCELAIN GOD



A SOCIAL HISTORY  
OF THE TOILET



JULIE L. HORAN

# Hinduism



# What is “Hinduism”

- In some ways Hinduism is the oldest living religion in the world, or at least elements within it stretch back many thousands of years. Yet Hinduism resists easy definition partly because of the vast array of practices and beliefs found within it. It is also closely associated conceptually and historically with the other Indian religions Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism.
- Unlike most other religions, Hinduism has no single founder, no single scripture, and no commonly agreed set of teachings. Throughout its extensive history, there have been many key figures teaching different philosophies and writing numerous holy books. For these reasons, writers often refer to Hinduism as 'a way of life' or 'a family of religions' rather than a single religion.

# IN SHORT...



“Hinduism” is less a religion than it is a long and complex set of related religious, ritual and mythic traditions that have accumulated, merged and transformed over time into a variety of practices

# KEY CONCEPTS

- **Brahman:** Hindu concept for the spiritual oneness of all reality
- **maya:** false or illusory reality
- **jiva:** the physical/psychological/social 'self' which acts, but which is not eternal
- **moksha:** release from the cycle of death and rebirth in Indian religions; liberation
- **bhakti:** devotional service to a personal god. Bhakti-yoga is a principal paths to liberation

# Overview of Hindu Theology

- Almost all Hindus believe that the real self (*atman*) is distinct from the temporary body made of matter (*prakriti*).
- The eternal soul is entrapped by *maya* (illusion). Impelled by lust, greed, anger, etc., one undergoes *samsara* (the cycle of repeated birth and death).
- Each soul creates its own destiny according to the law of karma. Under the influence of eternal time and material qualities, one moves throughout the creation, sometimes going to higher planets, sometimes moving in human society, and at other times entering the lower species.
- The goal of most Hindus is *moksha*, liberation from this perpetual cycle, through re-identification with the eternal brahma. There are various paths towards this common goal – (re)union with God). This may involve strict adherence to one's *dharma* (ordained duty) as revealed through authorized holy books and usually received through the guru (spiritual mentor)

# Hinduism in Practice



# Murti



The statue of a deity.

The Murti may serve as a focus of devotion to the god or goddess, or may be understood to be imbued with the power of the deity, or may even be experienced as the actual “incarnation” of the deity during worship.

# Puja



Puja is the ritual, performed at a temple or in one's home, to honor and acknowledge the deity. The puja generally consists of ritual recitations or chants, prayers, the offerings of food, and various gestures to acknowledge the high, royal, status of the murti. This could include "dressing" the Murti in robes or garlands.

# Puja II



Offering of a meal



flower garland

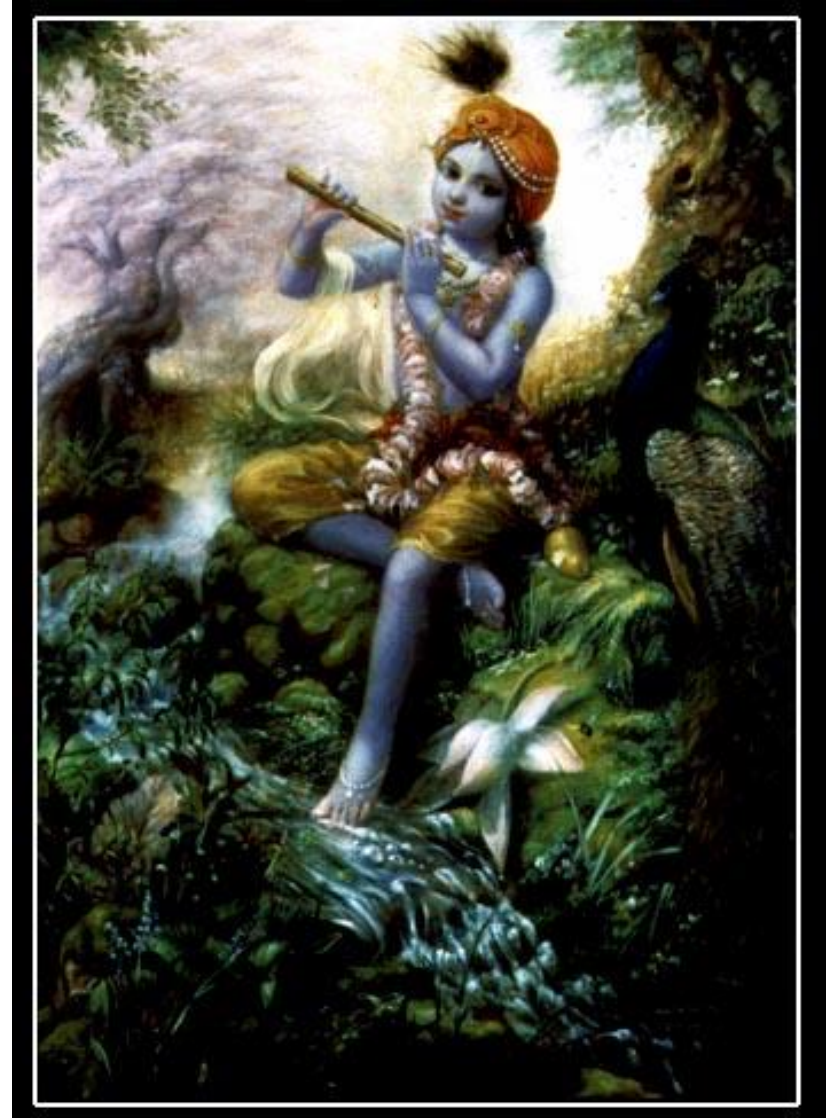
# VISHNU



Although a minor deity in the Vedas, Vishnu is now often seen as the preserver of the world and protector and maintainer of dharma, the natural and moral order of things. At times of trouble, he can be incarnated on earth (an “avatar”)

# KRISHNA

- Usually seen as one of the more important avatars (incarnations) of Vishnu
- Often portrayed as a young boy, sometimes playing a flute



# SHIVA



The (fiery) destroyer; but also brings revival, transformation and new life.

# SHIVA-PARVATI



Parvati is Shiva's wife. She is regarded as the domestic counterbalance to Shiva's destructiveness. Thus she is often honored for harvests. They gave birth to Ganesha.

Many Hindu myths tell of Parvati's love for Shiva and how hard she had to struggle for Shiva's attention because Shiva is noted for his contemplation and asceticism

# GANESHA



- Mischevious, “trickster” god. Is the god of success, but also of obstacles
- Has distinctive elephant trunk. Often seen with a mouse, indicating that with Ganesha’s help you can overcome obstacles big and small.

# LAKSHMI



Lakshmi is usually dressed in red and surrounded by gold. Note the jewels and the coins falling out of her hands on the left, and the lush surroundings above.

**Goddess of success and wealth – both physical and spiritual. Often given the title “Shri”, evoking grace, affluence, abundance, authority and auspiciousness.**

# HANUMAN



- Helped protect Vishnu's avatar Rama against a demon king. Is regarded a protector who can fight off evil.
- Worshipped mostly in North India.
- Identifiable by his monkey face.

# KALI



- Fierce mother goddess, so goddess of protection.
- Often associated with death. Note skull necklace

# PUJA HOME CEREMONY

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARaNRTJPnpg>

# RELIGION SCIENTIFICALLY CONSIDERED

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION!

