The Mytho-Symbolic Concept in the Renaissance

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with the idea of the mythic consciousness not as an historically oriented description of a certain mode of thought, but rather as a critical concept which can serve a useful function in dealing with the symbolic element in the literature of the Renaissance. It does not consider any particular work, but rather attempts to establish a point of view, a foundation, which will allow the most fruitful approach to a certain tradition in the literature of the period. For this reason, this thesis depends for its validity more on the adequacy of its critical approach than it does on any specific points which it discusses. In particular, this treatment of the mythic consciousness is governed by certain basic assumptions concerning the nature and function of concepts in general, and it is with a discussion of these basic assumptions that I should most logically begin.

First and most important, we should make a distinction between the level of particular facts and the level of concepts. The particulars of history—the individual work, the individual figure—constitute the 'matter' of critical thought. Concepts, however, such as 'Renaissance' and 'Romanticism,' are not facts in this sense, but rather are essentially ideal types. Strictly speaking, 'facts' and 'con-
opts are best described as interdependent though distinct elements in critical thought. To the historian, for instance, the particular fact takes on its meaning, its quality of factness, only through its inclusion in a conceptual structure in which it is related to other facts in a distinct interpretation of history. At the same time, the historical concept is always formulated with a particular situation, a particular set of facts, in mind. Nevertheless, the differentiation of fact and concept is a valid one, for, in practice, the concept is essentially a-historical, that is, it does not in itself imply any particular historical reference. The concept of the 'Renaissance man,' for instance, expresses only the idea of a certain type of personality, but this conceptualized personality is not itself an historical occurrence. As a concept, it represents only one of the many forms which personality can assume under the influence of certain forces. It achieves meaning for us in the work of history only when we apply it to a particular historical figure, when we use it to characterize and to interpret the forces which produced the personality at a specific time. It is the act of interpretation which gives the concept a particular coloring and content; the concept itself, however, is expressive of no historical 'fact' which ever existed. To put it another way, we may say that the same logical distinction exists between the concept of 'Renaissance man' and the particular figure, that exists between the scientific formula F=MA and the particular instance of a falling body. The formula is used to
characterize and to interpret the particular occurrence; but the formula itself is not a part of the physical world, and does not of itself refer to any one falling body.

This basic a-historicity of concepts involves two conditions governing their use, conditions which have been implied in the above paragraph, but which should be made more explicit. The first of these we might call the 'postulate of particularity,' which states, as I have said, that concepts take on historical significance only insofar as they are applied to a specific situation. It implies as well, however, that in this act of evaluation the critic is not suggesting an explanation of the subject in a causal sense. To return to our example, the concept of 'Renaissance man' expresses a certain idealized relationship between the factors in a man's personality, but it says nothing about the origin of the forces which bring this relationship about. Consequently, when I apply the term 'Renaissance man' to DaVinci, the act involves an evaluation of the concept in terms of the particular weight and emphasis of each of the forces in his individual case. But in no sense does it involve an explanation of why this was the case, of why his personality took this particular form. Hence we may say that concepts are used to characterize, but never to explain in a causal sense.

The second condition, which I shall call the 'postulate of adequacy,' follows from this primarily functional definition of the nature of concepts. Since concepts are products of thought and not of history, there is an essential arbitrariness about them. They are formulated, as I have said,
to allow the critic to characterize and interpret relations, and they can be judged by the critic only on the grounds of their adequacy in fulfilling this purpose. One cannot say that a concept is correct or incorrect in the same sense one can say that the dating of a work is correct or incorrect. One can say only that a concept is inadequate. Suppose, for example, I re-define the concept of 'Renaissance man' in such a way that I can now characterize each of the individual figures of the Renaissance in a more subtle and 'accurate' way, and therefore draw more meaningful relationships between these individuals. I cannot say that the earlier concept was wrong—only that it was inadequate and hence less useful.

These are the conditions which have determined my approach to the concept of the mythic consciousness. In this thesis, I have attempted to draw certain analogies between the 'consciousness' implied in the symbolic structure of literature and the 'consciousness' implied in the structure of myth—analogy which I hope will show that the idea of mythic consciousness is a valuable aid to the understanding of certain works in the Renaissance. In using the term 'consciousness' in connection with a piece of literature I do not mean to suggest that I am concerned with the psychology of the author or the nature of the process of creation which lies behind the work. I mean instead the consciousness implied in the work itself, as it is inferred from the nature
and tone of the relations which comprise the structure of the work. The analogy is between the conditions which govern symbolic relations in literature and the conditions which govern symbolic relations in myth. This analogy makes a general description of the mythic consciousness a useful critical instrument both for interpreting the individual work, and for drawing the most meaningful relations between similar works. It is the validity of this analogy which I hope to demonstrate in this thesis.

We might note that, insofar as the concept of the mythic consciousness is based on this fundamental analogy, it has no inherent relevance to the Renaissance. It is a concept, and, as we mentioned in the opening paragraphs, concepts in and of themselves have no essential reference to any specific work or period. The concept of the mythic consciousness, then, can be applied with equal correctness to any symbolic structure in literature. At the same time, no one who is familiar with recent Renaissance scholarship can fail to be aware of the multitude of people who are writing symbolics for the period. The extent of scholarly concern with this subject is evidence enough of the crucial position which the symbolic element in the literature of this period occupies, and, consequently, of the particular value of such a concept as that of the mythic consciousness in dealing with the Renaissance. In addition, I have tried to suggest one reason why this symbolic element is so impor-
tant in this period, and to show specifically why the concept of the mythic consciousness has a particular applicability to the Renaissance.

In the first chapter, I have discussed the general nature of symbolic structure in literature and have suggested at least one reason why the symbolic element in the literature of the Renaissance is so frequent, a reason which, I think, gives some insight into the particular tone of the symbol in the period. My aim in this chapter has been to set up at least implicitly certain general criteria which any concept must meet if it hopes to deal adequately with this aspect of the literature of the period.

The second chapter is devoted to a description of the mythic consciousness itself, and to the relation which I see between this description and the discussion of the literary symbol in Chapter I. For the actual analysis of myth, I have relied on Cassirer's treatment of this subject in Volume II of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Cassirer is not interested in myth as theme, but as a distinctive and autonomous formation of experience. In other words, he is not concerned with the particular objects of myth, but with the structure of thought implied in these objects; and, consequently, in his discussion of myth he deals explicitly with the laws which govern this formation, laws which constitute the mythic consciousness. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, moreover, seems to me to provide the most sophisticated
framework for drawing the kind of analogy which I am attempting to draw between myth and literature. In my discussion of Cassirer, I have tried to show the relation of his discussion of myth to the overall plan of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, and to suggest why I think this treatment is appropriate to my purpose.

As I have said, it is the nature of concepts that they are arbitrary, that they be judged only by their adequacy to a particular purpose and not by their factual correctness. It follows as well that when they are presented in skeleton form, as the concept of mythic consciousness is in this thesis, they have only potentiality. They take on life only in their application to a particular, and it is only in this application that they can be proved useful in any complete sense.

I hope in this study, however, to demonstrate general grounds for assuming the adequacy of this concept in further investigation of the literature of the Renaissance.
CHAPTER I

This chapter is concerned with the conditions which govern symbolic structure in literature. In its consideration of this subject, the chapter reflects the growing status of the symbol in modern thought. For the philosopher, the symbol promises a new approach to epistemology; for the psychologist, a new insight into the processes of thought; for the critic, a new approach to the world of the poem. Susan Langer, in Philosophy in a New Key, summarizes this 'symbolic' movement when she says,

A new philosophical theme has been set forth to the coming age: an epistemological theme... The power of the symbol is its cue, as the finality of sense data was the cue of a former epoch. 

Langer's book, published in 1942, has had a strong influence on critical thought, and Philosophy in a New Key is perhaps the most widely known popular exposition of this 'new theme.' For this reason it is particularly useful for our purpose, for this work provides a simple, basic point of reference for any discussion of the symbolic concept. It is appropriate, then, to begin this chapter with a consideration of Langer's ideas on the nature and function of the symbol.

Langer characterizes the symbol by drawing a distinction between the sign function and the simplest instance of the symbolic function, denotation. She points out that in any re-
lation involving the replacement of an object by a term—sign or symbol—there are at least three necessary elements: a term which 'means,' the object 'meant,' and the subject using the term. As she conceives it, the meaning of the term is not a quality of the term itself, but a function of the total context within which the term operates. The meaning of any term, in other words, must be seen as a product of the pattern of relations existing between subject, term, object, and whatever other elements may be present in the 'meaning' situation. Thus the specific difference between sign and symbol, she says, is not in their natures, but in their functions, and can ultimately be reduced to a difference in this pattern of relations.

The sign situation, according to Langer, can best be described by noting that the relation between the sign and its object is one of simple substitution. A sign, she notes, merely indicates the existence, past, present, or future, of an event or condition. Wet streets, for instance, are a sign of rain; a red light at an intersection is a sign to stop. The former is a natural sign, the latter, an artificial one; but they both operate in the same way—they point to the physical existence of their object. The simplicity of the relation is evident, says Langer, in the way in which we use signs. Wet streets tell us to carry an umbrella; a red light tells us to stop. But they 'tell' us this in a very straightforward way: there is no conceptual activity involved, only what we might call a conditioned reflex. The sign function has only the three basic terms: subject, object, and sign. In
the sign function, the relationship between the sign and its object is such that logically they form a pair. They are, in other words, logically if not practically interchangeable, and the designation of one as sign is determined by the choice of the subject, who finds it more convenient for his purpose.

In contrast, says Langer, symbols can never be described as merely standing for their objects, for symbols are conceptual rather than substitutional. They do not simply stand for their objects, but rather serve as the vehicle for the conception of this object. The proper name James, for example, does not primarily refer to the physical person, but to the conception of a certain personality which is associated with this person. The fact that the name does have this connotation allows us to think about James when he is not actually present. Thus, while the sign function had only three terms—subject, object and sign, the symbol function has four—subject, object, symbol, concept. The relation between the sign and its object could be fully characterized by the word signify, indicating a simple one-to-one relation. The symbol, however, refers primarily to its concept, and therefore is related to its object in a much more complicated way. Langer calls the relation between symbol and concept the connotative relation, and the complicated manner in which the symbol and concept refer to the object the denotative relation. Because a symbol retains its connotation even when the object is not present, the connotative and denotative relations represent for Langer interrelated but essentially independent as-
pects of a symbol's meaning.

Langer continues to distinguish between the logical and psychological poles of meaning. The pattern of meaning in the symbol or sign function, she says, can be viewed from two main points of reference, the logical and the psychological. The psychological corresponds to the question, "What does the subject mean by the sign or symbol?" This pole emphasizes the subject term of the sign or symbol function, and sees the meaning as lying principally in the relation which this subject establishes in referring the symbol to its proper concept and object. The logical pole corresponds to the question, "What does the symbol mean?" The logical aspect takes the symbol itself as the key term and stresses the way in which the symbol expresses its concept, independent of any act of reference on the part of the subject.

This is the crux of Langer's comments on the logic of signs and symbols. As a general introduction to the nature of the symbol it is helpful, but in some ways it is a misleading preface both to Cassirer and to what I conceive to be the approach of the critics concerned with the literary symbol. First, we might note that Langer gives an inadequate and essentially oversimplified account of the sign function. While it is true that the sign operates as a signal rather than as a conceptual instrument, this does not mean that there is no conceptual activity involved in its use. The sign, whether natural or artificial, always operates in a general conceptual or interpretive framework. In other words, while the inference of
rain from wet streets, may, on the surface, require nothing more than an habitual reference, this reference does imply an interpretation of nature which is part of the larger situation within which the sign operates.

Second, and more important, Cassirer and the majority of the critics who adopt a 'symbolic' approach would, I think, disagree with Langer's discussion of the logical and psychological aspects of meaning in the symbol situation. As she describes this situation, both these poles must be taken into account in any complete description of the meaning of the symbol itself.

...the existence of a subject is often tacitly accepted, but if there is not at least one thing meant, and one mind for which it is meant, then there is not a complete meaning—only a partial meaning which might be complete in many ways.2

While admitting the ultimate psychological origin of meaning, both Cassirer and the critics who take this approach do not see these two aspects of meaning as opposed. They differ with Langer because they do not understand the symbol situation in quite the same way that she does. In Langer's description, this situation is pictured as a structure of distinct entities and functions. A more thoroughgoing symbolist approach, however, would establish a much more integral relation between the physical and conceptual elements of the symbol unit. Specifically, they see these elements as interdependent, as taking on form and meaning only through the expression of the one in the other. Thus the symbol situation is not simply a
sign situation with an independent conceptual term added, for
the symbol does not 'stand for' its concept in the same way
in which a sign 'stands for' its object. Rather, the symbol
can be said to embody in a real sense the concept. This is
possible because, while meaning is a function and not a quality
of the symbol in any metaphysical sense, the symbol is itself
a function, a product, and a determinant of the conceptual
process. The symbol, says Cassirer,

...is no mere accidental cloak of the idea, but its
necessary and essential organ. It serves not merely
to communicate a given thought content, but is an
instrument by means of which this content fully
defines itself.3

The meaning of the symbol, then, is no longer seen as the
function of the total symbol situation, but of the symbol it¬
self. It is thought of as generating this meaning because the
various physical elements of the symbol, whether they are the
syllables in a word, the words in a sentence, or the letters
and numbers in a mathematical formula, are seen as standing
in certain particular relations with one another according to
certain general principles of symbolic formation. Thus we can
say that the psychological and logical poles of meaning are
reconciled by seeing the psychological aspect of meaning as
expressing itself according to logical (in the widest sense
of the word) laws which govern the structure of the symbol.

For Cassirer, as we shall see, this reconciliation of
the two aspects of meaning opens the way for the unification
of all areas of human knowledge in a system of critical idealism.
For the critic who adopts this approach to the literary symbol, it dictates a particular methodology, for this critic will no longer look for the meaning of the work in the psychological forces which lie behind the act of creation, but seek to discover this meaning as it manifests itself in the structure of the work. Such a method is possible, however, only if the underlying rationale of the literary symbol is first established, the specific law which governs the way in which the symbolic structure of a poem generates meaning. It is this law which ultimately determines what I designate the particular consciousness of the literary symbol.

This is the problem faced by Charles Feidelson in the opening chapters of *Symbolism and American Literature*. Feidelson is perhaps the most philosophically aware of the critics who are concerned with symbolic structure in literature, and thus offers, I think, the most incisive insights into the conditions which determine this structure. In these opening chapters, he is dealing primarily with the relation between what we might call a symbolic approach to epistemology and a symbolic approach to literature. Speaking generally, such an epistemology sees in the interdependence of the conceptual and material elements in the symbol the resolution of the false subject-object dualism which, says Feidelson, has plagued philosophy since Descartes. A symbolic theory of knowledge no longer understands experience as a passive acceptance of sense impressions, but as an activity in which the
worlds of subject and object, form and matter, are synthesized in a process of symbolic formation. In such a world of symbols, subject and object enter as relative terms, and the significance of this world derives not from its relation to any external reality, but from this process of synthesis, from the act of symbolic formation. Such an approach, says Feidelson, opens the way for the study of the literary symbol because it sees language as one of the modes of this symbolic formation. The poem, then, is viewed as a pattern of language which has meaning not as objective description or as subjective expression, but as an independent formation of experience. To Feidelson, concern with the poem as symbol appears thus in a heightened awareness of the nature of language.

Critical analysis of structure and creative experimentation with language are characteristic of our time because critics and writers tend to conceive of the literary work—the real poem or story or novel—as residing primarily in language and as consisting primarily of word arrangements. The strategy of modern criticism is to give 'language' a kind of autonomy by conceiving it as a realm of meaning, and the structure explored is discovered in the language, not behind the poem in the writer's mind or in front of the poem in an external world.

In other words, the question of the formal principle of the literary symbol, the principle which determines the specific consciousness of symbolic structures in literature, becomes for Feidelson a question of grammar in the largest sense of this word: if the meaning of the poem is in a com-
plete sense generated by the arrangement of words which comprises the structure of this poem, then the question of the logical law which governs the particular relations of this structure is really a question of the general nature of syntactical arrangement. Thus Feidelson asks, "...do the theory and practice of symbolism have a real basis in the structure of language?"5

His answer is yes, and he characterizes the symbolic function of the structure of literary or, perhaps better, metaphoric language, primarily in contrast to logical language. "Logical language," according to Feidelson, "is built on the principle of discreteness."6 The logical symbol is, in truth, more conceptual sign than symbol, for the distinction between the sign or symbol itself and the concept is carefully preserved. This concept is thought of as a discrete and logically defined area of meaning which, although it is still expressed by and articulated in the symbol, exists in a sense prior to and apart from it. Consequently, while in the statement, "Socrates is a man who drinks hemlock," the meaning is from one point of view generated by the arrangement of the terms, from another, it must be seen as referring to a prior structure of logical categories which perhaps overlap or coincide, but always keep their individual logical integrity.

In contrast, says Feidelson, metaphoric language emphasizes strongly the structural element in meaning. That is, it sees the significance of the individual terms as a product of the immediate structure of the language requiring no ref-
ference to pre-existing areas of meaning. As Feidelson expresses it, "Two poetic words, brought into metaphorical relation, actually lose their distinctive character in the light of the whole metaphoric meaning." He characterizes this metaphoric relationship with the phrase, "Under the aspect of." In the line, "The iron gates of life," for example, "life" takes on meaning by virtue of its position under the aspect of "iron gates," and, in a like manner, "iron gates" takes on meaning by virtue of its position under the aspect of "life." The phrase as a whole, which expresses the idea of life under the aspect of iron gates, does not acquire this significance either through reference to prior logical concepts "iron gates" and "life," or to psychological connotations which might cluster around these concepts. Instead, this meaning is generated in the metaphoric relationship itself, and the two terms are not thought of as having meaning apart from this relationship. This metaphoric principle expresses for Feidelson the true rationale behind the linguistic structure of a poem, and he considers it as absolute a form of language as the structure of logical categories implied in rational speech.

Feidelson's choice of the term, 'under the aspect of,' is meant to suggest the organic character of metaphorical structure as opposed to the mechanical character of logical language. To see the word as referring to an independent and strictly defined concept is to limit the function of syntax to the essentially mechanical relation of entities whose real
meaning exists independently of and apart from this structure. The structure of the sentence, in other words, never affects the individual word as a unit of meaning, just as adding a column of numbers will not change the numerical value of the various figures. In metaphorical language, on the other hand, the value of the word is directly involved with the value of every other word in the sentence, and through these, the value of the whole. We might put Mrs. Langer's definition to use again here: meaning is a function, and a function is a pattern—a pattern which must be viewed in its totality if its complete significance is to be grasped. In metaphorical language, words do not have meaning outside the pattern of language, and take on full value only within the whole, which is this pattern. In the organic language of metaphor,

...the relationship of part to part implies the relationship of part to whole. The elements of the metaphor have meaning only by virtue of the whole which they create by their interaction; a metaphor presents parts that do not fully exist until the whole which they themselves produce comes into existence.8

Feidelson, in the paragraph quoted above, and to some extent in the whole of his discussion of the distinction between logical and metaphorical language, seems to imply that this distinction is one of opposing and dichotematic principles rather than distinctive poles of emphasis of the same principle. Generally, we might note that in the relation of the meaning of the part to the meaning of the whole in any lang-
Language structure there is an inevitable interdependence between the meaning of the individual term and meaning of the totality which these terms create through their interaction. Logical and metaphoric language emphasize different aspects of this interdependence. Logical language stresses the independence of the individual term, while metaphoric language stresses the relational element in meaning, the meaning which the individual term takes on by virtue of its participation in a whole. In neither case, however, is this interdependence completely eliminated. Logical language never achieves a total discreteness, while, as we shall see, metaphoric language never achieves a complete freedom from the logical meaning of the individual terms. Nevertheless, Feidelson's description of the contrast between the mechanical structure of logical language and the organic structure of metaphoric language is a valid, and for our purpose, crucial distinction between two distinct ways of approaching the function of linguistic structure.

II

Feidelson's comments on the metaphoric language of poetry owe a great deal in both expression and conception to Alfred North Whitehead. There is, I think, a valid analogy which can be drawn between Feidelson's description of the organic structure of meaning in a poem and Whitehead's description of the organic structure of being; an analogy
which seems to have been explicitly recognized by Feidelson in his choice of the term 'aspect.' This similarity seems to me to be valuable for two reasons. First, some of the wider implications of Feidelson's principle of metaphoric relation and the conditions under which it operates in larger symbolic structures becomes more clear if viewed against Whitehead's concept of the structure of reality. Second, in the light of this analogy, Whitehead's ideas concerning the historical backgrounds of his own thought provide valuable insights into the context of the symbol in the Renaissance. In both cases, a further examination of this relation would seem to provide a more complete understanding of the conditions which a concept of mythic consciousness must meet if it hopes to deal adequately with the symbolic element in Renaissance literature. A closer examination of Whitehead's thought, then, is in order. For our purposes, it is convenient to confine this examination largely to Science and the Modern World, which, while not his most profound work, unites the main elements of his system with his judgments on their relation to the intellectual milieu of the Renaissance.

In a sense, of course, any discussion of the influence of Whitehead on a symbolic approach to experience must be qualified; for, while this influence is important, it is also tangential rather than direct. His whole epistemology is, in essence, antithetical to the symbolic theory of knowledge, and, while he is as strongly opposed as the symbolists are to the dualism of Descartes, he shares with Descartes a strong
desire to place science on a firm foundation. From his point of view, the Idealistic approach of the symbolists is as crippling an example of the bifurcation of nature as is the Cartesian distinction of physical and mental substance. Both split nature into two worlds, the world of experience and the world of nature which is 'somehow' the cause of our perception. Such a division appears to Whitehead completely unjustified, and his Realism is thoroughgoing and outspoken.

Nature is that which we observe in perception through the senses. In this sense perception we are aware of something which is not thought and which is self-contained for thought. This property of being self-contained for thought lies at the basis of natural science. It means that nature can be thought of as a closed system whose mutual relations do not require the expression of the fact that they are thought about.9

Whitehead's famous closure of nature to mind is not a metaphysical divorce; it merely states that the relations and qualities which we experience as a part of nature are actually a part of nature, and do not depend for their existence on the act of perception itself, as it would be defined by either an empiricist or a Kantian. Such a strict Realism is necessary; for, if science is to be put on a thoroughly observational basis, then the totality of its systematic relations must be derivable from experience itself, and not from additions to or conceptualizations of it. Whitehead's whole system can be seen as a development and exposition of this basic position. His epistemology, philosophy of nature, and metaphysics are elaborations of doctrines implied in our direct
knowledge of the natural world.

*Science and the Modern World* occupies a unique place in the canon of Whitehead's work. It is not so much an exposition of his natural philosophy and its metaphysical implications as it is an attempt to place this thought in its proper historical context. As it is presented in this work, his system is not an attack on the Cartesian dualism and the human sensationalism themselves, but rather on the conceptions of Newtonian science, which shares the same basic presuppositions. Whitehead's criticism of Newtonian physics centers on its description of matter, a description which he defines as the concept of simple location. In his own words,

To say that a bit of matter has simple location means that, in expressing its spatio-temporal relations, it is adequate to state that it is where it is, in a definite region of space and through a definite duration of time, apart from any essential reference of the relations of that bit of matter to any other regions of space or other durations of time.10

The keystone of this concept of classical materialism is the description of matter as discrete and self-contained. If the material objects which make up the world are defined in such a way, they can have only external relations to one another. In other words, the spatial and temporal relations between these various material objects have no effect on their essential nature. Because of this basic characteristic of matter, there is no possibility of an essential relation among matter, space, and time. If we see space and time as
modes of expressing the relation between material objects, then we must recognize that, as far as the Newtonian scientist is concerned, these relations are external. Space, time, and matter are three distinct and separate entities, and, in describing the relation among them, it is enough to say that matter exists in space and in time. Of course, the relation between space and matter was thought by the Newtonian scientist to be closer than that between time and matter; for, while in the Newtonian scheme the division of space affected the volume of an object, the division of time did not. This does not, however, alter the fact that spatial and temporal designations express only a simple positional relation between objects. From this point of view, space and time are merely loci of spatial and temporal points, and for the Newtonian scientist,

The ultimate fact embracing all nature is...a distribution of material throughout all space at a durationless instant of time, and another such ultimate fact will be another distribution of the same material.11

The controlling metaphor here is mechanical; nature is conceived of as a kind of three dimensional billiard table on which movement is observed through a series of separate instants, like frames on a motion picture film. Like a billiard table, the Newtonian universe is a closed system, for natural forces are thought of as determined by mass, which, therefore, determines its own configuration.
Whitehead believes that while these concepts of scientific materialism served a useful purpose, they contain a basic incoherence which becomes more apparent with each advance in knowledge. This is due to the fact that the Newtonian formulation of the world is no longer recognized for what it is—an abstraction from the realities of experience. The Newtonian concepts of point and instant are not descriptions of our actual experience, but abstractions from it. To fail to recognize this is to commit the most serious kind of error, an error which Whitehead labels the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness. To Whitehead, this Fallacy lies behind the concept of simple location and, therefore, behind the serious epistemological difficulties which have beset modern science from its inception.

As a mathematician, or more precisely, a geometer, Whitehead was particularly sensitive to these difficulties, and his interest in the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of modern science first appeared as a desire to develop further the application of geometry to physics. This task involved an investigation of the way in which the concepts of geometry are rooted in experience, and eventually brought him face to face with the epistemological criticisms of Hume.

As Whitehead sees it, both Hume's sensationalism and his attack on the causal structure of experience are the natural outcome of the 'Misplaced Concreteness' of Newtonian physics. In the first place, the Newtonian concept of matter
ultimately prohibited any description of our experience of material objects other than the one given by Hume. This was because 18th century theories of light and sound transmission did not allow the existence of light and sound as actual qualities of objects. To see them as such would demand that the full description of an object contain a necessary reference to the act of experience, which would, in effect, violate the independence of matter. Newtonian materialism implied that mind could not participate in any necessary way in the nature of the world; it could only observe. Both the Cartesian dualism and the Empirical sensationalism show this same approach.

Perhaps more important, the idea of time as a succession of discrete instants does not allow the sensations of experience to be related to a 'real' world in an essential manner. If time is thought of as a series of independent moments, then there can be no relation between the sensations and their 'objects'; for this would imply a causal connection, and there is no empirical justification for causality in such a series of discrete instants. The same applies to the relation between the various sensations in experience itself. These experiences cannot be shown to represent the 'real' material objects of the Newtonian world. Nor does the relation between sensations provide any basis in experience for the causal relations which are the essence of Newtonian physics.

Practically, of course, science was never affected by the Humean criticisms, and there was some justification for
ignoring these criticisms while the classical scheme of materialism served as an adequate unifying framework for science. Now, however, Whitehead feels science has outgrown the Newtonian formulation altogether and threatens to be reduced to a collection of ad hoc propositions unless it pauses to reassess its own metaphysical basis.

The progress of science has now reached a turning point. The stable foundations of physics have broken up, also for the first time physiology is asserting itself as an effective body of knowledge... the old foundations of scientific thought are becoming unintelligible. Time, space, matter, figuration, structure, pattern, all require reinterpretation.12

This is the larger task which Whitehead sets for himself: to develop a unified metaphysical structure which would allow valid grounds in experience for knowledge, and would provide for a conceptual unity among the propositions of science. To do this we must redefine the concepts of matter, space, and time—all the abstractions of science.

In effect, this amounts to a rephrasing of the basic metaphor lying behind scientific thought. The mention of physiology in the last quotation can be taken as indicative of a whole series of advances in all areas of science which could not be handled in strictly mechanical terms; for neither the structure of an atom nor that of a cell can be adequately described by the idea of such an arrangement of bits of matter. The growth of atomic theory reflects a change in scientific thought from a position in which mass was the one
permanent final quantity, to one in which energy is fundamental. But, as Whitehead remarks, "...energy is merely the name for the quantitative aspect of a structure of happenings; in short, it depends on the notion of the functioning of organism." The new science, then, requires a description of the order of nature which is organic rather than mechanical, for only this type of description will provide an accurate and adequate foundation for the structure of scientific thought.

As it appears in the works leading up to and including Science and the Modern World, Whitehead's new philosophy of natural science concentrates on developing such a concept of organism without reference to the idea of matter in simple location. This involves a reappraisal of the ultimate entities of nature; a new answer to the question, "What are the basic elements of the natural world?" Where the Newtonian scientists would have answered, configurations of matter, Whitehead distinguishes two kinds of primitive entities, objects and events.

An event is, for Whitehead, everything which exists, eventuates, or occurs; thus, events are thought of not only as having temporal extension, but spatial extension as well. Since the space-time distinction is not, according to Whitehead, a valid one, he speaks of events as four-dimensional spatio-temporal volumes. The material objects of Newtonian science are, in reality, such events; but while classical materialism conceived of them as discrete and independent,
Whitehead sees them as interrelated. This, he feels, is not an unfounded assumption but a fact of our experience. We perceive nature not as a series of disconnected facts, but as a continuity; and our awareness of this continuity carries with it an implicit recognition of the totality of interrelation which exists among all events—past, present, and future.

This total interrelation is possible only if you do not think of an event as an 'object' in the Newtonian sense, but as a pattern of energy. The spatial and temporal relations of such an event will be organic. Temporally, such a pattern develops through a duration and therefore its structure at any one time mirrors both its past and its future. Spatially, its structure mirrors its contemporaries. Whitehead is thinking in terms of fields of electromagnetic, gravitational force, which form a kind of basic substratum for the Whiteheadian universe. These forces represent aspects of events, they are the causal links which tie events together. A particular event is a grasping together, or, as Whitehead describes it in Science and the Modern World, a prehension of these aspects into a unity. Such a unification gives an event a distinct individuality, but not independence; for not only is it a unification involving aspects of other events, but it is involved in other events which include its own aspects in their unities.

Each event corresponds to...two patterns; namely, the pattern of aspects of other events which it
grasps into its own unity, and the pattern of its aspects which other events severally grasp into their unities. Accordingly, a non-materialistic philosophy of nature will identify a primary organism as being the emergence of some particular pattern as grasped into the unity of a real event. Such a pattern will also include the aspects of the event in question as grasped into other events, whereby those other events receive a modification, or partial determination. There is thus an intrinsic and extrinsic reality of an event, namely, the event as its ownprehension and the event as in the prehension of other events. The concept of organism, therefore, includes the concept of the interaction of organisms.14

Briefly, this is the basic outline of Whitehead's concept of the event. A complete description of events, of their interrelation, and of our experience of them, must include, however, some discussion of the second of Whitehead's primitive entities, objects. Whitehead uses the term object to characterize the qualities or sense objects which we experience in cognition. Ontologically, these objects have a reality in nature completely apart from our experience of them. They are not, in other words, products of the mind, but actual constituents of nature. The event, as a prehension of separate aspects of other events into a unity, involves the ingression of one or more objects. 'Ingression' is used here to suggest the intimate nature of this relationship. Objects are not merely accidental accompaniments of events; they are elements of form which, in this sense, can be said to support or sustain events. The ingression of an object, in other words, determines the texture of an event or group of events.

The distinction between objects and events is not meant
by Whitehead to suggest an ontological difference between them, but only to describe two natural entities which, while they are interdependent elements in the structure of nature, are distinguishable in our perception of this structure. Events express the actual relatedness of nature which we perceive as the spatio-temporal framework underlying the continuity of our experience. At the same time, events are elements of becoming; they are manifestations of the process by which nature realizes herself as such a scheme of relatedness.

Objects, on the other hand, express what is eternal and unchanging in experience. Each event is unique, it has an individuality which sets it apart from the community of other events. It is, in this sense, unknowable, for it provides nothing which we can recognize. In contrast, objects are repeatable in time. They possess a self-identity independent of their ingression into any particular event, which allows us to recognize them, and, through their mode of ingression, to know events.

In short, then, we may say that an event has its particular form and exerts its particular influence on its contemporary events by virtue of the ingression of one or more objects into the particular event. Objects, then, are relational elements; they characterize and are responsible for the aspects or fields of influence which relate events to one another. Again, this expressive potential of objects is possible because an object is not a thing, but an influence acting throughout a field. This idea leads Whitehead to the
conclusion that objects are not only repeatable in time, but may also have ingression into two or more events simultaneously. An object, for instance, will have ingression into an event A, but the ingression will always be characterized by the same object's modification of a contemporary event B. Thus, while the particular event A can be called the focal point of the object's ingression, the object exerts a field of influence which is, theoretically, unlimited and, therefore, to some extent modifies the totality of events which make up the universe. Hence, in considering the location of an object which is 'situated' in a particular event, we must recognize that, because of its influence through its field, this object modifies and therefore has ingression into all events at the same time.

This 'field' theory of objects has perhaps its most important application in Whitehead's theory of perception. To Whitehead, the basic fact of our psychological experience is the unity of our psychological field, which we are aware of as a characteristic of all observation. This unity, he maintains, is simply the self-knowledge of our bodily event. The percipient, in other words, is thought of as an event on the same level as the other events in the universe, with the exception that it is perceiving. The percipient event involves the ingression of objects which have their focal centers in contemporary events, and our experience of these objects is in essence our awareness of the ingestions.
sense, Hume was correct when he said that sense objects have location in the mind. What he ignored was the necessary relation between the ingression of the object in the percipient event, and its ingression in the perceived event. It is this relation which makes the objects of perception truly significant of our experience. Objects which we recognize by their ingression 'here now' signify for us the vast complex of events to which we, as events, are determinately related. Our experience, then, is not a mere psychological creation. Instead, perceptual knowledge is the valid apprehension of the relatedness of nature.

The concept of organic structure is the key to Whitehead's reorganization of the basis of scientific thought. It provides not only the foundation for new descriptions of space, time, and matter, but allows as well grounds for our certain knowledge of these entities. The old theories of bifurcation have at last been laid aside, and the way seems open for a rational and consistent articulation of scientific principles.

III

We have already noted the important differences between a symbolic epistemology and Whitehead's own realism, but perhaps at this point it would be helpful to make them more explicit. In particular, we might note that Whitehead's
realistic approach prevents him from ever seeing the symbol as truly conceptual. In any symbolic approach to epistemology the processes of consciousness by which experience is conceptualized and given form are always paramount. It is these processes which determine the structure of nature as we experience it. For Whitehead, this structure is given in experience apart from any action of the consciousness, and the result is that mind grows out of nature rather than, in the case of a symbolic approach, nature out of mind. Thus a symbol is to Whitehead simply anything which "elicits consciousness, beliefs, emotions, and usages." When he says objects 'symbolize' events in our experience, he means 'stand for' in the sense of signify, and, in fact, his whole description of symbolic reference in experience as it appears in Symbolism, its Meaning and Effect, resembles closely Langer's description of the sign-function in Philosophy in a New Key. We might say then, with more correctness, that the world of perceptual experience for Whitehead is a world of significance rather than a world of symbols.

Whitehead's refusal to make the step from fact to concept has, for us, its most important effects on his approach to language. For Whitehead, language is always essentially descriptive, always on the outside of reality. It is never, as it is for Cassirer, a mode for the formation of reality. Thus despite the fact that in Whitehead's system the old dualism between subject and object is rejected, and, hence, as
Feidelson points out, the dualism between description and expression loses its force, language is never seen as capable of forming its own reality.

Despite these differences, I think we can see that the analogy suggested at the beginning of Section II between Feidelson's description of the organic structure of meaning and Whitehead's description of the organic structure of reality is still essentially valid. In both cases, neither being nor meaning is seen as an independent quality of the individual element, but as a function of its relation to the totality of other terms in the structure. Taken together, Feidelson's description of metaphoric relation and Whitehead's model of an organic universe suggest certain characteristics of the truly symbolic poem, as well as certain problems which face the critic in dealing with it. Both these characteristics and these problems arise from a tension which is implied in the metaphoric theory of language, a tension between the normal meaning of the term as conceptual sign, and the metaphoric meaning of the word as symbol within the context of the poem. This tension appears quite clearly in Feidelson's remark quoted previously that words "lose" their individual meaning when brought into metaphoric relationship. "Poetic Form," as he remarks later, "presupposes the rational world at every point."16 It accepts the logical meaning of language as a kind of raw material which it molds into new forms of meaning. Thus while the total meaning of a metaphor can be
seen as playing off the individual logical meanings of the particular terms, these logical meanings are, from one point of view, unnecessary to the meaning of the terms as defined by the metaphoric relationship. In a sense, then, the creation of the poem involves the destruction of language, for the formation of language as symbol implies the negation of language as sign.

From one point of view, this destruction of language is to a degree a characteristic of all poetry; from another, the difference in degree amounts to a difference in kind. As the poem approaches its full realization as symbol, it becomes truly an epistemological form, creating its own structure of meaning. The totality of inter-reference in such a poem resembles the totality of inter-reference among the events in Whitehead's universe; and, like each event, each term is a focal point from which the whole may be viewed in a particular light, from a particular point of view.

To recognize that the poem implies its own world, a world whose meaning is independent of the author who created it and the forms of logical language which provided the material, is to recognize the need for a specific critical approach. Attempts to understand the poem through studies of the author or the intellectual background of the age are helpful, but meet with only a conditional success. Once it is recognized that the meaning of a work is a function of the structure of the work itself, then the most promising approach seems to be through the kind of critical concept outlined in the intro-
duction. For such a concept provides a general outline or paradigm of the kind and tone of relations which govern this structure. In attempting, as we are doing here, to formulate this kind of concept, Feidelson's discussion of metaphoric relation provides the single most important general criterion of adequacy. This principle, whose nature will be treated in greater detail in the succeeding chapter, constitutes the central logical postulate which determines the nature of the symbolic structure of a work. An adequate concept, then, must be founded on a basic similarity in this key principle.

In addition, as I noted earlier, Whitehead's discussion of the historical backgrounds of classical materialism provides a valuable insight into what I call the tone of the symbolic element in Renaissance literature. As we have seen, Whitehead's attack on the Newtonian formulation of classical materialism involves a return to the primitive elements in our experience. In Science and the Modern World this appeal is given an historical aspect. In his study of the pre-Newtonian Renaissance, he finds in the figure of Bacon an epistemological tradition which differs radically from the scientific materialism which later established itself, an older epistemological tradition which in a certain sense prefigures Whitehead's own system. He quotes the following passage from Section IX of Bacon's Natural History as his prime example:

"It is certain that all bodies whatsoever, though they have no sense, yet they have perceptions; for when one body is applied to another, there is a kind of election to embrace that which is agreeable,
and to exclude or expell that which is ingrate; and whether the body be alterant or altered, evermore a perception proceedeth operation; for else all bodies would be like one to another. And sometime this perception, in some kind of bodies, is far more subtil than sense; so that sense is but a dull thing in comparison with it: we see a weather-glass will find the least difference of the weather heat or cold, when we find it not. And this perception is sometime at a distance, as well upon touch; as when the lodestone draweth iron; or flame naphtha of Babylon...a great distance off...

Here Bacon's distinction between perception or taking account of on the one hand, and sense or cognitive experience on the other, reflects Whitehead's distinction between the 'experience' of prehension which is a characteristic of every event by virtue of the fact that it exists 'under the aspect' of its contemporaries, and presentational immediacy, which is limited to certain higher organisms. Bacon's awareness of the prehensive relations between natural entities seems to indicate an organic mode of thought as a real force in the Renaissance. In the light of our analogy between an organic structure of being and an organic structure of meaning, I think an awareness of this earlier tradition can go a long way toward explaining the density of the symbolic element in Renaissance poetry. In discussing what he terms the premises of modern literature, Feidelson remarks that,

Modern writing which, from one point of view is a return to the premise of all literature, is notably a conscious return because it reconsiders the premises of dualism.

It is precisely the element of consciousness which we
might expect to be lacking in the Renaissance. This suggests that concepts formulated in modern terms are not entirely suitable for use in dealing with this period, and, therefore, the concept of the mythic consciousness should reflect this distinctive element in the premise of Renaissance literature.

Taken together, Feidelson's description of metaphoric relation and this discussion of the unconsciousness of assumptions which characterizes the premise of Renaissance symbolism constitute the most important general criteria for the adequacy of the concept of the mythic consciousness. In the succeeding chapter, I shall consider first the place of Cassirer's work in mythography in the general scheme of The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms and the relation which Cassirer saw between this work and earlier attempts to describe myth. And second, I shall deal with the relation between the structure of the symbolic consciousness in literature as this structure is characterized by Feidelson's description of the principle of metaphorical relation and Cassirer's description of the structure of the mythic consciousness.
CHAPTER II

Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, the study of mythology was, almost literally, the study of the gods. Cassirer points out that when Schelling wrote his *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1856), his primary source of material was Georg Creuzer's *Symbolik und Mythologie der Alten Volker* (1810-23), which was concerned chiefly with the theory and history of mythological deities. In the period since Schelling, however, an increased interest in the study of mythology broadened the scope of this field. Studies by psychologists, anthropologists, philosophers, ethnologists, and philologists defined the body of material which constitutes myth to the general satisfaction of all, and arguments about what should or should not be included under this heading resolved themselves to quibbles on relatively minor points. On the other hand, the very abundance and diversity of this material served to emphasize the problem of unity, the problem of what constitutes the essence of myth. It is with this question, says Cassirer, that a truly philosophical theory of myth should begin.

Cassirer's description of the mythic consciousness is
such an attempt to define the underlying unity of myth. He approached the problem as a critical idealist in the Kantian tradition, and, as was his usual procedure, he shaped his own position in reference to the principle alternative theories of mythic unity. It is not necessary for us to consider here Cassirer's comments in detail, but some idea of their general nature and direction is necessary if we are to form a clear idea of his own distinctive approach to this subject. In surveying these theories, Cassirer divides them into two schools, the empirical-psychological and the metaphysical. Cassirer, as we shall see, had fundamental disagreements with both, yet, at the same time, both contributed to his own ideas on the nature of the mythic world. It is valuable, therefore, to characterize briefly these two approaches to myth and give a short summary of Cassirer's criticisms of them.

The empirical-psychological school, says Cassirer, is concerned primarily with the matter of myth, with the vast collection of primary material which, as we noted, became available at the turn of the last century. In its most naive form, this approach attempts to discover the unity underlying this material by studying the basic objects of myth. The scholars who adopted this approach assumed that the primitive or mythic mind is essentially arbitrary in its workings and impenetrable to the scientific method. Thus the only way in which a scientific approach to the products of this mind was possible was by referring them to some common natural occurrence
of being which had inspired their creation. It is from such investigations that the storm and the astral theories developed. The adherents of each of these explanations attempted to show that their particular object lay behind the whole body of mythology. As Cassirer points out, however, there could never be any truly scientific justification for any of these theories. They were based on tortuous readings rather than objective data and offered, he concludes, no real hope of unity.

More worthy of the term empirical-psychological are those theorists who accepted the science of empirical anthropology but attempted to explain these data through reference to a concept of the nature of primitive psychology. Among this group Cassirer would list Frazer, Tylor, and Levy-Bruhl. But the most well-known and convenient example is provided by the work of Sigmund Freud. Cassirer discusses Freud’s theories of myth and the primitive psyche at some length in the opening chapters of the *Myth of the State*. At one time, says Cassirer, Freud’s treatment of myth seemed to offer possibilities for a unified approach to mythology. Freud’s concept of myth was based on certain analogies he noticed between the psychic life of primitives and the psychic life of neurotics. For Freud, then, myth was essentially pathological, but psychopathology by Freud’s time was far enough advanced so that it treated neurosis no longer as an independent state, but as a variation of the rules and processes which governed normal life. It seemed, then, that myth could be treated in
the same manner, no longer as an isolated fact but as a part of a scientific study of well-known and scientifically justified phenomena; thus myth was no longer wrapped in mystery, but was opened to the light of a truly objective investigation. Most of Freud's empirical data, Cassirer notes, were derived from the study of the totemistic system of the primitives. In studying this system, Freud noted that the two seemingly universal commands of totemism— not to kill the same totem animal and not to use a woman belonging to the same totem—corresponded to the two crimes of Oedipus, who slew his father and married his mother, and to the two primal wishes of the infant, whose repression and reawakening form the nucleus of all neuroses. Thus the Father-complex and the Oedipus-complex became the central and key concepts in the explanation of myth, and promised to bring the study of myth into a general study of the nature of man.

As Cassirer remarks at the close of the chapter on Freud, however, the Freudian approach was no more satisfactory than the seemingly less sophisticated object theories. Although Freud has turned the problem of unity inward, to the realm of man's consciousness, he was still intent on classifying the objects of mythology, and, like the more simply 'objective' theorists, he believes that the only way to understand the meaning of the various mythic representations is to understand their source, to understand the various objects which they are meant to represent. Freud, says Cassirer, has merely shifted the scene from the world of nature to the world of the mind, and, in the end, he offers no more real hope of establishing
an adequate approach to myth.

Cassirer also notes another group of theories which he terms metaphysical or idealistic. These theories give much less attention to the objects of mythology, rather approaching myth as an independent configuration of man's consciousness, attempting to get inside the actual process behind myth—an attempt which is usually conditioned by certain metaphysical presuppositions. Cassirer believes that one such theory, developed by Schelling, was one of the first to ask the right questions about myth, and Cassirer's discussion of Schelling occupies a prominent place in the introduction to *Mythical Thought*, Volume II of the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. Schelling, says Cassirer, does not approach myth as the empirical psychological school does, as a simple collection of material. Instead, Schelling considers the various objects of mythology which comprise this body of empirical data as manifestations of an independent mode of thought which has its foundations in the very nature of the consciousness itself. The empirical data of mythology, says Schelling, can only be understood from within, by comprehending the principle which governs their formation by the consciousness. Thus he rejects any allegorical interpretation of myth, replacing it with a tautological one; that is, he rejects any theory which attempts to explain myth by transforming it into something which it is not, whether this something is psychology or nature. Because such an explanation, says Schelling, denies the distinctive reality which myth has for the human consciousness.
The only way to understand this distinctive reality is to approach myth positively. For Schelling, true philosophical speculation aims not at dismembering the life of the spirit, but at understanding it synthetically.

Although Cassirer, as we shall see, has definite criticisms of Schelling, he does agree with the initial approach because it has the virtue of seeing myth as a whole. Schelling, says Cassirer, understands that no particular element in myth can be stressed to the exclusion of any other, but that each must be given its proper place within the whole. To recognize this, says Cassirer, is to recognize that myth is not an arbitrary collection of fantasies, but has its own nature, its own necessity, in short, its own reality. Although for Schelling mythology had no objective existence apart from consciousness, Cassirer notes that

Even though the mythological process consists solely in determinations of consciousness—that is, in ideas, this process, this succession of representations cannot have been merely represented as such but must really have occurred in consciousness.3

Mythology here is not seen as something which was invented, but as arising out of a necessary process in the consciousness. Although, strictly speaking, this process has no existence apart from the consciousness, Schelling sees it as a determinant rather than a product of this consciousness. Schelling considered it his achievement to have replaced inventors, poets, and individuals as the creators of myth with the human
consciousness itself. In this sense, says Cassirer, we can say that myth for Schelling was discovered rather than invented.

No one who understands what its mythology means to a people, what inner power it possesses over that people and what reality is manifested therein, will say that mythology, any more than language, was invented by individuals...mythology is not merely a successive series of mythological representations. The successive polytheism which is its empirical content (and here we must remember that Schelling was writing at a time when mythology was almost entirely thought to be a history of gods) can be explained only if we assume that the human consciousness actually lingered successively on every moment of it. "The Gods which followed one another really seized successively upon the human consciousness. Mythology as a history of the gods could only be produced in life; it had to be experienced and lived." 4

But if myth is thus seen to be a distinctive form of life, it loses all overtones of a one-sided subjectivity. Life, for Schelling, was on the borderline between subjectivity and objectivity. The successive development of the gods in the consciousness represents a corresponding objective process, a movement in the absolute. Myth was thought to be a theogonic process, one through which God Himself 'becomes' by creating Himself in a series of stages. From an original undifferentiated feeling of natural unity, through the polytheistic stage, and on to the monotheistic stage, mythological thought reflects this process of becoming. But for Schelling, the individual moment, the individual stages of this process have reality and meaning only as part of the whole. Cassirer quotes Schelling himself at this point.

It is not with things that man has to do in the mythological process, it is powers rising in the
consciousness itself that move him. The theogonic process by which mythology rises is a subjective one insofar as it takes place in consciousness and manifests by the production of representations; but the causes and therefore the objects of these representations are truly and essentially theogonic powers, those powers by virtue of which the consciousness originally postulates god.

This is, for our purpose, an interesting and valuable passage, for it indicates both Cassirer's considerable debt to Schelling and the basis of his criticism. Cassirer was impressed by Schelling's attempt to describe myth as a true form of the human consciousness with its own necessity and therefore, for Cassirer, its own objectivity. But Cassirer, of course, rejects Schelling's metaphysical overtones, because, for him, they result in errors analogous to those made by the empirical-psychological school. Cassirer, in his descriptions of the particular systems of Schelling and Freud, has outlined two general approaches to myth, one empirical and realistic, the other rationalistic and idealistic. Ultimately, he finds them both unsatisfactory for essentially the same reason; that is, both approaches are primarily reductionistic. Both seek to explain the body of mythic representations, to give them meaning by referring that body to something other than what it immediately is. In the psychological approach, myth is deduced from certain supposedly universal functions of association and reproduction of ideas; on the other hand, the metaphysical approach just as surely reduces myth to a phase of the absolute. The premise behind both these expla-
lations is that you can only understand myth by understanding its causes and, hence, its objects. In a passage which brings to mind the traditional schematizing of Kant as midway between traditional rationalism and traditional empiricism Cassirer asks:

And yet, can we not conceive of a third approach to the mythological 'form' which neither seeks to explain the mythical world through the essence of the absolute nor merely reduces it to a play of psychological-empirical forces? If this approach agrees with both Schelling and his psychologists in seeking the subjectum agens of mythology solely in the human consciousness, does this compel us to accept either the empirical-psychological or the metaphysical concept of the consciousness? Or is there not a critical analysis of the consciousness distinct from these two views?

The answer to the last question is yes. In their concern with causes and origins, says Cassirer, both the empirical and metaphysical theories presuppose the unity of the consciousness as a self-evident datum. Modern critical epistemology, however, is coming more and more clearly to recognize that the assumptions of both psychology and metaphysics do not concern it. A critical view of mythology begins, like the empirical-psychological theories, from the known data concerning myth, but it does not seek after either historical, psychological, or metaphysical origins. The assumption of a unity of essence, says Cassirer, implies a unity of structural form. It is with this structural form that a truly critical approach to myth must be concerned. Consequently, philosophy must consider the various objects of myth from a formal point of view;
that is, it must seek the unity of function which is manifested in each particular mythic object. If, in this study, there is found to be an essentially stable inner form which is observable, then we should not infer the substantial unity of the human spirit from this, but rather should take this constant inner form to mean that if there is to be a unity at all, it is expressed by this unity of form.

In a critical approach we cannot conclude the unity of the function from a pre-existing or presupposed unity of the psychological or metaphysical substrate; we must start from the function as such. If, despite the differences in particular factors, we find in the function a relatively constant inner form, we shall not, from this form go back to infer the substantial unity of the human spirit; on the contrary, the constance of this inner form seems to constitute this unity. Unity, in other words, appears not as the foundation but as another expression of this same determination of form, which it must be possible to apprehend as purely immanent, in its immanent significance, without inquiring into its foundations, whether transcendental or empirical.

Thus, in seeking the form of the mythic consciousness, a philosophic theory of myth should, in the various representations of that consciousness, attempt to find the constant structure, the common form rather than the common origin or object; and thus isolate the spiritual principle by which all the diverse manifestations of myth seem to be governed.

II

Cassirer's formal approach to myth and its implications
for this study become more clear if we have some idea of the place which his description of the mythic consciousness occupies within the scheme of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Cassirer approaches not only myth, but all the cultural forms of art, religion, science, language, not as a social scientist but rather as a neo-Kantian idealist who is attempting to define a position from which all of these forms can be systematically understood. His early works had dealt with the structure of scientific and mathematical thought; when he attempted to apply his findings in this field to the cultural sciences, however, he found that traditional epistemology did not provide a sound methodological basis for his investigations. Like Whitehead, Cassirer feels that there is a modern crisis in knowledge; a crisis not in any particular cultural form, but in man's ability to relate all of these forms to a central concept of the nature of man. It is a crisis in anthropology, in "man's knowledge of himself." Each of the various disciplines—science, theology, political science, sociology, biology—describe man within their own particular systems, without reference to any central unifying definition; and, as a result, they find themselves in conflict over their approaches and conclusions with increasing frequency. Thus, says Cassirer,

...our modern theory of man lost its intellectual center. We acquired instead a complete anarchy of thought. Even in the former times to be sure there was a great discrepancy of opinions and theories relating to this problem. But there re-
mained at least a general orientation, a frame of reference, to which all differences might be referred. Metaphysics, theology, mathematics and biology successively assumed the guidance for thought on the problem of man and determined the line of investigation. The real crisis of this problem manifested itself when such a central power capable of directing all individual efforts ceased to exist.

Is there a definition of man, asks Cassirer, which, in the face of this diversity will allow for the individuality and integrity of each cultural form while at the same time providing for their basic unity as expressions of the human spirit? The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms is an attempt to answer this question and, in doing so, to provide a general orientation and frame of reference to which all areas of cultural investigations can be related.

Cassirer's development of such a definition is governed by the same methodological principle which governed his attempt to describe the unity of myth; that is, he is searching for a unity of function, not of substance. The essential characteristic of man for Cassirer is not found in his nature, in his being, but in the distinctive form which he gives to his activity, and it is only within the context of this activity, of the products of his unique function, that man can be properly understood. Cassirer attempts, in other words, a definition of man in terms of human culture. This is the 'secret meaning' which he finds in Plato's Republic. Plato was the first to realize, he says, that an adequate definition of man is possible only after philosophy had developed a satisfactory
concept of the state. Cassirer accepts this premise, but broadens the perspective to include the whole area of human culture. It is only by surveying the whole range of human activity and examining the unique form of each mode that philosophy can arrive at an adequate evaluation of man. In An Essay on Man, Cassirer characterizes his position clearly when he remarks:

We cannot define man by any inherent principle which constitutes his metaphysical essence—nor can we define him by any inborn faculty or instinct that may be ascertained by empirical observation. Man's outstanding characteristic, his distinguishing mark, is not his metaphysical or physical nature, but his work. It is his work, it is the system of human activities, which defines and determines the circle of humanity. Language, myth, art, religion, science, history are the constituents, the various sectors of this circle. A 'philosophy of man' would therefore be a philosophy which would give us an insight into the fundamental structure of each of these human activities, and which at the same time would enable us to understand them as an organic whole.

Cassirer is guided in his development of such a broad theory of man and culture by the methodological insight provided by the approach outlined in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. The Kantian 'revolution in method' resulted in a fundamental change in the relationship between cognition and its object. Instead of beginning with the object as the known and given, attention was directed to the laws of cognition which govern our experience of the object. Instead of grounding knowledge on the definition of being, epistemology turned to the study of the consciousness and the laws of judgment which
made knowledge of this being possible. It is only by discovering the basic form of judgment which alone is accessible in a primary sense, that truly objective knowledge is possible.

Such an approach discredits a simple copy-theory of knowledge, because the Kantian sees experience not as a passive acceptance of sense impressions, but as an act of judgment by which these sense particulars are formulated according to certain universal laws which govern experience, and articulated into a general structure of relations. From such a point of view it is no longer possible to speak of the object of experience as existing apart from the act of experience which gives it form. As an element of knowledge, it has meaning only within the structure of laws according to which it is conceptualized and described.

According to Cassirer, this insight implies a highly important consequence for the idealist position. If it is true that the object of knowledge is not 'given,' but can be described and defined only through a particular logical and conceptual structure, then philosophy will have to come face to face with the variety of such structures and with the diversity of 'worlds of objects' which they define. In the Critique of Pure Reason, says Cassirer, Kant had dealt only with the form of scientific judgments of cognition which finds its most perfect expression in the laws of mathematical physics. The laws of science, however, are only one of the
ways in which the world of experience takes on form. Myth, art, and language each share with science the character of every authentic function of the human spirit; that is,

...it does not merely copy but rather is an original, formative power. It does not express passively the mere fact that something is present, but contains an independent energy of the human spirit through which the simple presence of the phenomenon assumes a definite 'meaning,' a particular ideational content. This is as true of art as it is cognition; it is as true of myth as of religion. All live in particular image worlds which do not reflect the empirically given, but which rather produce it in accordace with their own independent principle. 10

Each of the modes of myth, science, and art shapes its own world according to its own principles. These worlds have, for Cassirer, "equal rank as products of the human spirit"; they are, in other words, autonomous and equal formations of reality. The development of Kant's thought through the three critiques, says Cassirer, shows that Kant himself gradually realized the implications of the methodological revolution of the first critique. The Critique of Practical Reason and the Critique of Judgment are attempts to extend this principle in analysis of the areas of ethical judgment and natural and aesthetic forms respectively. They attempt, in other words, to deal with other modes in which the human consciousness gives form to reality. The full extent of these modes, of the various worlds of the human spirit, can be grasped, says Cassirer, only by continuing this process of analysis, only by taking the central Kantian concept of
the formative power of the consciousness and applying it to all areas of man's activity. Thus, notes Cassirer, the methodology of the first critique points the way toward the unification of all forms of the human spirit in a critical-idealistic system, and the *Critique of Pure Reason* became the critique of culture.

For Cassirer, the concept of the symbol is the key to the extension of this basic Kantian insight into a comprehensive system which would consider both the diversity of the various forms of cultural activity as well as their unity in the human spirit. In the *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Cassirer uses the term 'symbolic' in several different contexts, and perhaps it would be helpful if, at this point, we made some attempt to distinguish them. The most convenient notation of these several meanings was given by Carl Hamburg in *Symbol and Reality*, his study of Cassirer. According to Hamburg, Cassirer uses 'symbolic' in three senses:

1) It covers what is often referred to by Cassirer as the 'symbolic concept,' the 'symbolic function,' or simply the 'symbolic.'

2) It denotes the variety of cultural forms which—as myth, religion, language, and science—exemplify the realms of application for the symbolic concept.

3) It is applied to space, time, cause, number, etc., all of which—as the most pervasive 'symbolic' relations—are said to constitute such domains of 'objectivity' as are listed under (2).**

Although these uses are obviously interrelated, the meaning of any particular use of the term is usually clear from
the context. Nevertheless, to avoid confusion, I shall refer to its usage as 'symbolic function' as 'symbolic formation'; its usage as 'cultural forms' as 'modes' (of symbolic formation); and its use in the third sense as indicative of pervasive symbolic relations as 'intuitive forms.' The nature and relation between these three meanings will, I hope, become more clear in the following pages.

We have already considered in the first chapter a concept of the symbol which is essentially Cassirer's, but it would be well to make his views more explicit. For Cassirer, the essence of the symbol is its conceptual nature, the fact that a sensuous particular somehow is made to express a general concept. From a simple material point of view, the symbol seems to be nothing but a sensuous particular; "but then," says Cassirer, "a miracle occurs." The particular becomes the vehicle for a general spiritual meaning, a function made possible by the fact that the symbol itself is not seen as standing alone, but as part of a whole. The meaning of the symbol is determined by the network of relations within which it stands. Thus,

Through the manner in which it is contemplated, this simple, sensory material takes on new and varied life... What it immediately is, is thrust into the background by what it accomplishes by its mediation, by what it 'means.' The concrete, particular elements in a work of art also disclose this basic relation. No work of art can be understood as the simple sum of these elements, for in it a definite law, a specific principle of aesthetic organization is at work. The synthesis by which the consciousness combines a series of tones into
a melody, would seem to be totally different from the synthesis by which a number of syllables is articulated into the unity of a sentence. But they have one thing in common, that in both cases the sensory particulars do not stand by themselves; they are articulated into a conscious whole, from which they take on their qualitative meaning.12

The particular sensory symbol, then, is always seen as part of a larger structure, and it is by virtue of its relation to the other elements of this structure that it takes on its general or conceptual meaning. But, as we noted in the first chapter, the symbol does not merely stand for the concept. While for Cassirer, as for any idealist, meaning has ultimately a psychological origin, he sees the symbol as a unit of meaning which expresses its concept in the nature and form of its structure. This interdependence of material and conceptual factors is the first law of symbolic formation. For Cassirer, the processes of conceptualization and symbolization are synonymous.

The logic of things, i.e., of the material concepts and relations on which the structure of a science rests, cannot be separated from the logic of signs. For the sign is no mere accidental cloak of the idea, but it is an instrument by means of which this content fully defines itself. The conceptual definition of a content goes hand in hand with its stabilization in some characteristic sign.13

The unity of the various modes is found in this common symbolic medium. Each mode represents a distinct conceptualization of experience, but this conceptualization is incomplete apart from its symbolization, its expression in a system of sensuous symbols.
This mutual relation is not limited to science but runs through all the other fundamental forms of cultural activity. None can develop its appropriate and peculiar type of comprehension and configuration without, as it were, creating a definite substratum for itself. This substratum is so essential that it sometimes seems to constitute the entire 'meaning' of these forms. Language seems fully definable as a system of phonetic symbols—the worlds of myth and art seem to consist entirely in the particular tangible forms which they set before us. Here we have, in fact, an all-embracing medium in which the most diverse forms meet.14

The recognition of this interdependence of the conceptual and material elements in the symbolic relation represents, for Cassirer, an insight not only into the nature of the symbolic concept itself, but into the essential function of the human consciousness as well, and results in his most essential departure from the Kantian position. Traditionally, says Cassirer, Idealism has attempted to juxtapose to the mundus sensibilis another world, the mundus intelligibilis, and draw the boundary between the two. The usual way of doing this was to say that the intelligible world is governed by the principle of receptivity. Even Kant, says Cassirer, maintained with full force the antithesis between the material and the formal elements of consciousness. But for Cassirer, an awareness of the nature of the symbolic function shows us that such an opposition between subject and object as two distinct and clearly defined worlds no longer holds. He objects to this rigid division between the material and formal elements in experience because:
...the antithesis expressed in it is a product of abstraction; the particular factors of knowledge are logically evaluated, whereas the unity of matter and form of consciousness, of the 'particular' and the 'universal,' of sensory data and pure principles of order, constitutes precisely that originally certain and originally known phenomenon which every analysis of consciousness must take as its point of departure.15

For Cassirer, the spirit exists only insofar as it goes beyond itself in an act of synthesis. But this act of symbolic formation is not merely a matter of arranging and regulating essentially independent sense impressions. It is a real synthesis and a real formation. As we have seen, the material and formal elements in the symbolic relationship are interdependent. The particular takes on form only when it is articulated into a general system of relations; but, at the same time, this general system has meaning only as it is expressed in the particular. This interdependence of the general and the particular in the symbolic relationship opens the way to a realization of the true 'reciprocacy and correlation' between sense and spirit.

In the light of this, the nature of the modes becomes more clear. They are not simply regulative structures through which we arrange experience, but true symbolic functions through which a particular form is given to reality. This process of formation as it is manifested in each mode is characterized, says Cassirer, by the same basic kinds of relations (i.e., those qualities listed above under (2) in Hamburg's survey of Cassirer's use of the term 'symbolic').
Specifically, by quality Cassirer means the particular types of combinations by which the individual element is related to the whole. But these qualities, he notes, never occur independently; that is, they always occur within the context of the totality of meaning which is the particular mode. From this mode, they take on a particular tonality. For example, says Cassirer, we interpret certain spatial forms, certain patterns of lines, as aesthetic figures, and certain other spatial forms as geometric figures. In the one case, space is conceived as a structure of independent relations, in the other, as a whole whose factors are interlocked in a perceptual and emotional unity. The basic quality or relation is the same, but in the former instance it appears under the modality of the logical-geometric concept and in the latter under the modality of the artistic imagination. Thus Cassirer says,

...in order to characterize a given form of relation in its concrete application and concrete meaning, we must not only state its qualitative attributes as such, but also define the system in which it stands. If we designate the various kinds of relation—such as the relation of space, time, causality, etc.—as $R_1$, $R_2$, $R_3$, we must assign each one a special index of modality, $u_1$, $u_2$, $u_3$, denoting the context of function and meaning in which it is to be taken. For each of these contexts, language as well as scientific cognition, art as well as myth, possesses its own constitutive principle which sets its stamp as it were, on all the particular forms within it. 16

The difference between the modes, then, is not in the kinds of relations which they draw but in the particular
tone which these relations take on within the context of the mode. In considering the particular structural form of the mythic consciousness, therefore, Cassirer will attempt to establish this tone, to establish the "constitutive principle" which governs the logical structure of myth. It is this tone which provides the basis for our analogy between symbolic structure in literature and the symbolic structure of the mythic world. In the following section, I shall consider Cassirer's treatment of the mythic consciousness in detail; and, using the framework provided by his outline of a general theory of symbolic forms, develop this analogy between the logic of the literary symbol as it is expressed in the metaphoric principle treated in Chapter I, and the logic of the mythic consciousness as it determines the basic principle of mythic logic, the relation of part to whole.

III

Cassirer characterizes the particular modality of myth by contrasting the mythic world-view with the scientific; a contrast which appears most clearly, says Cassirer, in the different way in which these two modes handle the initial contact with the object. It is the principal insight of any critical-idealistic system, as we have seen, that the object is not 'given' in experience, but that it takes on form and is known through its formulation by the conscious-
ness. The object, says Cassirer, "is no final form that imprints itself on the consciousness, but is the product of a formative operation effected by the basic instrumental-ity of the consciousness." 17

For Cassirer, this process of symbolic formation reaches its highest degree of exactitude, clarity, and self-consciousness in the development of science. Science has for its material, its substance, the basic phenomena of experience—colors, tastes, smells, perceptions of pressure and contact. The scientist approaches this world of sense from a particular, critical point of view. He looks for the constant relations between the impressions and seeks to formulate them as a set of universally valid laws which hold for all experience. In this critical process, the individual impression is not taken for granted, it is not simply accepted as objective: scientific objectivity involves the conforming of the individual impression to these universal laws. To be objective within the context of science means to be predictable, and therefore the individual impression is always evaluated in terms of the totality of experience. Thus, for science:

To know a content means to make it an object by raising it out of the mere status of given-ness and granting it a certain logical consistency and necessity. Thus we do not know 'objects' (in science) as if they were already independently determined and given as objects—but we know objectively, by producing certain limitations and by fixing certain permanent elements and connections within the uniform flow of experience.18

In the mythic consciousness, scientific objectivity, the logical evaluation of the particular in terms of the
universal, gives way to mythic intensity. For myth, the reality of an object is determined by its presence, by the intensity with which it fills the moment of consciousness. For Cassirer, this provides the primary insight into the nature of myth. Myth, he says, is not a mass of ideas, a kind of primitive science; the mythic consciousness does not contemplate the world and invent explanations for natural occurrences. It does not experience the abstract object of science, but instead intuits the force with which this object acts on the emotion through its mere presence in the consciousness. It is the simple fact of this presence which, for myth, establishes the 'reality' of a content.

It is this concept of mythic intensity which explains, says Cassirer, the singular concreteness of the world of myth. If to be real means simply to be effective, that is, to act on the consciousness, then while there can be gradations within the sphere of reality, there can be no gradations of reality. In the mythic consciousness,

Instead of the dialectical movement of thought, in which every given particular is linked with other particulars in a series and subordinated to a general law and process, we have here (in myth) a mere subjection to the impression itself and its momentary 'presence.' Consciousness is bound by its mere faculty; it possesses neither the impulsion nor the means to correct or to criticize what is given here and now, to limit its objectivity by measuring it against something not given, something past or future. And if this mediate criterion is absent, all 'truth' and reality dissolve into the mere presence of the content. All phenomena are situated on a single plane.19
It is this single plane of reality which characterizes myth and determines the tone of the logical structure of the mythic world, for myth recognizes no distinction between the real and the ideal, between the ground of experience and what is founded upon it. Thus it lacks any dividing line between representation and perception, image and thing. The scientific mentality, says Cassirer, is marked by this distinction between the real and the ideal; that is, science recognizes the ideal 'symbolic' functions of the mind and its products for what they are and does not confuse them with or claim them to be the whole of reality. If myth, however, is examined in terms of what it knows itself to be, this distinction between the world of immediate reality and the world of mediate signification is wholly foreign to it. Where science sees significance, myth sees real identity. For myth, the image does not represent the thing, it is the thing—it has the same actuality, it replaces the thing's actual presence. Since the image has the same power over the subject's emotions as the object, the mythic consciousness sees no distinction between the reality of the image and the reality of the object. This is to say, "...mythic thinking lacks the category of the ideal, and in order to apprehend pure signification it must transpose it into a material substance or being."²⁰

It is this lack of a logical distance between the levels of signification and meaning which provides the most conven-
ient point of analogy between the logical structure of
myth and the logic of the symbolic structure in literature.
Although this analogy is not drawn explicitly within the
framework of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, the work
does provide a valuable point of reference around which to
organize our comments on the relation between our descrip
tion of metaphoric structure in Chapter I and our descrip
tion of the logical structure of myth. We might preface these
comments, then, with a brief, general discussion of Cas-
sirer's definition of the relation between the modes of
myth and art.

Although the symbol exerts a creative force in all the
modes, says Cassirer, each mode evidences a distinctive
awareness of this creative function. Myth, as we have seen,
is not aware of this ideal function of symbolic formation;
it does not distinguish the symbols with which it builds and
orders its world from the physical world itself. Thus, says
Cassirer, the mythic consciousness is still dominated by the
world of sense; for, while ideally it does interpose a world
of mediate signification between itself and physical reality,
it does not recognize this mediation. Creation, then, does
not bear the stamp of a free, creative act; the mythic world
of symbols assumes the form of the given and becomes a world
of material.

The world of art, in its purest spiritual manifestations,
represents for Cassirer the polar contrast to the world of
niyoh. In art, says Cassirer, the creative power of the symbol reaches its highest realization: here the artistic symbol has a purely immanent validity and truth. It does not aim at or refer to something else, it simply is. Whereas the mythic world of symbols was seen as a world of material essence, the world of art is one of pure and immediate significance.

Cassirer's comments on the relation of the modes of myth and art are valuable as a reminder that art can never be reduced to myth. They are, as he notes, at opposite poles of the human consciousness. Yet it is this very polarity which provides the grounds for our analogy. In both myth and art the symbolic structure and its meaning are conceived as existing on the same level. Neither myth nor art refers to a separate level of reality from which it draws significance; and, although the levels are manifestly different, there is a resulting correspondence in logical form, for in neither case is this logic postulated on the principle of discreteness. This correspondence becomes more clear if we examine the relation between the logic of symbolic structure in literature as it is expressed in Feidelson's definition of metaphoric relation, and the logic of myth as it is defined in Cassirer's description of the categories of the mythic consciousness.

In Feidelson's description of the structure of the literary symbol, the correspondence of the levels of symbol and
meaning was seen as a conscious reworking of the logical form of language to create an autonomous realm of significance. This significance was created, as we have seen, by emphasizing the structural element of meaning, by considering the literary term as taking on significance through its interaction within the structure of the work rather than through reference to a distinct and prior area of meaning. The logic of this structure is expressed in the principle of metaphoric relation discussed in Chapter I. Feidelson describes this relation, as we have seen, by saying that one term takes on meaning by virtue of its position under the aspect of another. The meaning created through this interaction is not the product of an essentially mechanical relation of two discrete entities, but is rather an organic relation in which the meaning is in a real sense a product of their interaction. From this point of view, says Feidelson, we cannot speak of the individual term in the metaphor as having meaning apart from the whole created by their interaction. This relationship is organic because the relation of part to part implies the relation of part to whole; the meaning of the parts, in other words, does not come into being until the whole which is the product of this relation comes into existence. In the metaphorical language of literature, then, the meaning of any term implies the meaning of the whole metaphorical relation.

Feidelson sees the structure of a poem as a network of these metaphorical relations. The real literary symbol, he says, is a key term which stands at the center of many over-
lapping circles of metaphoric meaning. In this sense, it can be said to define a category of other terms which come under its aspect. The relation of part to whole in this relation of key term to category is exactly the same as the relation of term to term within the individual metaphor; that is, the part does not stand for the whole in the sense that it represents the whole. In the metaphorical relation of part to whole, the part retains its organic character as part of the whole. The symbol implies the whole meaning of the category, the totality of metaphorical relations into which it has entered. From this point of view, we may see the structure of the work as a structure of such categories related through the interaction of the key terms around which they are formed.

We can draw an analogy between the organics of meaning in this symbolic structure and the organics of concrete reality in the mythic world-view. In the mythic consciousness, the same criterion of intensity which results in the mythic world being a single plane of reality expresses itself as well in a structure of organic relations which is similar to that governing the literary symbol. This organic framework of myth is perhaps most conveniently characterized by considering the basic principle of mythic logic as it determines the relation of part to whole in the mythic world-view.

In science, as we have seen, the unity of the world was achieved by the articulation of the phenomena of experience into a system of logical laws. This articulation involves
a process of analysis; that is, scientific cognition can combine elements only by differentiating them, only by analyzing the ways in which they do or do not conform to certain conditions. This process of analysis, says Cassirer, is inherent in the nature of scientific synthesis, for the synthesis effects a unity of different entities, not a conceptual identity. Science, then, seeks a unity of discrete elements, and the relation which it attempts to establish between these elements is always clearly recognized as a relation between them; that is, it is realized as ideal and not physical.

Where science sees such an ideal relation, however, myth sees a relation of material identity. Myth does not, as we have noted, perceive an abstract, logically defined object, but rather intuits a force. It is this force which, through the intensity with which it affects the consciousness, establishes the reality of the object. But if to be real is to be effective in this way, then the parts of any whole become tantamount to the whole. The part, in other words, affects the mythic consciousness with the same force as the whole. Where science sees a distinct logical relation, myth sees a material equivalence; for, since the part does have an equivalent force, it is thought to contain somehow the whole. This equation involves the levelling of specific, logical distinctions.

The whole does not 'have' parts and does not break down into them; the part is immediately
the whole and functions as such. This relationship, this principle of the *pars pro toto* has also been designated as a basic principle of primitive logic. However, the part does not merely represent the whole, but 'really' specifies it; the relationship is not symbolic and intellectual, but real and material. The part, in mythical terms, is the same thing as the whole, because it is a real vehicle of efficacy—because everything which it incurs or does is incurred or done by the whole at the same time. The consciousness of the part as such, as a 'mere' part, does not belong to the immediate, naive intuition of reality but is achieved only by that analytical and synthetic function of mediating thought which goes back from objects as concrete material units to their constitutive conditions.  

The relation which myth sees between the part and the whole is one of material identity, while the relation of part to whole in the metaphoric relation is rather an expression of a sophisticated logic of meaning. An awareness of this essential difference reminds us once again that the mythic consciousness can never be used to 'explain' literature in any causal sense. Employed conceptually under the conditions outlined in the introduction, however, the structural correspondence, established in the above paragraphs, provides the most valuable point of contact between the world of myth and the world of the poem. It allows the critic to characterize and interpret the symbolic structure of a work as 'mythic' in a meaningful sense while at the same time avoiding the pitfalls of reductionism.

In Chapter I we established two general criteria of adequacy which the concept of the mythic consciousness must meet. They were, first, a correspondence in the basic
conditions governing the structure of myth and the conditions governing the symbolic structure in literature. This analogy between the organics of the mythic world and the organics of the metaphorical world of the poem fulfill this criterion. Second, we noted that a concept which hopes to deal adequately with the symbolic element in Renaissance literature should reflect the distinctive premise of Renaissance symbolism; that is, a lack of awareness of its own assumptions, of the tension between subject and object. This lack of awareness seems to be reflected in the lack of a distinction in the mythic world between the real and the ideal, a correspondence in tone which makes this concept particularly useful in dealing with the Renaissance. Taken together, the fulfillment of these two criteria are grounds for assuming the general adequacy of the concept of the mythic consciousness in the investigation of the symbolic element in Renaissance literature.
NOTES - CHAPTER I


2. Ibid., pp. 55-56.


5. Ibid., p. 57.

6. Ibid., p. 57.

7. Ibid., p. 57.

8. Ibid., p. 60.


13. Ibid., p. 144.


NOTES – CHAPTER II


3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Ibid., p. 6.

5. Ibid., p. 8.

6. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

7. Ibid., p. 11.


9. Ibid., p. 93.


13. Ibid., p. 86.

14. Ibid., p. 86.

15. Ibid., p. 144.

16. Ibid., p. 97.

17. Ibid., vol. ii, p. 17.


20. Ibid., p. 38.


