## The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (Volume 2), by E. Cassirer

- a. People / Organizations:
- b. Quotes:
- c. General Notes:
  - Preface, by E. Cassirer (pg. xiii)
    - "For the actual point of departure for all science, the immediacy from which it starts, lies not so much in the sensory sphere as in the sphere of mythical intuition. What is commonly called the sensory consciousness, the content of the "world of perception" which is further subdivided into distinct spheres of perception, into the sensory elements of color, tone, etc.—this is itself a product of abstraction, a theoretical elaboration of the "given." Before self-consciousness rises to this abstraction, it lives in the world of the mythical consciousness, a world not of "things" and their "attributes" but of mythical potencies and powers, of demons and gods. If then, in accordance with Hegel's demand, science is to provide the natural consciousness with a ladder leading to itself, it must first set this ladder a step lower. Our insight into the development of science taken in the ideal, not temporal sense is complete only if it shows how science arose in and worked itself out of the sphere of mythical immediacy and explains the direction and law of this movement." (pg. xvi)
      - "Science long preserves a primordial heritage, to which it merely gives another form" (pg. xvii)
        - □ "Such infringements of myth on the province of science can only be prevented if we can know myth in its own realm, can know its essence and what it can accomplish spiritually. We can truly overcome it only by recognizing it for what it is: only by an analysis of its spiritual structure can its proper meaning and limits be determined." (pg. xvii)
  - Introduction: The Problem of a Philosophy of Mythology (pg. 1)
    - "True speculation takes an exactly opposite road, aiming not at analytical disintegration but at synthetic understanding, and striving back toward the ultimate positive basis of the spirit and of life itself. And myth must be taken as such a positive basis. The philosophical understanding of myth begins with the insight that it does not move in a purely invented or made-up world but has its own mode of necessity and therefore, in accordance with the idealist concept of the object, its own mode of reality. Only where such necessity is demonstrable is reason, and hence philosophy, in place. The purely arbitrary and accidental cannot provide it even with an object of inquiry; for philosophy, the study of essence, cannot establish a foothold in the void, in a sphere which is itself without essential truth. At first sight, to be sure, nothing seems more disparate than truth and mythology; and accordingly no two spheres seem more opposed to each other than philosophy and mythology." (pg. 4)
      - "The phenomenon which is here to be considered is not the mythical content as such but the significance it possesses for human consciousness and the power it exerts on consciousness. The problem is not the material content of mythology, but the intensity with which it is experienced, with which it is believed as only something endowed with objective reality can be believed. This basic fact of mythical consciousness suffices to frustrate any attempt to seek its ultimate source in an invention-whether poetic or philosophical." (pg. 5)
        - ultis a real force that seizes upon consciousness in myth, i.e. a force that is not within its control. True mythology arises out of something independent of all invention, something indeed which is opposed to invention both in form and substance; it <u>arises out of a</u> process necessary from the standpoint of a consciousness the origins of which are lost in a suprahistorical sphere, a process which consciousness can perhaps resist at certain moments but which as a whole it cannot impede, much less annul. We see ourselves carried back to a region where there is no time for invention, either by individuals or by a people, no time for artificial disguises or misunderstanding. 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. With this realization, Schelling held, philosophical speculation had hit upon the actual vital source of mythology, but it can barely discover this source and cannot explain it further. Schelling expressly claimed it as his special achievement to have replaced inventors, poets, and individuals in general by the human consciousness as the source, the subjectum agens of mythology. True, he says, mythology has no objective existence outside of consciousness; but 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 taken place, must really have occurred in consciousness. Thus mythology is not merely a successive series of mythological representations: the successive polytheism which is its empirical content can be explained only if we assume that the human consciousness actually lingered successively on every moment of it. "The gods which followed upon one another really seized successively upon the human consciousness. Mythology as a history of gods could only be produced in life; it had to be experienced and lived." But if myth is thus shown to be a specific and original form of life, it thereby loses all semblance of mere one-sided subjectivity. For "life," in Schelling's view, is neither merely subjective nor merely objective but stands on the exact borderline between the two; it is a realm of indifference between the subjective and objective. The movement and development of mythical representations in human consciousness must correspond to an objective process, a necessary development in the absolute, if this movement is to possess inner truth. The mythological process is a theogonic process: one in which God himself becomes, by creating himself step by step as the true God. Each particular stage in this creation, insofar as it can be apprehended as a necessary stage of development, has its own significance; but only in the whole, only in the unbroken context of the mythical movement passing through all moments, are its complete meaning and true goal disclosed. Then each particular and contingent phase appears necessary, and hence justified. The mythological process is the process of the truth re-creating and so realizing itself." (pg. 5-7)
    - "In these conditions critical philosophy seeks to disclose a certain hierarchical structure, a superordination and subordination of the structural laws
      of the sphere in question, a reciprocal determination of particular formative factors. To seek a "form" of mythical consciousness in this sense,
      means to inquire neither after its ultimate metaphysical causes nor after its psychological, historical or social causes: it is solely to seek the unity of
      the spiritual principle by which all its particular configurations, with all their vast empirical diversity, appear to be governed." (pg. 11-12)
      - "...a critical phenomenology of the mythical consciousness will start neither from the godhead as an original metaphysical fact nor from mankind as an original empirical fact but will seek to apprehend the subject of the cultural process, the human spirit, solely in its pure actuality and diverse configurations, whose immanent norms it will strive to ascertain. It is only in these activities as a whole that mankind constitutes itself in accordance with its ideal concept and concrete historical existence; it is only in these activities as a whole that is effected that progressive differentiation of "subject" and "object," "I" and "world," through which consciousness issues from its stupor, its captivity in mere material existence, in sensory impression and affectivity, and becomes a spiritual consciousness." (pg. 13)
        - "We shall no longer seek to explain it as the expression and reflection of a transcendent process or of certain constant psychological forces. Its objectivity and from the critical standpoint this is true of all cultural objectivity must be defined not thing-wise but functionally: this objectivity lies neither in a metaphysical nor in an empirical-psychological "reality" which stands behind it, but in what

myth itself is and achieves, in the manner and form of objectivization which it accomplishes. It is objective insofar as it is recognized as one of the determining factors by which consciousness frees itself from passive captivity in sensory impression and creates a world of its own in accordance with a spiritual principle. If we formulate the question in this sense, the "unreality" of the mythical world can no longer be said to argue against its significance and truth. The mythical world is and remains a world of mere representations - but in its content, its mere material, the world of knowledge is nothing else." (pg. 14)

- "Thus the objectivity of myth consists primarily in that wherein it seems farthest removed from the reality of things from the reality
  of naive realism and dogmatism this objectivity is not the reproduction of a material datum but is a specific and typical mode of
  formation, in which consciousness disengages itself from and confronts the mere receptivity of the sensory impression." (pg. 15)
- "Just as, in cognition, we seek to ascertain the formal laws of thought which make a mere rhapsody of perceptions into a system of knowledge, so in mythology we must inquire into the nature of that formal unity through which the infinitely multiform world of myth ceases to be a mere conglomerate of arbitrary representations and unrelated notions and constitutes a characteristic spiritual whole. Here again the mere enrichment of our factual knowledge is fruitless until it serves to deepen our knowledge of principles, until a mere aggregate of particular factors is replaced by a specific articulation, a superordination and subordination of formative elements." (pg. 21)
  - "But once again our task as a whole will be to seek, not a unity of origin in which oppositions dissolve and seem to merge with one another, but a critical-transcendental unity in which the particular forms are preserved and clearly delimited. The principle of this differentiation becomes clear when we link the problem of signification with the problem of designation, i.e. when we consider how in the diverse cultural forms the "object" is bound up with the "image," the "content" with the "sign," and how at the same time they remain distinct from one another." (pg. 23)
- "An essential element of the correspondence between the diverse cultural forms is that the sign exerts an active, creative force in all of them myth and language, artistic configuration, and the formation of theoretical concepts of the world and its relationships. Humboldt says that man puts language between himself and the nature which inwardly and outwardly acts upon him, that he surrounds himself with a world of words in order to assimilate and elaborate the world of objects, and this is equally true of the configurations of the mythical and aesthetic fantasy. They are not reactions and impressions that act upon the spirit from outside, but true spiritual actions. In the very first, one might say the most primitive, manifestations of myth it becomes clear that we have to do not with a mere reflection of reality but with a characteristic creative elaboration. Here again we can see how an initial tension between subject and object, between "inside" and "outside" is gradually resolved, as a new intermediary realm, growing constantly more rich and varied, is placed between the two worlds. To the factual world which surrounds and dominates it the spirit opposes an independent image world of its own more and more clearly and consciously it confronts the force of the "impression" with an active force of "expression." However, this creation does not yet bear the character of a free spiritual act; it has a character of natural necessity, of psychological "mechanism." Precisely because at this stage there is not yet an independent self-conscious I, free in its productions, precisely because we stand here at the threshold of the spiritual process which is destined to delimit the "I" and the "world," the new world of signs must appear to the consciousness as a fully objective reality. Every beginning of myth, particularly every magical view of the world, is permeated by this belief in the objective character and objective force of the sign. Word magic, image magic, and writing magic are the basic elements of magical a
  - The mythical world is concrete not because it has to do with sensuous, objective contents, not because it excludes and repels all merely abstract factors all that is merely signification and sign; it is concrete because in it the two factors, thing and signification, are undifferentiated, because they merge, grow together, concresce in an immediate unity. From the very start myth, as an original mode of configuration, raises a certain barrier against the world of passive sense impression; it, too, like art and cognition, arises in a process of separation from immediate reality, i.e. that which is simply given. But though in this sense it signifies one of the first steps beyond the given, its product at once resumes the form of the given. Thus myth rises spiritually above the world of things, but in the figures and images with which it replaces this world it merely substitutes for things another form of materiality and of bondage to things. What seemed to free the spirit from the fetters of things becomes a new fetter which is all the stronger since it is not a mere physical force but a spiritual one. However, a force of this sort already contains within it the immanent condition for its own future dissolution; it contains the potentiality of a spiritual process of liberation which is indeed effected in the progress from the magical-mythical world view to the truly religious view. The condition for this development as our investigation will show in detail is that the spirit place itself in a new relation to the world of images and signs that while still living in them and making use of them it achieve a greater understanding of them and thus rise above them." (pg. 24-25)
- "[W]hat distinguishes science from the other forms of cultural life is not that it requires no mediation of signs and symbols and confronts the unveiled truth of "things in themselves," but that, differently and more profoundly than is possible for the other forms, it knows that the symbols it employs are symbols and comprehends them as such. But it does not achieve this at one stroke; on the contrary, here again the typical relation of the spirit to its own creations is repeated at a different level. Here again, freedom toward these creations must be gained and secured by constant critical endeavor. In knowledge, too, the use of hypotheses and principles precedes the knowledge of their specific function as principles and until this insight is gained, science can only contemplate and state its own principles in a material, that is, semi-mythical form." (pg. 26)
- Part 1 Myth as a Form of Thought (pg. 27)
  - o Chater 1 The Mythical Consciousness of the Object (pg. 29)
    - "It is one of the first essential insights of critical philosophy that objects are not "given" to consciousness in a rigid, finished state, in their naked "as suchness," but that the relation of representation to object presupposes an independent, spontaneous act of consciousness. The object does not exist prior to and outside of synthetic unity but is constituted only by this synthetic unity; it is no fixed form that imprints itself on consciousness but is the product of a formative operation effected by the basic instrumentality of consciousness, by intuition and pure thought. The *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* takes up this basic critical idea, this fundamental principle of Kant's "Copernican revolution," and strives to broaden it. It seeks the categories of the consciousness of objects in the theoretical, intellectual sphere, and starts from the assumption that such categories must be at work wherever a cosmos, a characteristic and typical world view, takes form out of the chaos of impressions. All such world views are made possible only by specific acts of objectivization, in which mere impressions are reworked into specific, formed representations. We can follow the aim of this objectivization back to strata preceding the theoretical object-consciousness of our experience, of our scientific world view. But when we descend into these strata, the direction and means of this process of objectivization change. So long as this direction is not clearly recognized and defined, no clarity can be obtained with regard to the course of development, its separate stages, its stopping places and turning points. Our investigation has already shown that this direction is by no means "simple" and unique, that the ways in which the diversity of sensory impressions can be synthesized into spiritual unities can reveal the most diverse nuances. And this conclusion is strikingly confirmed when we contrast the mythical process of objectivization with that of theoretical, pure empirical thought." (pg. 29)
    - "Myth too lives in a world of pure forms which it looks upon as thoroughly objective, indeed as objectivity pure and simple. But its relation to this world discloses no sign of that decisive "crisis" with which empirical and conceptual knowledge begin. Its contents, to be sure, are given in an objective form, as "real contents," but this form of reality is still completely homogeneous and undifferentiated. Here the nuances of significance and value which knowledge creates in its concept of the object, which enable it to distinguish different spheres of objects and to draw a line between the world of truth and the world of appearance, are utterly lacking. Myth lives entirely by the presence of its object—by

the intensity with which it seizes and takes possession of consciousness in a specific moment. Myth lacks any means of extending the moment beyond itself, of looking ahead of it or behind it, of relating it as a particular to the elements of reality as a whole. Instead of the dialectical movement of thought, in which every given particular is linked with other particulars in a series and thus ultimately subordinated to a general law and process, we have here a mere subjection to the impression itself and its momentary "presence." Consciousness is bound by its mere facticity; it possesses neither the impulsion nor the means to correct or 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. Here there are no different degrees of reality, no contrasting degrees of objective certainty. The resultant picture of reality lacks the dimension of depth - the differentiation of foreground and background so characteristically effected in the scientific concept with its distinction between "the ground" and that which is founded on it. This one characteristic of mythical thinking - which for the present is set forth only in the most general terms - implies many other features as its simple and necessary consequences; with it the phenomenology of myth is already indicated in broad outlines. For indeed, a mere glance at the facts of mythical consciousness shows that it knows nothing of certain distinctions which seem absolutely necessary to empirical-scientific thinking. Above all, it lacks any fixed dividing line between mere "representation" and "real" perception, between wish and fulfillment, between image and thing. This is most clearly revealed by the crucial significance of dream experience in the genesis and growth of the mythical consciousness." (pg. 35-36)

- "The undifferentiated, unreflecting consciousness refuses to draw a distinction which is not inherent in the immediate content of experience, but which results only from reflection on the empirical conditions of life, that is, from a specific form of causal analysis. If all reality is taken only as it is given in the immediate impression, if it is regarded as sufficiently certified by the power it exerts on the perceptive, affective, and active life, then a dead man indeed still "is," even though his outward form may have changed, even though his sensory-material existence may have been replaced by a disembodied shadow existence." (pg. 37)
  - ◆ "This characteristic interpenetration, this indifference of all the various levels of objectivization, which are distinguished by empirical thinking and the critical understanding, must be kept constantly in mind if instead of reflecting on the contents of the mythical consciousness from the outside we wish to understand them from within. We are accustomed to view these contents as "symbolic," to seek behind them another, hidden sense to which they mediately refer. Thus, myth becomes mystery: its true significance and depth lie not in what its configurations reveal but in what they conceal. The mythical consciousness resembles a code which is intelligible only to those who possess the key to it i.e. for whom the particular contents of this consciousness are merely conventional signs for some-thing "other," which is not contained in them. From this result the various types and trends of myth interpretation the attempts to disclose the meaning, whether metaphysical or ethical, that is concealed in myths." (pg. 37-38)
- "But if we examine myth itself, what it is and what it knows itself to be, we see that this separation of the ideal from the real, this distinction between a world of immediate reality and a world of mediate, signification, this opposition of "image" and "object," is alien to it. Only observers who no longer live in it but reflect on it read such distinctions into myth. Where we see mere "representation," myth, insofar as it has not yet deviated from its fundamental and original form, sees real identity. The "image" does not represent the "thing"; it is the thing; it does not merely stand for the object, but has the same actuality, so that it replaces the thing's immediate presence. Consequently, mythical thinking lacks the category of the ideal, and in order to apprehend pure signification it must transpose it into a material substance or being. This is true in all stages of mythical thinking, but it is nowhere expressed so clearly as in mythical action. In all mythical action a true substantiation is effected at some moment; the subject of the action is transformed into a god or a demon whom it represents. This fundamental characteristic of myth can be followed from the most primitive manifestations of the magical world view to the highest expressions of the religious spirit. It has rightly been stressed that rite precedes myth." (pg. 38)
  - "This <u>inability of mythical thinking to apprehend pure ideal signification</u>, is strikingly revealed by its relation to language. **Myth and language are inseparable and mutually condition each other.** Word and name magic are, like image magic, an integral part of the magical world view. But in all this the basic presupposition is that word and name do not merely have a function of describing or portraying but contain within them the object and its real powers. Word and name do not designate and signify, they are and act. In the mere sensuous matter of language, in the mere sound of the human voice, there resides a peculiar power over things." (pg. 40)
    - "And the image, like the name, of a person or thing reveals the indifference of mythical thinking toward distinctions in the "stage of objectivization." For mythical thinking all contents crowd together into a single plane of reality; everything perceived possesses as such a character of reality; the image like the word is endowed with real forces. It not only represents the thing for the subjective reflection of a third party, an observer; it is a part of its reality and efficacy. A man's image like his name is an alter ego: what happens to the image happens to the man himself. Thus image magic and object magic are never sharply differentiated." (pg. 42)
- "Mythical thinking is, in general, distinguished from a purely theoretical world view as much by its concept of causality as by its concept of the object. For the two concepts condition each other: the form of causal thinking determines the form of objective thinking, and vice versa. Mythical thinking is by no means lacking in the universal category of cause and effect, which is in a sense one of its very fundamentals. This is evidenced not only by the mythical cosmogonies and theogonies which seek to answer the question of the origin of the world and the birth of the gods but by any number of mythical legends possessing wholly explicative character, i.e. seeking to provide an "explanation" for the origin of some concrete thing, e.g. the sun, the moon, man, or some species of animal or plant. And the culture myths, which trace a cultural heritage back to a hero or savior, belong to the same class. But mythical causality is distinguished from the scientific principle of causality by the very characteristic to which the opposition between the two concepts of the object ultimately reduces itself. According to Kant the principle of causality is a synthetic principle which enables us to spell out phenomena and so read them as experience. But this causal synthesis, like the synthesis which takes place in the concept of the object, involves a very specific analysis." (pg. 43)
- "This isolating abstraction, which singles out a specific factor in a total complex as a "condition," is alien to mythical thinking." (pg. 45)

  "Whereas empirical thinking is essentially directed toward establishing an unequivocal relation between specific "causes" and specific "effects," mythical thinking, even where it raises the question of origins as such, has a free selection of causes at its disposal. Anything can come from anything, because anything can stand in temporal or spatial contact with anything. Whereas empirical thinking speaks of "change" and seeks to understand it on the basis of a universal rule, mythical thinking knows only a simple metamorphosis (taken in the Ovidian, not in the Goethean sense). When scientific thinking considers the fact of change, it is not essentially concerned with the transformation of a single given thing into another; on the contrary, it regards this transformation as possible and admissible only insofar as a universal law is expressed in it, insofar as it is based on certain functional relations and determinations which can be regarded as valid independently of the mere here and now and of the constellation of things in the here and now. Mythical "metamorphosis," on the other hand, is always the record of an individual event—a change from one individual and concrete material form to another. The cosmos is fished out of the depths of the sea or molded from a tortoise; the earth is shaped from the body of a great beast or from a lotus blossum floating on the water; the sun is made from a stone, men from rocks or trees. All these heterogeneous mythical explanations, chaotic and lawless as they may seem in their mere content, reveal one and the same approach to the world. Whereas the scientific causal judgment dissects an event into constant elements and seeks to understand it through the complex mingling, interpenetration, and constant conjunction of these elements, mythical thinking clings to the total

<u>representation as such and contents itself with picturing the simple course of what happens</u>. In this event certain typical traits may be repeated, but still there can be no question of a rule, of specific limiting formal conditions." (pg. 46-47)

- "The mythical consciousness, on the other hand, applies its "why" precisely to the particular and unique. It "explains" the individual event by postulating individual acts of the will. Even though our causal concepts are directed toward the apprehension and specification of the particular, although in fulfilling this purpose they differentiate themselves and complement and determine one another, nevertheless they always leave a certain sphere of indeterminacy surrounding the particular. For precisely as concepts they cannot exhaust concrete-intuitive existence and events; they cannot exhaust all the countless "modifications" of the general rule, which may occur at any particular time. Here every particular is indeed subject to the universal but cannot be fully deduced from it alone. Even the "special laws of nature" represent something new and specific as opposed to the general principle, the principle of causality as such. They are subject to this principle; they fall under it, but in their concrete formulation they are not postulated by it and they cannot be determined by it alone." (pg. 49)
- "Linked with this form of causality is another trait which has always been stressed as characteristic of the mythical world view, namely the peculiar relation it assumes between the whole of a concrete object and its particular parts. For our empirical apprehension the whole consists of its parts; for the logic of natural science, for the logic of the analytical-scientific concept of causality, it results from them; for the mythical view neither of these propositions applies; here there prevails a true indifference, both in thought and practice, between the whole and its parts. 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 [\*Greek word] 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." (pg. 49-50)
  - "Here myth shows us the opposite side of this relationship, permitting us to prove our point inversely. Because myth lacks the form of causal analysis, it cannot know the sharp dividing line which only this form of thought creates between the whole and its parts. Even where empirical intuition seems, of itself so to speak, to give us inwardly differentiated things, myth replaces this sensuous separation and contiguity by a characteristic form of interpenetration. The whole and its parts are interwoven, their destinies are linked, as it were and so they remain even after they have been detached from one another in pure fact. Even after such separation the fate of the part hangs over the whole as well. Anyone who acquires the most insignificant bodily part of a man or even his name, his shadow, his refection in a mirror, which for myth are also real "parts" of him has thereby gained power over the man, has taken possession of him, has achieved magical power over him. From a purely formal point of view the whole phenomenology of magic goes back to this one basic premise, which clearly distinguishes the complex intuition of myth from the abstract, or more precisely abstracting and analytical, concept." (pg. 51)
    - "In both cases mythical thinking has a tendency to thwart that analytical dissection of reality into independent partial factors and
      partial conditions, with which the scientific approach to nature begins and which remains typical of it." (pg. 51)
  - "While scientific thought seeks to dissolve all reality into relations and understand it through them, mythical thinking answers the question of origins by reducing even intricate complexes of relations such as musical rhythms or the organization of the castes to a pre-existing material substance. And because of this fundamental form of thought, all mere properties or attributes must for myth ultimately become bodies...In such concretions the immanent conflict, the dialectic in which the mythical imagination moves, becomes particularly evident. The mythical fantasy drives toward animation, toward a complete "spiritualization" of the cosmos; but the mythical form of thought, which attaches all qualities and activities, all states and relations to a solid foundation, leads to the opposite extreme: a kind of materialization of spiritual contents." (pg. 54-55)
    - "Mythical thinking, however, knows such a unity neither of combination nor of separation. Even where it seems to divide an
      action into a number of stages, it considers the action in an entirely substantial form. It explains any attribute of the action by a
      specific material quality which passes from one thing in which it is inherent to other things." (pg. 55)
- o Chapter 2 Particular Categories of Mythical Thinking (pg. 60)
  - "When we compare the empirical-scientific and the mythical world views, it becomes evident that the contrast between them does not reside in their use of entirely different categories in contemplating and interpreting reality. It is not the quality of these categories but their modality which distinguishes myth from empirical-scientific knowledge. The modes of synthesis which they employ to give the form of unity to the sensuous manifold, to imprint a shape on disparate contents, disclose a thoroughgoing analogy and correspondence. They are the same universal forms of intuition and thought which constitute the unity of consciousness as such and which accordingly constitute the unity of both the mythical consciousness and the consciousness of pure knowledge." (pg. 60)
    - "Thus, taken abstractly, both the mythical and the scientific explanations of the world are dominated by the same kinds of relation: unity and multiplicity, coexistence, contiguity and succession. Yet each of these concepts, as soon as we place it in the mythical sphere, takes on a very special character, one might say a specific "tonality." This tonality assumed by the particular concepts within the mythical consciousness seems at first glance totally individual, something which can only be felt but in no way known and understood. And yet beneath this individual phenomenon there lies a universal. On closer scrutiny the special character of each particular category reveals a specific type of thought. The basic structure of mythical thinking which manifests itself in the direction of mythical object consciousness and in the character of its concepts of reality, substance, and causality goes farther: it also encompasses and determines the particular configurations of this thinking and, as it were, sets its imprint upon them." (pg. 60-61)
  - "[S]ynthetic unity is essentially systematic unity: its production stands still at no point but progressively seizes upon the whole of experience, to refashion it into a single logical context, a totality of causes and effects. In the structure, in the hierarchy of these causes and effects, a special position is assigned to each particular phenomenon, to each being and event, by which it is distinguished from all others and at the same time related to all others. This is most clearly manifested in the mathematical view of the world." (pg. 61)
    - "...for scientific thinking synthesis and analysis are not different or opposite operations but it is through one and the same process that the particulars are sharply differentiated, and comprehended in the systematic unity of the whole. The reason for this is to be sought in the nature of the synthetic judgment itself. For what distinguishes synthetic judgment from analytical judgment is that it considers the unity it effects not as a conceptual identity but as a unity of different entities." (pg. 61)
  - "But though the mythical world is thus woven into a whole, this intuitive whole discloses a very different character from that conceptual whole in which cognition strives to comprehend reality. Here there are no ideal, relational forms which constitute the objective world as a world thoroughly determined by law; here, on the contrary, all reality is smelted down into concrete unifying images. And this contrast, visible in the result, rests ultimately on an opposition in principle. Every particular synthesis effected by mythical thinking embodies this character which only becomes fully evident in the whole. Whereas scientific cognition can combine elements only by differentiating them in the same basic critical act, myth seems to roll up everything it touches into unity without distinction. The relations it postulates are such that the elements which

enter into them not only enter into a reciprocal ideal relationship, but become positively identical with one another, become one and the same thing. Things which come into contact with one another in a mythical sense - whether this contact is taken as a spatial or temporal contiguity or as a similarity, however remote, or as membership in the same class or species - have fundamentally ceased to be a multiplicity: they have acquired a substantial unity. And this is evident even at the lowest stages of myth." (pg. 62-63)

- □ "To begin with the category of quantity, <u>we have already seen how mythical thinking makes no sharp dividing line between the whole and its parts, how the part not only stands for the whole but positively is the whole."</u> (pg. 64)
  - "...mythical thinking knows only the principle of the equivalence of the part with the whole. The whole is the part, in the sense
    that it enters into it with its whole mythical-substantial essence, that it is somehow sensuously and materially "in" it." (pg. 64)
- □ "Mythical thinking does not know that relation which we call a relation of logical subsumption, the relation of an individual to its species or genus, but always forms a material relation of action and thus since in mythical thinking only "like" can act on "like" —a relation of material equivalence." (pg. 65)
  - "[I]n myth the unity it creates is here again immediately diffused into mere equivalence. For myth, which sees reality on a single plane, one and the same substance does not "have" different attributes; on the contrary each specification as such is substance, i.e. it can be apprehended only in immediate concretion, in direct hypostatization." (pg. 65)
- Part II Myth as a Form of Intuition. Structure and Articulation of the World of Time and Space in the Mythical Consciousness (pg. 71)
  - Chapter 1 The Basic Opposition (pg. 73)
    - "The theoretical structure of men's world view begins at the point where consciousness first makes a clear distinction between illusion and truth, between what is merely perceived or represented and what truly "is," between the subjective and the objective. The criterion for truth and objectivity here employed is the factor of permanence, of logical constancy and logical necessity. Each particular content of consciousness is referred to this postulate of thoroughgoing lawfulness and measured by it. Thus, spheres of being are differentiated: the relatively transient is distinguished from the relatively permanent, the accidental and unique from the universally valid. Certain elements of experience prove to be necessary and fundamental, the framework supporting the whole edifice. To others only a dependent and mediate reality is assigned; they "are" only insofar as the particular conditions of their occurrence are realized, and by these conditions they are restricted to a specific sphere or sector of being. Thus, theoretical thought progresses by continuously postulating specific differences of logical value, one might say logical "rank," in the data of sensory experience. And the universal criterion it here employs is the principle of sufficient reason, which it retains as its supreme postulate, its primary requirement. In it is expressed the essential direction, the characteristic modality of knowledge. To "know" is to advance from the immediacy of sensation and perception to the purely cogitated and mediated "cause," to dissect the simple matter of sensory impressions into strata of "grounds" and "consequences." As we have seen, such a differentiation and stratification is totally alien to the mythical consciousness. This consciousness lives in the immediate impression, which it accepts without measuring it by something else. For the mythical consciousness the impression is not merely relative but absolute; the impression is not through something else and does not depend on something else as its condition; on the contrary it manifests and confirms itself by the simple intensity of its presence, by the irresistible force with which it impresses itself upon consciousness. Whereas scientific thought takes an attitude of inquiry and doubt toward the "object" with its claim to objectivity and necessity, myth knows no such opposition. It "has" the object only insofar as it is overpowered by it; it does not possess the object by progressively building it but is simply possessed by it. It has no will to understand the object by encompassing it logically and articulating it with a complex of causes and effects; it is simply overpowered by the object. But this very intensity, this immediate power with which the mythical object is present for consciousness, removes it from the mere series of uniform being and uniform recurrence. Instead of being bound by the schema of a rule, a necessary law, each object that engages and fills the mythical consciousness pertains, as it were, only to itself; it is incomparable and unique. It lives in an individual atmosphere and can only be apprehended in its uniqueness, its immediate here and now. Yet on the other hand the contents of the mythical consciousness do not disperse into mere disconnected particulars; they, too, are governed by a universal principle - which, however, is of an entirely different kind and origin from the universal principle of the logical concept. For precisely through their special character all the contents of the mythical consciousness are rejoined into a whole. They form a self-enclosed realm and possess a common tonality, by which they are distinguished from the contents of common, everyday, empirical existence. This trait of isolation, this character of the egregious, is essential to every content of the mythical consciousness as such; it can be traced from the lowest to the highest levels, from the magical world view which still understands magic in a purely practical, hence semitechnical, sense up to the highest manifestations of religion, in which all miracles are ultimately dissolved in the one miracle of the religious spirit. It is this characteristic transcendence which links the contents of the mythical and the religious consciousness. In their mere immediate existence they all contain a revelation and at the same time retain a kind of mystery; it is this interpenetration, this revelation which both reveals and conceals, that gives the mythical-religious content its basic trait, its character of the "sacred."" (pg. 73-74)
  - o Chapter 2 Foundations of a Theory of Mythical Forms. Space, Time, and Number (pg. 83)
    - See text
- Part III- Myth as a Life Form. Discovery and Determination of the Subjective in the Mythical Consciousness (pg. 153)
  - o Chapter 1 The I and the Soul (pg. 155)
    - "For a glance at the development of the various symbolic forms shows us that their essential achievement is not that they copy the outward world in the inward world or that they simply project a finished inner world outward, but rather that the two factors of "inside" and "outside," of "I" and "reality" are determined and delimited from one another only in these symbolic forms and through their mediation. If each of these forms embraces a spiritual coming-to-grips of the I with reality, it does not imply that the two, the I and reality, are to be taken as given quantities, as finished, self-enclosed halves of being, which are only subsequently composed into a whole. On the contrary, the crucial achievement of every symbolic form lies precisely in the fact that it does not have the limit between I and reality as pre-existent and established for all time but must itself create this limit-and that each fundamental form creates it in a different way. These general systematic considerations in themselves lead us to suppose that myth, too, does not start from a finished concept of the I or the soul, from a finished picture of objective reality and change, but must achieve this concept and this picture, must form them from out of itself. And the phenomenology of the mythical consciousness actually provides thoroughgoing confirmation of this systematic assumption. The more widely we extend the scope of this phenomenology, the more deeply we penetrate its primal and fundamental strata, the more evident it becomes that for myth the concept of the soul is no stereotype into which it forces everything that comes within its grasp but is rather a fluid, plastic element which changes in its hands." (pg. 155-156)
      - "It is here that a separation begins to take place between the spheres of the objective and subjective, between the world of the I and the world of things. The farther the consciousness of action progresses, the more sharply this division is expressed, the more clearly the limits between I and not-I are drawn. Accordingly, the world of mythical ideas, precisely in its first and most immediate forms, appears closely bound up with the world of efficacy. Here lies the core of the magical world view, which is saturated with this atmosphere of efficacy, which is indeed nothing more than a translation and transposition of the world of subjective emotions and drives into a sensuous, objective existence. The first energy by which man places himself as an independent being in opposition to things is that of desire. In desire he no longer simply accepts the world and the reality of things but builds them up for himself. This is man's first and most

primitive consciousness of his ability to give form to reality. And since this consciousness permeates all inward as well as outward intuition, all reality seems subject to it. There is no existing thing and no occurrence which must not ultimately submit to the omnipotence of thought and the omnipotence of desire. Thus, in the magical world view the I exerts almost unlimited sway over reality: it takes all reality back into itself. But precisely this immediate identification of I and reality involves a peculiar dialectic in which the original relationship is reversed. The enhanced feeling of self which seems to express itself in the magical world view indicates actually that at this stage there is as yet no true self. Through the magical omnipotence of the will the I seeks to seize upon all things and bend them to its purpose; but precisely in this attempt it shows itself still totally dominated, totally "possessed," by things. Even its supposed doing amounts to undergoing; indeed, all its ideal powers, the power of words and language for example, are at this stage seen in the form of demonic beings and projected outward as something alien to the I. Thus the expression of the I that is here achieved, and also the first magical-mythical concept of the soul, are totally confined within this intuition. The soul itself appears as a demonic power which acts upon man's body from outside and possesses it - and hence possesses the man himself with all his vital functions. Thus precisely the increased intensity of the I-feeling and the resulting hypertrophy of action produce a mere illusion of activity. For all true freedom of action presupposes an inner limitation, a recognition of certain objective limits of action. The I comes to itself only by positing these limits, by successively restricting the unconditional causality with respect to the world of things, which it initially imputed to itself. Only when emotion and will no longer seek to grasp the object immediately and draw it into their sphere, only when more and more clearly apprehended intermediary links are interpolated between the mere wish and its goal, do objects and the I acquire independent values: the two worlds are determined only by this form of mediation. Wherever this mediation is lacking a peculiar indifference continues to adhere to the representation of action itself. All reality and change, both as units and as a whole, appear shot through with magical-mythical action; but in the intuition of this action there is as yet no separation between fundamentally different factors, between "material" and "spiritual," between "physical" and "psychic." There is only a single undivided sphere of efficacy, within which a continuous exchange takes place between the two spheres that we usually distinguish as the world of the soul and the world of matter. Precisely at the point where the idea of efficacy becomes an all-embracing category in man's understanding and explanation of the world does this indifference appear most plainly." (pg. 157-158)

- o Chapter 2 The Development of the Feeling of Self from the Mythical Feeling of Unity and Life (pg. 175)
  - "The opposition of subject and object, the differentiation of the I from all given, determinate things, is not the only form in which progress is made from a general, still undifferentiated life feeling to the consciousness of the self. In the sphere of pure knowledge, it is true, progress consists above all in the differentiation of the principle of knowledge from its content, of the knower from the known; but mythical consciousness and religious feeling embrace a still more fundamental contrast. Here the I is oriented not immediately toward the outside world but rather toward a personal existence and life that are similar to it in kind. Subjectivity has as its correlate not some outward thing but rather a "thou" or "he," from which on the one hand it distinguishes itself, but with which on the other hand it groups itself. This thou or he forms the true antithesis which the I requires in order to find and define itself. For here again the individual feeling and consciousness of self stand not at the beginning but at the end of the process of development. In the earliest stages to which we can trace back this development we find the feeling of self immediately fused with a definite mythical-religious feeling of community. The I feels and knows itself only insofar as it takes itself as a member of a community, insofar as it sees itself grouped with others into the unity of a family, a tribe, a social organism. Only in and through this social organism does it possess itself; every manifestation of its own personal existence and life is linked, as though by invisible magic ties, with the life of the totality around it. This bond can relax only very gradually; only gradually can there develop an I independent of the surrounding spheres of life. And here again myth not only accompanies the process but mediates and conditions it, constituting one of its most significant and effective motifs. Since every new attitude of the I toward the community finds its expression in the mythical consciousness, since it is mythically objectified primarily in the form of the soul concept, the development of the soul concept not only represents but becomes a spiritual instrument for the act of "subjectivization," by which the individual self is achieved and apprehended." (pg.
    - "...the mythical-religious consciousness does not simply follow from the empirical content of the social form but is rather one of the most important factors of the feeling of community and social life. Myth itself is one of those spiritual syntheses through which a bond between "I" and "thou" is made possible, through which a definite unity and a definite contrast, a relation of kinship and a relation of tension, are created between the individual and the community. Indeed, we cannot understand the mythical and religious world in its true depth if we see in it only an expression, i.e. a mere copy, of any pre-existing divisions pertaining either to natural or to social reality. In it we must rather see an instrument of the "crisis" itself, an instrument of the great process of spiritual differentiation through which basic determinate forms of social and individual consciousness arise from the chaos of the first indeterminate life feeling. In this process the elements of social existence and physical existence provide merely the raw material, which acquires its form only through certain fundamental spiritual categories not situated in it and not to be derived from it. Here above all it is characteristic of the direction of myth that the dividing lines which it draws between "inside" and "outside" are of an entirely different character and quite differently placed from those drawn by empirical-causal cognition. Here the relation between the two factors of objective intuition and subjective feeling of the self and of life is different from the structure of theoretical knowledge, and this shift in spiritual accent modifies all the basic measures of being and change; the various spheres and dimensions of reality merge and diverge according to criteria entirely different from those which apply to the purely empirical order and articulation of the world of perception, to the structure of pure existence and its object." (pg. 177-178)
      - "First of all, the development of myth shows one thing very clearly: even the most universal form of the human consciousness of kind, even the manner in which man differentiates himself from the totality of biological forms and groups himself with his fellow men into a natural species, is not given from the beginning as a starting point of the mythical-religious world view but should be understood rather as a mediated product, a result of this very world view. For the mythical-religious consciousness the limits of the species "man" are not rigid but thoroughly fluid. Only by a progressive concentration, only by a gradual narrowing of that universal life feeling in which myth originates, does it gradually arrive at the specifically human feeling of community." (pg. 178-179)
  - "The mythical consciousness does not form species by composing certain elements into a unity on the basis of immediate sensuous similarity or of a mediated causal relation between them; the unity of mythical species is rather of a fundamentally magical origin. Those elements which belong to one and the same field of magical efficacy, which fulfill a certain magical function in common, always show a tendency to fuse, to become mere manifestations of an underlying mythical identity. In our previous analysis of the mythical form of thought we attempted to explain the fusion by reference to the nature of the mythical form of thought itself. Whereas the members of a synthetic combination effected by theoretical thinking are preserved as independent elements within this very combination, whereas theoretical thinking keeps them distinct even while bringing them into relation with one another, mythical thinking causes those things which are related to one another, which are united as though by a magical bond, to merge into one undifferentiated form. Thus, things which are totally dissimilar from the standpoint of immediate perception or from the standpoint of our "rational" concepts, may appear similar or alike provided they enter into one and the same magical complex. The category of sameness is not based on agreement in any sensuous characteristics or abstract-conceptual factors, but is

conditioned by the law of magical connections, of magical "sympathy." All things that are united by this sympathy, all things that "correspond" to one another or support one another magically coalesce into the unity of a magical genus." (pg. 181-182)

- □ "Thus myth expresses all natural reality in the language of human, social reality and expresses all human, social reality in the language of nature. Here no reduction of the one factor to the other is possible; it is rather the two together, in complete correlation, that determine the peculiar structure and complexion of the mythical consciousness. Hence it is hardly less one-sided to "explain" mythology in purely sociological terms than to explain it in purely naturalistic terms." (pg. 192)
- "Religion cannot rest on such shaky ground, for if it is to claim any kind of inner truth, it must express some objective reality. This reality is not nature but society; it is not of a physical but of a social nature. The true object of religion, the sole and original object to which all religious forms and expressions can be traced back, is the social group to which the individual indissolubly belongs, which wholly conditions his being and his consciousness. It is this social group which not only determines the form of mythology and religion but also provides the basic schema and model for all theoretical understanding, for all knowledge of reality. All the categories in which we apprehend this reality the concepts of space, time, substance, and causality are products not of individual but of social thinking and accordingly have their religious-social prehistory. To trace them back to this prehistory, to derive their seemingly purely logical structure from definite social structures: that is to explain these concepts and understand them in their true apriority. To the individual everything must seem a priori, universally valid and necessary, a fact which arises not from his own activity but from the activity of the species. The real bond which links the individual with his tribe, his clan, and his family is therefore the ultimate demonstrable foundation for the ideal unity of his world-consciousness, for the religious and intellectual structure of the cosmos." (pg. 192)
  - □ \*this is Cassirer recounting Emile Durkheim's philosophical view
- "In the foregoing remarks I have attempted to show how man can discover and determine the universe inside him only by thinking it in mythical concepts and viewing it in mythical images. But this describes only a single direction in the development of the mythical-religious consciousness. Here again the inward path is completed only in conjunction with the seemingly opposite path, from the inside outward. For the most important factor in the growth of the consciousness of personality is and remains the factor of action." (pg. 199)
  - "The import of man's action on the outside world is not simply that the I, as a finished thing, as a self-contained "substance," draws outside things into its sphere and takes possession of them. Rather, all true action is formative in a twofold sense: the I does not simply impress its own form, a form given to it from the very outset, upon objects; on the contrary, it acquires this form only in the totality of the actions which it exerts upon objects and which it receives back from them. Accordingly, the limits of the inner world can only be determined, its ideal formation can only become visible, if the sphere of being is circumscribed in action. The larger the circle becomes which the self fills with its activity, the more clearly the character of objective reality and also the significance and function of the I are manifested." (pg. 200)
    - ◆ "When we seek to understand this process as it is reflected in the mythical-religious consciousness, we find that at the first stages of this consciousness things only "are" for the I if they affect it emotionally, if they release in it a certain movement of hope or fear, desire or horror, satisfaction or disappointment. Long before nature can become an object of intuition, not to speak of knowledge, it too is given to man only in this way. This fact in itself contradicts all theories which make the personification and worship of certain natural objects and forces the beginning of the mythical consciousness. For things and forces are given in advance to the mythical consciousness no more than they are to theoretical consciousness; they represent, rather, a relatively advanced process of objectivization. Before this objectivization has begun, before the world as a whole has split into determinate, enduring, and unitary forms, there is a phase during which it exists for man only in unformed feeling. In this indeterminacy of feeling certain impressions are set off from the common background by their special intensity and force. To them correspond the first mythological images. They are not products of reflection, which dwells on certain objects in order to ascertain their enduring characteristics, their constant traits, but are the expression of a unique stirring, a momentary tension and release, of the consciousness, which will perhaps never be repeated in similar form." (pg. 200)
- "...the philosophy of Symbolic Forms is concerned with the totality of spiritual expressive functions. It regards them not as copies of being but as trends and modes of formation, as "organs" less of mastery than of signification. And here again the operation of these organs takes at first a wholly unconscious form. Language, myth, art - each produces from itself its own world of forms which can be understood only as expressions of the spontaneity of the spirit. But because this spontaneous activity is not carried out in the form of free reflection, it is hidden from itself. In creating its mythical, artistic forms the spirit does not recognize itself in them as a creative principle. Each of these spheres becomes for it an independent "outward" world. Here it is not so much the case that the I is reflected in things, the microcosm in the macrocosm, as that the I creates for itself a kind of opposite in its own products which seem to it wholly objective. And it can contemplate itself only in this kind of projection. In this sense the mythical gods signify nothing other than successive self-revelations of the mythical consciousness. Where this consciousness is still wholly confined to and dominated by the moment, where it simply succumbs to every momentary impulse and stimulus, the gods, too, are enclosed in this merely sensuous present, this one dimension of the moment. And only very gradually, as the spheres of action broaden, as the drive ceases to exhaust itself in a single moment and a single object but prospectively and retrospectively embraces a number of different motives and different actions, does the sphere of divine action acquire diversity, breadth, and depth. It is first of all the objects of nature which in this way move apart-which are sharply differentiated for consciousness by virtue of the fact that each of them is taken as an expression of a special divine power, the self-revelation of a god or demon. But although the array of particular gods that can arise in this way may be extended indefinitely, it contains the germ of a limitation in content; for all the diversity, all the differentiation and fragmentation, of divine action ceases as soon as the mythical consciousness considers this action no longer from the standpoint of the objects to which it extends but from the standpoint of its origin. The diversity of mere action now becomes a unity of creation, in which the unity of the creative principle becomes more and more clearly discernible. And to this concept of the transformation of the god corresponds a new view of man and his spiritual-ethical personality. Over and over again we thus find confirmation of the fact that man can apprehend and know his own being only insofar as he can make it visible in the image of his gods. Just as he learns to understand the structure of his body and limbs only by becoming a creator of tools and products, so he draws from his spiritual creations-language, myth, and art—the objective standards by which to measure himself and learn to understand himself as an independent cosmos with its peculiar structural laws." (pg. 217-218)
- o Chapter 3 Cult and Sacrifice (pg. 219)
  - See text
- Part IV The Dialectic of the Mythical Consciousness (pg. 233)
  - o "Thus far we have attempted, in line with the general task of the philosophy of Symbolic Forms, to represent myth as a unitary energy of the human spirit: as a self-contained form of interpretation which asserts itself amid all the diversity of the objective material it presents. From this standpoint we have attempted to disclose the objective categories of mythical thinking not as though we were dealing with rigid schemata of the spirit, fixed once and for all, but with a view to finding definite original trends of formation. Behind the vast abundance of mythical forms we have thus sought to lay bare a unitary formative power and the law according to which this power operates. But myth would be no truly spiritual form if its unity

signified merely a simplicity without contradictions. Its basic form does not unfold and imprint itself on new motifs and figures in the manner of a simple natural process; its development is not the tranquil growth of a seed which was present and ready made from the very first, which merely requires certain definite outward conditions in order to unfold and make itself manifest. The separate stages of its development do not simply follow but rather confront one another, often in sharp opposition. The progress of myth does not mean merely that certain basic traits, certain spiritual determinations of earlier stages are developed and completed, but also that they are negated and totally eradicated. And this dialectic can be shown not only in the transformation of the contents of the mythical consciousness but in its dominant "inner form." It seizes upon the function of mythical formation as such and transforms it from within. This function can operate only by continuously producing new forms-objective expressions of the inner and outward universe as it presents itself to the eye of myth. But in advancing along this road it reaches a turning point at which the law that governs it becomes a problem. This may seem strange at first glance, for we do not usually give the naive mythical consciousness credit for such a change of attitude. And indeed we have not to do with an act of conscious theoretical reflection, in which myth apprehends itself and in which it turns against its own foundations and presuppositions. Even in this turn the mythical consciousness remains within itself. It does not move out of its sphere or pass into a totally different "principle," but in completing its own cycle it ends by breaking through it. This fulfilment which is at the same time a transcendence results from the relation of myth toward its own image world. Myth can manifest itself only in this image world; as the mythical consciousness advances it comes to see this manifestation as something "outside" which is not wholly adequate to its own drive for expression. Here lies the basis of the conflict, which becomes gradually sharper and sharper, which creates a cleavage within the mythical consciousness and yet in this very cleavage discloses the ultimate depths of myth." (pg. 235-236)

- "If the philosophy of religion and the philosophy of language thus tend toward a point of intersection at which language and religion unite to form as it were a single medium, that of spiritual "meaning," it creates a new problem for the philosophy of symbolic forms. This philosophy cannot, of course, strive to dissolve the specific difference of language and religion in any original unity, whether this unity be defined as subjective or objective, as a unity of the divine source of things, of reason, or of the human spirit. For its inquiry is directed not toward a common origin, but toward a common structure. It does not seek a common unity of foundation for both language and religion but asks whether in these two absolutely independent and unique forms a unity of function may not be demonstrable. If there is such a unity, it can be sought only in a basic trend of symbolic expression, in an inner rule according to which it develops and unfolds." (pg. 254)
- d. Further Readings: