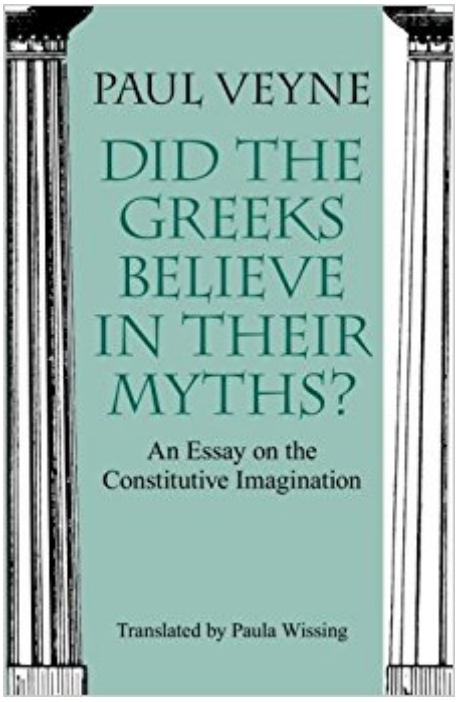
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Did The Greeks Believe In Their Myths?: An Essay On The Constitutive Imagination



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Synopsis

"[Veyne's] present book has some kinship with his sprightly theoretical work Comment on ecrit l'histoire; and he declares that its aim was to provoke reflection on the way our conception of truth is built up and changes over the centuries. . . . The style is brilliant and exhilarating."Ã¢â ¬â •Jasper Griffin, Times Literary Supplement

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, French (translation) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Paul Veyne is a French archaeologist and historian and an honorary professor at the CollÃƒÂ¨ge de France. He is the author of several books in French as well as Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?, also published by the University of Chicago Press. Ã Â

This was a difficult book. I read it through once, but it will always be a resource I will be dipping into again and again. Study and repetition are what helps me learn.This is not, I suspect, for the general reader. But I would still recommend it for anyone who finds themselves curious or captivated by the bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s title.The takeaway I got from this profound collection of essays on history is that my own ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“readingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• is often alarmingly superficial when it comes to seeing ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“what IS.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• In other words, there are some profound things going on and Paul VeyneÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s book points to those and uses ancient ways of seeing

and thinking to illustrate his ideas.We are story-telling creatures who live in myth. We all--past and present--recycle the same myths that the ancient people (those ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“OtherÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• people) did. And humans do this on a daily basis.By tackling this dense, often metaphysical topic, Veyne opens up an easy way to learn that our human imaginations and our view of reality are actually constructed instead of clearly observed.Just as the light we see in the night sky actually left its source aeons ago, we are actually living in a different universe than we think we are.The book has also given me another way to ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“pay attentionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• to the reality I am navigating through.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•--J.P. Hartley

mind blowing but all the time grounded in real scholarship, Veyne's speculative work in this field and as a commentator on Deleuzian philosophy makes him perfect writer on this topic - i was pleased to find it, and recommend it highly

I bought this book because I knew the author from his excellent book on Foucault ("Foucault, sa pensÃƒÂ©e, sa personne

There are 2 kinds of books: those that provide you with knowledge, and those that provide you with a method of understanding. Most of books belong to the first category; but theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re useless if you donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t know how to understand them. Books of the second type are rare and priceless: once youÃ¢â ¬â„¢ve read one of them different perspectives, closed before, open before you. Few of us have seriously thought what hides behind the common concepts of our time: truth, causality, science, knowledge, etc. We use these words mechanically, without thinking, without understanding that these notions are historical, not eternal.Books like that of Paul Veyne make a Ã¢â ¬Å“revisionÃ¢â ¬Â• of foundations of our thinking, providing us with another scheme of thinking, radically different from the common-sense one. And, as P.Veyne says, Ã¢â ¬Å“two schemes are better than oneÃ¢â ¬Â•.Behind the seemingly narrow and specialised title Ã¢â ¬Å“Did Greeks believe in their myths?Ã¢â ¬Â• really hides a philosophical essay on the nature of our world-view. What is truth, and is it possible that thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢re many Ã¢â ¬Å“truthsÃ¢â ¬Â•, not just one? Did the concept of truth in modern sense exist in ancient times? When did modern history begin and whatÃ¢â ¬â„¢re its methods? What is myth, and isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t our science (Einstein, Freud, etc.) also based on its own myth? What is the sociology of truth, and its social distribution? What is faith, and its relation to power? How should we read

ancient cosmogonies? Is myth a way of thinking, or a kind of knowledge, or something else? When did the notion of Ã¢â ¬Å“historical timeÃ¢â ¬Â• appear, and are other concepts of time possible?All these questions are brilliantly addressed in this little book, and are masterfully answered. Buy this book and read it attentively: itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s worth your time!:)

I really liked this book, especially the idea of subuniverses where people construct their own systems of belief. This idea of Veyne's was based on a section of William James' Principles of Psychology. James is the philosopher of "the will to believe." All in all this book contributed to my understanding of religious belief systems and the psychology of believers.

Paul Veyne in this work attempts to look at the different conceptions of truth that have existed in different times. Not always has the standard for truth been verifyability. In the end, in a remarkably poignant chapter, he explains how our own notions of truth may explain our inability to break out of the fishbowl of modern life, inhibiting our conceptual imaginations, our ability concieve new structures and visions for our life. The analysis is very Nietzschean and should be read by anyone who attempts to write history as it clarifies just what is at stake with the prefered methodology.

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