

Mircea Eliade's Conception of Myth

Summary

The article begins with a brief overview of the well-known historian of religions M. Eliade's (1907–1986) ideas, publications, and reception among Lithuanian diaspora and in the late Soviet period Lithuania as well as independent Lithuania. It is noted that Eliade's methodology for the study of religions can be attributed not only to the phenomenology of religion, the history of religions, and comparative religious studies, but also to the 20th century traditionalist school. Bearing in mind the resurgent ideological, political, and religious movements oriented towards traditionalism and the general focus on the idealization of the past in the early 21st century, it is useful to delve again into the postulates formulated by M. Eliade and see what creative direction he can offer to the person of today to overcome existential tensions.

One such basic concept analyzed by M. Eliade is myth. The second part of the article focuses on its perception in M. Eliade's works where conceptions of myth and the sacred, "real" and "fake" myths, myth and

creation, time and space in a myth and myth and desacralization are analyzed.

The article concludes that, for M. Eliade, any myth is real insofar as it is a hierophany, a manifestation of the sacred. Secondly, the issue of "realness" and "fakeness" of myths becomes clearer when analyzing the relationship of an ancient person to such a narrative. If the mythical worldview is still alive, then myths are trusted without reservation. M. Eliade finds the cosmogonic myths to be the most important ones because they provide an archetypal model of creation for any subsequent institution. According to M. Eliade, it can be a model action not only for later etiological myths, but for all human activity in general. Myths are also important in terms of the creative breakthrough of the sacred in time and space. On the other hand, the transition from the mythical time of "eternal present" to the events of historical time, which are treated as one-off and irreversible, begins the inexorable process of myth desacralization and desamentization.

Keywords: Mircea Eliade, myth, the sacred, time, space, desacralization.