CHAPTER • FIVE

THE LANGUAGE OF RELIGION

The previous chapters of this study have chronicled a variety of ways in which a single intellectual paradigm, with roots in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, has directed and shaped inquiry regarding the nature, status, and function of religion. In the first chapter, we outlined and analyzed the construction of the paradigm and identified a number of theoretical approaches to the question about the essence of religion. In the second chapter, we observed the workings of the paradigm in its desire to account for the origins of religion. In the third chapter, we identified a specific transformation of the paradigm under the influence of phenomenology so that analysts might be equipped to describe religion accurately and compellingly. In the fourth chapter, we explored the modification of the paradigm under functionalist intentions. These four interests—about essence, origin, description, and function—have been fundamental to the study of religion. The responses that scholarship has yielded are significantly responsible for the intellectual substance and methodological shaping of the discipline we call religious studies.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace some typical theoretical responses to questions about the way in which

religion is appropriately expressed. Therefore, we focus in this chapter on analyses of the language of religion. Here, as in each of the previous chapters, we will have opportunity to observe the intrinsic workings of the paradigm. The examples we shall cite, as was also characteristic of the examples cited in the previous chapters, are illustrative of intellectual interests that belong to the Enlightenment. Indeed, such interests can be referred back to the first of Immanuel Kant's critical questions, "How is knowledge possible?" While we kept this question uppermost in mind, our approach to the subject drew most of its inspiration from Kant's insights and proposals in his work on aesthetics, *The Critique of Judgment*. Thus, while the interest in epistemology remains, the responses we shall be identifying and analyzing are characterized by their fidelity to aesthetic consciousness. When a prevailing interest in epistemological issues is placed within the domain of the third critique, this mode of inquiry tends to focus on symbolic forms, on symbols and the process of symbolization.

Therefore, even before the treatment of epistemological issues in aesthetic form was directed specifically to the subject of religion, the intellectual connection between this mode of inquiry and the materials of religion had been made. For the materials (the data) on which this range of intellectual interests focused—symbolic forms, cultural symbols, and the process of symbolization—belong intrinsically to the world of religion and were acknowledged as such from the beginning. Myths and symbols, which form much of the content of religion, are appropriately approached as products or expressions of aesthetic consciousness. If the analyst wished to account for them in genetic terms, that is, by explaining how they happened to come to be, the analyst might propose that they have been produced through the powers of the imagination. Along the way, the same analyst will want to come to terms with the powers of intuition, with the manner according to which insights are effected, and with the creative process by which ideas are transposed into symbols and symbols are translated into ideas. When myths, symbols, cultural forms, and other examples of aesthetic consciousness are approached in this way, the description of their intentions and workings refocuses attention on the initial Kantian proposals and places these in previously unexplored combinations.

We wish to approach this subject, in this chapter, in two distinctive ways. Our intention is to chronicle the intellectual interest in approaching the question "How is religion expressed?" by distinguishing between those schools, movements, and theorists who concentrated on nondiscursive forms from those whose focus is discursive language. The first group includes Continental theorists, in the main, whose concern is with the workings of symbology.

Ernst Cassirer and the Marburg School

The response to Immanuel Kant to which we make repeated reference in this chapter was relatively slow in developing, perhaps because it was more delicate, more deliberately contrapuntal, and

thus more difficult to discern. But once discovered and elaborated, it gained increasing prominence and came to bear large intellectual fruit. Those scholars who gave it impetus were operating self-consciously in the name of Immanuel Kant, though they came to be called neo-Kantians. We refer specifically to Herman Cohen (1842–1918) and Paul Natorp (1854–1924) of the University of Marburg. But the scholar who worked this perspective to the fullest benefit of the academic study of religion was Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), also of the Marburg school, who is the author of the highly significant and influential three-volume work *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, published from 1923 to 1929. Cassirer was indebted to the Kantian orientation, but in his readings of Kant's work, he noticed certain original suggestions that had remained undeveloped, and which, if developed, would extend Kantian insights to more specific ranges of discourse.

The intellectual and historical sequence runs as follows. The neo-Kantian emphasis—particularly in Cohen, who, in turn, influenced both Natorp and Cassirer—lay on "the unity of cultural consciousness." Cohen followed the pattern of Kant's activity by writing three related books in sequence: the first on pure thought, *System der Philosophie*; the second on ethics, *Ethik des reinen Willens*; and the third on aesthetics, *Aesthetik des reinen Gefühls.* In addition to showing that cultural consciousness displays a certain unity of apprehension, Cohen argued that the distinction between thought and being—on which distinction Kant based his observations and contentions about the *ding an sich* (thing-in-itself)—was based on a large misconception. Instead of viewing thought and being as dichotomous, Cohen (followed by Natorp) contended that they are inextricably and mutually related. Being exists only in the process of being grasped and determined by thought, he proposed. Thus, being and thought are closely interlocked, for thought is what most definitively lends determination to being. In Cohen's and Natorp's views, Kant's apriori-synthetic judgment describes more than the process by which knowledge is acquired. It is also the dynamic interplay by which being is formed.

Ernst Cassirer accepted these twin contentions about the unity of cultural consciousness and the mutual reciprocity of thought and being. The next task, he believed, was to extend the boundaries of the Kantian corpus so that other forms of consciousness might be included. In other words, he accepted the initial Kantian framework—pure reason, ethics, and aesthetics—but saw no reason to regard this as an exhaustive list. Furthermore, if additions were to be made, they need not be accorded a lesser status than the original three components. Nor need they be given a diminished or otherwise qualified function when it comes to lending constitution to the world. It is conceivable—so Cassirer argued—that reality is determined by means other than those modes of knowledge Kant clearly identified in the movement's initial statement.

Thus, Cassirer regarded his own project—a comprehensive philosophy of symbolic forms—as an extension and embellishment of the original Kantian critical philosophy. Writing in the introduction to his second volume (the one that

deals specifically with "mythical thought"), Cassirer laid down some of the principles by which the original Kantian proposals could be extended and projected into heretofore unexplored areas:

> It is one of the first essential insights of critical philosophy that objects are not "given" to consciousness in a rigid finished state, in their naked "as suchness," but that the relation of representation to object presupposes an independent, spontaneous act of consciousness.

The cardinal principle carries a corollary, as Cassirer continues:

> The object does not exist prior to and outside of synthetic unity; it is no fixed form that imprints itself on consciousness, but is the product of the formative operation effected by the basic instrumentality of consciousness, by intuition and pure thought.

All of this is background to Cassirer's description of the intention of his own project:

> The philosophy of symbolic forms takes up this basic critical idea, this fundamental principle of Kant's "Copernican Revolution," and strives to broaden it. It seeks the categories of the consciousness of objects in the theoretical, intellectual sphere, and starts from the assumption that such categories must be at work wherever a cosmos, a characteristic and typical world view, takes form out of the chaos of impressions. All such world views are made possible only by specific acts of objectivisation, in which mere impressions are reworked into specific, formed representations . . . .

Then, Cassirer offered this preview of the conclusion of the project:

> Our investigation has already shown that this direction is by no means "simple" . . . that the ways in which the diversity of sensory impressions can be synthesized into spiritual unities can reveal the most diverse nuances. And this conclusion is strikingly confirmed when we contrast the mythical process of objectivisation with that of theoretical, pure empirical thought.

Note that the typical and familiar neo-Kantian themes are enunciated, with significant elaboration. The reciprocity between consciousness and the object is duly noted. The statement that the object is in "no already fixed form that impresses itself on consciousness, but is the product of the formative operation" shows that the Kantian disposition is being sustained, though restyled. In citing Kant's "Copernican Revolution," Cassirer is referring specifically to the fundamental insight and conviction that human consciousness determines whatever is reality for us. Cassirer's extension of the principle is that reality is formed by being apprehended through legitimate modes of consciousness. He understands himself to be

reaffirming Kant's opposition to the viewpoints (1) that reality is already fixed or objectively self-contained prior to the process of cognition, and (2) that knowledge occurs when cognition is shaped to some external state of affairs. Cassirer wants to be corrective, but he believes that Kant's viewpoint is both more revolutionary and sweeping than its founder suspected.

Cassirer's overall thesis is that every symbol system bespeaks a fusion, a union, or synthesis of object and human consciousness. Such modes of consciousness are numerous and distinct, as numerous and distinct as the world of "reality" they inform. As he put it: "The ways in which the diversity of sensory impressions can be synthesized into unities can reveal the most diverse nuances." The modes are numerous, but they are also specific.

The next task is to identify these modes and to describe their inner workings. In our study, we cannot trace the project in detail, but we can and must focus on the mode of mythical consciousness—the framework that provides most illumination regarding the nature of religion—as Cassirer develops his analysis and description in the second volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. In Cassirer's view, mythical consciousness represents a comprehensive and self-consistent mode of knowledge, by means of which reality is determined and formed. It is a distinctive modality through which reality is determined, conditioned, and known, all through the workings of one and the same cognitive process. It is important, in this respect, to see mythical consciousness not simply as a legitimate perspective on the world, alongside a number of other legitimate perspectives, but, instead, as a distinctive mode of address, apprehension, and engagement by means of which "the world" is regulated, constituted, and given content.

Cassirer illustrates his contention by contrasting mythical with scientific consciousness. The two can be contrasted because each has the function of providing a schema of organization by which the world is both formed and known. But mythical consciousness lends a mythical form to reality, whereas scientific knowledge lends a theoretical form to reality. Although distinct in this respect, the two modes can be regarded, in Cassirer's words, as "a specific and peculiar index of refraction." By calling them specific and peculiar, Cassirer wants to avoid a situation in which he is asked or persuaded to give priority to one of them, or to provide some scale for rank-ordering. He avoids this as well as having to identify one of the modes with the status of being normative. Instead, each is regarded as a unique, useful, indispensable, and disclosive mode of engagement, for reality bears a kind of polydimensional character.

Although the modes cannot be graded epistemologically, they can (as we have shown) be compared and contrasted. Scientific consciousness, for example, presumes an ability to engage in abstract thought. Abstract thought is not typical of mythical consciousness. And the analyst can employ a temporal measure—a time line—in making distinctions between the functions of the various modes. Cassirer

is acutely aware of the fact, for example, that it was in an earlier period of human awareness that self-consciousness was regulated by an immediate apprehension, or grasp, of reality. Such immediate apprehension relies on distinctive cognitive resources, clearly distinguishable from those that belong to scientific consciousness. As Cassirer explains: "Before self-consciousness rises to this abstraction, it lives in the world of mythical consciousness, a world not of 'things' and their 'attributes,' but of mythical potencies and powers, demons and gods." Scientific consciousness developed later, but did not thereby make mythical consciousness obsolete. In addition, scientific consciousness does not imply that a significant step closer to the truth has been taken. Rather, understanding of the world is formed out of the various legitimate modalities, each of which is shaped out of its own resources, each of which makes knowledge possible. Thus, though mythical consciousness was an earlier occurrence in the history of modes and methods by which knowledge has been acquired, it is neither made useless nor obsolete when, as Cassirer put it, "self-consciousness rises to scientific abstraction." From this recognition, the purpose of a philosophy of symbolic forms can be stated again. Such a philosophy, in Cassirer's words, "is not concerned exclusively or even primarily with the purely scientific, exact conceiving of the world." Instead, "it is concerned with all the forms assumed by man's understanding of the world." In summary:

> It seeks to apprehend these forms in their diversity, in their totality, and in the inner distinctiveness of their several expressions. And at every step it happens that the "understanding" of the world is no mere receiving, no repetition of a given structure of reality, but comprises a free activity of the spirit. There is no true understanding of the world which is not based on certain fundamental lines, not so much of reflection as of *spiritual formation* [emphasis mine] . . . . But, as we have seen, this articulation is not effected in the same way in all fields. . . . Thus, in particular, language and myth each reveal a "modality" which is specific to it, and which lends a common tonality to all its individual structures.

The range and scope of each modality are unique. Thus, the various modalities must be studied contextually. Thus there is reason for a philosophy of symbolic forms.

Yet, it must also be said that the various modes are interrelated. For example, not until the human spirit has acquired the ability to make abstractions does it recognize the characteristics of mythical awareness. It is through the acquisition of scientific awareness that one comes to discern mythical consciousness as a distinct modality. Through scientific knowledge, one is enabled to distinguish mythical knowledge. Scientific knowledge enhances modal self-consciousness. It assists one precisely to recognize the components and dynamics of the several modalities.

> For what distinguishes science from the other forms of cultural life is not that it requires no mediation of signs and symbols and confronts the unveiled truth of "things

in themselves," but that, differently and more profoundly than is possible for the other forms, it knows that the symbols it employs are symbols and comprehends them as such.

This recognition is implicit, of course, in the distinction between the immediacy of the mythical mode and the second-order reflective awareness of scientific consciousness.

Thus, while the scientific mode is not given a normative status vis-à-vis the mythical mode, it does own certain powers of discernment that give it insight into the configurations of mythical consciousness. This does not imply that scientific consciousness can sustain mythical consciousness by translating it into a scientific mode of awareness. On the contrary, the various modes of knowledge are distinct. Each has its own range. Each functions uniquely. Each forms reality intrinsically. Cassirer wanted to maintain all of the modes in their own terms. As noted, where knowledge of the world is the concern, Cassirer subscribed to a fundamental polydimensionality. Each of the modalities is a distinct way of lending form and pattern to the world, and apart from these formations the world is imperceptible and unknowable. Cassirer insists on the variety and distinctiveness of the several modes. At the same time, he understands the multi- or polydimensionality of the world to belong to "the unity of cultural consciousness." Thus, the diversity implicit in an enlarged, expanded, and embellished range of valid human experience does not mean that the several modes are discrete and unrelated. The polydimensionality of the world cannot destroy the unity of cultural consciousness, nor can modal variety violate the unity of the human spirit. In both distinctive and expansive senses, "the human spirit . . . advances beyond all the fixed boundaries we customarily draw between its various faculties."

Cassirer's polydimensionality really consisted of an effort to compose, in Hermann Cohen's words, a commentary on "the unity of cultural consciousness." It was Cohen's vision that Cassirer spelled out in detail. Both held that the expansion of the range of valid human knowledge does not destroy the unity of human awareness. In other words, when knowledge is distinguished by modes, the several modes need not be treated as discrete or disconnected entities. Instead, the modal polydimensionality contributes to richer, deeper, and more accurate conceptions of reality.

Amplifying the New Key:
Susanne Langer

Cassirer's modal polydimensionality was illustrated, extended, made more accessible, and stripped of all remnants of Hegelian and Neo-Kantian metaphysical dependencies by Susanne Langer (1895–1985) in her influential book *Philosophy in a New Key*, published in 1942. Unlike Cassirer, Langer's orientation was not predominantly Kantian: her chief mentor was Alfred North Whitehead. Thus, through Whitehead's philosophy, she was

already well acquainted with a schema for tracking "the continuous modality of the spirit" (in Cassirer's words) and did not have to contend for the same by seeking to reconcile it with an already prescribed index into valid forms of human experience. She expressed this tendency in the introduction to her *Philosophy in a New Key*:

> The study of symbol and meaning is a starting-point of philosophy, not a derivative from Cartesian, Humean or Kantian premises; and the recognition of its fecundity and depth may be reached from various positions, though it is a historical fact that the idealists reached it first, and have given us the most illuminating literature on non-discursive symbolisms—myth, ritual, and art. Their studies, however, are so intimately linked with their metaphysical speculations that the new key they have struck in philosophy impresses one, at first, as a mere modulation within their old strain. Its real vitality is most evident when one realizes that even studies like the present essay, springing from logical rather than from ethical or metaphysical interests, may be actuated by the same generative idea, the essentially transformational nature of human understanding.

On this basis, then, Langer could presume freedom, mobility, creativity, flux, spontaneity, transformation, metamorphoses, and the other products of Whitehead's thesis that *process is reality*. Her contribution registered primarily as an impressive illustration of the ways in which form influences content—as the two become reciprocally formative—in a variety of symbolic modes.

She referred to her approach as a "philosophy in a new key," a phrase that plays deliberately on modal vocabulary. The title indicates that the innovations to which she is calling attention pertain most of all to the placing of philosophical considerations in new tonal settings. As with John Dewey, Langer sees philosophy being reconstructed by being shifted onto new ground, whereupon even its fundamental questions have been changed. For her, the "disposition" of philosophical problems—the auspices under which issues are formulated, the intellectual horizon within which philosophical issues register, the "tacit, fundamental way of seeing things," the peculiar manner of phrasing curiosities—plays a crucial formative role in the cognitive process. For Langer, as for Cassirer, form and content always influence each other. The fundamental Kantian way of viewing the relation between form and content is never violated in *Philosophy in a New Key*. The same reciprocity is seen in the way human beings use and employ symbols.

Langer attested that symbol-making is "one of man's primary activities, like eating, cooking, or moving about." Such activity goes on at all times. Furthermore, symbol-making is the capacity that most significantly distinguishes the human from other animals. It represents the human's basic need. Symbolism is the prime stuff of thought. Thus, it follows that "the thinking organism must be forever furnishing symbolic versions of its experiences in order to let thinking proceed." In sum, "symbolization is the essential act of mind."

Symbolization functions to transform experiences for purposes of interpretation and communication. Speech is one form of symbolic transformation, but so also are myth, ritual (which includes magic), music, dance, art, and, in other ways, imagination and dreams. This view opposes the presumption that only linguistic forms of expression have cognitive value and that all nonlinguistic patterns of symbol formation belong to the realm of feeling and instinct. Instead, Langer extended the range of cognitive validity to nonlinguistic modes, but by making a crucial distinction first. For her, the true distinction is not between cognition and feeling, but between two sorts of symbolic modes: (1) those that function discursively, and (2) those that function presentationally. To say that linguistic forms of expression alone bear cognitive validity is to restrict knowledge to the discursive mode. This is also to regard the discursive symbolism as the exclusive bearer of ideas. Langer denounced this form of reductionism in favor of a view that honors nondiscursive modes of expression as unique avenues to truths about the world.

> I do believe that in this physical space-time world of our experience there are things which do not fit the grammatical scheme of expression. But they are not necessarily blind, inconceivable, mystical affairs; they are simply matters which require to be conceived through some symbolic scheme other than discursive language.

In other words, in Langer's view, there are various sorts of groupings—nondiscursive, nonverbal presentational forms of alignment—in which knowledge is formulated and articulated and meaning is acquired. The difference is that meaning is construed qualitatively rather than logically in the nondiscursive modes. Nondiscursive symbols function presentationally, for they express truths that cannot be verified logically. But this does not make them any less truthful. In Langer's view, intelligence cannot be restricted to the discursive forms, for nondiscursive, nonverbal formulation is also a product of serious and trustworthy mental activity. Both types of formulation give expression to "the basic human act of symbolic transformation."

Thus, Cassirer and Langer share the fundamental contention that knowledge of the world is not exhausted through the discursive, oftentimes scientific, logical mode of access. For both symbologists, the world is sufficiently multiform and pliable to allow for a variety of modes of access, each of which carries a formative capacity. Via each mode, the world is both apprehended and patterned. Because of his neo-Kantian leanings and his attention to ontological matters, Cassirer was more insistent than Langer in arguing that there is no reality apart from apprehension of reality, and that apprehension always occurs only through the instrumentation of one or another of the symbolic forms. The two share convictions regarding the multiplicity and richness of meaning that is available to a polydimensional modal approach to the world. It follows that for both of them any

diminishing of the multiplicity and restriction of the modal richness of knowledge runs counter to the intrinsic mobility, fluidity, and fundamental large-heartedness of reality. Any restrictiveness would violate the adventuresome spirit by which the world is formed. On this point both theorists agree, and much of what each asserts is intended to support this central insight.

An attitude to religion follows due course. For both Cassirer and Langer, there are deep, natural, and intrinsic ties between religion and mythology. With morphological refinement, mythology functions as that without which religion would not be what it is. There would be no religion, presumably, if the mythological mode were discarded, or were replaced by some scientific, discursive, logical mode of address. Langer and Cassirer could not allow this to happen, for religion depends on mythology. Understandably, religionists have appreciated Cassirer's and Langer's philosophies, particularly because of their contention that meaning is neither exhausted nor regulated by scientific knowledge. This is particularly welcome news, especially during an era when scientific respectability tends to regulate all canons of verification. In Cassirer's and Langer's view, the scientific mode is but one way of giving pattern or structure to reality. Alongside scientific apprehension, there are other modes of access to the world as well as other worlds. In short, Cassirer and Langer stand opposed to the view that there is but one defensible way of approaching reality, a way that is defined by the scientific method. Within such a world, religious sensitivity is not without resourcefulness.

Some advocates of religion have found in Cassirer's and Langer's formulations another advantage. In their view, it is one thing to attest that the mythical mode is an authentic means of apprehending reality. But there is even more to be learned by attaching the various cognitive modes to distinct movements or activities of the human spirit. For example, if there is a logical distinction between *mythos* and *logos*, it may be due to the fact that the two have different cognitive functions, loci, and roots. Thus, if *mythos* is placed prior to *logos* within the cognitive process, religion can also be understood to have its roots in "prereflection" or even "precognition." From this perspective, the resources of religion are "preconceptual." And to claim that religion is "preconceptual" is to say something important about the nature of religion. To associate religion with mythology is in no sense to explain it away. To link it to the "precognitive" mental activity is not to make it obsolescent.

We noted earlier that Ernst Cassirer inserted an *élan* into the history of human consciousness. Movement forward is associated with a progressive tendency toward abstraction. The use of sign is conscious in the scientific mode, for example, while signs are not seen as signs in mythical awareness. Susanne Langer supports the same *élan*, but she adds an element that gives forward movement some additional dimensions. Some of these additional insights are borrowed from Alfred North Whitehead's rule for charting adventures of ideas. Through Whitehead's

scheme, Langer develops a dynamic way of making the various modes interdependent. Furthermore, their interdependence is worked out chronologically and not simply logically. According to Whitehead, intellectual processes can be marked by their sequential moments of romance, precision, and generalization. These three moments form a sequence that is both cyclical and repetitive. Langer relates this pattern of interpretation to the sequence of development from ritual and myth to discursive language. Through the process, religion becomes elongated. It actually appears under new and various guises. It also becomes transformed into ingredients for new kinds of symbolic arrangement. Langer refers to philosophical thought, for example, as "the last reach of genuine religion, its consummation and also its dissolution." When something specific is gathered up into an abstraction, it is time for human understanding to embark on a new step in its adventures. In other words, modal apprehension is dynamic, for process is reality.

Symbols and Thoughts:
Paul Ricoeur

Since World War II, the most impressive approach to religion based on a comprehensive treatment of symbolic forms (or cognitive modalities) is that provided by the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (b.1913). Ricoeur's philosophy, which is formulated in an attempt to provide an extensive and systematic "phenomenology of the will," is conceived to refer to conversations of continental phenomenologists and existentialists—not only Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Martin Heidegger, and Gabriel Marcel, but also such lesser known figures as Pierre Thevenaz and Paul-Ludwig Landsberg. Hence, with Ricoeur the distinction between a philosophy of symbolic forms (à la Ernst Cassirer) and a phenomenological portrayal of the human condition (à la Husserl and Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre) is elidible. Ricoeur approaches the latter through the medium of the former. His work on symbols is directed toward phenomenological descriptions of the human condition.

In some respects, Ricoeur's point of view could just as easily have been reviewed in chapter 3 of this volume, for its preoccupation with "modal parsing" is designated to make a comprehensive phenomenology possible. We have placed Ricoeur's approach here rather than in the earlier chapter, although either would have been fitting, because his phenomenological philosophy is based on distinctions he draws between cognitive modalities. (A chief case in point is his treatment of the relationship between mythological portrayal and conceptual representation, a relationship he sketches in his article "The Symbol. Food for Thought.") This placing of Ricoeur here is authorized too, we believe, by his repeated declaration that he is not preoccupied with the problem of the starting point in philosophy. For him it is sufficient to commence with language, and with the meaning that is inherent in

language. Speaking about his approval of G. Bachelard's approach, wherein the attempt to establish the *primordium* is simply suppressed, Ricoeur writes:

> I should add that it is also an effort to bypass the thorny problem about the starting point of philosophy. We recall the tiresome backward march of thought seeking the first truth, and, more basically still, seeking a radical starting point which might not be a first truth at all. Perhaps you must actually experience the frustration involved in seeking a philosophy without presuppositions to appreciate the problem we are raising. In contrast to philosophies wrestling with starting points, a meditation on symbols starts right out with language and with the meaning that is always there already. It takes off in the midst of language already existing, where everything has already been said after a fashion. . . . Its big problem is not to get started, but, in the midst of words, to remember once again.

The significant line is the one in which Ricoeur refers to his own work as a "meditation on symbols" (in contrast to "philosophies wrestling with starting points") which "starts right out with language and with the meaning that is always there already." If this is phenomenology, it is not phenomenology done with revised Kantian objectives, but phenomenology in distinct modal keys. Its intention is not to establish a certifiable starting point, but to come to terms with the variety of substance of things made accessible through a modal parsing of the rhythmic interplay of literary and other symbolic forms of expression. This is not so much Kant's critical reflexivity as it is akin to Saint Augustine's mnemonic techniques for giving shape to subjectivity and content to introspection.

Ricoeur's starting point is an analysis of the human's situation in the world. This analysis is introduced by Ricoeur's contention that the human being suffers, at present, from a fundamental alienation, disproportion, a broken unity with respect to that by which the human being is sustained and supported. Approaching human experience in this way, Ricoeur takes advantage of the phenomenological rendering of the *natural standpoint.* The natural standpoint is characterized by its propensity toward distortion. Everything is distorted because it is viewed from a perspective within which human alienation is not yet self-conscious. Consequently, Husserl's program for *epoché* has strong redemptive connotations for Ricoeur in more than an epistemological or a cognitive sense. It is an instrument to assist the human to recognize his own disharmony.

In Ricoeur's view, the human is at odds with himself (we use masculine pronouns here merely for the sake of convenience). His capacities and performances, his intentions and acts, his ambitions and deeds, are distorted. Any phenomenological description of human subjectivity must recognize, as Ricoeur says, that "man is a flawed creature." He is marked by a "fault," a radical cleavage, that is manifested in the human passions and exemplified in ambition, likes, and dislikes. The condition is directly present to man in "the split which suffering introduces between me and myself." Ricoeur cites example after example to demonstrate that the human is

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a dual being despite his intention to be single. The human is a being divided against himself. Human existence itself is distorted. It suffers from a deep-seated constitutional weakness.

As with Søren Kierkegaard, Ricoeur's description of human subjectivity is correlated systematically with a series of descriptive literary essays. Furthermore, the several stages of the human dialectic, which are described in the literature, are also made accessible through specific hermeneutical modes. For each "stage," Ricoeur has developed a descriptive literature. Thus the first phase of Ricoeur's phenomenological program is called *eidetics*, and is described as a "phenomenological description of the essential structures of man's being-in-the-world," or a "study of man's fundamental possibilities."

In the first phase of the program, Ricoeur has attempted to depict human nature in its essential primordial wholeness, that is, apart from whatever consequences follow from the human's attempt to adapt to the conditions of actual existence. Since this depiction also describes what it is about the human being that makes him capable of fault, the title of the book in which this description is recorded is *Fallible Man*. The second phase of the program is introduced through the book *The Symbolism of Evil*. Here the focus shifts to a description of the human's actual existential situation. Phase one of the study was entitled *eidetics*, whereas phase two is called *empirics*. Phase three is *poetics*. Its purpose is to bring the analyses of the two previous studies together, to demonstrate how the human's actual situation can be reconciled with his essential conditions. In the third phase, Ricoeur becomes something of a visionary. Here he records his vision of a humanity reconciled with itself. The emphasis is on restoration, hope, collective self-realization. Thus, not until he reaches the third stage of his analysis does Ricoeur attempt to describe the dynamics of transcendence. Not until then is it appropriate to introduce promise and to speak of a definitive reconciliation of polarities. All three phases are included within a comprehensive and systematic attempt to engage in phenomenological description by tracing the intricate relationships and interdependencies between the voluntary and the involuntary. Ricoeur describes his own philosophy as a phenomenology of the will. It also registers as a phenomenology that provides an extensive and detailed description of the transformations necessary to overcome the "natural attitude."

We have indicated that Ricoeur's description of the subjective dialectic is correlated with a carefully conceived several-stage literary program. This correlation is Ricoeur's insight that literary modes are styled according to their intention. Myths and symbols make aspects of human subjectivity intelligible, whereas those same features are inaccessible through reflective conceptualization. In the same way, reflective conceptualization reveals aspects of human subjectivity that could not be reached through myths and symbols. The two spheres do not coincide, and yet they overlap and exhibit mutual ranges of interest.

Eidetics can be approached through careful and critical philosophical analysis, almost in the Kantian style. But when Ricoeur engages in empirics, he concentrates on myths under the conviction that humans gain consciousness of fault only through a mode of expression that, by analogy and figurative language, is equipped to sustain, corroborate, and come to terms with the fundamentally enigmatic character of human existence. That is, because they are designed to function suggestively and sometimes deliberately ambiguously, always indirectly, myths and symbols constitute a unique mode of disclosure. They also have a particular sphere of application. The experience of fault, which can never be brought to consciousness directly and objectively, can be mediated by the mythical and symbolic mode. Thus, whereas eidetics belonged to disciplined reflective analysis, empirics is reserved for myths, symbols, signs, rites, stories, and the other nondiscursive means of expression, communication, and disclosure.

This does not mean that once eidetics has been left behind—it is really never left behind—reflective analysis is finished. For, according to the rule that "the symbol is food for thought," and regulated by careful phenomenological principles, Ricoeur finds reflective analysis functioning even with the realm of empirics to interpret the myths and symbols and thus to formulate the meaning of the experience of fault. In this context, reflection is given a second-order function. The data of myths and symbols form the primary body of materials upon which reflective analysis and interpretation are exercised. Thus the meaning of the existential condition is derived through the content of myths, then the content is organized, synthesized, and even cross-referenced through second-order reflective tallies. In other words, thought elucidates the meaning of human subjectivity to which myths and symbols bear primary witness.

While Ricoeur approaches the human's essential nature in eidetics in an *a priori* fashion, his mythical account qualifies as an *a posteriori* approach. Reflection functions, as it were, on its own behalf in the first setting. In the second setting it is given a second-order function. In empirics, reflection works on the data and materials from myths and symbols. From this one can expect poetics to be formed by a reconciliation of the consequences of the straight philosophical reflection in eidetics with the mediated interpretative reflection of empirics. In poetics, Ricoeur will try to portray the consequences of subjectivity as this is projected through the singularity of human intentionality and mirrored in the duality of human affirmation. This stage is called poetics because it weaves intentional and expressive content together. But poetics is also consistent with the underlying structure that has been developed through eidetics and empirics. By means of a "meditation on symbols," which is also a fundamentally recollective endeavor, Ricoeur has engaged in a systematic effort at modal parsing which, at the same time, attempts to identify the declensions of human subjectivity. As noted, his comprehensive project is extraordinarily extensive.

Schleiermacher to Dilthey to Gadamer

Another trajectory from Immanuel Kant forward also deals with symbols in an instructive manner. This trajectory moves from Kant through Friedrich Schleiermacher, then rests with Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) for a time. In modified form it is brought into current conversation by Hans-Georg Gadamer (b.1900), author of the influential book of hermeneutical theory, *Wahrheit und Methode*. To refer it to Schleiermacher's revision of Kant's philosophy is to signal that the trajectory belongs to aesthetics. But this is something more than to give it a theoretical or disciplinary rootage within the humanities. The reference also implies that the best clues to the nature of reality are aesthetic. Reality is approached aesthetically: it is sensed before it is conceptualized.

The mood is Cartesian and Kantian in origin, at least initially, but the content of the mood, enunciated by Schleiermacher, was prompted by both Kant and G. W. F. Hegel. Kant supplied the interest in identifying a subterranean fundamental core. Hegel provided the contention that reality's core element is *Geist*, or spirit. To summarize the consequences neatly, what Dilthey sought was a nonidealist way of sustaining Hegel's criticism of Kant.

Dilthey's intention was to provide an alternative to the abstract character of Kant's analysis and to ground Hegelian motifs concretely. He was not attracted to Kant's categories of pure reason. The Kantian temper was too rigid and sterile, formed and inflexible, for Dilthey. In being stiff and erudite, in Dilthey's view, it violated the very suppleness of reality.

Critical of Kant's philosophy, Dilthey was only a little happier with Hegel's. In his view, Hegel's philosophy was too abstract, too theoretically rarified. He approved of Hegel's turning from formal epistemological components to devote concentrated attention to the dynamics of history and historical change. But he believed Hegel's preoccupation with the history of consciousness to be a concession to idealism and to involve flights of conceptual fantasy. Thus Dilthey wanted to be more precise and concrete than Hegel, and more flexibly expansive and less formalistically conceptual than Kant. He wanted to understand the workings of the human spirit in its utter concreteness. He was interested in tracing the movements of the human spirit in actual instances of specification. He was particularly interested in "lived experiences" and in "life relations." This meant working to identify the specific forms or modes through which the human spirit gains expression. Dilthey turned from the cold and abstract, and removed to *historical reason*. Historical reason provided him with a rationale. Historical reason implied that the *logos*—or principle of interpretation—could be located as being immanent in things. While it could be abstracted, it was not abstract. Finding, or locating, the rationale in things, Dilthey was able to identify specific instances of the objectification of the human spirit. Thus, Dilthey's alternative to the formalism of Kant and the speculative idealism of Hegel came in the form of deliberate attention to

symbolic life forms. The symbolic forms were important to him because they function as indices into the workings of the process of understanding. In Dilthey's terms, "understanding is our name for the process in which mental life comes to be known through expressions of it which are given to the senses."

Dilthey referred to these expressions as "manifestations of life." These expressions, or manifestations, are of three kinds. Note the retention of the original Kantian scheme. The first class of expressions consists of *mental* acts. These include construction of thought, formation of ideas, creation and synthesizing of concepts, reasoning, processes, and so forth, all of which are the products of intellectual work. Words, sentences, paragraphs, essays, treatises, and books are the forms into which such intellectual work is shaped. The second class of expressions—again, in true Kantian style—consists of *practical* or *ethical* acts. Here Dilthey pays particular attention to the way in which purposes are achieved through acts. Purposes and acts are always interrelated (like *theoria* and *praxis*). Will and deed always go hand in hand. Acts are performed to achieve something specific and concrete.

In this regard, Dilthey's examples come from the worlds of private and social practical activity. He illustrated the power of this class of expressions, for example, by citing the acts of legislators in public institutions. He insisted that the examples not be restricted to individual efforts to fulfill personal ethical and moral obligations. Instead, he was interested in the public demonstration of the processes he had uncovered. By concentrating on the dynamism of acts, he believed it possible to penetrate to the basis of human purposes, and this would reveal something fundamental regarding the nature of the human spirit.

His third class of expressions was identified as *psychic* and *imaginative* acts (again, keeping the Kantian framework intact). Here Dilthey had in mind those manifestations of life through which the emotions are expressed. He gave prominence to art, for example, by which he intended that a variety of art forms be considered. And he had high regard for such phenomena as gestures, exclamations, tonalities, voicings, shadings, and nuances. Dilthey was particularly impressed with the content of this third class of expressions primarily because of its ability to disclose something rudimentary about the human spirit. It probably goes without saying that this is the point in his scheme wherein the aesthetic dimension is most apparent and prominent.

It is important to recognize, too, that Dilthey was not supremely interested in drawing up classifications, or in finding the interpretive key to enable him to know how one or another manifestation of life ought to be categorized. Rather, his prime attention was given to an attempt to write a morphology of human understanding. The symbolic forms were instrumental in helping him trace the logic of understanding. His goal was to make the human inner reality transparent. He focused on autobiographical materials, for example, because he thought they

provided the opportunity for reexperiencing the mental processes of the autobi-
ographers. A careful analysis of autobiographical materials promises to enable the
analyst to reconstruct the mental processes of the text's authors. In reconstruct-
ing those processes, the analyst can also experience them for himself/herself.
Throughout Dilthey's comprehensive organon of forms of interpretation, the an-
alyst can reexperience the thought, act, and feeling that are implicit in the wide
assortment of expressions or manifestations of life. By means of this interpreta-
tion, the objectification of the human spirit is enunciated.

Dilthey is important not only for his own rich accomplishment but because of
his influence on subsequent theorists of interpretation. The intriguing contempo-
rary hermeneutical work of the Marxist philosopher Jürgen Habermas, for exam-
ple, was inspired by Dilthey's point of departure.

As we have indicated, the most promising line from Dilthey to contemporary
work in religious studies flows through the hermeneutical ponderings of Hans-
Georg Gadamer, author of the important book *Wahrheit und Methode* and scores of
other books, articles, and monographs. Gadamer is quick to acknowledge that he
belongs to Dilthey's tradition of scholarship. For instance, he shares Dilthey's in-
terest in wanting to place and decipher the rudiments of human understanding. But
he gives this subject new twists and turns. One can say, in brief, that Gadamer re-
tains Dilthey's interest in concrete specifications of the human spirit. But, unlike
Dilthey, he fails to give much attention to "historical reason." That is, Gadamer is
more interested in what the forms of expression disclose about the nature of reality
than in what they might say about the workings of the mental, ethical or emotional
capacities of human beings. And Gadamer's concept of the nature of reality is Hei-
degger's through and through.

Still, the fundamental point of departure is Dilthey's. Gadamer's assumption
is that the usual subject-object split between knower and external reality can and
must be overcome through a dialectical interrelationship between "one's own hori-
zon" and that of "tradition." In short, within human subjectivity there is a kind of
"dialogue" between one's perspective on life and the perspective or vision that one
possesses through transmission. Thus, understanding is formed via the encounter
between "horizon" and "tradition." In addition, being—and not simply under-
standing—is disclosed through the same dialectical encounter. This disclosure oc-
curs when one allows one's own horizon to be questioned by "the being of the
thing so that the thing encountered can disclose itself in its being."

In Gadamer's view, cultural forms of expression are manifestations of life, as
Dilthey had attested. Moreover, just as Dilthey hoped to be able to perceive the dy-
namic workings of life by examining the forms of expression, so too does Gadamer
contend that cultural forms enable one to view and experience the world. For exam-
ple, he can speak eloquently and persuasively of the way in which a work of art puts
a question to the viewer, rather than the other way around. As he explains this:

In the presence of a great work of our whole self-understanding is placed in the balance, is *risked*. It is not we who are interrogating an object; the work of art is putting a question to us, the question that called it into being. The experience of a work of art is encompassed and takes place in the unity and continuity of our own self-understanding.

Thus, cultural forms of expression provide disclosures of reality as well as self-disclosures. They are the means through which reality is made accessible for us, and they are media of self-knowledge and self-consciousness.

Hans-Georg Gadamer's work can be understood to relate to the subject of religion and to the field of religious studies in at least three prominent ways. First, in his view, religion is a significant source of a host of cultural expressions through which reality is made known. Similar to art and other cultural constructions, religion is an influential medium through which the human spirit has achieved objectification. Because of this, religion serves as a means through which reality is disclosed.

Second, religion is an instrument of self-consciousness. It assists the process through which the conditions of self-knowledge are enunciated. To turn the matter the other way, whatever conditions are necessary to establish self-knowledge are also of religious importance. Self-knowledge is an important religious undertaking.

Third, Gadamer conceives the process of human understanding to be formed by a dialectical relationship between "personal horizon" and "tradition." This dialectic includes the possibility that religion might function as a reliable adjudicator of the relationship between "horizon" and "tradition." For example, religious traditions can be conceived as being party to the placing of questions to which the human self responds. Religious traditions have an important role to play in placing and prompting questions to which the human self responds. Religious traditions can also be assigned an essential role within the process of human understanding. They are significant components of that process, for, as mirrors on reality, they are also part of that accumulated body of wisdom that is handed on, through which encounters take place. And in the dialogue between the human spirit and religious traditions, certain important windows on the nature of reality are opened.

Cassirer's, Langer's, Ricoeur's, Dilthey's, and Gadamer's approaches to language and symbols are philosophical in nature and theoretical in temper. They are based on hermeneutical theory. As such, they are exercises in critical cultural reflection. They provide compelling collective testimony that theoretical analyses of symbolic and cultural forms must take religious factors into account.

Geraardus van der Leeuw: A Phenomenological Approach

Other avenues of approach to religion as symbolic form are rooted less in hermeneutical theory and more in the history of religions. One of the best known of these is Geraardus van der Leeuw's classic *The Holy in Art*, which consists

iconography, history of art, as well as the

of combined phenomenological, historical, and theological insights. In his *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, as we noted in chapter 3, van der Leeuw engaged in comprehensive morphological description of the subject of religion. In *The Holy in Art* he became more specifically focused. Citing illustrations from a wide variety of historical times and cultural situations, van der Leeuw contended that art is a consecrated means of religious expression. Thus, as the title of his book reinforces, religion and art are to be interrelated by means of the connector *in*. In other formulations, as we shall see soon, *and* is the connector chosen.

From the first page of his study, van der Leeuw makes it apparent that his intention is to offer a systematic, phenomenological portrayal of the complex interrelationships between religion and art. He approaches both as being valid forms of cultural expression. Indeed, he wishes to give each a prominent place within the catalog of various kinds of cultural expressions. His problem is that he does not want this high appraisal to violate or otherwise qualify the Christian understanding of divine revelation. He finds himself in a dilemma in this regard. From the one side, speaking as a cultural historian with evident religious sensitivities, he wishes to approach art—along with history and natural science—as a legitimate and effective medium of divine revelation. But, on the other side, he wishes to keep faith with the Christian teaching that the revelation of God through Jesus Christ is altogether final, complete, and definitive. How can he make both affirmations at the same time? How can he appropriately express what he knows to be true of artistic expression without qualifying his adherence to special revelation?

The dilemma is not easy to resolve, for he discovers some standard theological distinctions to be of little use. It will not help him resolve the issue, for instance, if he assigns art to "general revelation" in contrast to which are more specific and redemptive forms of divine disclosure. In his judgment, this distinction works inaccurately and unfairly against the world, and he is unwilling to participate in a devaluation of the status of art. At the same time, he is not happy with any proposed resolution that would ascribe to art more than is due, thus threatening the absolute priority reserved for the revelation of God through Jesus Christ.

The impasse can be overcome, van der Leeuw believes, through specific attention to a motif that belongs in both religion and art without violating their respective sensitivities. That same motif had already been identified by Rudolf Otto in his search to isolate the essential core of religion. The next task, for van der Leeuw, is to discover and decide how *the holy* and *the beautiful* might be interrelated. "We do not intend to pursue causal relationships, but rather to search for comprehensible associations. Further, we do not intend to investigate the truth behind the appearance, but we shall try to understand the phenomena themselves in their simple existence."

The product is similar in tone and format to van der Leeuw's *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*. It is a comprehensive collection, a veritable catalog of artistic materials of a religious nature. The author focuses on the human experience

of beauty and holiness, as these expressions occur in dance, drama, rhetoric, the fine arts, architecture, and music. Its thesis is that religion and art are integrally interrelated since religion's core element is significantly reflected through and in art. The power of *das heilige*, in short, is implicit in art, and in all forms of art.

The next task is to illustrate the thesis more specifically by considering the various art forms. Van der Leeuw takes up these forms, one by one, attempting to establish precise correlations between religion and art as he proceeds. Always the goal is to identify "comprehensible associations"—art and religion belong together because they share common property. For example, when treating dance, van der Leeuw focuses on movement. Movement belongs to dance while giving expression to religious sensitivity. "The dance is the first discovery of movement external to man, but which first gives him his true actual movement. In the dance shines the recognition of God himself moving and thereby moving the world." Similarly, "holy play" functions within the context of drama as the connector between religion and art, for "holy play" expresses in dramatic form "the meeting of God with man, of man with God." Architecture is viewed in terms of "the well-built city of God's creation." Music is understood as "the echo of the eternal Gloria." Each form gives distinctive artistic expression to "the idea of the holy." This helps account for "the sacred in art."

Clearly, van der Leeuw's fundamental intention was to recover a sacramental vision of the world. He found this an appropriate task because of what modernity had done to deep-seated religious impulses. The means by which modern human beings interpret life to themselves, in van der Leeuw's opinion, has become impoverished and shallow. Feeling compelled to recall and recollect an earlier human vision—a view of things in which visible reality is an expression of an invisible reality—he set about to reconstruct the conditions by which an awareness of the transcendent dimension or plain can be restored. This is not a new vision, of course. Van der Leeuw attested that the integration of religion and art had been made explicit in the attitude of the world's first human beings. But the fundamental unity of that trusted human outlook in the world has been shattered. As a consequence, religion and art have become separated, and are even treated as unrelated subjects. So sharply have they become separated that they have even been judged to be antithetical to each other. The intrinsic compatibility between them cannot be reaffirmed, in van der Leeuw's view, until the fundamental unity of life is restored. Although complete restoration of that unity is no longer possible—this would require a reinstitutionalization of the sacramental vision—the Dutch theorist hoped that something of the original sense of things might be recaptured through the magnetism of the religious impulse. His book *The Holy in Art* was designed to assist this recovery. His intention was to re-create the setting and attitude and identify the human disposition that allows religion and art to complement one another within a unified picture of the world.

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Of such intentions are theologies created. Van der Leeuw's study is neither art history nor history of religions strictly considered, but theology of art, heavily dependent on Barthian Protestant theological convictions. Thus mixed with declarations about how the relationship between religion and art ought to be, van der Leeuw cannot resist describing the process by which what was lost through sin is won back via redemption. The Christian, that is to say, is at least partially restored to the original human state, and hence can reenvision the sense of the wholeness of things that was characteristic of the earliest human beings' perspective.

The entire program is supported by a conviction that the living God is at work—mysteriously, ordinarily unrecognizably, always awesomely, as perceived by faith—in the transitions between form and image in artistic expressions. The dominant working model is provided by van der Leeuw's interpretation of the deity: form and image are analogous to Father and Son, the latter being the expression of the former as well as the concrete manifestation in which the former is reciprocated. Appropriately, van der Leeuw calls his work "theological aesthetics or aesthetical theology," and the designations are apt. To treat religion and art as harmonious cultural forms, he invokes the support of a theological worldview of premodern vintage.

Aby Warburg: Religion as a Component in Cultural Analysis

Another way of going about cultural history, based on an integrative view of the interrelationships between styles of art and reflection, has been proposed by Aby Warburg (1866–1929), the founder of the Warburg Institute, first in Hamburg, and now in London. Warburg's work belongs to an intellectual context that includes such personages as Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), the first to write a comprehensive history of aesthetics by concentrating on form; Alois Riegl (1858–1905), who employed a formalist approach to make visual art studies rigorous; Heinrich Wölfflin (1864–1945), who sustained a formalist approach to the history of art in a conscious historically methodological sense, integrating insights from psychology; and Max Dvorak (1874–1921), who demonstrated the continuities between artistic form and philosophical and religious content, in its heritage. Equipped with such insight and inspiration, Warburg's dominant contention, though with significant variations, is that *art history is cultural history*. His own special interest was in making the dynamics of historical and cultural continuity and change accessible through comparative studies in symbolic forms.

While visiting and then living in Italy as a young man, Warburg was impressed with the recurrence of antique (both classical and pagan) forms and motifs in Renaissance art. Warburg had been trained to look for such phenomena by the influence of the classical philologist Hermann Usener (1834–1905). Usener focused on remnants and vestiges of primitive life in order to gain insight into the

meaning of ancient, classical, and pagan texts. Warburg concentrated too on artifacts that testified to the "survival of antiquity." Thus, the recurrence of antique motifs in the Renaissance served as an emergent paradigm for using iconography as an index to the currents of cultural history.

Warburg was not naive. He recognized that the ancient world had been superseded by other forms of culture. He was aware too that a millennium separates the end of the classical age from the flowering of the Renaissance. He agreed that the Renaissance was a new age, but he was curious about the recurrence of classical forms, wondering how it could most fittingly be explained that a latent culture would reemerge in revitalized form. Such factors so impressed him that he worked his way toward a theory of cultural history that was chiefly cognizant of the repetition of ideal types.

Warburg's work had bearing on iconography, history of culture, and the relationship that pertains between them. In this latter regard, he concentrated on symbolic forms, having noted that when items from previous cultural eras reemerge in subsequent cultural periods they often do so in new or revised guise and forms. For example, consideration of deity in the classical era was closely associated with speculation about the planets and the significance of their rotations. But, later, when religious ideas gained some separation from cosmological speculation, the planets were no longer regarded as heavenly bodies. Appropriately, the religious functions once attributed to the planets were also transformed, though not lost. Eventually, for example, the "religious content" originally associated with the planets was internalized psychologically so that the forces which once ruled the world (from above) were construed as internal personal drives and temperaments. But the process continued, for, following this psychological internalization, another successive period occurred that was marked by a fresh burst of interest in astrology and the occult. Hence, the power once attributed to the planets as heavenly bodies was reassigned to those same planets. The religious, psychological, and cultural implications were drawn anew, a reconstitution that is the fundamental work of culture.

Aby Warburg's interpretive point was that the classical motifs do enjoy a certain durability as formative ingredients of Western culture, and while such motifs have undergone striking change and modification, they can be counted on to continue to function as prime instruments of cultural transmission and transformation. In this way, though the examples would fill a library (as they do), the survival of antiquity is employed as a comprehensive reference point to make the dynamics of historical and cultural continuity and change a methodologically accessible subject. Jean Seznec's book *The Survival of the Pagan Gods* is a vivid example of the sort of research that is inspired, conceived, and produced in the Warburg manner.

It should be obvious that Warburg's perspective has a bearing on the relationship between the various subjects that belong to the humanities, and even to

the relationships between academic fields of study. Because of the perpetual interplay of form and content, together with the dynamism that is characteristic of symbolic expression, the multivalent substance of both art and culture can never be uncovered through simple, one-tense, unidimensional, and static approaches to a subject. Rather, since the task is to seize upon phenomena in process of transition, transmission, and transformation, a wide variety of perspectives must be drawn upon simultaneously. This implicit "academic plan" is consistent with Warburg's conviction that reality usually falls into the "borderlands" between the academic fields. It also gives energy to his understanding that all of the disciplines that belong to the humanities and the social sciences must be accorded proper place. In principle, at least, none can be ruled out of an inquiry.

Commenting on Warburg's attempt to "tear down the barriers artificially set up between the various departments of historical research," Fritz Saxl, Warburg's associate and successor, has described the institutional vision this way:

> Historians of science were not to work independently of historians of art and of religion; nor were historians of literature to isolate the study of linguistic forms and literary arts from their settings in the totality of culture. The idea of a comprehensive "science of civilization" was thus meant to embody the demand for a precise method of interaction and correlation between those diverging scientific interests in the humanities which have shown a tendency to set up their subjects as "things in themselves."

Since its founding, the Warburg Institute has attempted to institutionalize a judgment against all forms of scholarly research that are neither interdisciplinary nor cross-cultural, and, in the words of Alfred North Whitehead, rigidify "selective attention." In treating the subject of cultural continuity and change, the Warburg Institute has discovered a way of conducting cross-cultural studies that allows the disciplines within the humanities to enter the discussion on their own terms, but then insists that they relate to each other.

In Warburg's perspective, religion does double duty. As an integral component of culture, religion is both a specific mode or form of cultural expression and the source of significant, formative cultural content. In other words, religion could be understood to be a significant "symbolic form," and it is also responsible for content belonging to other significant "symbolic forms." "Deity" or "divinity," for example, plays a prominent role in the articulation of a specifically religious cultural "symbolic form," but, under another guise, "deity" or "divinity" also becomes implicit in other specific cultural or symbolic forms. Thus motifs that may have a religious tradition as their source find their way into other forms and contexts. Such motifs are regulated by the dynamics of cultural transition and transmission. A particular theme or motif may have a special relationship with a particular religious tradition, but once it becomes ingredient in culture it can no longer be governed by the dictates of religion or the interests of the religious

tradition. This is simply to reiterate that Western culture is composed of root elements that gain expression in dynamic and flexible ways.

Erwin Panofsky: Architecture and Reflection

Something of Warburg's spirit can be found in Erwin Panofsky's (1892–1968) researches, particularly in his book *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. Here the attempt is not to develop a scheme that works for the integration of the cultural sciences, but to spot definite similarities between a specific art form and a specific pattern or style of thought. In *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, Panofsky focused on a style of art and a pattern of reflection, both of which were characteristic of an era, then tried to explain why they occurred together and how they are interrelated. In short, he employed scholastic theology to help explain and interpret Gothic architecture, and Gothic architecture as a reflection of scholastic thought. His intention was to illustrate that since the medieval worldview was organic and unitary, one and the same article of religious conviction could be expressed symbolically in at least two symbolic modes. In the first place, it can be set to words and given expression in concepts. In the second place, it is also amenable to a visual structural portrayal. But it is the same affirmation that was articulated both in argumentation and in stone mortar, piers, and buttresses. The one is mirror image of the other.

The reason for this complementarity is that a single "mental habit" (or, in the phrase Panofsky also liked to use, "habit-forming force") is present in both contexts. This means that Gothic buildings were constructed according to scholastic principles. This made the medieval architect a kind of scholastic in his attempt to lend structural expression to scholastic principles. It also meant that the scholastic thinker engaged in a kind of architecture. Both theology and architecture were governed by the same structural principles. Both were characterized as theological systems and those responsible for their design as "system builders."

The mental habit implicit in both thought and architecture was also designed to create a "summary," a *summa*. Both scholastic theology and Gothic architecture were explicit summaries. Both sought to make the unity of truth visible. Both were deliberate announcements that reality itself is whole, unitary, and integral. Reality is not made up of disparate parts. It was not conceived as being atomistic or even dual or bipolar. Rather, the world is all of one piece. While there may be different places, realms, and regions within reality, these are all ingredient in the totality. Indeed, Panofsky's chief literary example, Saint Thomas Aquinas's major work, is appropriately entitled the *Summa Theologica*.

Both scholastic theology and Gothic architecture were constructed in accordance with three clear principles of design: (1) the structure needed to be comprehensive and include all relevant components and features within its total grasp

(Panofsky's requirement of "sufficient enumeration"); (2) the arrangement of parts within the structure was required to be orderly and systematic (Panofsky's requirement of "sufficient articulation"); and (3) the edifice itself, whether in thought or physical construction, was designed to exhibit distinctiveness and deductive cogency (Panofsky's requirement of "sufficient interrelation"). Drawing on these three examples, Panofsky identified the most prominent mental habit as "postulation of clarification for clarification's sake." In reflection the principle is called *manifestatio*, while in architecture it is referred to as "the principle of transparency."

Deliberate self-consciousness is present in both instances. In the structural design of the Gothic cathedral, Panofsky argued, every attempt was made to contain all of Christian truth in a reflexively self-conscious manner. The Gothic cathedral employed an architectural structural design to help "give voice" to motifs inspired by Christian teaching. This insight prompted Panofsky to observe:

> We are faced with what may be termed a "visual logic". . . A man imbued with the Scholastic habit would look upon the mode of architectural presentation, just as he looked upon the literary presentation, from the point of view of *manifestatio*. He would have taken it for granted that the primary purpose of the many elements that compose a cathedral was to ensure stability, just as he took it for granted that the primary purpose of the many elements that constitute a *Summa* was to ensure validity.
>
> To him the panoply of shafts, ribs, buttresses, tracery, pinnacles, and crockets was a self-analysis and self-explication of architecture just as the customary apparatus of parts, distinctions, questions, and articles was, to him, a self-analysis and self-explication of reason.

Thus, the interest in maximizing explicitness is just as much a principle of architecture as it was of theology during the Gothic and scholastic era. The fully developed Gothic cathedral, corresponding to the fully developed theological system, is testimony to techniques and materials necessary to realize that interest. At each point along the way, from the formation of the mental habits to its culmination in the "high" period, correspondingly similar steps were taken in both fields. In both architecture and theology a definite style was being worked out according to one and the same set of structural principles. In both form and essence, then, Gothic architecture and scholastic theology are close filial expressions of an identical pervasive notion.

The mental habit Panofsky isolated is calculated to maintain a complementary relationship between faith and reason as well as the conviction that truth is one, whole and integrated. Alternative organizational principles were available, both to architecture and to theology, but their products were manifestly different from the interrelated styles Panofsky held up to scrutiny. For instance, mystical theology and nominalist philosophy are expressions of alternative organizing principles, neither of which is protective or illustrative of the scholastic mental habit.

Consequently, Panofsky saw both of them as threats to the unity of truth; that is, they do not measure up philosophically speaking. Neither do they maintain ways of keeping the relationship between faith and reason complementary. Scholasticism resisted these alternatives because they enshrined mental habits that lead to disintegration. Similarly, scholasticism successfully avoided the mistakes of the poets, humanists, and antirationalists, whose world tends to break up eventually, with its several components becoming disassociated.

The complementarity on which Panofsky focused scholarly attention is striking and instructive. One cannot be sure, however, that Panofsky's insights can be applied to other situations. It may well be that the scholastic-Gothic correlation is unique, and that similar conjunctions of art and thought are difficult to find. Panofsky himself was impressed with the possibility that a similar correspondence could be effected between the Carolingian revival in the arts and the philosophical work of John Scotus Erigena in the ninth century. Other potential examples come to mind. Albrecht Dürer, for example, might have done more for the cause of the Protestant Reformation with his art, so the case can be argued, than Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon did with their books, treatises, and sermons. And yet the style that pervades both Dürer's art and Luther's theology may be one and the same.

Pushing the matter further, one can perhaps find parallels between the philosophers and artists of the Enlightenment era. Similarly, the early twentieth-century revolt against the post-Renaissance worldview seems to have taken the same structural, visual, and conceptual form in, say, the art of Dada, the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, and even the poetry of Ezra Pound. German expressionist art, for another example, is matched by a corresponding German expressionist philosophy. The same kind of correspondence analysis seems to work well in other cultures too. Definite structural correspondences are found in Buddhist thought and Buddhist art. Classical Hinduism also developed its own art forms by means of which one can read the tenets of the worldview just as surely as one can discern them in the words of the sacred scriptures. In short, while Panofsky did not supply the transitional methodological steps, there is no doubt that the exercise he carried out can be conducted on other and additional cultural data that provide examples and candidates for parallel development. Panofsky's contribution to the discussion about styles and patterns in cultural history may register first of all as an articulation of a formal truth: namely, that once a descriptive name is applied to a culture (given all of the latter's complexities and its manifold comprehensiveness), inquirers and interpreters are prompted to find more and more precise ways in which that name or descriptive title is either apt or not.

In Panofsky's work we see a clear attempt to show the interdependence and interaction of religion and art in specific cultural settings. His work can be classified as intercultural comparative symbolics, for the intention is to identify

correspondences between interrelated symbolic forms in a given place at a given time. The results are intriguing to scholars in religious studies because religion is made explicit party to a larger, more comprehensive cultural composite. In Panofsky's view, specific intrinsic ties exist between religion and other forms of human expression. Such linkages and correspondences can be demonstrated. They provide the touchstones that enable one to interpret a culture. Furthermore, it follows that unless the religion quotient is given due place, the composite cultural analysis is partial and, for that reason, impoverished.

The Jungian Attitude: Jung, Campbell, and Neumann

The ploy becomes fancier, more complicated, and considerably more pretentious when genre studies are examined to disclose (1) the fundamental characteristics, nature, or structure of human consciousness, (2) the fundamental characteristics, nature, or structure of reality, and (3) the fundamental characteristics, nature, or structure of both of these together. One finds this turn taken in impressive fashion, for example, by Carl G. Jung (1875–1961), the Swiss psychoanalyst and mythologist. Viewed from within an interest in the formation of religious studies, Jung's achievement lies in his ability to find corroborative evidence in mythology for his psychoanalytically derived indices into human consciousness. Thus, instead of identifying religion with a particular symbolic form or structural pattern, Jung took form and pattern as reflections and evidences of the dynamic workings of the human psyche.

Jung deviated from the position of Sigmund Freud, under whose psychoanalytic nurturing his attitudes had been formed in Freud's school in Vienna. Indeed, it was his disagreement with Freud that led him to the attitude toward religion that we are attempting to summarize here. The divergence between the two focused on the definition and function of what Freud called the libido (which, with ego and superego, was taken as one of the three formative components or motivational factors of the personality). Freud saw libido as raw motivational power or energy, which he identified closely with sexuality. Jung could agree with Freud that the unconscious consists of drives and energies, but he was unwilling to give sexuality such large priority and exclusive control. He conceded that some unconscious processes have the characteristic of Freud's id-system, but then asserted that other unconscious energies and strivings are the sources of positive and creative activity. These same energies and strivings are instrumental in the growth and maturation of the individual.

It is clear that the disagreement was not simply conceptual or definitional. The two really had different conceptions of the place and function of psychoanalysis. Freud was interested primarily in uncovering the basis of neurotic and psychotic behavior; he was concerned about deviations from the norm. Thus he

approached libidinal energy in attempting to identify mechanism of repression. As Freud understood human nature, libidinal drives were in conflict with acquired and established cultural sanctions; the same conflict was mirrored in the psychological makeup of individuals. As Jung saw it, Freud was concerned primarily to treat the aberrations, the neurotic and psychotic by-products of this fundamental conflict. Jung understood himself to be more ambitious. It was not enough to neutralize the negative. In addition, he sought to identify and express the role of the unconscious life in positive, constructive terms. The difference between Freud and Jung consisted largely of differences in intention coupled with large differences in temperament. Simply put, whatever assumptions and standpoints they shared were directed toward markedly different ends.

Jung distinguished between two systems of unconscious processes. The first, personal or individual unconscious drives, could be depicted in the terms Freud selected. These drives are highly idiosyncratic and deeply personal and individual. As Freud discovered, the unconscious is formed out of infantile urges, some very animal like in nature, all of which carry the capacity to develop pathological expressions. But Jung discerned an additional side or dimension, the *collective unconscious*, by which he referred to cumulative human resourcefulness in generic terms. It is as though the long, accumulated, corporate experience of the human race had been gathered into one, then transmitted through deep-seated unconscious mental and psychological processes. The principles that are derived from this accumulated collective experience provide the basis for action and reaction. Jung drew upon the phrase "archetypal tendencies" to refer to the disposition "to react and to apprehend or experience life in a manner originating from the remote past of the human race." He defined "archetypes" as "congenital conditions of intuition." They are conditions of intuition because they influence the ways human beings receive, place, organize, and interpret their perceptions, feelings, aspirations, and experiences.

These interests placed Jung in immediate contact with the worlds of mythology and symbolism. In his view, archetypal unconsciousness is implicit in the images and symbols that belong to mythology. Mythology provides a visible disclosure of the rudiments of human consciousness, indeed, on a universal scale. The assumption is that the structure of the psyche is determined by the force and character of archetypal awareness. Because human consciousness is remarkably the same the world over, one and the same myth or mythological theme will occur in the folk literatures of peoples of very different cultural settings and from very different times. This fact brings strength to the thesis that the archetypes are present to human experience, universally considered. The mythological figures of Prometheus, Zeus, Hermes, or Proteus, to cite a few examples, are born over and over again, not only as cultural artifacts but as elements within self-consciousness.

Thus, the strong linkages that Jung discovered between religious and psychological realities have been explored, expressed, and illustrated by Joseph Campbell

(1904–1987), among others, particularly in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The intention of this book is to assist the process of individual self-discovery; that is, to facilitate individuality, or to enable one "to become aware of the hidden totality of the self." Campbell portrays the coming to self-awareness as a journey, an interior pilgrimage, which, like religious pilgrimages of all times, involves the successful meeting of obstacles, hurdles, and crisis points along the road of trials.

The process is made up of three significant stages, which Campbell enumerates under the names *departure* (separation from the world), *initiation* (a penetration to some source of true power), and life-enhancing *return*. Although depicted as a three-stage journey, the process is also described as a "coming to terms with one's own inner center."

Departure denotes "the sounding of the ego-centric system," a turning into the darkness to face the unknown, the passage into the realm of night which, by interpretation, indicates the first determined step away from *persona* toward recognition of one's true self. The second stage, *initiation*, refers to being subjected to the road of trials. Such trials, if successfully met, culminate in the experience of enlightenment. The third stages includes the *return* to the initial point of departure after the pilgrim (or hero) has experienced self-realization. The implication is that contact with eternity helps redirect one back to influence one's native surroundings. Campbell explains:

> The battlefield is symbolic of the field of life, where every creature lives on the death of another. A realization of the inevitable guilt of life may so sicken the heart that, like Hamlet or like Arjuna, one may refuse to go on with it. On the other hand, like most of the rest of us, one may invent a false, finally unjustified, image of oneself as an exceptional phenomenon in the world, not guilty as others are, but justified in one's inevitable sinning because one represents the good. Such self-righteousness leads to a misunderstanding, not only of oneself but of the nature of both man and the cosmos. The goal of the myth is to dispel the need for such life ignorance by effecting a reconciliation of the individual consciousness with the universal will. And this is effected through a realization of the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all.

The account is intriguing, not least for the reason that Campbell can interpret a large range of stories, fables, and myths in light of the chronicle. Drawing upon folklore and mythological accounts from cultures east and west, ancient and modern, Campbell makes a convincing case that it is the same fundamental account that is being rendered each time the story is portrayed. Thus "the hero with a thousand faces" is really each person, each one who senses the need to effect a passage from *persona* to realization of a truer self.

> The aim is not to *see*, but to realize that one *is*, that essence; then one is free to wander as that essence in the world. Furthermore: the world too is of that essence. The