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Hubert Knoblauch

Metaphors, Transcendence and Indirect Communication

Alfred Schutz' phenomenology of the life-world and the metaphors of religion[1]

It [metaphor] brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this (Kenneth Burke)

Metaphors and Symbols

The famous theologian Paul Tillich once stated that "everything religion has to say about God ... has a symbolic character" (Tillich 1957, 9). Expressions like "life after death", "immortality", "reincarnation" or "heaven" are not to be taken at face-value but are to be understood symbolically. Thus heaven is not an immediate reference to a place but a symbol. God, "Being-itself" and everything religious has, according to Tillich, necessarily a symbolic, i.e., metaphorical character, and religion is to be considered a symbolic reality. Symbols, however, cannot be "deciphered"; there is no way to translate religious meaning by non-metaphorical notions. Therefore Tillich tried to develop a "negative metaphorical language", a kind of language full of contradictions and paradoxical propositions (Tillich 1964). Although Tillich emphasized the relation between metaphor, symbol, and religion, he used the notion of metaphor in a very broad, unspecific way[2] which may lead to the misunderstanding that metaphor is a specific feature of religious language (Edwards 1968).

A more specific notion of metaphor can be found in rhetoric. Rhetoric defines metaphor as a trope, characterized by the substitution (*immutatio*) of a *verbum prorium* by another word which shares some feature with the first (*similitudo*). Metaphors in the narrow sense are substitutions of primary semantic units by secondary units which stand in an analogical relation to the former; this relation may be obvious and close (*Nahmetapher*), but it may also be distant (*Fernmetapher*) (Plett 1983, 83). According to Sapir (1977), metaphors consist of at least two terms that come from separate domains (George, the lion), one of them being the topic (George), i.e. the tenor, while the other is called the vehicle (the lion). Both terms ("lion", "George") share certain

[1] I want to thank Maggi Kusenbach, UCLA, for her useful comments.

[2] Even if one would equate metaphor with figurative language, as Quintilian did, one could not specify religious language by the use of metaphors alone.

elements that allow for the metaphor ("strength"). A similar concept of metaphor is held in linguistics. For Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors relate "source domains" (e.g. journey) to "target domains" (e.g. "love").[3] When love is metaphorically compared to a journey, different aspects of the journey (e.g. the temporal sequence, the goal etc.) also may be used to structure the notion of love. However, in rhetorics metaphor is more specifically considered a sub-category of "tropes", i.e. the figures of speech that relate a term either by replacement, implication, or juxtaposition to another.[4] Metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony have been considered the most important among the tropes and were therefore labeled "master tropes" by Kenneth Burke.[5]
On the level of words, metaphor (as a trope) has been considered a "reduced" comparison, to be more exact, a shortened version of allegory (Lausberg 1963, §228ff). Allegory, as an 'extended metaphor', refers to the linguistic means by which one thought is substituted by another, both being in a relation of similarity. As with metaphor, allegoresis is one rhetorical means to communicate transcendent realities, yet allegoresis can also be found in other linguistic domains, i.e. institutionally specialised registers, such as the language of economy or politics.[6] Even if allegoresis, allegory and metaphorical expressions in general is one way to express symbols - especially with respect to philosophical and theological thought (Plett 1983, 92), the very use of a metaphor or allegoresis, however, does not already indicate religious language. With respect to the linguistic means of religious language in general, Samarin concedes that "the general picture for religion (...) is similar to that for other domains of experience" (Samarin 1976, 8). Although metaphor may be more frequently used in religious language, it is however also regularly used in the different domains of mundane language. Hosea may call God Israel's husband, lover, betrothed, shepherd etc., but we may find the same metaphors in, e.g., political oratory.
If neither metaphor nor allegoresis nor other linguistic means can be considered as *differentia specifica* of religious language, it seems more promising to change the level of inquiry. In order to define what we mean by 'religious' language in general and metaphors in particular, we have to define what we mean by `religion' or transcendent realities in the beginning. In order to understand religious metaphors, we have to clarify the problem: what is the specificity of the

[3] Lakoff and Johnson start from the assumption that the cognitive structure of language depends on basic-level experiences and image schemes which are not metaphorical. Major, pervasive parts of everyday language (and thinking), however, are characterized by a metaphorical concept.
[4] Aristotle distinguished between four types: genus substituting for species, species for genus, genus for genus, and analogy. Poetics, Chapter 21.
[5] Whereas metaphor states an equivalence between terms taken from separate semantic domains, metonymy replaces or juxtaposes contiguous terms that occupy a separate place within the same semantic or perceptual domain. Synecdoche also draws on a single domain, one term, however, including the other like a part of the whole. Irony, finally, juxtaposes concepts from the same or seperate domains that are felt to contradict each other. There are other tropes such as periphrasis, antonomasia, catachresis, emphasis, hyperbole; the tropical substitution may function on the level of words or on the level of thoughts resp. sentences (such as allegories).
[6] The symbolic character of religious communication has been a subject of the classical allegoresis, as in the four meanings of the bible: the literal (historical) meaning is to be distinguished from the allegorical (christological-ecclesiological), the moral (tropological) and the anagogical (eschatological) meaning. Cf. Harris 1966.

linguistic domain to which religious metaphors refer. We shall identify this specificity as symbolization, and, following Lewis (1958), consider metaphors as one of the linguistic means of symbols: "Symbolism is a mode of thought, but allegory is a mode of expression".[7] In order to understand the notion of metaphor, we have, therefore, to clarify what we mean by „symbol“ and „symbolisation“, a clarification which I shall attempt on the basis of the phenomenological theory of symbols developed by the "father" of phenomenological sociology, Alfred Schutz[8]. Schutz' phenomenological theory of symbols and signs is based on the notion of appresentation. Appresentation is also at the very heart of his theory of transcendences which has been adapted to the sociological theory of religion by Thomas Luckmann. By referring (somehow extensively) to Schutz' writings (including some unpublished manuscripts), we shall attempt to show that Schutz himself has developed concepts of religion, religious experience and symbolic communication of transcendence which differ at certain points from Luckmann's adaptation.[9] I shall further suggest that both approaches are complementary rather than contradictory to each other. Since Schutz neglected the social dimensions of transcendences, I have therefore to draw on Berger and Luckmann's concept of socially constructed symbolic universas, especially on Luckmann's concept of the religious symbolic universe, the "sacred cosmos". For both, Schutz and Luckmann, all communication depends on the language used in everyday life. Religious as well as any symbolic communication thus has to face the problem of indirect communication. This idea will provide the basis for the reconsideration of the problem of religious communication with respect to metaphors.

Transcendence and Religiosity

Religion is commonly taken to refer to that particular part of human existence which is concerned with the supernatural, with the ultimate meaning of life, with transcendence. However, what exactly that part consists of has been subject to the endless discussions that have tried to come up with definitions of religion. Consequently, definitions of religion have been abounding. Especially the substantialist attempts to define the "essence" of religion have failed in the face of the variety of what socially counts as religion - even on the level of the "world religions" (Luckmann 1977). Functional definitions on the other hand avoid premature and restrictive substantial criteria and allow the encompassing of the most diverse definitions of religion without falling prey to ethnocentric pre-judgements. One of the broadest of these functional definitions of

[7] By symbolization we do not refer to the rhetorical notion of 'symbol' or "symbolic allegory" which assumes a real participation between the allegory and the object refered to. Cf. Lausberg 1963, §423ff.

[8] And one should add that Schutz was aware of the similarity to Lewis' analysis of allegory as a field of symbolization. Cf. Maurice Natanson's letter to Alfred Schutz, July 21, 1954 (Schutz Archive, Constance).

[9] Spickard (1993) has already suggested that Schutz provides a useful approach to a sociology of religious experience. However, he neither refers to Schutz' explicit references to religion, nor does he mention the theory of transcendence, but considers only the "intersubjective experience" of time as religious.

religion is provided by Thomas Luckmann in his renowned essay "The Invisible Religion".[10] According to Luckmann, religion is an elementary feature of the "conditio humana". It fulfills a central anthropological function: "The basic function of religion is to transform members of the natural species homo sapiens into actors in a historical social order" (Luckmann 1991, 171). This transformation is made possible by the human capacity of transcending; thus transcendence is the basis of religion: "It is in keeping with an elementary sense of the concept of religion to call the transcendence of biological nature by the human organism a religious phenomenon" (Luckmann 1967, 49). Simmel (1993) called the basis for religion as a process in the human mind "religioid". In order to avoid the confusion with specific social forms of religion, i.e. religion in a narrower sense, we shall refer to this basic function of religion as "*religiosity*".

But what do we mean when we speak of *transcendence*? Every human being knows the limits of his or her experience and the boundaries of his or her existence. We know that we cannot return to before and yesterday, we cannot make someone else's experiences our own, we cannot avoid death. There is a before and after of experience, and no one doubts that the world into which he or she was born existed long before he or she became aware of its existence. In the naive realism of everyday life, we know the boundaries of our existence even if we do not constantly think about them. This knowledge pertains to the common sense of everyday life. Moreover, persons have knowledge of things that transcend them within the world. We remember experiences we do not have any more, we plan actions which are not performed yet, and we meet other beings who, so we assume, make experiences which are not ours.

These experiences of transcendence are based on the intentionality of consciousness, i.e. the fact that every experience is an experience *of* something.[11] By virtue of its intentionality, in experiencing we are automatically referring to something which is assumed by but not given in the experiencing act itself. This way, every experience may be said to transcend itself, or, to use the words of Husserl, transcendence lies at the very heart of every experience.[12] Transcendence, therefore, rests on the relatedness of experience to something else.[13] It is consistent with this fundamental notion of transcendence that experience is characterized by what Derrida (1967) criticized as "metaphysics of presence". Instead of being an unclarified assumption of the phenomenologists', this "metaphysics" is a feature of any mundane experience in the natural attitude. Therefore the capacity to transcend which lies at the very heart of religiosity can be identified by this feature of conciousness, i.e. to experience something which is not presented directly. Thus hearing a sound refers to what we just heard before and will hear soon after.

[10] Marquard (1985, 42) has called this approach 'religious-phenomenological minimal functionalism'.
[11] Husserl's concept of appresentation is described by Schutz (1962a, 294ff).
[12] Already Husserl (1973, 145) recognized the transcendence of experience in the fact that in experiencing we assume the existence of what is being experienced.
[13] Cf. Schutz/ Luckmann 1984, 337; this refers to Schutz' "notebooks", the manuscripts for Schutz' last work, the so-called "Notizbücher", which are included in this volume.

Husserl calls these links the "retentions" and "protentions" of the immediate experience. While perceiving an object, we almost automatically "appresent" that the object has an unseen background. By appresentation we refer to the connection between the object or event directly experienced and the object or event which is not immediately present to experience but constituted by our consciousness. Appresentation is a particular form of coupling or pairing by which we take experience intuitively as indicating or depicting significantly something else. The appresenting part of the couple "wakes" or "evokes" the appresented one. Moreover, "each appresentation carries along its particular appresented horizons, which refer to further fulfilling and confirming experiences..." (Schutz 1962a, 296). Appresentation is not tantamount to inference, and the appresented member must not be a physical object; it may be a recollection, a fantasm or a dream. Thus, transcendence consists in the belief that there is something experienced which is not identical with the act of experiencing itself.[14]

According to Schutz, the experience of transcendences can be distinguished on *three levels*. First, whenever anything transcends the actual, direct experiences, we may speak of the *small transcendences* of space and time. Our automatic assumptions that we can anticipate a future experience, that we assume that there will be things as soon as we turn around, that things out of reach can come into reach again are based on our routine to cope with these transcendences. Little transcendences are characterized by the fact that we can, in principle, experience them directly - in the future, by moving our body. *Intermediate transcendences*, however, differ with respect to exactly this feature. When that which is actually experienced (the body or expressions of another self) is taken to refer to something that cannot be experienced directly (the consciousness, the inner life, the experiences of the other self), Schutz talks about intermediate transcendences, provided that what cannot be experienced directly is still taken to belong to the same everyday reality as the self and its experiences. Finally we may speak of the *great transcendences* when an experience presents itself as pointing to something that not only cannot be experienced directly but in addition is definitely not part of the ordinary reality of everyday life (in which things can be touched, handled, communicated).

"Ordinary reality" which is surpassed by the great transcendences is tantamount to what Schutz calls the "*reality of everyday life*" or, synonymously, the "world of working". The world of everyday life is the social world in which we live in wide awakeness, act and work, encounter fellow-men ("like us") and act on them; the world in which we perform spontaneous actions. Everyday life is also characterized by a specific form of time, "vivid presence" which lies at the

[14] This specification at least can be drawn from what Schutz says in his reply to Charles Morris' question, if transcendence means the experience of transcendence or the transcendence of experience. What else, Schutz replies, could it mean "than that the content of experience, the noema [the experienced as opposed to the experiencing] so to say always refers beyond itself?" (Schutz in: Schutz/ Luckmann 1984, 337). It follows from this that the experiences of the past and future, the experience of others etc. constitute further levels of transcendence.

intersection between inner time and cosmic time.[15] Acting, working and communication in everyday life presupposes the "natural attitude" (or, what Luckmann calls "naive realism"), the "suspension of disbelief": we naively assume that the things and persons we encounter do really exist, and that they prove their existence by bodily, sensual and intersubjective evidence. It is in everyday life that we act toward things and change them in a way which is predictable by experience, where we communicate with others in such a way that they respond meaningfully.

In speaking of the great transcendences, Schutz and Luckmann refer to the experiences by which we leave ordinary reality on different paths, such as dream, ecstasy, meditation. These paths have one element in common: they suspend the practical theory of everyday life, i.e. its common sense. In dreams, ecstasies and meditation, everyday life loses its status as the preeminent reality for the human being, at least for the duration of these experiences. After one returns to everyday life, only recollections of such experiences remain.

Whereas Luckmann in the beginning used the general notion of transcendence sketched above merely in order to define the elementary function or religion, later he integrated all of Schutz' three levels of transcendence.[16] In this later version, all three transcendences can become the basis for social forms of religion. Thus "important aspects of modern consciousness have been successfully shaped by collective representations that originate in social constructions of intermediate transcendences of nation, race, classlessness, and the like. In recent decades, the concern with minimal transcendences symbolized by notions such as self-fulfillment and the like, has become widespread if not dominant" (Luckmann 1991, 176).

Schutz, on the other hand, takes a different point of view. By drawing a categorical distinction between the reality of everyday life and the world of religious experience, Schutz locates religion, or, to be more exact, religious experience, on the level of the "big transcendences". Thus, as opposed to Luckmann, Schutz defines religion exclusively by the experience of great transcendences which exceed the reality of everyday life. On the other hand "big transcendences" cannot be identified exclusively with religion. Even if some interpretations may lead in this direction (Luckmann 1967), there are a number of provinces of meaning "that transcend the finite province of meaning of everyday life" (Schutz/ Luckmann 1984, 333). As we shall see later, Schutz' notion of religion as a province of meaning depends on symbolization. It therefore does not exclude the fundamental transcendence but may be rather conceived of as the symbolically socialized form of subjective experience of transcendences. Before we turn to the symbolization of provinces of meaning, we have to clarify what Schutz means by the notion "province of meaning"?

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[15] Schutz (1962b, 210ff) systematically lists the different elements of the cognitive style.

[16] Building on the "Structures of the Life-World II" in which Luckmann developed this theory, he adapted it for the new German edition of the Invisible Religion (1991).

3. Provinces of meaning and the multiple realities

When speaking of everyday life, one has to avoid a common misunderstanding. Quite often, the phenomenological notion of the life-world and the notion of everyday life have been regarded as synonyms. One can circumnavigate the common consequential confusion of notions (which has been criticized by Welter (1986)) if one takes "everyday life" to be only one (yet "paramount") level or "order" of the life-world.[17] Instead of speaking of different life-worlds, Schutz prefers to speak of *multiple realities* that consist of *provinces of meaning*, and he takes the world of everyday life to be one of the provinces of meaning (Schutz/ Luckmann 1984, 333).

The concept of multiple realities is linked to William James' theory of "sub-universa".[18] James argues that reality simply means anything we relate to in our emotional and active life; anything that excites and stimulates our interest can be considered real. One has, however, to distinguish different orders of experienced realities, such as the world of science, the world of `idols of the tribe', and, of course, the world of mythology and religion (James 1981, 921ff). Whereas James preferred to speak about "sub-universa", Schutz prefers the term "finite provinces of meaning" in order to emphasize that "it is the meaning of our experiences, and not the ontological structure of the objects, which constitutes reality" (Schutz 1962a, 341).

Nelson Goodman's "constructivist" approach resembles Schutz' concept of multiple realities (Goodman 1978; 1984)). To Goodman, there is no "real world" independent of human mental activity and human symbolic language. What we call world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct it. The worlds we create depend on certain activities; the artist may create one world, the scientist or the people in everyday life others. Different types of activities create "versions" of the world, and if these versions are consistent, they are "worlds". Goodman claims that it is by way of symbolic activities that we create worlds. It does however not become clear how exactly this is being done; moreover, he does not clarify what it is that makes a "version" of the world a right version and thus a "world" by its own.

Whereas Goodman refuses to assign any privileged status to any "ultimate reality", Schutz follows James in assuming that there is one province of meaning which is the *paramount reality*. To James the "paramount reality" is the world of senses or physical things, assuming that it is paramount because it is characterized by perception (James 1981, 921f). Schutz does not agree to the "primacy of perception", presupposed by James, as the only reason for the 'paramount status' of everyday life.[19] In his view, its eminent status derives from the fact that the reality of everyday

[17] By the notion of "order" Schutz refers to the works of Bergson.

[18] Although Schutz cites James in the corresponding publications, it is worth mentioning that Schutz (1936) had already developed his theory of provinces of meaning (including the 'reality accent", the paramount reality of everyday life, the shock, the different worlds of science, phantasy, world of working etc.) before he came in contact with James' pragmatic philosophy.

[19] In fact, in a letter to Gurwitsch (Grathoff 1985, 364) he declines the "primacy of perception" as metaphysical and considers transcendences as his starting points to define everyday life.

life is the world of working in which we can change events and things and in which we share them ("objectively") with others. It is the pragmatic motive which proves "the unity and congruity of the world of working [i.e. everyday life, H.K.] as valid and the hypothesis of its reality as irrefutable" (Schutz 1962b, 231). Everyday life is not restricted to immediate perception but includes the existence of others, culture and communication.

Schutz does not only deliver a "transcendental" argument for the "paramount status" of the world of working. He also assumes that the prevalence of the world of working in which the pragmatic motive dominates, seems to be a specific cultural pattern (which might not hold true for, e.g., the "buddhist cultural experience"). In accordance with Weber's view on modern secularization, the paramount status of everyday life is due to the process of the "secularization of consciousness", especially a "secularization of the 'attention à la vie'" which has been rationalized and imported into hierarchies of projects" (Schutz 1936).

The world of everyday life constitutes the paramount reality in which we live, yet our experiences always tend to switch into other "provinces of meaning". The world of everyday life is not closed. "Even within a single hour our consciousness may run through the most different tensions and adopt the most different attentional attitudes to life" (Schutz 1962b, 233, Fn 19). These attitudes can be characterized as provinces of meaning.

Provinces of meaning are, so to say, fields of experience. Schutz himself started to analyze the provinces of meaning, and he considered this to be a first sketch to a "typology of provinces of meanings" or "quasi-realities" (Schutz 1962b, 232). As examples for finite provinces of meaning which transcend everyday life he mentions "the world of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, especially the world of religious experience, the world of scientific contemplation, the play world of the child, and the world of the insane."[20] These provinces of meaning are characterized by a certain *cognitive style*, and Schutz offers a list of elements which help define it. The cognitive style consists of 1) a specific tension of consciousness; 2) a specific epoché; 3) a prevalent form of spontaneity; 4) a specific form of experiencing oneself 5) a specific form of sociality; 6) a specific time-perspective (Schutz 1962b, 230f). Schutz applied this list of elements (which, he concedes, may be extended) to several provinces of meaning such as dreams, fantasms - and everyday life. As a province of meaning, e.g., the world of everyday life is characterized by the form of voluntary spontaneity that we also call action, and by working as its form of action which is performed by a reflexive self. Its typical tension of consciousness is "wide-awakeness", that is to say, "a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life" (Schutz 1962b, 213). Its time-perspective links the inner time ("durée") with the cosmic time (thereby generating conventional social time); its form of sociality is made up of others in actual and potential contacts with respect to the little and intermediate transcendences. It is also

[20] Schutz 1962b, 231f. Schutz refers to "religious experiences in all their varieties".

characterized by a particular world view which Schutz calls the "epoché of the natural attitude". In contrast to the phenomenological "bracketing of belief", in everyday life we act on the basis of the "suspension of disbelief", assuming for all practical purposes the existence of the things, people and goals we act upon. We could also call this attitude the "naive realism" of everyday life.

By reason of its paramount status, all other provinces of meaning are "modifications" of everyday reality. Yet, because of their typical cognitive styles, the experiences in each province of meaning are consistent and compatible with one another in (and only in) each particular province of meaning. Since each province of meaning is additionally characterized by its specific "accent of reality" ("dream-world", "play world" etc.), Schutz also calls them *finite* provinces of meaning (Schutz 1962b, 232f). The transition between provinces of meaning are experienced as a "*shock*" which may befall us frequently even in the midst of our daily life: the curtain in the theatre, the picture frame, falling asleep. In his writings, Schutz has analyzed several finite provinces of meaning, especially the world of phantasms (or imaginations), the world of dreams, and, rather extensively, the world of scientific theory (Schutz 1962b, 234ff).

These analyses of provinces of meaning can not only be related to the foundations of literature in "fictionality" and the "imagination"[21]; they may also find an interesting corroboration in the psychology of consciousness. Already on the level of the criteria of the cognitive style, e.g., the notion of "tension of consciousness", Schutz anticipates empirical theories, such as Fischer's physio-psychological theory of different states of consciousness.[22] The notion of province of meaning is especially pertinent with respect to investigations on what has been called "altered states of consciousness", especially since the conceptualization of these states (such as "trance", "out-of-body-experience", "near-death-experience" etc.) is still much less developed than the empirical instruments for their measurement (Tart 1969; Dittrich 1994).

"Altered states of consciousness" are often linked to religious experience, and there are scholars who take them as the experiential basis of religion.[23] Lewis for instance claims that possession trances, visions, revelatory dreams etc. give rise to what he calls "ecstatic religions", and that ecstatic states of mind were also at the origin of world religions such as Christianity (Bourguignon 1973). Schutz, too, repeatedly stresses that *religious experience* is one of the finite provinces of meaning. The switch from the reality of everyday life to the religious province of meaning is experienced as a shock, exemplified by Kierkegaard's experience of the "instant" as

[21] In his analysis of the anthropological foundation of literature, Iser (1991, 156f) takes fictionality to be a modification of consciousness which resembles dreams but exhibits specific features. With respect to "the imaginary", a comparison to Schutz' analyses (1940) of the "imageries" would be promising.

[22] Fischer (1971) distinguished between states of consciousness on a contiunuum from "ergotropial excitement" to "reduced arousal", "normal perception" being in the center of a continuum. Like Fischer, Schutz and Luckmann distinguish different degrees of tensions of consciousness ranging from almost full passivity in sleep or meditation on the one hand to a highly increased tension in "angst" and ecstasy. Cf. also Schutz/ Luckmann 1984, 166ff.

[23] F. Goodman (1980) posits "religious altered states of consiousness, which she says is cross-culturally universal.

the leap to the religious sphere (Schutz 1962a, 344). However, Schutz never analyzed the features of religious experience in detail. One can only guess that religious experience is linked to the basic experience of "fundamental anxiety" ("Fundamentalangst") which he mentions occasionally: that I shall die and that I fear to die (Schutz 1962b, 228). Since this "primordial anticipation from which all others originate" governs the whole system of relevances (that motivates everyday action), it adds a specific feature to religious experience: it bestows an "ultimate significance" to life. Also for Luckmann (1967, 58), the type of experience which results from a "breakdown of the routine of everyday life" is apprehended as a direct manifestation of the reality of the sacred domain, which ranges form "helplessness in the face of natural events to death and is typically accompanied by anxiety or ecstasy or a mixture of both".

Provinces of meaning are subjectively experienced. However, if art, theory or, for that matter, religion become finite provinces of meaning, they depend on cultural constructions which are brought about by symbols. (According to Schutz and Luckmann (1984, 165ff), the "social approval" of certain provinces of reality - visions, dreams, ecstasies - defines the "theory of reality" of a society".) Thus, for instance, Western culture "has developed several systems of symbols such as science, art, religion, politics, and philosophy" (Schutz 1962a, 332). In order to understand metaphors, we have to turn to the question how this symbolic social construction may be explained.

Signs, Symbols and the Sacred Cosmos

Transcendence is a general feature of human experience. Because empirically every human being is born into a socio-historical world, also the experience of transcendence is shaped by cultural knowledge. In the words of Schutz, most of the experiences of socialized individuals are "preinterpreted" or "socially derived" from the social stock of knowledge (Schutz 1962, 401). Even with respect to subjective "altered states of consciousness", most experiences turn out to be coined by cultural traditions, so that even hallucinations take on familiar forms: whereas Roman Catholics will have death-bed visions of the Virgin Mary, Protestants will have near-death experiences of Jesus Christ and Hindus will perceive their own gods (Dinzelbacher 1981; 1985).

Knowledge, i.e. socially accepted experience, can only be transmitted by signs. Signs are the means by which we cope with the small and intermediate transcendences *in* everyday life. Experiences of finite provinces of meaning other than that of the reality of everyday life, i.e. the "big transcendences, "can be grasped only by symbolization": "Signs and symbols (...) are among the means by which man tries to come to terms with the manifold experiences of transcendence" (Schutz 1962a, 321, 293). As already mentioned, the notion of transcendence which is the basis for the definition of religion is also the basic conscious mechanism for the constitution of language, symbols and signs in general. By means of signs we cope with the different

transcendences of experience.[24] Signs of all kinds are based on appresentation by which the appresenting term, present in immediate apperception, is coupled or paired with the appresented term.[25]

On the level of the little transcendences, *marks* allow to cope with recollections and anticipation which transcend the world in reach; the broken branch may become a mark for the location of a waterhole. *Indications*, on the other hand, manifest a typical relation between an immediate A and an event B, actually not perceivable in such a way that A allows us to assume the existence of B. This holds true especially for "natural signs", such as the footprint of animals or the halo around the moon that indicates rain.[26] Whereas both, marks and indications, can be consituted subjectively, *signs* refer to appresentations which presuppose intersubjectivity and communication, designating "objects, facts, or events in the outer world, whose apprehension appresents to an interpreter cogitations of a fellow-man".[27] Although the cogitations of the alter ego are never fully grasped, signs allow for a typical understanding of others' actions, motives, and intentions. Thus signs are constituted in, pertain to and appresent realities of everyday life. *Language* as historical system of signs is the most important storehouse of typifications, abstractions and standardizations which allows one consciousnesses to understand another for all practical purposes (Schutz 1962b, 324ff). Language is one of the most important vehicles which contains the socially approved knowledge within a certain community, its typifications, interpretive schemes and recipes for conduct.

Whereas the signs of a language are constituted interactively by way of communicative, reciprocal actions, i.e. in the world of everyday life, the devices by which we apprehend phenomena that transcend the world of everyday life are *symbols*. Since we consider metaphor as one kind of symbol, it will be useful to analyse symbols in more detail. Symbols can be defined as an "appresentational reference of a higher order in which the appresenting member of the pair is an object, fact, or event within the reality of everyday life, whereas the other appresented member of the pair refers to an idea which transcends our experience of everyday life" (Schutz 1962a, 331).

Symbolic appresentations are rooted in the human condition. Thus the body as the center zero of our subjective system of time and space coordinates with its basic dimensions of above and underneath, before and behind, may be easily linked to primary metaphors, such as heaven or rain to "above", and earth to "below". Also the life-cycle is a resource for the symbolizations of other

[24] This position resembles the theory of Burke (1961, 10): language exhibits a kind of "transcendence" similar to the transcendence theology is refering to.

[25] Schutz sometimes also uses the term "signs" as refering to all types of signs, including symbols. His theory of signs is based on the distinction of different semiotically relevant levels of appresentation which cannot be reconstructed here.

[26] Cf. Schutz 1962a, 311. One should note that Luckmann transformed these notions; to him, marks refer to spatial and indications to temporal transcendences.

[27] Schutz (1962a, 319) consequentially formulates his theory of communication which cannot be reconstructed here.

realities, society, and nature (Schutz 1961b, 334). Since body, consciousness and the world of everyday life provide the basis for this construction, Schutz assumes that there exists a universal stratum for symbolism. The symbolic forms, however, in which elements of other realities are appresented "are as manifold as the symbols appresenting them" (Schutz 1962, 335). On the basis of the universal symbolization, cultures develop particular forms of symbolic universe". Thus, e.g., the particularity of Western civilization consists in the attempt to interrelate the systems of symbols as depending on and derived from the scientific symbol system (Schutz 1962a, 332).

The universal stratum of symbolism, therefore, is subject to social constructions by which they are elaborated into "*systems of symbols*".[28] Whereas Schutz did only hint at these "systems of symbols", Berger and Luckmann (1979/1967, 110ff, 119) have analyzed them as social constructions of *symbolic universes*.[29] By way of their communicative objectivation and transmission, symbolic universes are "socially objectivated systems of meaning that refer, on the one hand, to the world of everyday life and point, on the other hand, to a world that is experienced as transcending everyday life."[30] Symbolic universes may be understood as the social objectivation of what is subjectively experienced as provinces of meaning. They are shared by a certain group, be it as common knowledge or as expert, esoteric or secret knowledge. Symbolic universes constitute the most encompassing level of legitimation, i.e. the process whereby actions and experiences are rendered meaningful and plausible. According to Berger and Luckmann, the symbolic universe of a society is the matrix of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings accounting for what is considered the entire social and historical reality. Symbolic universes are social constructions of knowledge within history which depend on the objectivation and sedimentation of a specific meaning. They are best exemplified by the "conceptual machineries" of mythology, i.e. the conception of reality that posits the ongoing penetration of the world of everyday life by sacred forces.

To Berger and Luckmann as well as to Schutz, religion is a typical example for a "system of symbols". When a continuous body of experts attempts to eliminate the inconsistencies of mythological systems, they may be "canonized" and become theological conceptualizations. Theological systems of symbols are theoretically more rationalized. The rationalizations undertaken by the specialized religious experts lead to an interruption of the continuity between the worlds which had prevailed in mythologies and to an increased removal from the naive level

[28] Schutz 1962a, 332ff; 351f. That is to say that they have to be socially approved in order to provide typical solutions to the problem of coping with certain transcendences.

[29] Berger and Luckmann distinguish different levels of objectivation in the construction of symbolic universes. Symbolic universes consist in cultural specific elaborations of social reality by means of symbols. Yet, they cannot be totally removed from individual experience. Death, for example as "the marginal situation par excellence for the individual" has to be integrated "within the paramount reality of social existence" since it is "of the greatest importance for any social order".

[30] Luckmann (1967, 43) refers to Schutz' multiple realities.

of common sense. Theology again is a pardigm for later philosophical and scientific conceptualizations of the sacred cosmos.[31]

As there are provinces of meaning other than religious experiences, there are also symbolic universes other than religion: `the sacred sphere is only ONE symbolic sphere'.[32] One example for a symbolic universe has been provided by Hans Robert Jauss in his theory on literature and aesthetic experience. Based on Schutz' theory he contrasts aesthetic experience to the experience of everyday life. Aesthetic experience suspends the belief in common sense but still remains in a communicative relation to the world of everyday life. Since aesthetic experience comes near to religion and theory, it can only be characterized as a province of meaning by specific features ("*poiesis*", "*aisthesis*", "*catharsis*").[33] Aesthetic experience is founded in everyday life, in the aesthetic self-representation of individuals by ornament, in the ornamental styles of things and gifts, in the musical forms of rituals, etc. (Jauss 1977, 165). In literature, aesthetic experience is communicated, that is: it takes a specific communicative form. In this respect, Jauss analyzes the difference between "*das Lächerliche*" (the ridiculous) and "*das Komische*" (the funny) in everyday life and in its forms in literature. Similarly, in one of his early papers, Schutz had stressed that art as a symbol-system has to follow its own laws, the ones of language and style.[34]

To a certain extent, the theory of symbolic universes can also be found in the work of Max Weber who uses the notions "life orders" or "spheres" rather than symbolic reality.[35] According to Weber, religion has to compete with other "life orders", those which not only resemble religion but which also perform similar functions. Aesthetic and erotic experience, for example, exhibit magical roots similar to religion, they allow for intensive experiences, and they provide people with meaningful orientations, given that they are consciously applied and extraordinary spheres.[36]

Schutz referred to different "systems of symbols", such as art (Dürer), literature (Goethe and Eliott), music (Mozart), mathematics and science as well as politics; he mentioned religious symbolism, but he never undertook an extensive analysis of religious symbol systems. Again, we find a corresponding analysis in the work of Luckmann. Luckmann calls the historically specific

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[31] The process of institutional specialization of the "sacred cosmos" has already been described by Weber (1980); a detailed account can be found in Luckmann (1967), 62ff.

[32] "Das Sakrale ist nur EIN Bereich des Symbolischen" (the sacral is but one symbolic sphere). Schutz in: Grathoff 1985, 367.

[33] Admittedly, Jauss (1977, 161ff) refers to "provinces of meaning". Since he analyzes aesthetic experiences in literature (which presupposes at least a sign-system), one should - with respect to Schutz - rather speak of literature as a symbol system.

[34] Cf. Schutz 1981a, especially 264ff. Schutz stresses already in the 1920s that art as a symbol system is to be distinguished from everyday life.

[35] There is a certain resemblance to Dilthey's notion of different orders; it is, however, not clear if Schutz alludes to Dilthey in this respect.

[36] Music and dance for example contrasted with the "antidionysian opposition to music" of early Christianity, and art generally may fulfill the function of a redemption from everyday life and from the burden of theoretical and practical rationalism. Cf. Weber (1988/ 1922; esp. 557, 555).

religious symbolic universe a "sacred universe" or a *sacred cosmos*. The "configuration of religious representations that form a sacred universe is to be defined as a specific historical social form of religion" (Luckmann 1967, 61). Whereas religiosity is to be considered the basic function of religion (which is performed by the world view as a whole[37]), the sacred cosmos is the specific form of religion. The sacred cosmos is made up of religious representations which make use of the symbolic potential of language, apparent in the "personification of events, the formation of divine names, the construction of `different' realities by metaphorical transposition" etc. (Luckmann 1967, 60).

Consequently, one should distinguish between basic religiosity based on the subjective experience of transcendence (and, therefore, provinces of meaning), and *religion in a narrower sense*. Religion is a province of meaning that has been subject to processes of symbolic social constructions. It forms the symbolic universe which Luckmann calls the *sacred cosmos*. The sacred cosmos shapes the contents of, and the distinctions between, subjective provinces of meaning. It thus fulfills not only the basis religious function of transcending human nature, but also the specific function of religion in the narrower sense: it authoritatively bestows ultimate and encompassing sense to individual life and instills significance into individual biographies by means of the symbolic language, ritual acts and icons, sacred calendar, sacred topography and ritual enactments of the sacred tradition of social groups as well as ritual acts. Thus both the ultimate significance of everyday life and the meaning of extraordinary experiences are located in this "different" and "sacred" domain of reality" (Luckmann 1967, 58).

5. Metaphor and the paradox of communication

As a province of meaning, the sacred cosmos is subjectively experienced as being different from the common sense of everyday life; and as a symbolic universe, the sacred cosmos surpasses the realm of everyday communication. Exactly at this point Schutz discovers a serious problem which he calls the "*paradox of communication*": The world of everyday life is characterized by "acts of working", by understanding and intersubjectivity; it is therefore the only province of meaning in which communication with others is possible. Language - any language - pertains as communication *kat exochen* to the intersubjective world of working. It thus obstinately refuses to serve as a vehicle for meanings which transcend its own presuppositions. Symbols also originate in, are determined by and find their solution within this world of everyday life (Schutz 1962a, 294). "If we discuss a work of art with a fellow beholder, if we indulge with others in the same ritual" (Schutz 1962b, 258), we are still in the everyday world.[38] How then, Schutz asks, can we

[37] It is in this sense that Luckmann talks about the world-view, or the "relative-natural attitude" as "transcendent", even as the "elementary form of religion", universally found in all human societies. (Luckmann 1967, 52f.)

[38] Schutz (1962b, 258) hints at the possibility that both partners in a communication may, in communicating, leap together "from the finite province of meaning, called ‘world of everyday life’", into the province of play, art, religious symbols, etc., i.e. a quasi-reality that may be "restored".

communicate experiences which are made in provinces of meaning other than everyday life if the symbols we use belong to a different interpretational scheme "independent of any reference to the common-sense thinking of everyday life and its realities" (Schutz 1962a, 346)? Luckmann faces the same problem with respect to religious communication. Religious experiences cannot be communicated directly as such, they can only be reconstructed through communication.[39] How can we communicate phenomenological meditations, dreams or phantasies, if the symbols cannot be "translated into the language of everyday life" (Schutz 1962b, 255ff)?

This paradox of communication has also been seen by other scholars. Schutz mentions the work of Karl Jaspers, who assumes that the attempt to communicate experiences of transcendence only leads to "ciphers" ("Chiffren"), and it may, at best, result in a "cipher language" (Jaspers 1970, 29 and 39). Other scholars, such as Luhmann (1987), assume that it is not possible to communicate these experiences at all. Schutz, however, finds a solution to this problem in what he calls the manifold forms of *indirect communication*" (Schutz 1962b, 233). (He analyzed them especially with respect to phenomenological meditation, but he also refers to forms of religious experience, such as "pure meditation"[40]). By indirect communication he alludes to a notion of Kierkegaard who assumes that provinces of meaning other than daily life are more adequately described by poets and artists than by scientists and philosophers (Schutz 1962b, 244). "The poet and the artist are much closer to an adequate interpretation of the worlds of dreams and phantasms than the scientist and the philosopher, because their categories of communication themselves refer to the realm of imagery. They can, if not overcome, at least make transparent the underlying dialectical conflict" (Schutz 1962b, 244). An example of "indirect communication" is the way in which Kierkegaard tries to express aesthetic and erotic experiences. As soon as erotic experience is being reflected it loses its immediacy; these experiences are therefore described by comparing them to music, especially to the operas of Mozart (Schutz 1964). Another example for this indirectness is the classical topos of "ineffability", i.e. the inability to express the mystical experiences (James 1958, 293).

Schutz' solution to the paradox of communication consists in the following argument: The paradox of communication "exists only as long as we take what we called the finite province of meaning as ontological static entities, objectively existing outside the stream of individual consciousness within which they originate. Then, of course, the terms and notions, valid within one province, would (...) become therein [in the world of everyday life, HK] entirely meaningless." But "the finite provinces of meaning are not separate states of mental life in the sense that passing from one to another would require a transmigration of the soul and a complete extinction of memory and consciousness by death"; "they are merely names for different tensions

[39] To Luckmann, this happens by communicative acts that are given an elementary communicative form, such as mythical narratives, invocatory or commemorative rituals, or symbolic reminders.

[40] Schutz 1962b, 256; 245. Schutz remarks that religious meditation is a subform of pure meditation.

of one and the same consciousness". As opposed to, e.g., Karl Rahner's (1964, 306) "ontology of symbolic realities", Schutz takes the provinces of meaning not as "realities" beyond human consciousness but rather as functions of consciousness which are, therefore, subject to social constructions. "All these different experiences are experiences within my inner time; they belong to my stream of consciousness; they can be remembered and reproduced. And that is why they can be communicated in ordinary language in working acts to my fellow man" (Schutz 1962b, 257f). Since the reality religion refers to is based in the subjective experience, and since it is the same consciousness making the different experiences, not only can experiences made in the natural attitude enter into dreams and phantasms, but also other forms of experiences can enter into everyday life and therefore be communicated. Thus, it is not by virtue of a linguistic mechanism nor by virtue of a system of communication (as Luhmann argues) but by virtue of the basic subjectivity of religious experience that we are able to communicate these experiences.

This leads us back to the initial question of the essay: how can we define metaphors on the basis of a theory of symbols. In fact, after having sketched Schutz' theory of symbols, we arrived at the problem of indirect communication, and it is exactly at this point where we hit on metaphors again. As Schutz concludes himself:[41] "Therefore, by necessity, everything what can be communicated about the derivative provinces of meaning has an incidental and *metaphorical character* and is rather a hint than a statement" (Schutz 1940)." Luckmann shares this view with respect to religion: "The linguistic articulation of a sacred cosmos, however, rests upon what we may term the symbolic potential of language which appears in the personification of events, the formation of divine names, the construction of `different' realities by *metaphorical transposition*, and so forth".[42] Thus, metaphor is one means by which indirect communication is realized.

Also to Schutz, this accomplishment of metaphors presupposes a specific appresentational relationship which may be best caught by Sapirs "interaction view of metaphor".[43] To Sapir, the two terms of the metaphor cannot be understood in isolation, they have to be considered in relationship with each other.[44] They "interact" in the sense that they give "two ideas for one", stressing either the common or the different features, and finally express a commonplace knowledge that embraces and places the metaphorical 'tenor' and the 'vehicle'. Thus, all metaphors involve analogy, and they add something new to the term stated. By fusing the meanings of different fields, metaphors are capable of being synthesised into new meanings.

With respect to metaphors in general, this synthesis can be analyzed semiotically or linguistically by reconstructing the underlying mechanisms of figurative transference, that is: "an appresenting object A, originally paired with the appresented object x, enters into a new pairing with an

[41] As Halbfas (1978) shows, this problem of mystical experience is typically solved by communicative forms, such as the "paradoxon".
[42] Luckmann 1967, 60. Other forms of symbols may be "ritual", i.e. the "acting form of symbols, and "icons".
[43] Cf. the lucid analysis of Sapir, op. cit.
[44] Therefore he labels them "continuous" and discontinuous" terms. p. 7f.

appresented object X...".[45] The meaning of these metaphors may be understood in the frames of different symbolic traditions which, linguistically, could be regarded as "domains". Metaphors used in everyday language can be reconstructed in this way with respect to their meaning in "source" and "target" linguistic domains.

Although this view seems to suggest an almost semiotic or linguistics understanding of metaphors, it should be clear by now that Schutz' theory of transcendence, provinces of meaning and symbolic universes is based on the subjective processes involved in constituting signification, symbolisation and, for that matter, metaphors.[46] Therefore, Schutz' theory of symbols and his notion of metaphors cannot be understood at all as a linguistic mechanism. Rather, there remains an "essential ambiguity of the symbol, the vagueness of the transcendent experiences appresented by it, and the difficulty of translating their meaning into discursive terms" (Schutz 1962a, 338). The ambiguity of these metaphors is, first, due to the fact that metaphors, as symbols, are "appresentations of a higher order". Symbols as appresentation of a higher order are based on preformed appresentational references (such as marks, indications, signs, and even other symbols). Schutz exemplifies this appresentation of a higher order by Jacob's dream of the ladder in which God revealed Himself to him (Genesis 28, 10-25). After waking up, Jacob took the stone that had served as his pillow, set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it, vowing that this stone shall be God's house. "Surely", he said, "the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not". Here, the transcendent sphere ("the Lord is in this place") steps into everyday life: the stone becomes a pillow, the pillow a pillar, the pillar God's house (Schutz 1962a, 337).

But metaphors with a symbolic function also remain ambiguous for another reason. As symbols, they refer to a reality other than everyday life; already their constitution is based on a subjective experiential dimension which lies beyond the conventions of ordinary communication. Whatever the content of the subjective experiences of transcendence and the content of provinces of meaning may be, they fall prey to what Schutz calls the "tragedy of language": the impossibility to catch the world of inner experience in the net of words (Schutz 1981, 214).

[45] Appresentational relations are governed by three principles: 1. The principle of the relative irrelevance of the vehicle; to the nationalist, for example, it does not make a big difference if his national anthem is sung in a particular key or played on any particular instrument. 2. the principle of the variability of the appresentational meaning, that is: the possibility of homonymy, synonymy, and change of meaning, and 3. the principle of figurative transference. Schutz 1962a, 305.

[46] This distinction corresponds roughly to what Frege called „Bedeutung“ and „Sinn“.

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