Generation 'Why?':
Contested Concepts of Ultimacy in Contemporary Western European Culture

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I, hereby, declare that this is my own work.

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Introduction

0.1 Introduction

The thesis has two aims: the first is to provide the reader with an understanding of the prevailing 'horizons of meaning' within contemporary Western European culture, and the second is to determine the contribution of the Christian *Weltanschauung*[1] in this context. The thesis seeks to achieve these aims, through identifying, exploring and critiquing those aspects, such as mass-media, which shape perceptions, influence values, and form 'horizons of meaning.' The driving impetus of the thesis stems from the contention, that contemporary, mass-media-infused, image-saturated, contemporary Western European culture is undergoing a debilitating contraction of its 'horizon of meaning.' This truncation is particularly perceptible in the proliferation of consumerism, whereby commodities are made to carry significant meanings for a culture. The term 'horizon' comes from Hans-Georg Gadamer, who proposes that, "[T]he horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."[2] When applied to the thinking mind, he continues, "we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons."[3] The thesis seeks to provide a basis on which to achieve such expansion of 'horizons,' by presenting access to, and comprehension of, a transcendent counter-narrative.

The Christian *Weltanschauung* is part of a theo-cultural response which draws on philosophies of language and theologies of grace, revelation and incarnation in order to advance a basis for a (re-)expansion of available 'horizons of meaning' and an articulation of transcendent counter-narrative. For the thesis to achieve such aims, multiple disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, theology, anthropology, cultural analysis, semiology, linguistics, epistemology, and ontology will be explored. The following chapters will identify, develop and employ a classic dialectical approach, forged from positions and counter-positions found in a diverse range of theorists centring on themes such as, narrative and counter-narrative, true transcendence and quasi-transcendence, the Christian *Weltanschauung* and the prevailing trends of predominantly secular, media-saturated, contemporary Western European culture. The thesis seeks to contribute to a larger discussion circulating around questions of mass-media, culture, and (ultimate) meaning. The treatment of significant ideas are 'nested' through the thesis, thus, key ideas introduced in chapter

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[1] *Weltanschauung*, literally, means worldview. The thesis uses this German term since it communicates a richer, deeper meaning than its English-language equivalent. A *Weltanschauung* encompasses an entire way of being in the world - all ideas, values, and knowledge that shape the human perspective of lived experience in the world.
[2] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Continuum, 2004), 301.
[3] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 301.

one are expanded upon in chapter two, as corollary ideas are introduced and discussed, with further nuances, similarly being drawn out and developed in chapter three.

0.2 Background of Author

It is in personal experience that initial basic questioning of culture, language, and religion began. This provided a foundation which led to the form of the thesis, and sets in place a basis for understanding its motivation.

The sensitivity to culture and shifting cultural influences, and the interest in its themes, derives from my own inter-cultural and inter-denominational experiences. I am of Dutch nationality, but have lived in New Zealand, Austria and Ireland. My religious heritage is rooted in shared Calvinist/Roman Catholic perspectives which, in the thesis, at times generates a creative friction. My worldview has further been shaped through education, such as attending a boarding school, which had a significant proportion of international students. The interaction with various languages and worldviews raised questions of communication, and different understandings of the world. The relationship between language and worldview becomes a focal point, explored and critiqued in the following chapters. The thesis specifically focuses on the cultural environment of 'Generation Y.'[4] By virtue of the year of my birth, I am also a member of this generation, having experienced coming to adulthood in the era of mass-media influence and high technologisation. The basic premise of the thesis stems from the experience of contrasting messages communicated by the mass-media, and countered by a Christian worldview. In pursuing an undergraduate course in theology, these early experiences were given context within broader theoretical frameworks, which the thesis seeks to advance. The *Weltanschauung* instilled by my religious upbringing has, to some extent, provided a model by which to approach the world portrayed by the mass-media. Interesting questions arise, with regard to the dominating cultural narratives, and the form and content that a counter-narrative might have.

0.3 Culture

The key concept, which underpins and informs the interpretative functioning of the research is the ambiguous omnipresence of culture, which is pivotal in influencing and forming human being. Thus, culture offers an entry-point for analytic exploration, since culture – as potentially radically enabling or debilitating, and expansive or restrictive of human perceptions of meaning, purpose and

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[4] 'Generation Y' designates those born from the 1980s onwards.

transcendence – is fundamentally pliant and malleable. Identifying the shapers of culture and critiquing the shaping are significant aspects of the overall task of the thesis. The thesis explores and critiques contemporary Western European culture in relation to the significant cultural shifts ushered in by technological developments, and the preoccupation with the acquisition of consumer goods, which hold and convey significance. In forming its understanding the thesis will draw on key authors such as Clifford Geertz, Raymond Williams, and Stuart Hall, amongst others. These authors will provide a framework on which the thesis can develop an understanding of contemporary Western European culture.

Clifford Geertz, describes culture as being, "webs of significance."[5] This proposition is expanded by Stuart Hall, who states, "culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings - the giving and taking of meaning - between members of a society or group."[6] Additionally, Michael Paul Gallagher describes culture as being a, "set of meanings and values informing a common way of life."[7] These meaning-structures have a significant impact on the human, in particular for shaping lived experience in the world. The thesis, therefore, raises questions relating to the effects of cultural shifts, such as the development of an image-suffused, technologised, media-ised, consumer culture. The cultural meaning-structures are communicated through language, since it is, "the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged."[8] Therefore, language has a key role in expanding, or contracting, 'horizons of meaning.' The thesis will seek to develop an understanding of 'language' to capture any system that functions through signs, that is, any system which carries meaning. Through such developments mass-media imagery can be categorised as part of the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. The significance lies in which meanings are easily made accessible, since these can potentially shape a *Weltanschauung*, and, thus, lived experience in the world.

0.4 Contemporary Western European Culture

The thesis is focused on contemporary Western European culture from the 1980s onwards. The reason for this timeline is due to the exponential proliferation of mass-media from this period to the present and which has increasingly exerted influence on the character of Western European culture.

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[5] Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.
[6] Stuart Hall, "Introduction," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 2.
[7] Michael Paul Gallagher S.J., *Clashing Symbols: An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 20.
[8] Hall, "Introduction," 1.

The generation coming of age and experiencing these cultural shifts is, as mentioned above, 'Generation Y.' This generation has become inculturated into a mass-media commodity culture, which shapes their lived experience in the world, and, in some instances, may be the only one with which they are familiar. This cultural environment has accelerated and proliferated through technological innovations, and has provided corporations with a means to instill their meanings into the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. These meanings, intentionally created, occur specifically in the form of brands. These developments, the thesis contends, cause a debilitating contraction of 'horizons of meaning.' Michael Warren describes this as 'cultural oppression,' which is the, "imposition of a world of meaning on others in such a way that they cannot think about it or question it."[9] The reduction of the human into passive recipients of cultural trends is comparable to a form of 'slavery,' which warrants a liberatory response. The thesis attempts to provide the basis for such a liberatory response, in the form of transcendent counter-narrative.

The mass-media, as a significant part of the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture, has an active role in such debilitation. Karen E. Dill states, "what we experience via the media plays a large part in creating our culture."[10] Furthermore, Marshall McLuhan states, "[a]ll media work us over completely."[11] He continues, "[T]hey are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered."[12] Thus, the meaning-structures of contemporary Western European culture have become shaped by corporations through the mass-media. However, culture, as Michael Warren explains, "should itself be formed in the image and likeness of human personhood."[13] He continues, "whereas in fact it can do the opposite and form persons in some other image and likeness."[14] This raises interesting questions as to who is doing the shaping and in what images and likenesses.

In contemporary Western European culture, the meanings communicated and exchanged have become pervaded with purposive symbolic imagery on behalf of trans-national corporations, (the dominant institution of our time), through the mass-media. Such symbolic imagery becomes

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[9] Michael Warren, *Seeing Through the Media: A Religious View of Communications and Cultural Analysis* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 13.
[10] Karen E.Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality: Seeing Through Media Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 47.
[11] Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage,* co-ordinated by Jerome Agel (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 26.
[12] McLuhan and Fiore *The Medium is the Massage,* 26.
[13] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 63.
[14] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 63.

particularly visible in the corporate brand logo, which conveys meaning. The indication is that such image immersion can, consciously and unconsciously, affect people's perception of the world, and the meaning frameworks they grasp as available to them and within which to be situated.[15] One primary effect of existence, amid such culturally pervasive image-suffusion, is the promotion and normalisation - through the totemisation of consumer goods injected with quasi-significance via advertising and advertorial - of rampant acquisitive consumerism. Another significant effect is upon the human being's yearning to experience transcendence through *ek-stasis*.[16] Karen Armstrong states that, traditionally religion has been the source to obtaining ecstasy.[17] This traditional role of religion in providing ecstasy has significantly diminished for contemporary Western European culture.[18] However, the yearning for transcendence remains and it continues to be sought by humans. This, in the corporate world, is seen as a business opportunity ready to be exploited for profit. One such corporation is Nike[19] which, as Naomi Klein points out, advertises athleticism in a number of ways - one of which is the explicit promotion of attaining some form of transcendence through athleticism.[20] Corporations can therefore embody a spiritual dimension in their advertising. A blurring of 'horizons' can occur through this surrogate quasi-transcendent consumerist experience. However, the ecstasy experienced through, for example, the acquisition of logoised, rubberised footware only temporarily, incompletely, and inadequately, satisfies the inherent human yearning for transcendence. The yearning for a genuine experience of transcendence remains but this truncated experience of transcendence provides an opportunity. The human, un-satisfied and yearning for true Transcendence, continues their quest for transcendent 'horizons of meaning' through questioning and narratives. The thesis will advance the basis for a transcendent counter-narrative, which seeks to broaden the 'horizons of meaning' available.

0.5 Image, Imagination, and Ultimacy

To understand the power and impact of the mass-media on contemporary Western European culture, it is crucial to explore the role of 'language' in forming lived experience in the world. In communicating meaning the mass-media makes use of, and modifies the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. The primary form of representation the mass-media employs in getting its promotional message to the consumer is through the presentation of images,

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[15] See Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 62-3. Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 11.
[16] A standing outside the self
[17] Karen Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth* (London: Canongate, 2005), 8.
[18] See Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth,* 8.
[19] Nike was the ancient Greek winged goddess of victory. Karl C. Kerenyl, *The Gods of the Greeks* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1992), 122.
[20] Naomi Klein, *No Logo* (London: Fourth Estate, 2010), 51.

moving or still, which convey a narrative. Dill adds, "the most popular forms of modern media (television, movies, video games) are essentially high-tech forms of storytelling."[21] The roles of 'language' and narrative, therefore, need to be interrogated in relation to their providing meaning-structures.

The thesis will focus on images in particular, bearing in mind that, as James W. Fowler says, "virtually all of our knowing begins with images and most of what we know is stored in images."[22] If this is true, then images, in particular, have significant effects on knowledge and memory. Coincidentally, images conveyed by the mass-media also form a significant portion of the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. These images can shape and form perceptions of lived experience in the world. It is promotional imagery and brands, in particular, conveyed via the mass-media, which can potentially truncate 'horizons of meaning,' such as, knowledge, beliefs, values, rules, feelings, and future hopes. These imaged perceptions of lived experience in the world are significant, since it is the impressions of this cultural environment that (in)form the imagination. Fowler explains that the myriad of images, which are presented to the human (which includes those via mass-media) are collated and stored by the human imagination, creating some form of ultimacy.[23]

The response to some conception of ultimacy is, in the broadest sense of the word, faith. Paul Tillich describes faith as the, "state of being ultimately concerned."[24] Thus, at the core of the relationship between imagination and meaning, is faith. This is of significance since the ultimate concern is, "the ground of everything,"[25] in such a manner that, "being without it is being without a center [*sic*]."[26] The necessity and yearning for such an 'ultimate,' reveals itself in the quest for meaning and transcendence. The need for an ultimate, is in rising up to the, "challenge of finding or composing some kind of order, unity, and coherence"[27] in the world in which we live. Armstrong points out, that humans are "meaning-seeking creatures,"[28] and it is culture, through 'language,' which provides and gives access to meaning-structures for particular groups of people. In identifying and discussing the roles of image and imagination, the thesis will construct its arguments on key authors, such as, John Sallis, Jean Baudrillard, and Kathleen R. Fischer, amongst

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[21] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 50.
[22] James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: HarperOne, 1995), 25.
[23] See Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 25.
[24] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 1.
[25] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[26] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 123
[27] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 24.
[28] Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God: What Religion Really Means* (London: Bodley Head, 2009), 17.

others. Key topics such as, 'language,' imagination, 'ultimacy,' and faith, provide a foundation for the later dialectical discussion surrounding the contrasting nature of 'horizons of meaning' and modes of 'language.'

The contemporary Western European cultural environment warrants interrogation, so that individuals can themselves become aware of and explore 'horizons of meaning.' The thesis will propose one such response, through the use of the Christian *Weltanschauung* and its meaning-structures. It is particularly those aspects of the Christian *Weltanschaaung* which designate it as counter-cultural in contemporary Western European terms, such as, the claim that Christian meanings and values, "are salvific" and "the decisive ones for life," and that Christianity provides "ultimate norms" by which to "judge reality"[29] which are important. The aim, though, is not to enforce a Christian perspective of the world, but rather, through its employment, to see the limitations set by mass-media in meaning-seeking. Therefore, the (re-)introduction of the Christian *Weltanschauung* and 'language' is to provide one example of a counter-narrative which can expand 'horizons of meaning.' This counter-narrative can offer critique on mass-media shaped lived experience in the world.

0.6 Contrasting 'Languages'

The contrasting 'languages' between that of contemporary Western European culture and the Christian *Weltanschauung* is a manifestation of the archetypal clash between two modes of 'language,' that of *logos* and *mythos*. These modes of 'language' were in, "most pre-modern cultures, two recognised ways of thinking, speaking and acquiring knowledge."[30]

The Christian *Weltanschauung* uses *mythos* as its mode of 'language' to communicate lived experience in the world. *Mythos* is a, "form of symbolic thought and expression."[31] Myth more specifically provides, "a figurative representation of a reality which eludes precise description or definition."[32] It is, therefore, a mode of 'language' that, "deals with a numinous order of reality behind the appearances of the phenomenal world."[33] However, contemporary Western European culture, through a dominating hybrid meta-discourse of scientistic and consumerist materialism manifests and inculcates another *Weltanschauung*. Contemporary Western European culture promotes a 'language' in which true transcendence is no longer present and which, inherently and conceptually removes advertance to the existence of God. The thesis terms this 'language' as being

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[29] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 21.
[30] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 2.
[31] Avery Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," *Theological Studies* 27 (1966): 6.
[32] Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," 8.
[33] Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," 8.

logos-istic in mode. The term *logos* refers to a, "pragmatic mode of thought that enabled people to function effectively in the world."[34] Armstrong continues, "[I]t had, therefore, to correspond accurately to external reality."[35] Contemporary Western European culture has caused an outbalancing of *logos* over *mythos,* since, "we live in a society of scientific *logos* and myth has fallen into disrepute."[36] Since the 'language' of a culture has significant impact on humans, this outbalancing of 'language' has pivotal and far-reaching repercussions on the way human imagination operates and how humans conceptualise lived experience in the world and conceive 'ultimacy,' and on whether (or not) they consider religious revelation viable or possible. The thesis will investigate the potential of (re-)affirming the Christian *Weltanschauung* and accompanying *mythos* 'language' to provide a basis for attaining transcendent 'horizons of meaning.'

0.7 The Foundations of the Christian *Weltanschauung*: Grace and Revelation

The Christian *Weltanschauung,* on which the counter-narrative employed by the thesis is based, is grounded in the Christian Ultimate - that is, Godself revealed through grace, in general and historical revelation, and reaching a pinnacle in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Revelatory experience is where an, "ultimate concern grasps the human mind and creates a community in which this concern expresses itself in symbols of action, imagination and thought."[37] The importance of each revelatory mode differs from denomination to denomination. One such example would be the different modes in which revelation occurs. The Calvinist church adheres to sacred Scripture as being the prime mode for revelation. Other modes, such as, nature, sacred Tradition or some conception of the sacramentality of images, are considered less significant. In approaching the Christian *Weltanschauung,* the thesis will draw on protestant theologians, such as, Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, and John Calvin and Roman Catholic theologians, such as, Michael Schmaus, Avery Dulles, and Karl Rahner. These authors will inform and provide a comprehensive overview of the liberatory counter-narrative of transcendence. At the heart of this counter-narrative lies the concept of Divine grace. The significance of grace for the counter-narrative is to emphasise that it is, "a gift of love," wholly, freely bestowed, and, "gratuitous... unmerited and undeserved."[38] Foundational to this understanding of graced revelation is the striking insight that it is not humanity that finds God, but rather, it is God that finds humanity, and freely chooses to reveal Godself to them. The Christian counter-narrative is, thus, not a human narrative solely thrown up from human *mythos*-making and speculation, but rather, is a transcendent revelatory experience occurring by Divine initiative,

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[34] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 3.
[35] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 3.
[36] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 3.
[37] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 78.
[38] Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979), 6.

received, experienced, reflected-upon and articulated in human 'language.' The result is that the Christian community negotiates, conceptualises, and comprehends the existence of God by means of revelatory signposts manifested, apprehended and articulated in the world. It is clear that the revelatory signposts of the Christian Ultimate stand in contrast to the signposts created by corporations and communicated through the mass-media, providing individualist narratives of 'ultimacy.' The revelatory signposts of the Christian Ultimate, that is, of God, can only have their significance apprehended and articulated in the world through the use of *mythos* 'language.' *Logos,* as mode of 'language' is limited to the finiteness of the physical world for expression.

The reinstatement of *mythos* into the heart of contemporary Western European culture will require a re-imagining of its dominating cultural attitudes. To expand the 'horizons of meaning,' the reinstatement is necessary since that dependence on one sole mode of 'language,' has, as proposed, detrimental effects on people in their search for meaning. *Mythos* opens the possibility for contemporary Western European culture to get in touch with the Christian *Weltanschauung* and with the 'language' of its narratives.

Chapter One

Critiquing Contemporary Western European Culture

1.1 Introduction

The thesis title indicates the scope of the following chapters and involves broad questions of meaning and ultimacy. For the thesis to develop and explore these questions it must first analyse the phenomenon of culture, since it is within culture that the human has its being, asking questions, and seeking meaning. As will become apparent, culture shapes the meaning-laden world in which these answers are sought and given.

The word culture requires some explanation, considering that it, "is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language."[1] This is possibly due to the use of the word in various different contexts obscuring its deeper meaning. For example, in news articles, culture becomes merged with different phenomena, such as, "culture wars,"[2] "Western culture,"[3] "popular culture,"[4] "Protestant culture,"[5] "gay culture,"[6] and "commodity culture."[7] Thus, to gain a comprehensive understanding of culture, the thesis will begin with a brief outline of the historic concept and the realities it attempts to describe. This understanding will then be drawn upon in outlining and critiquing contemporary Western European culture.

1.2 Culture

Historically, the concept 'culture' has gone through several evolutions. In its earliest usage, culture, "was a noun of process: the tending *of* something, basically crops or animals."[8] Here, 'culture,' "means an activity, and it was a long time before the word came to denote an entity."[9] Thus, the earliest meaning of 'culture' indicates a, "dialectic between the artificial and the natural, what we do to the world and what the world does to us."[10] In other words, "there is a nature or raw material beyond ourselves."[11] Nevertheless, this, "raw material must be worked up into humanly significant

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[1] Raymond Williams, "Culture," in *Keywords* (London: Flamingo, 1983), 87.
[2] Nick Bryant, "The Great 'Cate Debate,'" BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13592675.
[3] BBC, "Hay: David Cameron and Barack Obama 'No Clue' on Terror," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-mid-wales-13590077.
[4] Yolande Knell, "Egypt's Revolution Inspires New Trends in Pop Culture," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13193624.
[5] BBC, "Arson Attack at Orange Order Hall," BBC, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/8176145.stm.
[6] Kathryn Westcott, "Why is the Word 'Slut' so Powerful?" BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-13333013.
[7] Paul A. Taylor and Jan LI. Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media: Then and Now* (Berkshire: Open University, 2010), 147.
[8] Williams, "Culture," 87.
[9] Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 1.
[10] Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, 2.
[11] Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, 2.

shape."[12] This proposition will be further developed and the thesis will show that the raw materials of the world become meaningful through human interaction.

The earliest meaning of culture, fixed in rural labour, gradually evolves in meaning to describe, "something like 'civility,' and then in the eighteenth century becomes more or less synonymous with 'civilization,' in the sense of a general process of intellectual, spiritual and material progress."[13] Consequently, 'culture' meant to be civilised, or cultivated, and there were those who were regarded as un-civilised, un-cultivated. 'Culture' and 'civilisation,' then, both went through various processes, whereby they were used to, "distinguish between 'human' and 'material' development."[14] Thus, these were connected with one another from an early stage in human development.

The understanding of culture as being related to the human, particularly as a way of life, intellectually, spiritually, and aesthetically, continued well into the nineteenth century. This is apparent from writings of Matthew Arnold. In 1869, Arnold published *Culture and Anarchy,*[15] where 'culture,' as Michael Paul Gallagher states, "meant 'the pursuit of perfection' which entailed 'an inward condition of the mind and spirit', a quality 'at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation' of that industrial age."[16] In a contemporary setting, such an understanding would qualify as some sort of conception of, "high culture, that is, to the fine arts, humanism, intellectual enlightenment, and classical education."[17] It was this high culture that, "traditionally merited the most academic and scholastic attention."[18] The implication of such an understanding, as shown, is that the rich and powerful were in possession of culture and that those lacking culture were considered barbaric, uncivilised. To this day a form of Arnoldian understanding of culture persists whenever culture is, "being limited to such pursuits as art, music and literature."[19]

The earliest non-Arnoldian interpretation of culture came from Edward Tylor. Tylor, summarised by Gallagher, defines culture, "as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [*sic*] as a

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[12] Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, 2.

[13] Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, 9.

[14] Williams, "Culture," 89.

[15] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[16] Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols,* 13.

[17] Allan Figueroa Deck, "Culture," in *the New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, Ed. Judith A.Dwyer (Minnesota: The liturgical Press, 1994), 256.

[18] Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.

[19] Tony Walsh, "Changing Culture," *Doctrine and Life* 56 (2006): 106.

member of society."[20] Hence, culture at this stage is starting to be understood as encompassing some of the most significant aspects of being human. Anthropologists Clifford Geertz, Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn[21] further explain culture as encompassing, "the total lifestyle of a people, including all ideas, values, knowledge, behaviours, and material objects they share."[22] This is of significance and will be expanded upon in the following chapters, particularly in relation to the material objects shared within contemporary Western European culture such as branded products, and the epistemological consequences thereof.

Geertz writes that, "there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture."[23] Humans are, thus, "meaning-seeking creatures,"[24] and, additionally, "cultural animals."[25] These two characteristics are intertwined and interconnected, since culture provides the meaning-structures through which the human embarks on its quest. Culture, thus, should not be seen as, "just an ornament of human existence but - the principal basis of its specificity - an essential condition for it."[26] Culture, is, therefore, not added on, so to speak, "to a finished or virtually finished animal, [rather] was ingredient, and centrally ingredient, in the production of that animal itself."[27]

Geertz illustrates this by stating that, "one of the significant facts about us may finally be that we all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of life but end up in the end having lived only one."[28] Humans exist in cultural webs of meaning, whereby, "[b]ecoming human is becoming individual, and we become individual under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives."[29] This has enormous implications for contemporary Western European culture as an environment where the human person becomes an individual. It is against the backdrop of the Christian counter-narrative that the cultural environment of contemporary Western Europe will be revealed to provide limited 'horizons of meaning' and inadequate tools for becoming self-actualised as an individual. The term 'horizons of meaning' is used to indicate the range of meanings available, which may be limited to the finite, or be as broad as the Transcendent Ultimate in the counter-narrative. Psychologically, cultural patterns are crucial, since, "humans require a

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[20] Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 13.
[21] A. L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963).
[22] Thomas J. Sullivan, *Sociology: Concepts and Applications in a Diverse World* (US: Pearson Education, Inc. 2004), 39.
[23] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 49.
[24] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 17.
[25] Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 3.
[26] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 46.
[27] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 47.
[28] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 45.
[29] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 52.

continually updated image or a model of the environment within our brains, and it is then based on that model that humans perceive, make decisions, and behave."[30] The meaning structures provided by culture are significant for the human, as they easily fall into despair, questioning the purpose and meaning of what appears at times to be a chaotic world. Therefore, the world needs to be modeled by meaning structures. Thus, "from the very beginning we invented stories that enabled us to place our lives in a larger setting, that revealed an underlying pattern, and gave us a sense that, against all the depressing and chaotic evidence to the contrary, life had meaning and value."[31]

Without the orientation offered by cultural patterns, "man's [*sic*] behavior [*sic*] would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experience virtually shapeless."[32] It is culture that provides the meaning structures, directing and shaping the human. Geertz further explains that culture, "is best seen not as complexes of concrete behavior [*sic*] patterns - customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters." [33] Rather, he continues, they should be seen as a, "set of control mechanisms - plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call programs) - for the governing of behavior [*sic*]."[34] As shown, culture is crucial to the human, since without it experience of the world would be virtually shapeless; humans, "would be unworkable monstrosities with very few useful instincts, fewer recognizable sentiments, and no intellect."[35] As the control mechanisms of culture guide behaviour, it must shape the life of the human, leading to a particular way of living, out of the thousands possible. This understanding is useful in highlighting how culture actively shapes the lives of humans. Culture can be seen as a, "signifying system through which a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored."[36] Geertz further explains that culture, "is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action."[37] Hence, at the most basic level of understanding (as far as it is possible with a complex phenomenon such as culture), it is, "concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings - the giving and taking of meanings - between the members of a society or group."[38] This is also the understanding grounding the works of Raymond Williams and Michael Paul Gallagher. Therefore, culture shapes not only the raw material outside of the human, it also shapes the human itself, and can be regarded as one of the

[30] Susan Nolan-Hoeksema, Barbara L. Fredrickson, Geoff Loftus and Willem A. Wagenaar, *Introduction to Psychology* (Hampshire: Cengage Learning, 2009), 153.
[31] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 2.
[32] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 46.
[33] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 44.
[34] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 44.
[35] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 49.
[36] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 46.
[37] Geertz*, The Interpretation of Cultures*, 145.
[38] Hall, "Introduction," 2.

essential components constituting human be-ing.[39] Culture is, therefore, "a uniquely human creation, the expression of human freedom and transcendence."[40] As the Second Vatican Council states in *Gaudium et spes,* "men and women themselves are the authors and the artisans of the culture of their community."[41]

Culture develops and changes over time, Raymond Williams, cited by Michael Warren, states that culture is, "not something in the past or, if in the present, then ... something finished and set."[42] Culture, is an ongoing activity, and it has a living influence on us.[43] As became apparent, the meaning of culture as phenomenon also evolved. Thus, it must be kept in mind that the understanding of culture employed in the thesis is part of this development, open to further growth.

1.3 Communicated Meanings

As shown, culture, in basic terms, concerns shared meanings. It is 'language' that, "is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged."[44] Thus, culture and language are different sides of the same coin, namely that of meaning. As the thesis will show later, corporations have become part of the meaning-structures of culture. The significance of the tools for communicating cultural ideas, behaviours, attitudes, values, and knowledge will become evident later. Geertz states that culture, "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [*sic*] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."[45] An aspect of human being is, therefore, dependence upon a signifying system called culture, whose cultural meanings, "organize and regulate social practices, influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects."[46]

These meanings are constructed by the, "participants in a culture, who give meaning to people, objects and events,"[47] and communicate these meanings through language. However, meanings are not just communicated through spoken language; there are various other means such as written words, images, clothes, notes, and facial expressions, to name a few. The thesis,

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[39] Culture is an essential component for the human 'to-be' in the world.
[40] Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 25.
[41] Vatican Council, *Gaudium Et Spes,* Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Vatican City, 1965), 55.
[42] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 38.
[43] See Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 38.
[44] Hall, "Introduction," 1.
[45] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 89.
[46] Hall, "Introduction," 3.
[47] Hall, "Introduction," 3.

therefore, uses 'language' in a very broad way, encompassing anything, "that is disengaged from its mere actuality and used to impose meaning upon experience."[48] In other words, to communicate meanings within culture, humans rely on 'language,' whereby signs are used, "whether they are sounds, written words, electronically-produced images, musical notes, even objects - to stand for or represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings."[49] Geertz adds that 'language' consists of, "words for the most part but also gestures, drawings, musical sounds, mechanical devices like clocks, or natural objects like jewels."[50] Thus, media such as, television, internet, radio, magazines, advertisements, and games work on different 'language' levels as tools for conversation, to extend and communicate meanings through signs such as written words, images, and sounds. Furthermore, the objects themselves function as a 'language,' as will be shown later in the work of Marshall McLuhan. In this chapter, the tools of communication are of particular interest for the critiquing of contemporary Western European culture, since a significant proportion of cultural meanings are communicated through them.

The 'language' of a culture, as shown, works "*through representation,*"[51] that is, the use of "some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, to express or communicate a thought, concept, idea or feeling."[52] In contemporary Western European culture representation, "is the dominant system by which we handle communication, but it is not the only option."[53] There have always been, "ways of separating ourselves from the objects and ideas under discussion, systems of delegation, and substitutions."[54] However, "how people have understood themselves in relation to both the world and the systems of communication has changed radically."[55] Jenn Webb quotes Christopher Prendergast, who draws upon Martin Heidegger to highlight this change. This is due to, "the emergence of what Heidegger called the Age of World Picture, based on the epistemological subject/object spilt of scientific outlook: the knowing subject who observes ... the world-out-there in order to make it over into an object of representation."[56] This is significant to the following chapters, since the 'language' of a culture, "carries that culture's system of priorities, its specific set of values, its specific composition of the physical and social world."[57] Hence, it colours the perception of the human sharing the culture's 'language,' since, "culture depends on its participants

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[48] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 45.
[49] Hall, "Introduction," 1.
[50] Geertz*, The Interpretation of Cultures*, 45.
[51] Hall, "Introduction," 4. Italics in original.
[52] Hall, "Introduction," 4.
[53] Jen Webb, *Understanding Representation* (London: SAGE, 2009), 15.
[54] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 15.
[55] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 15.
[56] Christopher Prendergast, *The Triangle of Representation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2, quoted in Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 15.
[57] Graeme Turner, *Film as Social Practice* (London: Routledge, 1993), 45.

interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and 'making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways."[58] Thus, for example, a traffic light which signals red means stop in the given context. This works because culture through 'language,' has circulated the knowledge that red signifies such an action. Significantly, it is not necessarily the colour red that is important, but rather its function as sign - which stems from human meaning-making activities. This is known as the, "semiotic approach to representation [which] depends on the notion that all uses of language begin with a (representational) sign."[59] Therefore, with this in mind, elements such as, "sounds, words, notes, gestures, expressions, clothes are part of our natural and material world, but their importance for 'language' is not what they *are* but what they *do,* their function."[60] And what they do is, "construct meaning and transmit it. They signify."[61] Signs such as words, images, and sounds, "are the vehicles or media which carry meaning,"[62] because they, "stand for or represent the meanings we wish to communicate."[63] The significance for the thesis is that, evidently, 'language' is fundamental to the meaning structures of culture, and that these meanings are human constructs.

For future reference, in particular for understanding the significance of brands and the counter-narrative presented in chapter three, distinction must be drawn between sign and symbol. A symbol, "is a complex of gestures, sounds, images, and/or words that evoke, invite, and persuade participation in that to which they refer."[64] Additionally, symbols are understood, "to indicate more than one meaning, 'thrown together' in such a way that one meaning implies or entails others."[65] Signs on the other hand "ambiguously point to a single referent. They give information or offer directions."[66] They, "appear through social agreement, and committees often construct them."[67] Thus, while a symbol can be understood as an intensified sign, the two are not the same. Symbols, such as, "darkness and light, water or oil, emerge from the drama of human experience and enjoy cross-cultural power."[68] Symbols, "constantly convey a surplus of meaning."[69] Stephen Happel contines, "[T]heir versatility as carriers of meaning makes it impossible to say that they have a one-to-one correspondence with their referents."[70] Symbols are crucial as they can lead the human, "towards self-transcendence, but they can also fixate the confusions of self-destruction and social

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[58] Hall, "Introduction," 2.
[59] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 45.
[60] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[61] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[62] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[63] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[64] Stephen Happel, "Symbol," in *The New Dictionary of Theology,* ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 997.
[65] Happel, "Symbol," 997.
[66] Happel, "Symbol," 997.
[67] Happel, "Symbol," 997.
[68] Happel, "Symbol," 997.
[69] Happel, "Symbol," 997.
[70] Happel, "Symbol," 997.

bias."[71]   As such, brands can symbolise the acquisition of success, wealth, self-actualisation, and have social implications such as relationships based upon commodities, and a 'quasi-caste' system whereby becoming an individual of self-worth is based on acquisition of symbolic brands. These invite the consumer to participate in the reality to which they refer; being without such symbols would almost mean being a *persona non grata.*

Signs[72] can, "be broken down into two parts. The *signifier* is the physical form of the sign: the image, or word, or photograph. The *signified* is the mental concept referred to. Together they form the sign."[73] The connection between the signifier and signified, "is not based on resemblance or intention, but on something entirely arbitrary - something cultural."[74] With symbols the signifier and signified are fully intentional and are not arbitrary; a symbol points towards and participates in the reality it symbolises. Nevertheless, the "very existence of different languages demonstrates [the] fundamental arbitrariness of language."[75] Hence, cultural meanings are crucial to the relationship and connection between signifier and signified in the sign. This theory stems from Ferdinand de Saussure, who is associated with the school of thought known as structural linguistics, which later theorists, such as Jacques Derrida, questioned by introducing the idea of deconstructionism, leading to the school of thought known as post-structuralism. Despite the arguments and counter-arguments posed by each school of thought, there is agreement that representation communicates meanings - which is the key point for the thesis.

In this chapter, attention is specifically drawn to the mass-media. Their signs are of significance given that, "what we experience via the media plays a large part in creating our culture."[76] Mass-media, thus, assists corporate signifying-practices. As mentioned earlier, culture and 'language' are concerned with assigning meaning to experience; however, the question arises as to what effect these have on the individual 'horizons of meaning' and experience within, and of, the world? The foundations for exploring these questions are set in place within this chapter.

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[71] Happel, "Symbol," 998.
[72] The concept of sign comprising of signifier and signified stems from structural linguistic Ferdinand de Saussure. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, ed. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
[73] Turner, *Film as Social Practice,* 47.
[74] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 45.
[75] David West, "Language, Thought and Reality: A Comparison of Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* with C.K Ogden and I.A Richards' *The Meaning of Meaning,*" *Changing English* 12 (2005): 329.
[76] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 47.

The term, 'horizon,' as seen in the Introduction, refers to "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."[77] We can speak of, "narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons."[78] The following sections of this chapter seek to outline, explore, and critique dominating aspects of the cultural landscape of contemporary Western Europe, in particular its tools for communication, and the meaning-laden representations it employs. These have significant effect on the 'horizons of meaning' available to the human, particularly in regard to conceptualisations of reality.

1.4 Contemporary Western European Culture

The previous sections have provided a foundational conception of culture and representation. This section seeks to outline the cultural milieu of contemporary Western Europe with, particular focus on the tools for communication, primarily the mass-media. The primal medium for communication is speech, which, "is recreated anew by every medium of communication - from paintings to hieroglyphs to the alphabet to television."[79] Thus, each "medium, like language itself, makes possible a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression, for sensibility."[80] This is significant for the thesis as the forms of mass-media work, "by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce their special definition of reality."[81] Significantly, therefore, "our media-metaphors classify the world for us, sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color [*sic*] it, argue a case for what the world is like."[82]

'Generation Y,' named in the thesis title, describes the generation which has come of age from the 1980s onwards. The thesis focuses upon this generational group because, as will become clear, they have come of age within a culture shaped by a mass-media,[83] which has provided a world of representations that embody particular ideological meanings. The consequences for the meaning structures of culture will be developed further in the next chapter. Hall explains that for the human, cultural meanings are produced through a, "variety of different *media*; especially, these days, in the modern mass media, the means of global communication, by complex technologies, which circulate meanings between different cultures on a scale and with a speed hitherto unknown

[77] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 301.
[78] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 301.
[79] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 10.
[80] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.
[81] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.
[82] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.
[83] Mass-media denoting, "any social or technological devices used for the selection, transmission or reception of information." John J. Macionis and Ken Plummer, *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (Harlow: Pearson, 2012), 764. Original in italics.

in history."[84] It is within the lifetime of 'Generation Y' that means of communication, through technological advances, has proliferated at extraordinary velocity and facilitated the potential of cultural material to extend beyond traditional cultural limits. This development was partly made possible through the emergence of, "commercial and private television stations all over Europe in the 1980s,"[85] and the emergence of satellite TV in the late 1980s.[86] Richard Paterson, states that the, "advent of the first satellite transmission and later digital transmission increased the number of channels which could be delivered to viewers at an economic cost and led to a rapid proliferation of services."[87] These developments facilitated the cultivation of a generation exposed to meaning-laden, cultural material from differing cultures. For example, the proliferation of, "[e]nglish-language television programmes, primarily those made in the USA and next, those made in Britain, [being] the most exported within Europe."[88]

This generation has been inculturated into the world of internet access, where "Usenet groups, organized around topics of interest to communities of users, became popular in the early 1980s."[89] From then onwards, e-mail, search engines, portals, e-commerce, social networks and blogs have also proliferated, with Hotmail, Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter now being world-wide phenomena with millions of visitors daily. Moreover, another media tool has become part of the culture in which this generation lives, the interactive gaming console, which "became widespread in the 1980s,"[90] and since then has moved to new heights in interaction, through improved graphics and connection to the internet, providing a virtual digital world. Some of the other significant technological innovations that are part of the cultural universe for this generation are memories of the Sony Walkman, the arrival of cellular phones, laptops, and more recently the Apple iPod, iPhone, or some sort of Android-based smartphone. These cellular phones have developed to become multi-purpose communication devices, no longer limited to text messages and calling, but having a myriad of Apps, the ability to take pictures, listen to music, watch movies, and browse the internet. Recently, Apple has with the introduction of the iPad, attempted to bridge a niche in the market between laptop and smartphones. These developments are of significance because connectivity to the internet is becoming increasingly mobile, and pervasive, as is the meaning-making it facilitates.

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[84] Hall, "Introduction," 3.
[85] Jonathan Bignell and Andreas Fickers, "Introduction: Comparative European Perspectives on Television History," in *A European Television History,* ed. Jonathan Bignell and Andreas Fickers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 6.
[86] Société Européenne des Satellites, "The History of SES," SES, http://www.ses.com/4337028/history.
[87] Richard Paterson, "Television: A Framework for Analysing Contemporary Television," in *The Media: An Introduction,* ed. Adam Briggs and Paul Cobley (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), 135.
[88] Bignell and Fickers, "Introduction," 2.
[89] John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 2-3.
[90] Ellen Seiter, "New Technologies," in *Television Studies,* ed. Toby Miller (London: BFI, 2002), 34.

The technological innovations have brought about the formation of a digital communicative world with the possibility of everyone being connected to one another. These developments have brought, "a culture of mass self-expression on a scale never seen before, which has the potential to touch and connect us all and to change how we relate to one another through culture."[91] It is, in part, the technological innovations in the 1980s that has led to the rapid proliferation of media. This development seems to have led to contemporary Western European culture being saturated in mass-media, and the, "production of information and culture [becoming] ... organised on an increasingly industrial scale."[92]

1.5 The Generation Title

The thesis, as noted, focuses on the generation that came of age from the 1980s onwards. The title for this generation is disputed among cultural commentators, depending on factors such as the cut off point of the preceding generation, and the characteristics that distinguish generations. Hence, there is no universally agreed template upon which to construct a timeline, partly because generations slightly overlap, and differing interpretations of what constitutes the distinguishing characteristic that separates the generations. As there is no universal agreement on the generation time lines, the thesis will employ Adam Possamai's timeline, which has the virtue of clarity, and which designates the generation titles as follows: "Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 whereas generation Xers were born between 1965 and 1980; followed by the Y generation between 1981 and 2000."[93] 'Generation Y' is also sometimes referred to as the "'MTV generation,'"[94] characterised by, "short attention spans, interested in cultural products that offer little substance but a great deal of style, consuming today's products now - instant gratification, over in a flash, gone tomorrow."[95]

As outlined, the distinguishing characteristic between generations is of significance. Between 'Generation X' and 'Generation Y' the distinguishing characteristic is the proliferation of mass-media through technological innovation. In other words, 'Generation Y' differentiates from 'Generation X' through a digital divide. 'Generation Y' are, "known as digital natives, meaning they grew up with technology and are likely more comfortable with it."[96] The preceding generation

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[91] Charles Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture: The Future of Global Cultural Relations* (London: Counterpoint, 2010), 19.
[92] Justin Lewis, "Mass Communication Studies," in *Television Studies,* ed. Toby Miller (London: BFI, 2002), 4.
[93] Adam Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y* (London: Equinox, 2009), 2.
[94] Warren Kidd, *Culture and Identity* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 127.
[95] Kidd, *Culture and Identity,* 127.
[96] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality*, 42.

that "learned new technology are called digital migrants."[97] This, "new generation didn't have to relearn anything to live lives of digital immersion. They learned in digital the first time around; they only know a world that is digital."[98] Additionally, as, "everyday technology has evolved particularly rapidly, the digital divide has broadened substantially."[99] The effects of such a superficial, digital world have significant impact on the 'real' world, as more communication, social interaction, media consumption and worldviews are offered through the digital environment.

A further characteristic of 'Generation Y,' in contrast to the previous generation, is that "the deep-rooted sceptical outlook developed by Xers during the economic crisis in the 1970s, the Aids epidemic and threat of global nuclear warfare,"[100] are taken to new heights, since "Yers think anything and everything is possible."[101] This outlook is not illogical, considering the knowledge amassed through media exposure to events over their lifetime, stretching from various wars,[102] political uprisings,[103] genocide,[104] the continuous threat of terrorism,[105] the danger of deadly viruses[106], natural disasters,[107] economic world recession, and the continuous looming threat of global warming. Despite both, "generations [living] in a world of insecurity, Yers were born into this age of uncertainty and took it for granted whereas Xers had to learn this reality for themselves."[108] Thus, 'Generation Y' has come of age in a world of fluid meanings, accompanying lack of certainty, and are, as Tony Judt states, "acutely worried about the world it is to inherit."[109] What is significant for the thesis, however, is the recognition that both 'Generation X' and 'Generation Y' were raised in the predominant, "heyday of global consumerism."[110] Possamai, quoting Rebecca Huntley, attempts to describe the faith of this generation, which is orientated to, "being faithful to a logo in consumer society (that is choosing and having fidelity towards a specific brand as if one could belong to a type of consumer tribe), Xers started in their teen years whereas

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[97] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital*, 4.
[98] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital*, 4.
[99] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality*, 43.
[100] Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y*, 2.
[101] Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y*, 2.
[102] For example: Gulf War (1990-1991); Bosnia (1992-1995); First Congo War (1996-1997); Kosovo (1998-1999); Afghanistan (2001-present); Iraq (2003-2011); Lebanon (2006).
[103] For example: Tunisia (2010-2011); Libya (2011); Egypt (2011-2012); Yemen (2011-2012); Syria (2011-present).
[104] For example: Rwanda (1994).
[105] For example: Attack on the World Trade Center, New York City (11/09/2001); Madrid train bombings (11/03/2004); London bombings (7/7/2005).
[106] For example: Avian Influenza, Swine Influenza, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Dengue, Enterohaemorrhagic E. coli, Foot and Mouth, Aids.
[107] For example: Indian Ocean Tsunami (2004); Hurricane Katrina (2005); Earthquake and Tsunami off Japan causing a partial nuclear meltdown (2011); Christchurch earthquake (2011).
[108] Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y*, 2.
[109] Tony Judt, *Ill Fares the Land* (London: Penguin, 2010), 3.
[110] Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y*, 2.

Yers were already hooked in pre-school."[111] 'Generation Y' has thus come to habitate a, "Branded World [which] is organised through style, logos and image."[112] The formation of this branded world, through the channels of mass-media, is of concern to the thesis, particularly in relation to the effects upon individual 'horizons of meaning.'

1.6 The Connected World

The technological developments within communications have facilitated the emergence of a mass-media, meaning-laden, saturated cultural environment for 'Generation Y.' This development is of significance, since these digital technologies are employed by corporations to convey specific ideological perspectives. Ideology is a, "set of ideas which give some account of the social world; ideas which are usually partial (in both senses) and selective (as all positions are)."[113] Through the digital technologies, the world has shrunk to such an extent that, "increasingly young people around the world are becoming very much alike."[114] Within the developed countries across the globe certain ideas regarding the consumption of goods are communicated through mass-media, inculturating 'Generation Y' to embrace, "similar generational attitudes, norms, and behaviors."[115] Despite differing cultural and geographical contexts, there appears to be a common denominator, manifest visibly as the adherence to consumerist ideals, and particularly manifested as faith to the brand logo.

The thesis has examined the significance of representations as a sort of 'language' to communicate meanings in culture. Evidently, the mass-media represents various meaning structures for interpreting and conceptualising reality. Neil Postman states that, "the clearest way to see through a culture is to attend to its tools for conversation."[116] Thus, below, the thesis will analyse the mass-media landscape, focusing upon two technologies in particular, namely, television and the internet. The reason for this selection is that they are the two predominant mediums of communication for contemporary Western European culture. Television has been, "our culture's principal mode of knowing about itself,"[117] observes Postman. He continues, "[T]herefore how television stages the world becomes the model of how the world is properly to be staged."[118] In

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[111] Rebecca Huntley, *The World According to Y: Inside the New Adult Generation* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2006), 144, quoted in, Possamai, *Sociology of Religion for Generation X and Y*, 2-3.
[112] John J. Macionis and Ken Plummer, *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (Harlow: Pearson, 2012), 525.
[113] Gill Branston and Roy Stafford, *The Media Student's Book: Fifth Edition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 172.
[114] Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital* (New York: McGrawHill, 2009), 27.
[115] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 27.
[116] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 8.
[117] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 92.
[118] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 92.

other words, television provides a model of/for culture. What effect does this have on 'horizons of meaning' for 'Generation Y'? MTV provides a useful example. It was one channel among many, "when it appeared in 1981, [however] it quickly became the generation's medium par excellence."[119] Additionally, MTV is also, "the model for fully branded media integration,"[120] where from the beginning, it has, "not just been a marketing machine for the products it advertises around the clock,"[121] but it has also, "been a twenty-four-hour advertisement for MTV itself: the first truly branded network."[122] MTV for a generation became, "a source of news and a world of meaning all its own."[123] The meanings embodied and communicated to its audience reflect these branded commodified ideas, in turn constructing particular meaning-structures for a generation.

MTV, apart from being an example of a commercialised network, promoting brands through advertising and becoming a source of meaning for a generation, also provides an example of how a television network crosses cultural boundaries, entering Europe from America with the advent of satellite and cable. The effects are that through the electric circuitry of satellite television, radio and the internet, as McLuhan puts it, "we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned."[124] No longer are cultural artifacts, such as films, limited to the cultural milieu in which they were created, they are trans-cultural. This has been made possible because the emergence of, "[d]igital and satellite delivery of media (including radio), combined with the strength of global corporations and global media ownership [making] the prospect of global market for media space more realistic."[125] Furthermore, this, "intensification of globalization (the emergence of a global commodities market in advertising space) is a cause for concern. Expansion is likely despite the recalcitrance of audiences facing the necessary blandness of trans-cultural commercial communication."[126] These trans-cultural commercial communications can perhaps have contributed to the cultural phenomena described by Chip Walker, and drawn on by Naomi Klein, that, "despite different cultures, middle-class youth all over the world seem to live their lives as if in a parallel universe. They get up in the morning, put on

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[119] Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 12.

[120] Klein, *No Logo,* 44.

[121] Klein, *No Logo*, 44.

[122] Klein, *No Logo*, 44.

[123] Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith,* 12.

[124] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 4.

[125] Iain MacRury, "Advertising: Advertising and the New Media Environment," in *The Media: An Introduction,* ed. Adam Briggs and Paul Cobley (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), 48-9.

[126] MacRury, "Advertising," 49.

their Levi's and Nikes, grab their caps, backpacks, and Sony personal CD players, and head for school."[127] In a more contemporary setting, it is probable that the majority will pick up their iPod.

In a variety of ways, all the different cultures comprising contemporary Western Europe, have been impacted by this commodity culture, which is, "premised upon the profuse circulation of generic, frequently cross-referencing, image-based brands and the manufacture of desire, all to cultivate the type of individual consumer who will demand such products."[128] This particular knowledge of ideas, beliefs, behaviours and values is communicated through the mass-media and appears to overarch the individual geo-cultural areas within Western Europe; these meanings have become part of the cultural landscape.[129] The argument is that it matters little if you're in Paris, London, Dublin, Berlin, Amsterdam or Madrid, the commodity culture, in some shape or form, has become fused with the host cultures, not overwhelming them, but becoming a significant component of them. This becomes apparent when in these cities one is likely to find retail outlets for the following brands: McDonald's, Sony, Philips, Apple, Nike, to name a few which are readily recognisable. As a result of the proliferation of the mass-media, "no society today can confidently say that it stands outside the field of global financial markets and transnational corporate operations. A similar observation might be made about popular culture and television."[130]

The commodity culture promoted through the mass-media can, therefore, be understood as an overarching cultural phenomenon across the countries which comprise contemporary Western Europe, since various innovations are making the world a smaller place. For example, the constant connection to the internet through mobiles, offers, "more access to more of everyone's culture, heritage and ideas than ever before."[131] As result, this generation's view of planet earth is of one that is "infinitesimal."[132] Thus, due to increased communications between cultures, meaning structures such as values, ideas, knowledge, behaviours, and material objects are increasingly becoming shared, facilitating the emergence of the overarching cultural phenomenon, outlined above. This has significantly accelerated due to the internet; however, the role of television must

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[127] Chip Walker, "Can TV Save the Planet?" in *American Demographics,* May 1996: 42, quoted in Klein, *No Logo,* 119.

[128] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media*, 147.

[129] This counters the concept of mass society, which has been refined by Frankfurt School theorists such as Adorno M. Horkheimer and H. Marcuse, in which "mass media are responsible for the emergence of a homogenized mass culture, the fragmentation of communities, and the erosion of cultural values and standards of artistic expression." Debra Spitulnik, "Anthropology and Mass Media," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993): 296. http://0-content.ebscohost.com.library.gmit.ie/pdf18_21/pdf/1993/AOA/01Oct93/9403093132.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=9403093132&S=R&D=aph&EbscoContent=dGJyMMvl7ESeqLI4zdnyOLCmr0meprRSsKq4SrSWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGotk+xprFLuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA.

[130] Michael Curtin, "Globalisation," in *Television Studies,* ed. Toby Miller (London: BFI, 2002), 45.

[131] Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture,* 4.

[132] Don Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 205.

not be overlooked within contemporary Western European culture, as broadcast material, "can be seen both as a representation of popular cultural attitudes of the time, and as a massive source of meaning for the audience - meanings that might help them to construct their particular view of the world around them."[133]

This raises a key question; to what extent does mass-media construct the world of meaning and, affect human 'horizons of meaning'? Culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings, whereby, "men and women themselves are the authors and the artisans."[134] However, in this image-saturated, mass-media, commodity culture, what is offered is, "a new kind of accessibility to multiple versions of reality."[135] In other words, all media pushes some reality of meaning forward, which in turn, resonates within culture. This will become a focal point in chapter two, when its effects upon the human worldview, and 'horizons of meaning' are further investigated. In relation to the ideas communicated by mass-media, Debra Spitnulnik, cites Stuart Hall:

> [The mass-media] have progressively *colonized* the cultural and ideological sphere. As social groups and classes live...increasingly fragmented and sectionally differentiated lives, the mass media are more and more responsible (a) for providing the basis on which groups construct an 'image' of the lives, meanings, practices, and values of *other* groups and classes; (b) for providing the images, representations and ideas around which the social totality, composed of all these separate and fragmented pieces, can be coherently grasped as a 'whole.'[136]

The significance of the mass-media, thus, lies in its ability to share meanings. This warrants the examination of the tools for communication, since these disclose underlying cultural trends. In particular, the thesis will focus on two of the dominant forms of media for 'Generation Y,' that is, television and the internet.

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[133] Kidd, *Culture and Identity,* 127.
[134] Vatican Council, *Gaudium Et Spes,* 55.
[135] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 18.
[136] Spitulnik, "Anthropology and Mass Media," 295.

1.7 Tools for Communication

1.7.1 Television

In the sections foregoing, the role of culture in shaping the world of meaning for the human has been highlighted. This materialises in the representations of culture, which communicates these meanings, particularly through tools for communication, such as television. For contemporary Western European culture, television has been communicating its versions of reality for decades; it is, "essentially [a] realistic medium because of its ability to carry a socially convincing sense of the real."[137] The consequences of these simulated versions of reality will be investigated in chapter two; for now television can be seen as, "a popular cultural medium."[138] John Fiske continues, "[T]he economics that determine its production and distribution demand that it reaches a mass audience, and a mass audience in western industrialized societies is composed of numerous subcultures, or subaudiences."[139]

What television, in its basic forms consists of, is moving images, passing by the viewer at such a speed as to create a narrative of succeeding images. The potency of this must not be underestimated. As the cliche puts it, 'a picture paints a thousand words'; if so, then, what power does a thirty second advertisement for Nike shoes hold? Television communicates to its audience primarily through stories, since it is, "predominantly narrational in its mode."[140] Programmes such as the news, documentaries, and movies, are all narratives. Roland Barthes adds, "narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is, nor has been, a people without narrative."[141] John Drane elaborates on this significant method of communicating meaning, pointing out that, "we are telling more stories today than at any time in living memory."[142] Of particular interest is that even advertisements, "are mini-narratives."[143] Michael Warren, describes, "printed advertisements, television commercials and programs [*sic*], movies, full color-images, and the like"[144] as being mini-narratives. In chapter three the role of narrative for the human will be further developed, and employed to present a counter-

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[137] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London, Routledge, 1997), 21.
[138] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 37.
[139] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 37.
[140] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 128.
[141] Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 79.
[142] John Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church: Spirituality, Creativity and the Future of the Church* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), 133.
[143] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 129.
[144] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, back cover.

narrative. This is necessary since narratives in whatever shape or form are, "a basic way of making sense of our experience of the real."[145] Gerard Loughlin observes:

> Everything is story, for stories produce every significant thing. Stories produce desire. They manipulate and channel our emotions, directing them toward objects we might otherwise find unexciting. Stories produce reality, establishing certain orders and relations between things and people and other people. They establish the significance of age and gender, of skin colour, class and accent: of all the things that matter and that could otherwise, if told in a different story. Narratives produce time, the positioning of things before and after, the placing of the present at the complex intersection of individual and communal time-narratives. And stories produce us, our sense of self-hood, of being an 'I' with a past and a future, a narrative trajectory.[146]

The narrational mode of television, has in itself, "a specific grammar, a way of structuring meaning."[147] Television runs according to codes, which are a, "rule-governed system of signs, whose rules and conventions are shared amongst members of a culture, and which is used to generate and circulate meanings in and for that culture."[148] These codes are the, "links between producers, texts, and audiences, and are the agents of intertextuality through which texts interrelate in a network of meanings that constitutes our cultural world."[149] This section has focused upon television, but as Marshall McLuhan points out, it is not just television, it is rather that, "all media work us over completely."[150] He continues, "[T]hey are so pervasive in their personal, political, economic, aesthetic, psychological, moral, ethical, and social consequences that they leave no part of us untouched, unaffected, unaltered."[151] Martha Smith Tatarnic, states that, "television's structure, use, and nature, is a message which inherently legitimizes: individualism and the centrality of individual desires; competition; the primacy of visual sense; a worldview which focuses relentlessly on the new, fast-paced, dramatic, and sensational; and the equation of information with entertainment."[152] Postman, employing Plato, points out the importance of the

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[145] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 128.

[146] Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15.

[147] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media,* 18.

[148] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 4.

[149] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 4.

[150] McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, 26.

[151] McLuhan and Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, 26.

[152] Martha Smith Tatarnic, "The Mass Media and Faith: The Potentialities and Problems for the Church in our Television Culture," *Anglican Theological Review* 87 (2005): 457. http://0-content.ebscohost.com.library.gmit.ie/pdf13_15/pdf/2005/ATR/01Jun05/17880857.pdf?T=P&P=AN&K=17880857&S=R&D=aph&EbscoContent=dGJyMMvl7ESeqLI4zdnyOLCmr0meprRSr6y4S7CWxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGotk+xprFLuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA.

forms of human communication and conversation, "and postulates that how we are obliged to conduct such conversations will have the strongest possible influence on what ideas we can conveniently express."[153] Postman continues, "[A]nd what ideas are convenient to express inevitably become the important content of a culture."[154] These observations bring to the fore, again, the essential connection between culture, 'language,' and differing ideological approaches to reality.

That the versions of reality shown on television, have practical effect upon the human, particularly in behaviour, has been analysed by Karen Dill. She points out that, "many times what we see on the screen provokes a change or a response outside our awareness."[155] Dill expands, "[T]his is how the fantasy world of media shapes our realities."[156] Chapter two will seek to investigate the effects of this fantasy world, represented in the mass-media, upon the human subject interpreting reality. However, the evidence shows that, "people learn values - both what is socially acceptable and what is rewarded - through the media. They also learn expectations of others and consequences of behaviors [*sic*]."[157] This is summed up by the behaviourist[158] approach which, emphasizes the importance of "environmental, or situational, determinants of behavior [*sic*]."[159] In this view, "behavior [*sic*] is the result of a continuous interaction between personal and environmental variables."[160] The human in contemporary Western European culture, is daily, "bombarded by images and attitudes, constantly learning and constantly being persuaded."[161] Advertisements on behalf of corporations utilise mass-media to inject goods with meaning; it is through this that products take on social meanings. Advertising by its nature, "is intimately bound to other media."[162] Iain MacRury continues, "[P]rimarily it is economic interdependence that dictates the terms of their relationship."[163] As will become evident, corporations also employ the internet to promote their brand story.

Culture is, in broad terms, concerned with shared meanings. Therefore, if media is culturally pervasive, whereby it has the potential to change attitudes, then the meanings conveyed through

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[153] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 6.
[154] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 6.
[155] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 224.
[156] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 224.
[157] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 52.
[158] The behaviourist approach is one approach among many; of particular interest to the thesis is also the cognitive approach, which goes beyond classical behaviorism. Whereby, rather "than focusing only on how environment affects behavior [*sic*], it examines the interactions among environment, behavior, and the individual's cognitions." See Nolan-Hoeksema *et al*, *Introduction to Psychology*, 480-483.
[159] Nolan-Hoeksema *et al*, *Introduction to Psychology*, 477.
[160] Nolan-Hoeksema *et al*, *Introduction to Psychology*, 477.
[161] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 224.
[162] MacRury, "Advertising," 45.
[163] MacRury, "Advertising," 45.

advertisements may have a profound broad cultural impact and, subsequently, will affect individual 'horizons of meaning.'

1.7.2 Constructionism and Television

The mass-media, injecting meanings into culture, profoundly affects the 'language' which communicates these new realities, as they become part of the cultural landscape. As indicated earlier, the 'language' of culture functions through representation, where "representation is a practice, a kind of 'work,' which uses material objects and effects. But the meaning depends, not on the material quality of the sign, "[164] but on its representative function. It is through this system that sounds, words, notes, gestures, expressions and clothes are, "vehicles or media which *carry meaning* because they ... stand for or represent ... the meanings we wish to communicate."[165] However, does the material world embody meaning in itself or does the human construct meaning and apply it to the material world? A potential solution comes from the, "constructivist or constructionist approach to meaning in language"[166] This school[167] of thought holds that, "it is not the material world which conveys meaning: it is the 'language' system or whatever system we are using to represent our concepts."[168] In other words, the constructionist approach to language, "encompasses the notion that meaning is not reflected or imposed, but actually constructed, in the process of making representations."[169] This is of significance, since it is, therefore, the, "social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others."[170] Consequently, objects in themselves don't embody any meaning, but rather, their potential to carry meaning is something cultural. The same applies to logos, where, "the logo on a sports shirt or shoe has no real usefulness beyond the status it derives from being instantly recognizable."[171] How can we say that a brand embodies meaning? Because if we, "have a concept

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[164] Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 26.
[165] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[166] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 25.
[167] Other theories of representation include the following:
The **reflective approach** whereby "meaning is thought to lie in the object, person, idea or event in the real world, and language functions like a mirror, to *reflect* the true meaning as it already exists in the world."
The **intentional approach** holds that "it is the speaker, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends they should mean." - Stuart Hall, "The Work of Representation," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 24-5. And, Jen Webb, *Understanding Representation* (London: SAGE, 2009), 43-4.
[168] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 25.
[169] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 44.
[170] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 25.
[171] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media,* 134.

for something, we can say we know it's 'meaning'"[172] For example, there is no inherent reason why the Nike Swoosh logo has to be a Swoosh, or why this should make its running shoes more desirable; this is made possible through the cultural value placed upon it. This indicates a cultural landscape where, "the increased irrelevance of an object's use-value compared with its status as sign to be circulated, creates a situation in which meaning is reduced to the recognition of how different objects and people share a relationship within a self-referential commodity system."[173] The mass-media participates in and cultivates these superficial relationships. MacRury notes that the, "assertion that we are bound to a promotional culture seems increasingly accurate, as lives play out against a media landscape of competing images and signs"[174]

As has become apparent, television, as tool for representing the world, portrays versions of reality which do not necessarily portray truth. This has repercussions for the human, especially in the experience and understanding of the world they inhabit. As later chapters will show, it forms the lens through which the world is interpreted. Contrary to the past, where social learning, "took place within a small group of people,"[175] it is becoming more apparent that television has an impact on culture, providing models through which the audience can shape and interpret the world. Dill explains that, "[W]ith modern media, we've expanded our role models, so to speak, to include anyone we can see through the media."[176] Warren illustrates this phenomenon whereby, through television, a "child of nine may now find herself [*sic*] in the electronic hands of persons who imagine for her [*sic*] the shape of the human."[177] Consequently, those who create the programs on television are partly the artisans of culture, as they can choose and decide what models of reality are available for mass audiences to watch. For example, television influences, "what we think and talk about by presenting some ideas and withholding others."[178] Therefore, "[W]atching television, specifically commercials, motivates us to purchase one product over another."[179] Such critiques are not new, but they serve to bring about an awareness of the potential of mass-media.

However, such critiques are generally aimed at the content. As shown earlier, the object through which the representations flow also functions as a 'language,' conveying ideas. As McLuhan states, it is, "the medium [which] is the message,"[180] and the message of, "any medium or

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[172] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.
[173] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media*, 135.
[174] MacRury, "Advertising," 40.
[175] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 53.
[176] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 53.
[177] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 18.
[178] Mara Einstein, "Television Marketing," *Television Studies,* ed. Toby Miller (London: BFI, 2002), 37.
[179] Einstein, "Television Marketing," 37.
[180] McLuhan, *Understanding Media,* 7.

technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs."[181] In other words, the means of communication physically produces change within culture, since each new technology, "both sustains culture and produces or reproduces cultures. Each spawns, in turn, a little 'culture' of its own."[182] An example would be the introduction of the telegraph, which suddenly facilitated information to travel faster than previous means of communication allowed. The effects on the human of such technological advances are, according to McLuhan, in terms of their perception of time and space, which is abolished, hence, the reason why mass-media has created a world perceived as infinitesimal to 'Generation Y.' Despite the perceptive insight offered by McLuhan, he is limited in knowledge to his time, because television was a recently new development. The future developments of television and its employment were still unclear. These developments were known by Postman, who expands on McLuhan, concluding that different, "forms of media favor [*sic*] particular kinds of content and therefore are capable of taking command of culture."[183] Television, for example, is based around images and sound, and therefore, through this method of communication contemporary Western European culture is, "in the process of converting their culture from word-centered to image-centered."[184] Nuancing Postman, one must be mindful that even, "today, at the level of mass communications, it appears that the linguistic message is indeed present in every image: as title, caption, accompanying press article, film dialogue, comic strip balloon."[185] In other words, a more comprehensive overview of communication within contemporary Western European culture would show that, "it is not very accurate to talk of a civilization of the image - we are still, and more than ever, a civilization of writing, writing and speech continuing to be the full terms of the informational structure."[186] Evidently though, "most texts now involve a complex interplay of written text, images and other graphic or sound elements, designed as coherent (often at the first level visual rather than verbal) entities by means of layout."[187]

Nevertheless, in relation to the content of television, Postman's critique is that through imagery, television, "has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience."[188] In other words, whatever is shown on television such as the news, movies,

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[181] McLuhan, *Understanding Media,* 8.
[182] Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Machay and Keith Negus, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (London: SAGE, 2003), 23.
[183] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 9.
[184] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 9.
[185] Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 37.
[186] Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 37.
[187] Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 17.
[188] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 87.

documentaries, music videos, soaps, or commercials are all made to be entertaining. As mentioned, television "is our culture's principal mode of knowing about itself. Therefore - and this is the critical point - how television stages the world becomes the model of how the world is properly to be staged."[189]

The role of television cannot be dismissed when considering contemporary Western European culture, it has the potential to captivate audiences, to draw them into narratives. The potency of drawing into narrative is explicated by the theory of "transportation,"[190] which describes when an individual is, "reading a book, watching a movie or TV show, or playing a video game [they] become transported, swept up, or lost in the story, even feeling like they themselves are part of the story."[191] Through these techniques television can readily promote a 'worldview' to its viewers, particularly when advertisers through astute imagery, grasp the imagination and provide a mini-narrative that 'transports' the viewer into a certain version of reality. In the contemporary media landscape, organisations, "will turn their attention more to the Internet,"[192] to use it as a point of contact, "and information exchange as they attempt to satisfy more needs (real and imagined)."[193] As will be outlined below, the internet is increasingly being used by corporations to supplement their narrative experience, to fortify their brand, and gather fans/consumers.

1.7.3 The Internet

The previous section examined television as tool for conversation within contemporary Western European culture, and the consequences for meaning structures available. However, as mentioned earlier, through technological innovations, such as modern, multi-purpose cellular phones, and computer tablets, the world has become increasingly connected to the internet. The role of the internet is shown by authors such as Clay Shirky, Don Tapscott, and Charles Leadbeater to have positive effects on the development of culture, facilitating the expansion of meaning structures available. However, as this section will highlight, this perceived space of freedom, where differing meanings are available, is increasingly under threat of corporate, and political influence.

The internet, as tool for conversation, is particular to 'Generation Y,' which has come of age alongside this technology. Tapscott, when analysing this generation, which he designates as the Net Generation, challenges the position of Postman, and argues that as the, "Net is the antithesis of TV,

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[189] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 92.
[190] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 14.
[191] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 14.
[192] MacRury, "Advertising," 45.
[193] MacRury, "Advertising," 52.

the N-Generation is in many ways the antithesis of the TV generation."[194] Taking this position further, he explains that for this generation, "television should be interactive. It should do what the consumer asks."[195] In other words, this generation is accustomed to using, "interactive digital media."[196] The passivity once paired with watching television, he says, will cease in this scenario. This also contrasts with Warren's findings, which state that, "many studies confirm that cultural passivity is the norm for most persons."[197] However, the internet, according to Tapscott, through the possibility of creative collaborative interaction, will allow humans to become once again the formers of cultural meanings. The internet, "seems to provide a vehicle to explore the self and for children to establish themselves as independent, self-governing individuals."[198] It does so by providing access to the myriad of cultural artifacts from across the globe, each expressing a particular world-view of beliefs, values, knowledge, and behaviours.

Charles Leadbeater expands upon this, and states that the, "combination of mass self-expression, ubiquitous participation and constant connection is creating *cloud culture*, formed by our seemingly never-ending capacity to make and share culture in images, music, text and film."[199] Leadbeater is optimistic in the sense that the 'cloud' will be shared by all who are connected. It will expand and evolve and, "if culture provides much of our sense of identity, then creativity helps to give us our sense of agency: who we want to be."[200] Claude Levi-Strauss, is less optimistic, and argues that over-communication actually inhibits the creativity of the human.[201] The question arises as to what effect this has on the human seeking meaning. The human now has access to more 'webs of meaning' through these digital clouds than ever before in history. Arguably, it allows for the human to create their own individual world-view, comprised from the numerous cultural meaning structures available. But the question remains whether these, "[d]igital clouds will be either commercial, social or public."[202] The internet, as tool for communication, is open to the public, provided one is connected, with no specific government or corporations claiming ownership, that is, until recently. In the past year governments in Europe and America, have attempted to pass

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[194] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital,* 26.

[195] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 3.

[196] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 55.

[197] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 17.

[198] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 56.

[199] Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture,* 21.

[200] Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture,* 36.

[201] What threatens us right now is probably what we may call over-communication - that is, the tendency to know exactly in one point of the world what is going on in all other parts of the world. In order for a culture to be really itself and to produce something, the culture and its members must be convinced of their originality and even, to some extent, of their superiority over the others; it is only under conditions of under-communication that it can produce anything. We are now threatened with the prospect of our being only consumers, able to consume anything from any point in the world and from every culture, but of losing all originality. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 15-6.

[202] Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture,* 31.

legislations such as A.C.T.A,[203] S.O.P.A,[204] and P.I.P.A,[205] which threaten a previously 'open space.' Moreover, apart from governmental interventions, corporations have already taken hold of this space, employing it to communicate their corporate advertisement mini-narratives.

The optimistic perspective sees the internet as, "reshaping culture around the world, changing how we will think and relate to one another."[206] To a certain extent this is true. The internet has brought cultural change and, as Shirky points out, "most of the barriers to group action have collapsed, and without those barriers, we are free to explore new ways of gathering together and getting things done."[207] Frequently-cited examples of such collaboration and organisation are the political uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Iran, Yemen, and Syria where social media sites are seen as providing a platform on which a group could communicate and co-ordinate rallies and protests. This, according to Shirky, is possible because, "we are living in the middle of a remarkable increase in our ability to share, to cooperate with one another, and to take collective action, all outside the framework of traditional institutions and organizations."[208] However, counter to this perspective, Evgeny Morozov terms this positivist thinking as, "cyber-utopianism: a naive belief in the emancipatory nature of online communication that rests on a stubborn refusal to acknowledge its downside."[209] For example, the internet has brought change in social relations since communications are increasingly taking place across this platform. 'Generation Y' in this sense, "haven't known anything but a life connected to one another, and to the world of bits in this manner."[210] It has become part of their model of reality. Thus, for this generation, "living in a wired society, the digital environment is simply an extension of the physical world."[211] Potentially, such developments can obscure the distinction between the real and unreal further, whereby fantasy worlds portrayed through television, are supplemented by the interactive world of the internet.

The core concern here lies in the internet, as tool of communication and conversation, being employed by advertisers and corporations to communicate meanings to their audiences. Tapscott argues, that this has become more difficult with the emergence of the internet, since "[T]elevision made it very easy to establish universal meanings."[212] Tapscott continues, "[T]he Web makes it

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[203] Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement.
[204] Stop Online Piracy Act.
[205] Protect IP Act.
[206] Charels Leadbeater, *We-Think: Mass Innovation, Not Mass Production* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 5.
[207] Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: How Change Happens When People Come Together* (London: Penguin, 2009), 22.
[208] Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody,* 21.
[209] Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: How Not to Liberate the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), xiii.
[210] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital,* 5.
[211] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital,* 19.
[212] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 196.

very difficult."[213] This generation, for Tapscott, are, "no longer passive consumers of the broadcast model."[214] Thus the internet, for authors such as Tapscott, is interpreted as creating agency. However, people are still "increasingly buying goods and services linked to rich world brands, which are some of the most powerful cultural carriers."[215]

According to Grainne Rothery, television communicates meanings to culture and despite the emergence of the internet it remains, "the biggest, because people spend more time watching TV."[216] Furthermore, for product promotion, "TV and print still score much higher in terms of effectiveness than most other media, including online."[217] However, new media such as the internet play a crucial role "in extending the brand story."[218] Peter McPartlin expands, "[T]he promise of the new social media channels is that they can deliver more intimate or closer brand relationships than are possible through mainstream media."[219] The internet, thus, potentially provides a perceived intimate relationship to the brands' 'tribe,' with which the human can affiliate and identify themselves. On "TV, the broadcaster rules. The kids are viewers. In an interactive environment, the locus of control is shifted to the consumers, who are not viewers but users."[220] Advertisers seek to exploit this through the internet to create a whole experience, complementing television. They do so by grasping the imagination, through interaction online, with the branded product and accompanying 'tribe,' providing additional meaning through promoting community and identity. One method is through platforms such as Facebook, where, "successful companies view befriending customers in these social networks as a relationship-building exercise."[221] The corporation becomes a 'friend' online, whereby they automatically have access to the much-revealing profile of the brand follower, and update the follower of new products, whose messages seem trustworthy, since one would "believe messages from friends because they're real."[222] The internet is increasingly becoming a platform for advertisers to promote their brands. It is, "accepted practice for mainstream media like TV, radio and newspapers to use platforms like Twitter and Facebook as backchannels to extend audience engagement with their content."[223] The interactive backchannels became a medium in which brands used word of mouth, and what better way of, "spreading word of mouth than by encouraging consumers to become ambassadors of a brand

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[213] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 196.
[214] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 186.
[215] Leadbeater, *Cloud Culture*, 42.
[216] Grainne Rothery, "Heart of the Matter," *Marketing Age,* 3 (2011): 18.
[217] Peter McPartlin, "Custom-Made Media," *Marketing Age,* 5 (2011): 47.
[218] McPartlin, "Custom-Made Media," 47.
[219] McPartlin, "Custom-Made Media," 47.
[220] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 197.
[221] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 202.
[222] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital*, 202.
[223] Peter McPartlin, "New Media Model," *Marketing Age* 5 (2011): 41.

through their own media - hence the reason why a channel such as Facebook is often referred to as facilitating word of mouth 'on steroids'!"[224] Among those marketing products, there is now the creation of a, "holistic model where a matrix of different channels is used to communicate unique, self-contained brand messages that together build into a bigger, more complex brand narrative/ideal."[225] Earlier the narrational mode of discourse of television came to the fore. The internet allows for the narrative to reach new levels of complexity, wherein the consumer's imagination is grasped by clever promotional imagery. Contemporary Western European culture is increasingly becoming connected to this digital world of the web, and technological innovations such as the iPad have created new opportunities for "media providers and marketers through new content, advertising and sponsorship possibilities,"[226] to communicate meanings into the world.

Cyber-utopians further hold that the internet fosters a creative, collaborative space for individuals to interact on, particularly via platforms such as Hotmail, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flicker, which contribute meaningfully to culture. Counter to such propositions, it appears that a significant proportion of 'Generation Y' do not share material online. The internet, as multi-directional communicative network should, in such a collaborative framework, have an equal upload speed to download speed. However, far more likely, is a download speed much faster than upload speed, the reason being that 'Generation Y's' use of the internet consists largely out of gaining knowledge through accessing information, and downloading videos, music and programs, rather than uploading or contributing to them. Contrary to Tapscott, this generation, if to be termed anything, is a 'Download Generation.'

The hypothesis that through collaboration and perceived agency, the human within contemporary Western European culture has become less susceptible to the meaning-injecting advertisements for brands, does not appear to be plausible. Rather, as Leadbeater puts it, "more companies will try to follow Apple and persuade people to become fans of their products."[227] Additionally, as 'Generation Y' increasingly put their personal information online they are, "losing control of this information because [of] the data-collection practices of corporations."[228] Thus, the internet has enormous potential as space for target marketing, where innovative new ideas will emerge to communicate effectively the meaning of brands. It is no surprise then that in relation to social media potential, "96 per cent of marketing executives interviewed expect to spend more time

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[224] McPartlin, "New Media Model," 42.
[225] Hugh Mair, "The Digital Watch," *Marketing.ie* 22 (2011): 15.
[226] Grainne Rothery, "The Tablet Revolution" *The Marketing Age* 5 (2011): 22.
[227] Charles Leadbeater, *We-Think: Mass Innovation, Not Mass Production* (London: Profile Books, 2009), 104.
[228] Palfrey and Gasser, *Born Digital*, 39.

and money in this area in the next year."[229] Recent developments have further promoted the influence of corporate sway online, as, for example, when Icann (The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), decided to increase the number of new website domain suffixes.[230] The way is now open for corporations to create sites ending with .Coke, .Nike, .Apple, thereby providing more corporate visibility online. The potential for corporations to more effectively communicate their messages will further affect culture. With current internet trends continuing, the internet appears to become a space where the human can shape their cultural identity, form 'horizons of meaning' according to the many cultures, artifacts, and interactions available. However, the expansion of governmental monitoring, and online control, together with the continuously growing influence of corporations attempting to promote and inject meaning into their corporate products by providing an evermore complex brand narrative/ideal through the web, are potentially pernicious for the development of culture and 'horizons of meaning.'

It has become apparent that the internet has not yet fostered the promised emergence of cultural-agency. This ideal is greatly inhibited by the resources available, given that, for example, Nike's spending on demand creation in 2010, was \$2,356 million.[231] Thus the internet, despite its frequently cited potential, is a space where political interests and corporations are increasingly powerful, to the detriment of its character as 'free space.'

1.8 Advertising Transcendence

The thesis has outlined the cultural milieu of contemporary Western European culture, particularly its tools for communication and conversation which are being exploited by corporations to project their corporate meanings into culture. Representation is a system that communicates knowledge of meanings, ideas, behaviour and values, which shape the 'horizons of meanings.' This will be further explored and critiqued in chapter two. Corporations, however, continue to employ, and at an ever-increasing rate, advertising in mass-media to inject meaning into objects, and to communicate these meanings throughout the cultural milieu.

In its early days, the primary task of advertising was to bridge the distance, "separating the producer from the consumer, and second, the subsequent mutual *anonymity* of the producer and

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[229] Colm Carey, "Jury Out on Social Media," *Marketing.ie* 22 (2011): 25.
[230] BBC, "Icann Increases Web Domain Suffixes," BBC, http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-13835997.
[231] Nike Incorporated, *Annual Report Files on 7/20/2010,* 27.
http://investors.nikeinc.com/Theme/Nike/files/doc_financials/AnnualReports/2010/docs/NIKE_2010_10-K.pdf.

consumer."[232] This distance was a byproduct of the industrial revolution, which changed, "the rate and volume of manufacture and supply of goods."[233] In other words, after the personal relationship between producer and consumer diminished, advertisements became a method to regain a relationship. As shown, the internet is also increasingly becoming a tool through which this interaction, trust, and relationship is established. It was through the increase in manufacturing that, "the market was now being flooded with uniform mass-produced products that were virtually indistinguishable from one another."[234] For these, predominantly similar products to differentiate themselves from each other, branding was employed, whereby corporations started to rely on a, "denial of the marginal nature of the supposed differences between what are essentially the same commodities."[235] This illusion is, "created by the advertising industry's manufacture of superficial distinctions and purported attributes."[236] It was not until the mid-1980s that a major shift happened, when it became apparent that, "successful corporations must primarily produce brands, as opposed to products."[237] 'Generation Y' has thus come of age within a corporate meaning-laden world where the brand as symbol of corporations is of crucial significance. Gill Branston and Roy Stafford draw on Neal Lawson, and term the contemporary setting as, "turbo-consumerism,"[238] by which they "describe the pace of demand which advertising, especially branding, has stimulated in recent decades."[239] They continue, "[i]t is arguably the most powerful and pervasive form of propaganda in world history."[240]

The means of advancing the brand story is through advertisements. These do not necessarily just consist of the commercial breaks which interrupt television programmes, but also include the hidden advertisements within movies or 'soaps,' since these too communicate a 'worldview' to the audience. Examples of such brand promotion taken to high levels are the *Transporter* movies, each essentially being a form of promotional video for the branded automobiles. Comparable, is the movie *The Fast and The Furious*, which was released in 2002, when members of 'Generation Y,' were gaining their driving licences. The movie focused upon a characteristic of this generation, which is, that they want products which "fit their personal needs and desires."[241] The concept of advertising and the construction of brands will be discussed in more depth later, however, it should

[232] MacRury, "Advertising," 42.
[233] MacRury, "Advertising," 40.
[234] Klein, *No Logo,* 6.
[235] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media,* 134.
[236] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media*, 134.
[237] Klein, *No Logo,* 3.
[238] Neal Lawson, *All Consuming* (London: Penguin, 2009), quoted in Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book,* 310.
[239] Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book,* 310.
[240] Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book,* 310.
[241] Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital,* 78.

be noted that advertising became, "integral to the development of branding as it assumed a form suitable not just as the vehicle for the communication of product information, but also as the carrier of brand symbolism - transforming the commodity into a specific and meaningful 'good.'"[242]

A brand, "is something which exists in the minds and actions of customers in the market."[243] Tapscott continues, "[I]t is really a relationship between a customer and a product or firm."[244] He elaborates further that, "[Y]outh, especially teens, have been very brand-conscious."[245] This is no surprise considering the immense efforts of corporations to achieve such results. For 'Generation Y' brands contain meaning, which seems to have been made possible by factors such as, the advent of commericialised programming, satellite TV, Cable TV, interactive gaming, the internet, and the production of brands rather than products. These factors to some extent contributed to the phenomenon that John Berger describes, "[I]n the cities in which we live, all of us see hundreds of publicity images every day of our lives."[246] He continues, "[N]o other kind of image confronts us so frequently."[247] He concludes that, "[I]n no other form of society in history has there been such a concentration of images, such a density of visual messages."[248]

The critique of branding is directed towards its effects upon the human, and the cultural environment in which they have their being. Culture, as shown earlier, "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [*sic*] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."[249] Again, as shown earlier, the representations employed to communicate these meanings, such as sounds, images or expressions, are signs, which can be divided into two parts, the signifier and the signified. Both signifier and signified "are required to produce meaning but it is the relationship between them, fixed by our cultural and linguistic codes, which sustains representation."[250] Within the sign, there is "the *form* (the actual word, image, photo, etc.), and there is the *idea or concept* in your head with which the form was associated."[251] Brands in this understanding, also function as signs, where an image or text represents certain ideals beyond the sign. For example, in commodity culture, when someone grasps the image of a Swoosh (the signifier), it immediately calls to recollection certain idea(l)s of

[242] MacRury, "Advertising," 42.
[243] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 193.
[244] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 193.
[245] Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital*, 193.
[246] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 123.
[247] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 123.
[248] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 123.
[249] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 89.
[250] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 31.
[251] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 31. Italics in original.

Nike's intricate relationship to achievements in sports (the signified). However, it arguably goes even deeper than the superficial connection of the Swoosh or "Just Do It" with sport. This would, according to Roland Barthes, be the signifier and signified on the first level, which "yields a set of signs with a simple, literal message or meaning."[252] However, an image also has wider cultural meanings,[253] and "Barthes calls this second level of signification the level of myth."[254] For Barthes, "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse."[255] In such understanding myth is equated to "a type of speech"[256] which discloses signification, and hence meaning. This type of speech, communicates a message, which can, "consist of modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech."[257] Nevertheless, "myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is *a second-order semiological system.*"[258] This is possible, because as Barthes argues, "that which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second."[259] In other words, the basic signifier, and signified regarding Nike, becomes the signifier in the second-order of myth. The signified of the myth, which will be discussed below in this chapter, is related to some conception of transcendence through sports. This invocation of 'myth' should not be confused with the concept *mythos,* which is considered in chapter three. Barthes' understanding of myth is better understood as a type of quasi-myth. Corporate brand myths refer to narrow 'horizons of meaning,' limited to the finite, using imagination to conjure up fantasy worldviews for the purpose of profit.   Nevertheless, the quasi-mythical Nike symbol has accrued these quasi-transcendent meanings through the skillfully constructed signifying practices of the advertising industry.

An intensified sign, or symbol, "is used for any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for a conception - the conception is the symbol's meaning."[260] Symbols, according to Geertz, "are tangible formulations of notions, abstractions from experience fixed in perceptible forms, concrete embodiments of ideas, attitudes, judgements, longings, or beliefs."[261] Thus, brand symbolism, is "the core meaning of the modern corporation, and ... the advertisement [is] one vehicle used to convey that meaning to the world."[262] These symbolic brands are, therefore,

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[252] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 39.
[253] See Roland Barthes *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage Books, 2009).
[254] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 39.
[255] Barthes, *Mythologies,* 131.
[256] Barthes, *Mythologies,* 131.
[257] Barthes, *Mythologies,* 132.
[258] Barthes, *Mythologies,* 137. Italics in original.
[259] Barthes, *Mythologies,* 137.
[260] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 91.
[261] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 91.
[262] Klein, *No Logo*, 5.

ideologically laden signs which communicate particular meaning structures, such as values, ideas, knowledge, and conceptualisations about life.

The human is dependent upon cultural meaning-structures in the quest for meaning. This quest has an additional spiritual dimension, since all humans have some form of spirituality, that is, an ultimate concern which is the foundational meaning-structure for them. The human, as spiritual being, refers, "to the way people *lead* their lives; it includes the deepest purpose toward which a life is directed and the values and goals that underlie motivation."[263] Spirituality, therefore, "consists in the vision of life and the values and attitudes within that vision which, integrated together, make one's life meaningful and by which one lives and acts."[264] Hence, "on an abstract, reflective, and cognitive level, spirituality refers to the theory of how human life should be led."[265] One's spirituality, is therefore, "made up of the most basic and deeply held values, ideals, attitudes and commitments one has and it brings these into a unified understanding that enables one to live rationally and energises one to act purposefully and to commit oneself to various goals and activities in different areas of life."[266] Thus, spirituality, as a common anthropological category, "places the Christian way of life in dialogue with other human conceptions of life."[267] An example of another conception of life is that seen through the scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist lens. This dialogue will be considered in chapter three, where Christian spirituality is explored, and is proposed as counter-cultural counter-narrative.

Naomi Klein, and Donald Katz, in analysing the significance of brands upon the human, highlight their quasi-religious, spiritual dimension. As Klein concisely states, corporations gradually realised that "advertising wasn't just scientific; it was also spiritual,"[268] and the "role of advertising was to help corporations find their soul."[269] The search, or more accurately formulated, the formation of a corporate soul, perhaps sought to respond to a deep-seated human spiritual yearning. The Nike and the Apple corporations have, "integrated the idea of branding into the very fabric of their companies."[270] These corporations will, therefore, be taken to exemplify how brands can influence culture through representing meanings. Corporations, such as these, see, "themselves

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[263] Roger Haight, "Sin and Grace," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives,* ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 425.

[264] Bill Cosgrave, "Relating Spirituality and Morality," *Doctrine and Life* 59 (2009): 26.

[265] Haight, "Sin and Grace," 425.

[266] Cosgrave, "Relating Spirituality and Morality," 26.

[267] Haight, "Sin and Grace," 425.

[268] Klein, *No Logo,* 6.

[269] Klein, *No Logo,* 7.

[270] Klein, *No Logo*, 16.

as meaning brokers instead of product producers."[271] This injecting of brands with meaning, in its, "truest and most advanced incarnations, is about corporate transcendence."[272] This required that the corporation, advertising and selling the brand should have, "an extra component that can only be described as spiritual."[273] For corporations such as Nike or Apple, the real business at hand is, "creating a corporate mythology powerful enough to infuse meaning into these raw objects just by signing its name."[274] As shown earlier, these raw material objects, carry no meaning in themselves, but rather, it is through their circulation within culture and its 'language' that they become meaning-laden objects. This leads to the situation where a brand is no longer, "a product but a way of life, an attitude, a set of values, a look, an idea."[275] These brands can only come to embody such concepts if these have become part of the cultural milieu and its 'language.' Hence, corporations, to a significant extent, permeate and shape the cultural world, through, and in which, the human searches for meaning. In short, these branded meanings, and their projected symbolic significance have become part of the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture.

In the pursuit of profit, corporations aim to provide some sort of simulacrum of transcendence because they realise its value. The human yearns to experience transcendence, particularly through ecstasy,[276] and religion, "has been one of the most traditional ways of attaining ecstasy."[277] Nevertheless, within contemporary Western European culture, "the role of religion in providing *ek-stasis* has diminished significantly."[278] However, the search for transcendence appears to be one of the essential component of be-ing human, hence, the yearning remains. In contemporary Western European culture, this search for transcendence incarnates itself in, "art, music, poetry, rock, dance, drugs, sex or sport."[279] These, "all point to a craving for spontaneity occasioned by the character of our society, a thirst for liberation of the self."[280] In the corporate world, this inherent human need is seen as a business opportunity, leading to advertising campaigns such as those of Nike, whose advertising and imagery promotes athleticism in a number of ways – one of which is the explicit promotion of "athleticism as transcendence."[281] In other words, the narrative which the Nike corporation promulgates to contemporary Western European culture through the mass-media, is that *ek-stasis* - the transcending of one's reality - is to be sought through

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[271] Klein, *No Logo,* 21.
[272] Klein, *No Logo,* 21.
[273] Klein, *No Logo,* 21.
[274] Klein, *No Logo,* 22.
[275] Klein, *No Logo,* 23.
[276] A standing outside the self.
[277] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth,* 8.
[278] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth,* 8.
[279] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 8.
[280] Amos Niven Wilder, *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Lima: Academic Renewal Press, 2001), 9.
[281] Klein, *No Logo*, 51.

sport. Nike came to the realisation that, "sport has slowly replaced work, religion and community as the glue of collective consciousness."[282] As response, to capitalise on this development, Nike, "poses the activity of sport as highly spiritualized: the means of finding oneself and belonging to a community of others."[283] To achieve such results, Nike, in its advertisements, employs star celebrity athletes such as basketball player Michael Jordan, upon whom is conferred a kind of secular sanctity. As Robert Goldman and Robert Papson observe, "[R]epresentations of the super athlete signify human transcendence, but those representations are constructed by media, sport corporations, and advertisers to serve their own materialistic ends."[284]

Nike, amongst others, "constructs itself as the vehicle for an ethos that integrates themes of personal transcendence."[285] The method it employs to convey these ideas is by using, "advertising as storytelling."[286] When analysing television and the internet, the significance of narrative as discourse for the human became apparent; it appears that corporations capitalise on this human attribute. In short, the advertisements within mass-media convey mini-narratives, which inject and assign meaning to the Nike brand. The Nike corporation, it must be highlighted, is, "not a production company. Almost all production of shoes, apparel, and accessories is outsourced to contract suppliers in developing nations while the home office in Beaverton, Oregon designs, develops, and markets the branded goods."[287] To create meaning, Nike's, "advertising sifts through the cultural politics of consumption and distills from it the appropriate visual and moral aesthetic to attach to its logo."[288] Its logo, the Swoosh, "has acquired meaning and value through repeated association with other culturally meaningful symbols. By placing the *swoosh* in the same frame with Michael Jordan, *Nike* was able to draw upon the value and meaning of Michael Jordan as star basketball player."[289] Nike created around Jordan a "fantastical superhero mythos predicated on [his] breathtaking physical gifts."[290] The "power of Nike's signalmaking connected to Michael Jordan had indeed helped make Jordan a hero in the oldest sense of the term."[291] This signalmaking, from a Barthesian perspective, is on the level of myth, since beyond its simple, literal message, there are wider cultural meanings conveyed. These quasi-mythical aspects, constructed by Nike, bring to the fore the supposed mythical heritage contained within the brand, since 'Nike' was the goddess of victory. These quasi-mythical narratives must not be underestimated, since Nike, alters

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[282] Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson, *Nike Culture* (London: SAGE, 2000), 66.
[283] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture,* 62.
[284] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture,* 62-3.
[285] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 3.
[286] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 3.
[287] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 6.
[288] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 15.
[289] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 17.
[290] Donald Katz, *Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World* (Holbrooko: Adams Media, 1994), 8.
[291] Katz, *Just Do It*, 8.

"the look and sound and feel and even the abiding fantasies of everyday life."[292] In other words, they have a profound impact on culture, and the 'language' that communicates these meanings. It has become apparent that Nike, amongst others, communicates, "certain pure ideas about athleticism as transcendence."[293] This corporate message is a response to developments in the 1980s, when "physical self-improvement and health became the basis of the new secular religion, and Nikes became the chalices and rosaries of choice."[294] This highlights the quasi-sacramental character now assigned to sports apparel. Nike's followers, "sought the daily racing of their hearts in pursuit of a new liberation of spirit."[295] As Nike director of advertising, Scott Bedbury, put it, "One thing that all consumers share is a fear of death," [296] and "Nike rose up by force of that fear and a host of other human longings that seemed universal."[297] It was through clever advertisement and market strategy that, "highly designed athletic shoes became objects that conjured a yearning."[298] It is this yearning which the corporation's phrase 'Just Do It' is designed to answer. This phrase, "speaks to the restraint and inhibition in everyday life that keep people from the experience of transcendence."[299] At this point, the important consideration is the implications of these messages for the culture, now intricately fused within the web of meanings which humans have spun. Within these webs, there now exists a web of brands that conjure their own meanings and project these into the culture. One of the effects of these developments is the promotion of consumerism, where as mentioned earlier, "meaning is reduced to the recognition of how different objects and people share a relationship within a self-referential commodity system."[300] The techniques employed by corporations such as Nike, have resulted in creating a branded world in which the human quest for meaning is truncated by corporate messages, and personal transcendence is portrayed as achievable through consumption of a brand. The result of this truncation is that it undermines contemporary Western European culture's exploration of broader and deeper 'horizons.' The brands designate limits on human ultimate concerns. Paul Tillich put forward a connection between religion and culture, whereby religion, "as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture, and culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself."[301] Religious yearnings and the quest for meaning are essential components of the human. Within contemporary Western European culture, it appears that brands seek to express and provide meaning within culture, and offer quasi-transcendental experiences,

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[292] Katz, *Just Do It,* 6.
[293] Klein, *No Logo*, 51.
[294] Katz, *Just Do It,* 66.
[295] Katz, *Just Do It,* 66.
[296] Katz, *Just Do It,* 66.
[297] Katz, *Just Do It,* 66.
[298] Katz, *Just Do It,* 9.
[299] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture*, 19.
[300] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media,* 135.
[301] Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture,* ed. Robert C. Kimball (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 42.

where the symbols point towards ultimate concern. Culture, faith, and spirituality are interlinked, and shape the life-path apparent to the human. The following chapter will expand on these ideas, show their connection to each other and their impact on the human, particularly regarding worldview.

If Nike or Apple are to be considered as contenders for the theistic-religious communities, one of the visible signs would be a congregation of followers, and a place of gathering and worship. Nike appears to have just such a quasi-sacred space, where its followers can congregate. It is called NikeTown. NikeTown is, "the company's chain of flagship retail outlets. Each one a shrine, a place set apart for the faithful, a mausoleum."[302] These can be described as, "a temple, where the Swoosh is worshiped as both art and heroic symbol."[303] Apple, also, has such a dedicated space, the AppleStore. Here you will encounter a community of fans at worship; "it is almost a cathedral, a devotional space where people go for a rite of initiation into the Apple Way."[304] Leadbeater continues, "[T]he priesthood wander among the congregation who are sharing tips with one another and waiting for instruction from the evangelists."[305]

For corporations such as Nike,[306] "the manipulation of cultural meanings has become the key to value production."[307] There are various methods corporations can use to inject their brands with meaning; one frequent method is by sponsoring, "sports, arts, music, education,"[308] whereby the corporation is, "each time getting their brand identified with culture."[309] A particular brand, therefore, becomes fused in meaning with transcultural values. Consequently, a "culture is being established in which the truncated transcendence of men and women is taken advantage of as they are offered products for their consumption that in reality consume them."[310] The mass-media communicates this idea in contemporary Western European culture, entertaining the audiences and creating a worldview where the hearer is, "assured that they can be satisfied by inventions, contraptions, packaged experiences, tinsel-things."[311] The result is a culture where, "[s]hopping and consuming has now become a major social practice of everyday life; and in some markets - such as

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[302] Klein, *No Logo,* 56.
[303] Klein, *No Logo*, 56.
[304] Leadbeater, *We-Think*, 103.
[305] Leadbeater, *We-Think*, 103.
[306] Other examples of corporations which claim ultimacy through their advertisements are BMW, which calls itself 'The Ultimate Driving Machine,' the hair straightener GHD, which describes itself as being 'A New Religion for Hair,' Coca-Cola 'Open Happiness.'
[307] Goldman and Papson, *Nike Culture,* 15.
[308] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology,* 525.
[309] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology,* 525.
[310] Jim Corkery, "Does Technology Squeeze Out Transcendence - Or What?" in *Technology and Transcendence,* ed. Michael Breen, Eamonn Conway and Barry McMillan (Dublin: the Columba Press, 2003), 14.
[311] Corkery, "Does Technology Squeeze Out Transcendence," 14.

the 'youth market' - it has become almost the number one social activity."[312] Corporations contribute to the truncation of transcendence, and consequently, truncated 'horizons of meaning.' This is discussed in more detail in chapter three. The mass-media, through programmes, films, and particularly by advertising brands, have formed the cultural milieu in which the human quest for transcendence and meaning materialises. The human in contemporary Western European culture has been immersed in this extensive mass-media perpetuated, commodity culture.

Branded meanings circulate within the cultural arena where the human searches for meaning. The following chapters will explore what effect these have upon the human perception of the world, their worldview, which the thesis will term, *Weltanschauung*, their entire way of being in the world, the model through which they interpret, comprehend, and therefore, as agents exercise attitudes, values, behaviours, and knowledge of life. Christina A. Astorga, draws on Charles H. Kraft, who states that a worldview, "has an integrating function, in terms of the way it systematizes and orders people's perception of reality - its premises and presuppositions, its bases and criteria, its limitations and boundaries - into one design, creating a whole way of understanding and interpreting multifarious events."[313]

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show that culture shapes the *Weltanschauung* for the human, through communicating certain ideas, values, knowledge, and beliefs, in narrative form. Within contemporary Western European culture, it has become apparent, that mass-media has, to a significant extent, shaped and contributed to the narratives and 'language' of the cultural landscape. In the following chapter, the extent, and effect of this phenomenon will be further developed, particularly as it affects social imagination, and human faith. Previous findings have shown that, corporations realised that humans have a spiritual, questioning, and meaning-seeking dimension. Nike, for example, employs mini-narratives aimed to conjure and satisfy these yearnings, injecting its products with meaning, particularly, through *ek-stasis,* providing quasi-transcendent experiences.

It is specifically because the human is, "precisely the animal most desperately dependent upon such extragenetic, outside-the-skin control mechanisms, such as cultural programs, for

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[312] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology,* 525.
[313] Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture,* (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1999), 54-57, quoted in Christina A. Astorga, "Culture, Religion, and Moral Vision: A Theological Discourse on the Filipino People Power Revolution of 1986," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 581.

ordering his [*sic*] behavior [*sic*],"[314] that the models communicated through the mass-media in narrative form have such effect. Additionally, as Dill suggested, these narratives do have a practical impact upon human behaviour. In their search for meaning, every human can be at different stages, depending on various factors. The factor of concern to the thesis is the cultural milieu, which, the evidence suggests, truncates 'horizons of meaning.'

The thesis, in chapter three, will utilize a religious perspective, which sees God as the furthest 'horizon,' against whose background other horizons of meaning should be examined. There is thus a questioning, searching, aspect to exploration of 'horizons of meaning. Yet, it has become apparent that corporate meanings, communicated through the mass-media have become intricately interwoven into culture, which present the human, who yearns for meaning and transcendence, with a surrogate quasi-transcendence achieved through means of product consumption. The *ek-stasis,* achieved through product consumption, falls categorically short of that of true transcendence, only sating human yearning temporarily, incompletely, and inadequately. Thus, it fails to achieve Depth.[315] However, by continuously seeking to exploit human yearnings, such quasi-transcendence appears to inhibit the human from questioning, particularly in terms of human finiteness. It does so by ceaselessly grasping the human imagination, through advertisements. These visual narratives represent a future, whereby the human is changed through consumption of the product. The result is a blurring of 'horizons of meaning' for the human. Karl Rahner, in relation to the human exploration of horizons, refers to, "the fact that he [*sic*] experiences his finiteness radically, he [*sic*] reaches beyond this finiteness and experiences himself [*sic*] as a transcendent being, as spirit. The infinite horizon of human questioning is experienced as an horizon which recedes further and further the more answers man [*sic*] can discover."[316] 'Horizons' can be opened through questioning and finding answers. However, the questions rarely arise because the corporate, mass-media environment is continuously seeking human attention. 'Generation Y,' "are basically devoting their lives to consuming media."[317] This diet, it appears, is a characteristic of 'Generation Y' and increasingly truncates the horizon of meaning for the human, and, "anyone who cares about humanity from a larger perspective - certainly including spiritual, philosophical, and ideological perspectives - should have problems with the negative, manipulative kind of marketing we see so often today."[318] The corporations, through their, "close alignment between media technologies and their commodified content [have] become increasingly resistant to any radical reinterpretation and

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[314] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 44.
[315] Depth indicates the initial experience, unthematic and without name of God in the material world.
[316] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 32.
[317] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 6.
[318] Dill, *How Fantasy Becomes Reality,* 150.

re-appropriation by the masses."[319] This complicates the communication of counter-narratives or counter-cultural developments. Thus, within contemporary Western European culture, individuals appear to have lost their fundamental capacity as artisans of culture, that is, that "whoever names the world owns the world."[320] This role has, apparently, been forfeited to the cultural industry, which is what major corporations have become. Michael Warren terms this development, cultural oppression, the, "imposition of a world of meaning on others in such a way that they cannot think about it or question it."[321] In Biblical terms, such diminishment of persons into passive receptors is a form of 'slavery' necessitating a liberatory response.

Having outlined the cultural milieu of contemporary Western European culture, there remains hope and potential to expand the 'horizons of meaning,' as chapter three will seek to express. The human has not lost its ability to question. The yearning is never fully satisfied. The yearning for a genuine experience of transcendence remains. Tillich, states that for the human, a, "profane existence is never found in the pure state. To whatever degree he may have desacralized the world, the man [*sic*] who has made his choice in favor of a profane life never succeeds in completely doing away with religious behavior [*sic*]."[322] This spiritual void, besides being the area that is being exploited to sell products, can also be the place where a potential resolution to the contemporary cultural conditioning might be found. In such a cultural milieu, in order to expand horizons, counter-narratives need to be explored, or re-explored, since, "stories are human constructions, socially enacted. When the stories that society tells about itself change, so does society. The world changes when we tell different stories about it."[323] Difficulties will arise as corporate meanings have become firmly rooted in culture. This, consequently, has a direct effect on 'language,' which this culture uses to communicate meanings. Therefore, a radical re-interpretation of 'language' is also necessary in order to expand horizons of meaning for individuals, as will become evident within chapter two, and three. The interaction with a counter-narrative, which stems from the Judaeo-Christian religion, can open the horizons for contemporary Western European culture, whereby, "[P]reviously existing world-views, meaning systems and accustomed behaviours experience challenge... resulting in the development of new ways of seeing and inhabiting the world."[324]

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[319] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media,* 135.
[320] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 8.
[321] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 13.
[322] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1987), 23.
[323] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 18.
[324] Walsh, "Changing Culture," 103.

Chapter Two

Questions of Meaning and Ultimacy

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive description of contemporary Western European culture. This will be expanded, and developed in this chapter. In chapter one the cultural milieu of contemporary Western European culture was shown to be saturated with images, relayed via the mass media on behalf of transnational corporations. These corporations promote their branded images which at the most basic level signify particularly ideas concerning reality. This chapter will explore and critique the role of culture and 'language' in interpreting reality, the imagination, and concepts of ultimacy. The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the way in which cultural environment shapes the human, particularly regarding the concept, and experience, of ultimacy.

In this chapter, the effects of mass-media in delineating 'the known' within contemporary Western European culture are investigated. This chapter, thus, starts with analysing representation, which provides a basis for understanding imagination and its role in forming a conception of ultimacy. Representation, as outlined in chapter one, is any signifying system that enables the expression of meaning in lived experience - and providing a basis for an apprehension of reality. This is of significance because it is through representation that the cultivation of the world and the human takes place. In contemporary Western European culture, television and the internet function as tools for conversation, through which versions of reality are communicated and understood. These media are linked to 'language' as they provide a means to represent the lived experience in the world. Neil Postman adds that every, "medium, like language itself, makes possible a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression, for sensibility."[1] The forms of media are, "like metaphors, working by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce their special definitions of reality."[2] Advertising, in particular, has lent some significance to reality for the human. As Jonathan Bignell explains, the "meanings of ads are designed to move out from the page or screen on which they are carried, to shape and lend significance to our experience of reality."[3] He continues, drawing on the work of Judith Williamson, that advertisements, rather than just persuading the human to consume a commodity, also, "ask us to participate in ideological ways of seeing ourselves and the world."[4] It is through representation, that these outcomes are achieved.

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[1] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.
[2] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.
[3] Jonathan Bignell, *Media Semiotics: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 30.
[4] Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), 11-12, quoted in Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 31.

2.2 'Language' and the Cultural Universe

The significance of representation as a sort of 'language'[5] for the thesis, is due to its complex function in creating and communicating cultural meanings to the human. In the previous chapter it was outlined that transnational corporations, particularly for 'Generation Y,' have contributed to the cultural webs of meaning, through product placement in the mass-media. Evidence of their cultural impact can be illustrated through the analysis of Paul du Gay in reference to the Sony Walkman. Though the Sony Walkman no longer carries the same brand significance as when the study was carried out, the example is still useful. Du Gay says that when someone knows something about the Walkman, "[it] has entered into and made a considerable impact on, our culture. It has become part of our cultural universe."[6] In becoming part of our cultural universe, the Sony Walkman has become a meaningful object. The significance of the interconnection between culture and material objects was outlined in the previous chapter, namely, that culture includes, "all ideas, values, knowledge, behaviours, and material objects."[7] Du Gay's case study focuses on the Sony Walkman, yet applies to all meaningful objects within a culture. In contemporary Western European culture the Sony Walkman has been supplanted by the Apple iPod. When such products become part of the 'cultural universe,' it means that they have "become inscribed in our informal social knowledge - the 'what-everybody knows' about the world - without consciously knowing where or when they first learned it."[8] Corporate brands, and their underlying meanings have, thus, significant influence on the cultural milieu in which humans find themselves on their quest for meaning. It becomes clear, that corporate meanings are a component of the shared cultural frameworks of meaning, which are created and communicated through 'language.' This is significant, as humans depend on "language and sign systems to shape ... reality."[9]

Ludwig Wittgenstein writes extensively on the relationship between reality and 'language,' and states that the, "limits of my *language* mean the limits of my world."[10] The role of 'language' in expanding or contracting 'horizons of meaning' in the gaining of understanding of reality, is evident. Thus, the representations available and employed within contemporary Western European

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[5] For the purposes of clarity, the thesis terms representation as a sort of 'language.' This is because languages work through representation. That is, they use some element to stand for or represent a concept, idea, or feeling. Thus, photography, television, writing, music, fashion, gestures, brands, or an exhibition are all forms of 'language.' As such, "it is through culture and language that the production and circulation of meaning takes place." Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[6] Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Machay and Keith Negus, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman* (London: SAGE, 2003), 8.
[7] Sullivan, *Sociology*, 39.
[8] Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 8.
[9] Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 6.
[10] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), 68. Italics in original.

culture can be described as the medium through which the human comprehends, interprets, and shapes reality. The mass-media functions, as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky state, "as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace."[11] They continue, "[I]t is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society."[12] The mass-media, particularly via television, utilises imaged representations as 'language' in order to communicate a narrative to its viewers. This narrative grasps the human imagination in a way that goes beyond simply communicating facts. The effects reverberate through cultural meaning-structures, such as 'language,' imagination, faith, ultimacy, dreams, values, fantasies, education, entertainment, and *Weltanschauung*. By analysing the effects of signs and symbols, the potency, impact, and necessity for counter-narrative can begin to be understood. Religious 'language,' also functions through signs and meaning-laden symbols, and provides a basis for articulating counter-narrative. However, within contemporary Western European culture religious 'language' would seem to have lost its potency. The significance of 'language' in the creation, communication and delineation of meaning is, therefore, of great importance.

2.3 'Language' and Consciousness

The human as bio-cultural entity has the natural capacity to represent. The significance of 'language' is that it "is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged."[13] Hall states that representation is "the production of meaning through language,"[14] and continues by saying that "we use signs, organized into languages of different kinds, to communicate meaningfully to others."[15] These 'languages' use signs to "stand for or reference objects, people and events in the so-called 'real' world."[16] Hall employs this term in reference to the material world, to distinguish the possibility of 'language' to communicate ideas, concepts, objects that are not part of this world. However, as the thesis develops it will show that what Hall terms reality, that is, limited to the finite, falls short of that Reality, which is the infinite Transcendent 'horizon.' The thesis draws on the Christian *Weltanschauung* to point towards this infinite Transcendent 'horizon.' Nevertheless, it is through reality and 'language' that this Transcendent Reality can be grasped and experienced.

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[11] Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), 1.
[12] Herman and Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1.
[13] Hall, "Introduction," 1.
[14] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.
[15] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.
[16] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.

The material world, which appears to humans as 'real,' natural, and stable is actually one of fluid meanings grasped through culture and 'language.' There "is no simple relationship of reflection, imitation or one-to-one correspondence between language and the real world."[17] Hall continues, "[T]he world is not accurately or otherwise reflected in the mirror of language."[18] This aspect of 'language' was explored in chapter one, where the separation of the sign into signifier and signified, showed that the connection between them, "is not based on resemblance or intention, but on something entirely arbitrary - something cultural."[19] The signs through which the human approaches reality are, thus, cultural preferences providing a model shaped by humans themselves. Hence, Bignell writes that, "[a]ll of our thought and experience, our very sense of our own identity, depends on the systems of signs already existing in society which give form and meaning to consciousness and reality."[20] The human searching for meaning finds themselves in a 'cultural universe' surrounded and shaped by sign systems, which, "leads to the realisation that consciousness and experience are built out of language and the other sign systems circulating in society that have existed before we take them up and use them."[21] It is significant that the meaning and understanding of lived experience is produced and circulated by culture and 'language.'

There are various means of representation. Of particular interest to the thesis is imagery as it is frequently used by the mass-media. For example, the Walkman as object or concept "takes on a range of cultural meanings, partly as a result of how it has been *represented* in visual and verbal forms."[22] The visual seems to have significant potential in grasping the human imagination, and evidently advertising agencies exploit this. Nevertheless, the impact of, and consciousness shaping power of images, especially advertising images, is widely underappreciated. The impact of powerful advertising images lie in its ability to invite the viewer to imagine something about to happen.[23] Therefore, it must be remembered that images, "even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted."[24] Because images, such as photographs, are often comprehended as objective representation, while they contain certain ideas, perspectives and interpretations. The imaged signs depend on something cultural, that is, meaning-structures created by humans. Chapter one illustrated that, increasingly, corporations are also contributing to these meaning-structures. This

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[17] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.
[18] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 28.
[19] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 45.
[20] Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 7.
[21] Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 7.
[22] Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 24.
[23] Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book,* 58.
[24] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 19.

became particularly evident in Nike's quasi-mythical image of Michael Jordan flying through the air. The same applied to the Sony Walkman, which was represented in the mass-media through imagery, as being "part of the required equipment of the modern 'nomad' - the self-sufficient urban voyager, ready for all weathers and all circumstances."[25] Thus, an understanding of representation is of vital importance when analysing questions of meaning and ultimacy, since it "connects meaning and language to culture."[26] Its value cannot be underestimated within contemporary Western European culture in constructing and providing access to 'horizons of meaning.'

There has been much debate about representation and how it functions, and what it seeks to do. Cultural theorist Jen Webb explores these questions and finds that "[n]euroscientists, social scientists and philosophers argue [that] rather [than] representation being a straightforward matter of signs standing in for, and communicating, real things, it is an **epistemological process**."[27] In other words, representation is "productive of what we know, and how we know it: that is to say, it is constitutive - it makes us."[28] Webb continues, stating that representation is also "**ontological**: that is, it is about the nature of being; it is tied up with what something actually is, of what it is constituted, its status as a thing, property, object or experience."[29] This characteristic of representation and its consequences, will be developed further within the following chapter. Representation is also described as being "**cognitive**, an aspect of brain function."[30] Finally, it is also "**axiological.** This means that it involves questions of ethics, or the 'right' way of seeing, knowing and doing."[31] Hence, the way in which the world is represented in culture has profound impact on the human moral compass, since the "dynamics of culture and religion bear on the way our moral vision is shaped relative to how we see reality, what we regard as values or disvalues, and what we judge as right or wrong."[32]

Evidently, representation goes far beyond simply having something substituted or standing in for some concept. This is of significance, considering that the mass-media draws on, contributes, and alters the 'language' available for human discourse. Corporations, for example, employ the mass-media to create and communicate significant symbols, such as a brand logo, which expresses an idea, and conjures up certain emotions. It achieves this through representational 'language.' In contemporary Western European culture, the form through which a significant proportion of human

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[25] Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 23.
[26] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 15.
[27] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 5. Bold in original.
[28] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 5.
[29] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 6. Bold in original.
[30] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 6. Bold in original.
[31] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 6. Bold in original.
[32] Astorga, "Culture, Religion, and Moral Vision," 569.

discourse runs, is that of the mass-media. Neil Postman highlights that, "how we are obliged to conduct such conversations will have the strongest possible influence on what ideas we can conveniently express."[33] Postman continues, "what ideas are convenient to express inevitably become the important content of culture."[34] Therefore, what ideas the mass-media can conveniently and effectively communicate have the potential to become the content of culture. This can potentially alter and truncate the human perception of itself, and of reality. Television, for example, achieves this by being "predominately narrational in its mode."[35] It uses 'language' to create "a specific grammar, a way of structuring meaning."[36] As illustrated above, the narrational means of communicating meanings evidently remains potent. This may hold a key to understanding the current meaning-seeking trends within contemporary Western European culture, and the potential of the counter-narrative outlined in the following chapter. To understand the role of narrative, representation in communicating meanings needs to be further explored. This is of significance because narrative builds on 'language.' The 'language' available to communicate meaningfully will determine what meanings are able to be understood and communicated in culture. Thus, the 'language' of a culture has repercussions for the apprehension of truth communicated by a narrative. Moreover, as the constructionist approach to meaning showed, culture constructs meaning in the process of representing, and therefore provides a basis for understanding the perception of the world incarnate in culture. As Mary Douglas, perceptively quotes from E. Sapir:

It is quite an illusion to image that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language of habits of the group.... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.[37]

This chapter, therefore, focuses on 'language,' keeping in mind the contemporary setting highlighted earlier, where Western European culture is immersed in the images communicated by the mass-media, on behalf of corporations. These frequently communicate their quasi-mythical mini-narrative through this mode of representation. Patently, imaged representations as a method of communication employed by corporations warrant investigation.

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[33] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 6.
[34] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 6.
[35] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 128.
[36] Taylor and Harris, *Critical Theories of Mass Media*, 18.
[37] Edward Sapir, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* vol. 9 (London: Macmillan, 1933): 155-69, quoted in Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 22-3.

2.4 The Potency of Imagery

Representation utilises various signs (words, sounds, images) to represent the meanings communicated. To explain the significance of representation for the human this section will focus on one particular method of representation, which is through images. The reason for this is because mass-media narratives are frequently focused on grasping the optic, which is one of the prime faculties in acquiring knowledge about the context in which the human finds itself. The potency of imagery, besides grasping the human optic, also lies in forming the imagination through which some conception of ultimacy is formed. An understanding of imagery also provides the foundation to comprehend the development outlined in the following section where lived experience is increasingly interpreted, under the guidance of images.

John Berger states that an image, "is a sight which has been recreated or reproduced."[38] He continues, "[i]t is an appearance, or a set of appearances, which has been detached from the place and time in which it first made its appearance and preserved - for a few moments or a few centuries."[39] In other words, every image "embodies a way of seeing."[40] This counts even for a photograph, since, "photographs are not, as is often assumed, a mechanical record."[41] Within contemporary Western European culture, the opposite appears to be often assumed, as Stuart Hall notes; like the object itself, "the photograph is held to be an objective representation of something factual, the image a way of presenting 'facts' about its subject in a purely informational way."[42] In other words, the belief is, "that photography and film, unlike many other signifying forms, appears to *record* rather than to *transform*."[43] On the level of representation both a photograph or a painting are known as a sign in the Saussurean sense. However, when the representation is very much like the "referent itself (i.e., the thing in the world) [it] is known as an icon."[44] An icon is a simulacrum[45] for something in the real world.[46] Important to remember is that even when a representation is very much like the referent itself, as is the case with a photograph, it still carries

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[38] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 2.
[39] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 2.
[40] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 2.
[41] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 2.
[42] Peter Hamilton, "Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War Humanist Photograhy," in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 81.
[43] Janet Woollacott, "Messages and Meanings," in *Culture, Society and the Media,* ed. Michael Gurevitch, Tony Bennett, James Curran, and Janet Woollacott (London: Methuen, 1984), 99.
[44] Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 47.
[45] Simulacrum is "representation based on resemblance, which can really invoke the original by perfecting duplicating it." Webb, *Understanding Representation,* 17.
[46] "A sign may be an **icon**, an **index** or a **symbol**. All are signs, but they take different forms and perform different functions in the work of making meaning." Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 47-9. Bold in original.

meaning and needs to be interpreted. This becomes of significance in a later section entitled 'Language' and Concepts of Reality.

Images carry a sort of perceived 'realness' or 'truthfulness' in what they represent. Perhaps this perception is also present in promotion imagery? Of concern here is their ability to embody within a frame, a certain way of 'seeing.' The frame's potency lies in communicating a certain perspective of the world. This applies to any representation through image. In the most extensive understanding, they are both carriers of meaning within systems of 'language,' that is, they work "through representation,"[47] since imagery, like sound, and words, uses "some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, to express or communicate a thought, concept, idea or feeling."[48]

Up to this point, references made to images have focused largely on their ability to convey meaning in the mass-media. The question arises as to what essentially makes images so powerful that they have the potential to shift cultural values, beliefs, and radically truncate the 'horizons of meaning' for the human? To understand the potency of imagery, it may be of some benefit to touch on the early forms of image-making, such as painting. As Berger states, the "eyes and hands of the first painters and engravers were as fine as any that came later."[49] He expands, "[t]here was a grace from the start."[50] It was part of the human quest to represent the significance of the world, to represent via two-dimensional images, meaning-laden objects.

Throughout human history the image has carried significance. Humans have been, "calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. They give thanks by means of them, expect to be elevated by them, and are moved to the highest levels of empathy and fear."[51] These characteristics are still somewhat present, as, "there still remains a basic level of reaction that cuts across historical, social and other contextual boundaries."[52] However, David Freedberg, in analysing the power of images throughout history, notes that "[w]e refuse - or have refused for many decades - to acknowledge the traces of animism in our own perception of and response to images."[53] The animism which Freedberg talks about, is not "the nineteenth-century ethnographic sense of the transference of spirits to inanimate objects, but rather in the sense of the degree of life or liveliness

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[47] Hall, "Introduction," 4.
[48] Hall, "Introduction," 4.
[49] John Berger, *The Shape of a Pocket* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 36-7.
[50] Berger, *The Shape of a Pocket*, 36-7.
[51] David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 1.
[52] Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 22.
[53] Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 32.

believed to inhere in an image."[54] There is something in images that cuts across time and space, as even in the contemporary world, "[m]agical thinking pervades our treatment of pictures - although we may 'know' that the pictures we study are only flat, two dimensional objects marked with colours and shapes, we frequently talk and act as if they had consciousness, desire or agency."[55] In other words, there is a mysterious dynamism in imagery which can influence the human perception and consciousness. Nevertheless, as Michael Warren points out, despite contemporary Western European culture being overwhelmed with images, particularly those of advertising, it remains a culture where, "most persons ... do not seem to be able to think about images."[56] He elaborates, "[T]hey have little idea of how images function in shaping their consciousness."[57] Of particular concern to the thesis is the efficacy of advertising images in shaping the human consciousness, by creating a yearning to possess the imaged.[58] As John Berger explains, this potential of image is not new; it was, in the past, exploited by paintings where the possession of oil paintings show the collector "sights of what he may possess."[59] Briefly, representation through images is also of significance to Christianity, as Baudrillard states, "[A]ll Western faith and good faith became engaged in this wager on representation: that a sign could refer to the depth of meaning, that a sign could be exchanged for meaning and that something could guarantee this exchange - God of course."[60] The potential Depth to be reached through signs - particularly symbols and icons - has lost meaning within contemporary Western European culture, where it has become related to fantasy, superstition or magic. This perspective comes from a culture whose mode of thinking, speaking and acquiring knowledge is rooted in, "science - not religion - as the basic term of explanation."[61] Herein lies one of the contrasts between "traditional and primitive cosmologies and our own modern scientific world view."[62] In chapter three, these two *Weltanschauungen*, and their effects on the 'language' of culture, and the human, are examined and pursued.

The matter of inquiry for this chapter lies in the images presented by the mass-media within contemporary Western European culture. The reference to paintings serves to reveal that imaged representations seem to have always grasped the human. An image is, as cited earlier "a way of

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[54] Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 32.
[55] Jessica Evans, introduction to *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 17.
[56] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 122.
[57] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 122.
[58] See Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 12.
[59] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 79.
[60] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan press, 1994), 5.
[61] Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 43.
[62] Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 43.

seeing."[63] That is, they represent an idea, concept, or object, in a certain way. This applies to painting, but more significantly also to images in the mass-media. Particularly within advertising, "the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional; the signifieds of the advertising message are formed *a priori* by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds have to be transmitted as clearly as possible."[64] Advertising imagery, provides a narrative, which seeks to grasp the imagination of viewers, by creating emotions and offering the means to satisfy them. In this process it represents a particular way of 'seeing the world,' a *Weltanschauung*. Advertising itself embodies a certain *Weltanschauung,* in that the world is seen through the meanings of the brand. However, what is of concern is how all the different advertisements contribute to the overall *Weltanschauung* within contemporary Western European culture, infused as it is, with scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist ideas and values. This became evident earlier, where Nike appears to have somewhat altered the experience of everyday life, particularly in providing quasi-transcendent experiences. Representations employ signs to stand in for, or represent, the meanings humans wish to communicate. The Nike Swoosh, however, was (in chapter one) shown to be a symbol. A symbol, as explained, is an intensified sign whose meanings are not arbitrary; they are unique and powerful embodiments of meaning. The effects of Nike on the 'cultural universe' appear to be significant, taking into account the previously mentioned epistemological dimension of representation.

Advertising through media such as magazines, billboards, and newspapers generally use photographic images, which are, "not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask."[65] As Sontag notes, while, "a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects) - a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be."[66] In relation to the findings above, this is a naïve stance regarding photographic imagery. It assumes an objectivity present in a photo, which has some form of authority in communicating 'truth.' However, as mentioned previously, even photographs are interpretations of the real, and thus, offer only one perspective of the truth, depending on camera angle, zoom, time, background lighting, and season. Current trends with Photoshop software have obscured such objectivity even further.

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[63] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 2.
[64] Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," 33.
[65] Susan Sontag, "The Image-World," in *Visual Culture: The Reader,* ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 80-1.
[66] Sontag, "The Image-World," 81.

2.5 'Language' and Concepts of Reality

The significance of 'language' has introduced questions concerning the perception and interpretation of reality. This section is of importance as it shows that the versions of reality produced and circulated in contemporary Western European culture are empty, truncated 'horizons of meaning.' This analysis is necessary as it is within this cultural environment that the imagination is confronted with concepts, ideas, and values, through which it forms some conception of ultimacy. Thus, if the versions of reality advanced are already hollow and empty, the conception of ultimacy, it seems reasonable to deduce, will also be empty.

Contemporary Western European culture is suffused in images of the mass-media; "their constant messages and pleasures seem to flow around and through us, and they immerse most of our waking lives."[67] Therefore, the potency and effects of images warrant further investigation. Earlier it was mentioned that, "[t]he primitive notion of the efficacy of images presumes that images possess the qualities of real things."[68] However, for contemporary Western European culture, it is, "our inclination ... to attribute to real things the qualities of an image."[69] This is the underlying premise on which Jean Baudrillard constructs his proposition regarding the contemporary cultural environment. According to Baudrillard, this is the age of simulation, whereby, "crossing into a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials."[70] Baudrillard continues, and states that it is worse than just the liquidation of all referentials, since, "with their artificial resurrection in the system of signs, a material more malleable than meaning, in that it lends itself to all systems of equivalences, to all binary oppositions, to all combinatory algebra."[71] Thus, for Baudrillard there appears to be no source in reality where truth, or objectivity is to be found. In other words, Baudrillard argues that the simulacra within contemporary Western European culture no longer functions as a mirror image of the real. There is no longer a, "referential, or a substance."[72] He elaborates, "[i]t is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal."[73] The result is that, "simulation threatens the difference between the 'true' and the 'false,' the 'real' and the 'imagery.'"[74] Baudrillard expands, stating that the "impossibility of rediscovering an absolute level of the real is of the same

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[67] Branston and Stafford, *The Media Student's Book*, 9.
[68] Sontag, "The Image-World," 83.
[69] Sontag, "The Image-World," 83.
[70] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.
[71] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.
[72] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1.
[73] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 1.
[74] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 3.

order as the impossibility of staging illusion."[75] He continues, "[I]llusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible."[76] In mass-media commodity culture, television offers multiple versions of reality. Baudrillard expands on this and states that television functions as a, "kind of genetic code that directs the mutation of the real into hyperreal."[77] Briefly, this means that rather than images being used to represent reality, it is reality that is related and judged according to the image. More specifically, the imaged narratives of the mass-media have become the template by which to experience the world. Thus, corporate promotional images in the mass-media contribute to formation of the hyperreal, and profit from such development. The 'horizons of meaning' they communicate, are, thus, truncated, superficial, and inadequate. These propositions contribute to general questions determining reality. Ludwig Wittgenstein states, "no part of our experience is at the same time a priori."[78] He continues, "[w]hatever we see could be other than it is."[79] Therefore, "[w]hatever we can describe at all could be other than it is."[80] He concludes, "[t]here is no a priori order of things."[81]

Expanding on these findings, Guy Debord writes that in societies, "dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of *spectacles.*"[82] This is significant, as the hyperreal or spectacle is the environment that forms the 'horizons of meaning' for contemporary Western European culture. Debord continues, "[E]verything that was directly lived has receded into a representation."[83] This position reinforces the views of Baudrillard, who states that, "[i]t is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody."[84] He expands, "[i]t is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real."[85] It, thus, appears that within contemporary Western European culture technological innovation has facilitated the obscuring of reality through signs, because so much of what the human learns of the world comes through these technological mediums. Neil Postman critiques these innovations since, "technology imperiously commandeers our most important terminology."[86] Postman continues, saying that technology, "redefines 'freedom,' 'truth,' 'intelligence,' 'fact,' 'memory,' 'history,' - all the words we live by."[87] Postman highlights that, "technologies create the ways in which people perceive reality."[88]

[75] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 19.
[76] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 19.
[77] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 30.
[78] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* 69.
[79] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* 69.
[80] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* 69.
[81] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* 69.
[82] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle,* trans. Ken Knabb (Sussex: Soul Bay Press, 2009), 24.
[83] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 24.
[84] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 2.
[85] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation,* 2.
[86] Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 8.
[87] Postman, *Technopoly*, 8-9.

This significance of technology was apparent at the beginning of this thesis, given that the generational time-line is set in place by the proliferation of technological innovations, which facilitate the shaping of a 'cultural universe' for a generation. Corporations, such as Nike, and Apple, uphold and exploit this system which, "turns appearances into refractions, like mirages: refractions not of light but of appetite, in fact a single appetite, the appetite for more."[89] This system doesn't require the 'real;' what is important and required is, "the not-yet-real, the virtual, the next purchase. This produces in the spectator, not, as claimed, a sense of freedom (the so-called freedom of choice) but a profound isolation."[90] This, "[b]ondage to images consists precisely in the failure to see them *as images*."[91] The spectator is left wandering in this system in search of true Transcendence, for the Real. However, this search is truncated by messages of corporations projecting potential meaningful versions of reality in which their branded product plays a crucial role. These mirages truncate the 'horizons of meaning' through which the Real can potentially be reached. Television, as shown, by its, "ability to carry a socially convincing sense of the real,"[92] assists with this obscuring. As mentioned earlier, there is a link between the society of the spectacle and the 'horizons of meaning' in contemporary Western European culture. Debord mentions that in, "all of its particular manifestations - news, propaganda, advertising, entertainment - the spectacle represents the dominant *model* of life."[93]

In chapter one, when analysing contemporary Western European culture, it became evident that one of the functions of culture is to provide the models by which to interpret reality. Now it is clear that the spectacle communicated by the mass-media is incorporated into the webs of meaning of culture. Hence, the spectacle Debord speaks of, "cannot be understood as a mere visual excess produced by mass-media technologies."[94] It goes deeper. The spectacle is, "a worldview that has actually been materialized, a view of a world that has become objective."[95] Consequently, this system shapes and determines, to some extent, where the citizens of contemporary Western European culture find meaning, and, more specifically, in what they find meaning. The spectacle can be said to embody a way of 'seeing,' and practically living in the world. Thus, the way the spectacle represents the world is how it will be interpreted, understood, and lived. As Debord is careful to point out, the, "spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between

[88] Postman, *Technopoly*, 21.
[89] Berger, *The Shape of a Pocket,* 12.
[90] Berger, *The Shape of a Pocket,* 12.
[91] John Sallis, *Force of Imagination* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 48.
[92] Fiske, *Television Culture*, 21.
[93] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 25.
[94] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 24.
[95] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 24.

people that is mediated by images."[96] The use of mass-media by corporations to produce a commodity fetishism in contemporary Western European culture, is constructed upon these image-mediated social relations. The social relations in such a system are increasingly built on envy, where brands become symbols of value between people. This *Weltanschauung* clearly affects the social relations between people, since the shared frameworks or 'maps' to meaning have been truncated by the representations of trans-national corporations. Consequently, social interaction is increasingly conducted through these symbolic meaning-laden branded commodities.

2.6 Reality and Ideology

Culture includes, "all ideas, values, knowledge, behaviours, and material objects."[97] The thesis has advanced and developed propositions that suggest that corporations through the mass-media have become significant contributors to the cultural universe, including sharing particular ideas of lived experience in the world. This, as Baudrillard argues, has led to the creation of the hyperreal, which is primarily concerned with ideas regarding the real, rather than objective truth. This section will show that culture is ideological, that is, it communicates certain ideas regarding lived experience in the world. Of significance here and for the following chapter, are the ideas which are prevalent and dominant in 'language.' For example, religious 'language' seems to have lost its potency in contemporary Western European culture, and along with this loss, its ideas.

As humans come to experience the world through 'language,' the ideas conveniently expressed through it become part of the cultural environment. This is crucial to the human as bio-cultural entity in communicating thoughts and concepts to others who share the codes of 'language.' Since the crux of the thesis lies in meaning questions, consideration of the function of 'language' becomes crucial.

Contemporary Western European culture is suffused by the promotional imagery of trans-national corporations. These organisations profit from exploiting cultural representations to communicate to the human. Corporations, through the mass-media, do so by using words, ideas, concepts, images, notes, dreams, fantasies, hopes, beliefs, and transforming them for the purpose of injecting their own products with meaning. By attempting to create these meanings they tap into the vast cultural reserve of meanings already present. Corporate brands, through the mass-media, have

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[96] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 24.
[97] Sullivan, *Sociology,* 39.

thus become a component of the "cultural circuit."[98] It is within this circuit that the human is caught in the search for meaning. Corporations use the mass-media as a vehicle to turn a product into a branded significant object. To achieve this, they use advertorial representations to convey certain ideas of how to 'see the world.' Thus, brands, in their essence, are ideological. This process, as the following sections will explore, happens through the imagination.

A *Weltanschauung* is formed through the social knowledge of culture, which is communicated and understood through representation. As Jen Webb explains, representation is "fundamental to everyday life."[99] She expands, "[p]eople practice representation all the time because we live immersed in representation: it is how we understand our environments and each other."[100] In chapter one it was pointed out that humans are "meaning-seeking creatures."[101] The meanings they seek are retained within culture and made accessible through 'language,' which "organize[s] and regulate[s] social practices, influence[s] our conduct and consequently [has] real, practical effects."[102] Culture consists of "shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the *codes which govern the relationships of translation between them.*"[103] These are the codes that, "fix the relationships between concepts and signs."[104] In other words, the human is limited to the meaning-structures provided by culture through 'language' to comprehend reality. Wittgenstein's earlier statement, regarding the limits of language serves as reminder. Thus, as cultural meaning-structures are shared through 'language,' it necessarily communicates particular ideas as to what constitutes meaning, where it is to be sought, and found. Representation, "as the 'active labour of *making things mean*' - necessarily embraces ideas and values."[105] Adam Briggs and Paul Cobley continue, "[a]s such, representations are ideological."[106] However, "ideology operates beyond the realm of representation; it does so by occupying the space of people's concrete experience, donating a sense of coherence, consistency and 'naturalness' to our lived existence."[107] Paul Ricoeur, in relation to ideas represented in words, states that, "everything that can be said concerning words is the result of their 'correspondence with ideas.'"[108] He elaborates further, "[t]o talk about ideas and about words is to talk twice about ideas: once about 'ideas in themselves,' and the second time

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[98] See Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 3.
[99] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 2.
[100] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 2.
[101] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 17.
[102] Hall, "Introduction," 3.
[103] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 21.
[104] Hall, "The Work of Representation," 21.
[105] Adam Briggs and Paul Cobley, "Introduction to 'In the Media,'" in *The Media: An Introduction*, ed. Adam Briggs and Paul Cobley (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), 308.
[106] Briggs and Cobley, "Introduction to 'In the Media,'" 308.
[107] Briggs and Cobley, "Introduction to 'In the Media,'" 308.
[108] Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: The Creation of Meaning in Language,* trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, S.J. (Abingdon, Routledge, 2003), 55.

about ideas as 'represented by words.'"[109] This shows that everything is embedded in ideas, and as such are ideological. Ideology, as Webb explains, is, "the matrix that frames what we can see, and what we can imagine; the practice whereby a particular group within a culture attempts to naturalize their own meanings and values, or pass them off as universal and as common sense."[110] However, this particular group can only be characterised as ideological in relation to other ideological *Weltanschauungen,* which sees its own meanings and values as universal and common sense. Thus, as cultural animals, ideological frameworks naturally surround the human. Corporate brands, as the carriers of an ideology, form part of the cultural meaning-structures of contemporary Western Europe. As such, brands embody a, "way of life, an attitude, a set of values, a look, an idea,"[111] that shapes and gives meaning to existence. These form narrow, 'horizons of meaning,' which truncate a deeper lived experience.

As culture and 'language' are intrinsically intertwined with each other, it must be stated that it is not 'language' per se that is ideological, rather the overarching culture from which it emanated. Contemporary Western European culture, for example, is rooted in scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist ideologies. The ideological characteristic of representation is significant to the thesis, as it shows that 'language' carries culturally pervasive ideas. Within contemporary Western European culture this 'language' has been utilised, extended, transformed, and added too by the mass-media, in particular by advertising. As Jonathan Bignell, drawing on Judith Williamson states, advertising, "has a function, which is to sell things to us."[112] He continues, "[b]ut it has another function, which I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art and religion."[113] That is, "[i]t creates structures of meaning."[114] He expands, "[A]s well as asking us to buy something, Williamson argues that ads ask us to participate in ideological ways of seeing ourselves and the world."[115] Having broadly mentioned the overarching ideals within contemporary Western European culture, it must be said that this "globalized liberal ideology looks for support to economic leaders and above all to the mass-media, rather than to active participation on the part of people."[116] The mass-media, and corporations, are thus key in understanding the cultural oppression in contemporary Western European culture. This warrants a liberatory response, of which the counter-narrative discussed in chapter three will be one attempt.

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[109] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 55.
[110] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 146.
[111] Klein, *No Logo*, 23.
[112] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 11-12, quoted in Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 31.
[113] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 11-12, quoted in Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 31.
[114] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 11-12, quoted in Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 31.
[115] Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, 11-12, quoted in Bignell, *Media Semiotics,* 31.
[116] Alain Touraine, *Can We Live Together? Equality and Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 28.

In highlighting the ideological nature of 'language' as carrier of meaning within culture, it becomes apparent that the counter-narrative of the following chapter will be confronted by what is known as "Mannheim's paradox."[117] This raises questions regarding the objectivity of any statement. In other words, "where, if anywhere, ideology leaves off and science begins."[118] This understanding of ideology, proposed by Geertz, undermines itself, since the implied proposition that science is an un-biased, objective analysis of reality is unfounded. Science starts from a certain hypothesis regarding what constitutes the 'real.' The proposition of Geertz demonstrates the deep-rooted paradoxical nature of ideology, undermining any apparent objectivity of concept. This means that the counter-cultural-counter-narrative explored in chapter three can be dismissed as simply one ideological *Weltanschauung* versus another ideological *Weltanschauung*. In essence this is correct; they are competing *Weltanschauungen,* each with their own ideas and values. However, as will be explored further in this chapter, the thesis approaches complex meaning questions that revolve around differing statements or beliefs in an ultimate concern. That is, concerns in the world that "claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group."[119] The ultimate concern contains ideas, and is, thus, ideological. Nevertheless, if all is ideology, is any objectivity or classification possible? The ultimate concern may offer insight. It functions as a model for the human on which they construct their lives, grasp meaning, and make choices. An ideology that truncates the transcendent yearnings and aspirations of the human will be limited to the finite, thus, hindering the potential to transcend the material to a higher plane where mystery resides, where ideas become superfluous and inadequate, where awe and silence dwell. This will be explored further in chapter three. In essence, there are ideas limited to the finite, and those reaching towards the infinite.

Paul Tillich says that every human has an ultimate concern. Once an ultimate concern is established "it demands the total surrender of him [*sic*] who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name."[120] Therefore, the ultimate concern partly functions as a model providing meaning against which other views are judged. Returning to the issue of contesting ideologies, how can an ideological position claim objectivity or truth, since every ideological position makes claims to these ideals? To address this the thesis draws on ideas regarding faith, as described by Tillich. Faith, "is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern."[121] Tillich points out that the difference between true and false claims to ultimacy lie in the "finite ...

[117] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 194.
[118] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 194.
[119] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
[120] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 1.
[121] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 1.

[claiming] infinity without having it (as, e.g., a nation or success)."[122] He continues, pointing out that true faith is where, "the ultimate concern is a concern about the truly ultimate,"[123] while on the other hand, "in idolatrous faith preliminary, finite realities are elevated to the rank of ultimacy."[124] Therefore, according to Tillich, true ultimacy lies beyond the finite realities of this world and material reality should offer a gateway to Depth, towards true transcendence, rather than being turned in on itself. This point will be further elaborated upon in chapter three, which discusses transcendent 'horizons of meaning.'

It is through 'language' that cultural ideologies become communicated and become established as truth. Geertz outlines that ideology is a, "'representation' of the imagery relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[125] It coerces its followers, shapes their *Weltanschauung* and, moreover, plays a role in "defining (or obscuring) social categories, stabilizing (or upsetting) social expectations, maintaining (or undermining) social norms, strengthening (or weakening) social consensus, relieving (or exacerbating) social tensions."[126] In contemporary Western European culture, imaged representations, relayed via the mass-media come forth from ideas and values instilled by trans-national corporations. These corporate powers seek to exploit this 'natural' meaning-seeking activity of humans by offering their own meanings in the pursuit of profit - offering quasi-transcendent experiences through consumption.

The mass-media, thus, fulfills an ideological function in contemporary Western European culture.[127] Television, in particular, makes accessible certain ideas of reality via its narratives. However, a cautionary note regarding the role of television as ideological signaling apparatus should be mentioned. Janet Woollacott, summing up John Fiske and J.R Hartley's work, points out that they accept that, "television performs an ideological function at a general level."[128] While at the same time, "they are anxious to avoid either conspiracy theory on the part of media professionals, ... or a view of media audiences which sees them as mindless dupes."[129] It is such reductionism that the thesis seeks to avoid. Additionally, the thesis does not assume some sort of conspiracy theory regarding corporations and the mass-media. In short, the mass-media promotes a *Weltanschauung,* which compliments, upholds, and promotes a scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist ideological

[122] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 13.
[123] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 13.
[124] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 13.
[125] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 2010), 317.
[126] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 203.
[127] See chapter one, footnote 136.
[128] Woollacott, "Messages and Meanings," 102.
[129] Woollacott, "Messages and Meanings," 102.

stance, which simultaneously produces and answers the needs of culture. The effects on 'language' and the comprehension of 'horizons of meaning' shall be explored and critiqued further in the following chapter.

Debord explains that "the language of the spectacle consists of signs of the dominant system of production - signs which are at the same time the ultimate end-products of that system."[130] In other words, the signs referred to here can be understood as the symbolic brands of corporations. These symbols are part of the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. These to some extent are the ultimate end-products, which in some cases claim ultimacy. The social implications of ideological representations are significant, Debord, in criticising the dominant paradigm of the production orientated economy states that the "first stage of the economy's domination of social life brought about an evident degradation of *being* into *having* - human fulfillment was no longer equated with what one was, but with what one possessed."[131] This shift in paradigm communicated through 'language' has ontological effects, that is, how humans understands themselves as being, especially in determining their self-worth. As counter-balance, Emmanuel Mounier avoids the formation of an existential choice between being and having. He states that, "[w]e should think of them rather as polar opposites between which our embodied existence is held in tension."[132] This approach recognises that it "is just not possible to be without having."[133] Mounier continues, "that personal being is an indefinite capacity of having, that it is never fulfilled in whatsoever it may have."[134] This point serves to highlight that being and having is not a straightforward existential choice. In this tension balance needs to be sought. There is, nevertheless, an overbalance within contemporary Western European culture towards having, whereby it forms part of the value of being. Social relations and the social imagination have accompanied this shift in culture, whereby having is promoted and encouraged to new heights. This, again, is achieved through meaning-laden representations, since what culture 'makes known' shapes the perception of the human. Webb points out that there "is no simple mirror of the world, but only ways of seeing that are inflected by philosophical and hence ideological perspectives."[135] The 'way of seeing' promulgated by the mass-media, truncates accessibility to broader 'horizons of meaning' such as those held by the Christian faith. The spectacle of contemporary Western European culture appears to have sidelined the Christian *Weltanschauung* as a valid means for 'seeing' and interpreting the world.

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[130] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 25.
[131] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 27.
[132] Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism,* trans. Philip Mairet, Notre Dame: Notre Dame University press, 1952), 39
[133] Mounier, *Personalism,* 39
[134] Mounier, *Personalism,* 39
[135] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 18.

2.7 Lived Experience and the Formation of Imagination

At this point the connection between culture and 'language' has become sufficiently clear to investigate its impact on the human. The signs humans use to represent the meanings they wish to communicate contain an ideological viewpoint regarding reality. To comprehend the effect of representation on the human, it is necessary to turn to the faculty of the imagination. The need for investigating the functions of the imagination is because within the ideological framework of contemporary Western European culture, "[w]e associate the imagination with emotion and intuition, and we in the West are schooled to regard these as sources of error and deception."[136] This becomes evident, when in popular speech, "we often use the term imagination and imagine to refer to subjective and unreliable experiences of reality."[137] The effect of such an understanding does not go without consequence, especially because the imagination forms a pillar on which comprehension of transcendent counter-narrative depends. This is because, "the imagination speaks the language of transcendence."[138] Chapter three will explore this further in relation to *mythos* as one imaginative form of communication. Patently, contemporary Western European culture underestimates the potential of the imagination, a faculty which goes deeper than offering unreliable experiences of reality. The thesis argues that the imagination plays an essential role for the human. This is also recognised by Paul Ricoeur, on whom William Bausch draws. Ricoeur, according to Bausch, sees the imagination, "along with speculative knowledge, as a genuine and essential ingredient in all acts of creative knowledge."[139] Robert Audi would add that the imagination is also significant for scientific knowledge, since normally, "it emerges only through using imagination, both in formulating questions and in framing hypotheses to answer them."[140]

The imagination, as Kathleen R. Fischer explains, is "the human power that opens us to possibility and promise, the not-yet of the future."[141] Advertising attempts to grasp the imagination for this reason. It achieves this by offering a representation of a future state of affairs that is reached through consumption of the meaning-laden object. The thesis will develop this connection between 'language' and the imagination, particularly in forming 'horizons of meaning.' Nevertheless, the faculty of the imagination is an area of great debate, and as John Sallis, quoting Edward S. Casey,

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[136] Kathleen R. Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow: The Imagination in Christian Life* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1983), 5.
[137] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 5.
[138] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 12-13.
[139] William J. Bausch, *Storytelling: Imagination and Faith* (Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1986), 24.
[140] Robert Audi, *Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge,* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 300.
[141] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 7.

states, "we must *use* imagination in order to give an adequate descriptive account of imagination."[142]

A basic proposition on which the thesis builds its understanding of imagination is founded on the realisation that the imagination is always rooted in material reality, which enlightens it. Moreover, as Cornelius Castoriadis, quoted by Jacqueline Adams, states, "the imagination is the main source of meaning in social and cultural life, providing a framework for the interpretation of reality."[143] The imagination, thus, "helps produce our sense of reality."[144] Therefore, perceptions of reality and the imagination are intertwined. Jacqueline Adams puts forward the argument, drawing on Rosine Christin, whereby the, "imagination is shaped by reality - that is, the imagination can be understood as a mental, individual, and social space that produces the reality that simultaneously produces it."[145] This is also in line with earlier findings, where perception of reality, how it is perceived, interpreted, comprehended, and lived is a cultural matter. Therefore, it becomes apparent that culture informs and shapes the imagination of individuals. As a result it appears more appropriate to speak in terms of a social imagination, since the individual imagination cannot escape the structures of culture. For example, reading, "is an imaginative act, involving knowledge and affectivity."[146] He elaborates, "[t]he writer must therefore suppose certain areas of knowledge and certain kinds of affective reaction on the part of the reader."[147] That is, the "[w]riter and reader must share a common context."[148] This common context is nothing less than culture. The same criteria applies to art, as highlighted by Gadamer:

> The player, sculptor, or viewer is never simply swept away into a strange world of magic, of intoxication, of dream; rather, it is always his [*sic*] own world, and he [*sic*] comes to belong to it more fully by recognizing himself [*sic*] more profoundly in it. There remains a continuity of meaning which links the work of art with the existing world and from which even the alienated consciousness of a cultured society never quite detaches itself.[149]

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[142] Edward S. Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 225 quoted in Sallis, *Force of Imagination*, 12. Italics in original.

[143] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987), quoted in Jacqueline Adams, "The Imagination and Social Life," *Qualitative Sociology* 27 (2004): 278.

[144] Adams, "The Imagination and Social Life," 278.

[145] Adams, "The Imagination and Social Life," 278.

[146] Jonathan Webber, Philosophical Introduction to *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, by Jean-Paul Sartre (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), xix.

[147] Webber, Philosophical Introduction to *The Imaginary*, xix.

[148] Webber, Philosophical Introduction to *The Imaginary*, xix.

[149] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 129

Jean-Paul Sartre goes as far as to describe imagination as another facet of perception, distinguishing between optic perception and the imagination which he terms imagining consciousness. Sartre states that imagination, "would be, like perception, a way in which consciousness relates to an object."[150] Thus, the imagination is a different mode of consciousness than perception, the difference being the relationship to an object. Therefore, imagination, "is a certain way in which the object appears to consciousness, or, if one prefers, a certain way in which consciousness presents to itself an object."[151] Hence, when perceiving a chair through optic enquiry one is in direct relationship to it, while when imagining the object there is a distance involved. The relationship at stake lies within knowledge of reality acquired by perception or the imagination, which is another facet of knowledge. Sartre notes that, "[i]n perception, knowledge is formed slowly; in the image, knowledge is immediate."[152] He continues, "[w]e see now that the image is a synthetic act that links a concrete, not imaged, knowledge to elements more properly representative."[153] In perception the human has to scan the object perceived, slowly acquire knowledge about it, and formulate an assessment, while in the act of imagining, the same object readily appears and there exists no doubt that what is imagined is in fact the object. This is because what is imagined has been informed by the concrete knowledge a person may have acquired over their lifetime. In short, Sartre concludes that, "the object of perception constantly overflows consciousness; the object of an image is never more than the consciousness one has of it; it is defined by that consciousness: one can never learn from an image what one does not know already."[154] However, the cultural reality where this knowledge is acquired, and in which the process of imaginary consciousness operates is, according to Baudrillard and Debord, a culture where reality has been substituted by representations. Corporations have become a significant part of the 'cultural universe' using representations to communicate ideological meanings. These are significant for the imagination given that 'language' forms the basis of knowledge; it is productive of what the human knows, including understanding the nature of being. In other words, it gives meaning to their experience of the world, including themselves as entities.

The imagination, is significant to the counter-narrative discussed in chapter three as Donal O'Leary, quoting Michael Paul Gallagher's summary of Schleiermacher notes, "[B]elief in God

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[150] Sallis, *Force of Imagination,* 9.
[151] Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 7.
[152] Sartre, *The Imaginary,* 9.
[153] Sartre, *The Imaginary,* 9.
[154] Sartre, *The Imaginary*, 10.

depend[s] on the direction of our imagination, the highest and most original element in us."[155] This highlights that the imagination can be formed and truncated from finding mystery in the ordinariness of daily experience. For contemporary Western European culture the conceptual 'maps' that form the imagination are accessible through the ideologically-charged representations of the mass-media. The imagination never ceases to facilitate interaction and comprehension of the world. It is shaped through the daily encounters within culture such as, "images, symbols, rituals and conceptual representations offered within conviction, in the language and common life of those with whom we learn and grow."[156] As chapter one showed, the human is shaped and guided by culture in finding meaning and it is through representation that these meanings are shared, judged and experienced. It is with this conception in mind that, in accord with Fischer, the thesis holds that, "the imagination makes it impossible for us to bypass this world."[157] That is, the human is rooted in the world, which forms and guides the process of the imagination. The thesis accepts and builds on Fischer's understanding of the imagination. She states that the imagination is needed to open up to the human the, "experience of the Ultimate coming through the finite reality, to the Depth at the heart of matter."[158]

2.8 Imagination, Faith and Ultimacy

The imaged representations of trans-national corporations, are part of the total accumulation of images that the human consciousness has at its disposal to make sense of the world. These confront the human imagination through perception and are connected to their meaning-making. Fowler approaches faith as a kind of imagination and goes on to state that in its imaginal mode, "faith 'forms into one' a comprehensive image of an ultimate environment, an environment of environments, in relation to which we make sense of the force fields of our lives."[159] It is around this centre that the human perception of the world is determined. The formation of an ultimate environment takes place through the imagination. It creates a knowledgeable image by drawing on all forms of consciousness. As Sartre explains, "the image consciousness is a synthetic form that appears as a certain moment of a temporal synthesis and organizes itself with the other forms of consciousness, which precede and follow it to form a melodic unity."[160] Within this imaginative unity, the formation of an ultimate environment, also termed, ultimate concern, develops. This

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[155] Michael Paul Gallagher S.J., "Retrieving Imagination in Theology", in *The Critical Spirit: Theology at the Crossroads of Faith and Culture* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2003), 200-207 quoted in Donal O'Leary, "Imagination: the Forgotten Dimension" in *The Furrow* 57 (2006): 520.
[156] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 25.
[157] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 11.
[158] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[159] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 28.
[160] Sartre, *The Imaginary*, 15.

functions for humans as a foundational 'map' by which they interpret reality, and guide their lives. This finds spiritual expression in faith, as chapter one showed.

Fowler's description of faith appears to be developed on Tillich's conception of faith as, "the state of being ultimately concerned."[161] He continues, the "dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern."[162] However, contrary to Fowler's imaginative mode of faith, the thesis proposes that the formation of an ultimate concern, and thus, faith, are produced by the imagination. This formation takes place through interaction with the culture world. The reason for this is to point out that faith is formed by culture. Fowler hints at the role of culture when he mentions that "[m]etaphors, symbols, concepts - and many, many other kinds of representations - serve to bring our shared images of an ultimate environment to expression."[163] However, this falls short in explaining that faith is also shaped by these representations. Therefore, the 'language' of culture does not only facilitate the creation, formation, and exchange of ultimates, but can potentially also steer the human away from the "lasting world religious traditions."[164] According to Fowler, these "prove again and again to be the lively custodians of *truthful* images of the ultimate environment."[165] One of these is the Christian *Weltanschauung* which forms the foundation of the counter-narrative discussed in the following chapter. One of the functions of the imagination is to facilitate humans in formulating conceptions of an ultimate environment. This happens unconsciously and dynamically through submersion within culture.

Faith, as Tillich explains, is being "ultimately concerned"[166] about something. The formation of an ultimate appears to be developed through living in the cultured world. For 'Generation Y' the environment where the ultimate concern is created, formulated, and articulated is in contemporary Western European culture, suffused by promotional imagery, communicating various meaning-laden narratives. These uphold and communicate a culture that is obsessed by commodity fetishism, which is, "the domination of society by 'intangible as well as tangible things.'"[167] The ultimate fulfillment is attained "in the spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet at the same time succeed in making themselves to be regarded as the epitome of reality."[168] In such a system, representations confront

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[161] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
[162] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
[163] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 29.
[164] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 29.
[165] Fowler, *Stages of Faith,* 29. Italics in original.
[166] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
[167] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 36.
[168] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 36.

the imagination diverting it from being used to see the "Depth in the ordinary."[169] Instead it is used to conjure up a future image of the human having consumed the commodity, or to formulate and experience a quasi-transcendent experience through consumption. It is through engaging with the imagination that "consumers are continually striving, through material goods, to close the gap between their imagined and experienced pleasures."[170]

There is a link here between 'language' in advertising and the imagination, since the "language of advertising - and representation in general - operates as much on fantasy and desires as it does on rational choices and so-called 'real' needs."[171] The people represented within the context of, "advertisements are ... not a realistic representation of ourselves but an *imaginary* one."[172] This is so because the advertisement creates a future image of a situation made possible by the consumption of the commodity. The imagined pleasures and the imagined future 'I' seem to be a result of clever advertisements that confront the human with a generally unattainable experience. It is the imagination confronted by moving images, such as Michael Jordan flying through the air, which formulates these images into the "the not-yet-real, the virtual, the next purchase."[173] In contemporary Western European culture these narratives daily confront the human. In such a situation, the imagination is diverted from its full capabilities in coming to understand the mystery that the world harbours. Instead it is employed to concentrate on publicity images, about which John Berger says, "[O]ne may remember or forget these messages but briefly one takes them in, and for a moment they stimulate the imagination by way of either memory or expectation."[174] Berger here only takes one image as example but daily the human is confronted by significantly more. They are faced with these images, impinging on the imagination, calling its full participation in decoding and imagining the outcomes of consuming the product advertised. These signs, in the representation system of mass-media advertising, are outlined in chapter one as advancing "packaged experiences."[175]

The 'language' of contemporary Western European culture achieves the aforementioned results by shaping and interacting with the imagination whereby the imagination formulates some concept of ultimate concern. Briefly, the formation of an ultimate concern depends on certain conceptions represented through signs or symbols, which are intensified signs. These signs are

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[169] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[170] Kenneth R. Himes, "Consumerism and Christian Ethics," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 140.
[171] Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 26.
[172] Du Gay et al., *Doing Cultural Studies,* 26. Italics in original.
[173] Berger, *The Shape of a Pocket*, 12.
[174] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 123.
[175] Corkery, "Does Technology Squeeze Out Transcendence - Or What?," 14.

present within culture and form a 'language' through which meaning is communicated and constructed. The 'language' of a culture is significant, since, as Tillich notes, the act of faith, "is dependent on language and therefore on community."[176] Hence, as has been proposed throughout the thesis, culture through 'language' gives form to the spiritual faith journey of humans. In short, culture through 'language' functions as a sort of "conditioning."[177] Aldous Huxley, in *Brave New World*, employs this term to describe the cognitive formation of the human whereby 'horizons of meaning' become established. The term 'conditioning' here serves to highlight to potential of culture through 'language' to expand or contract meanings for humans. Chapter three will seek to find a balanced approach between two different *Weltanschauungen*, which would enable humans to broaden their 'horizons of meaning.'

What individuals know, believe, and communicate meaningfully, is largely determined by culture. Therefore, the imagination which functions in constructing some sort of ultimate concern, is limited to the lived experience which culture communicates and shapes for it. Hence, one, "encounters the divine through what is present in one's culture."[178] This phenomenon of, "seeking images, symbols, and language to express and share the experience of the divine is called the socialization of the experience."[179] However, if the representations through which this socialisation of experience runs fails to communicate truth within culture, then the experience is undermined. In other words, if the words, images, and symbols of the Christian Ultimate are no longer understood as containing truth then the experience of grace and revelation is also undermined. Thus, if the representations commonly employed are rooted in scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist ideologies, then this is the 'cultural universe' within which individuals' quest for meaning takes place. These 'horizons' are categorically short of the available 'horizons of meaning.'

Within contemporary Western European culture, "even the most religious of us, [are] secular in ways our foremothers and forefathers were not."[180] The world has changed, it is no longer "a sacramental universe in which the things of this world, its joys and catastrophes, harvests and famines, births and death, are understood as connected to and permeated by divine power and love."[181] A change in 'language' has accompanied this phenomenon within contemporary Western European culture. It now conveys a "daily experience, [which] is for the most part nonreligious."[182]

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[176] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 27.
[177] Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 12.
[178] Astorga, "Culture, Religion, and Moral Vision," 591.
[179] Astorga, "Culture, Religion, and Moral Vision," 591.
[180] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1-2.
[181] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1-2.
[182] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 2.

One of the potential functions of imagination is to accommodate some conception of an ultimate. The conception of ultimate out of which, in Tillich's terms, faith stems, is thus shaped by the imagination. Coulson, in citing Newman, supplements this approach stating, "the assent of faith must first be credible to the imagination."[183] Furthermore, "our imaginative assents cannot be subsequently disregarded: we are all the books and poems we have responded to."[184] For contemporary Western European culture, in addition to books and poems, the following can also be added: television programs, mini-narratives from advertisements, glossy magazines, movies with their own narrative style, and the internet. The imagination is formed by all such interactions, out of which some sort of conception of 'ultimate' arises.

This 'ultimate' is what Tillich terms the ultimate concern, which is, "concern about what is experienced as ultimate."[185] In contemporary Western European culture, branded commodities are represented as symbols of ultimacy. The human within such a system experiences reality through these significant signs. The concept of 'ultimate,' perhaps, requires explanation. The concept stems from Tillich, who states that the "ultimate is the ground of everything."[186] It is with this understanding that the "ultimate concern is the integrating center [*sic*] of the personal life."[187] Therefore, "[b]eing without it is being without a center [*sic*]."[188] There is, thus, no human without faith, since "a human being deprived completely of a center [*sic*] would cease to be a human being."[189] He continues that it is for, "this reason one cannot admit that there is any man without an ultimate concern or faith."[190] Hence, a conception of ultimate is a necessary and fundamental part of being human. The ultimate concern, "gives depth, direction and unity to all other concerns and, with them, to the whole personality."[191] Faith, in the broadest sense, as seen above, "is the centered movement of the whole personality toward something of ultimate meaning and significance."[192] Where humans find meaning, as explored in chapter one, depends on culture, since it, "is the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their action."[193] Faith as an inward act is thus guided by larger cultural patterns, and thus it takes considerable efforts for the human to consider other ultimates. This is because the cultural patterns are for the human the only right way of 'seeing,' conveying truth, knowledge, and propositions regarding the

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[183] John Coulson, "Faith and Imagination," *The Furrow* 34 (1983): 537. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27677697.
[184] Coulson, "Faith and Imagination," 537.
[185] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 11.
[186] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 123.
[187] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[188] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[189] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[190] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[191] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 122.
[192] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 123.
[193] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 145.

human. Moreover, an ultimate such as the Christian Ultimate may be conveyed through a 'language' that is difficult to comprehend or taken as invalid communicator of truth. Thus, to some extent, the 'language' becomes meaningless, as the realities it points towards are understood as an illusion. The webs of meaning in which the human is caught are predominantly seen as being the only 'true' way to perceive and interpret the world.

The necessity for an ultimate, or as Tillich calls it "ultimate concern,"[194] is revealed in the human quest for meaning and transcendence, which has been present throughout human history. This is shown by Claude Levi-Strauss, who notes that primitives, "are perfectly capable of disinterested thinking; that is, they are moved by a need or a desire to understand the world around them, its nature and their society."[195] In order to achieve this understanding they proceeded "by intellectual means, exactly as a philosopher, or even to some extent a scientist, can and would do."[196] To step up to the "challenge of finding or composing some kind of order, unity and coherence"[197] in the world, these people constructed myths, where they employed images "borrowed from experience."[198] This highlights earlier conclusions regarding the imagination, formed by material reality. Nevertheless, "from the very beginning we invented stories that enabled us to place our lives in a larger setting, that revealed an underlying pattern, and gave us a sense that, against all the depressing and chaotic evidence to the contrary, life had meaning and value."[199] The function of these early narratives was, "therefore designed to help us to cope with the problematic human predicament. It helped people to find their place in the world and their true orientation."[200] Mythological narratives were a means of representation available within their culture to find meaning and create an ultimate concern to which they could order, understand and live their lives. These narratives are needed because humans are "meaning-seeking creatures."[201]

2.8.1 Ultimacy in Contemporary Western European Culture

The thesis holds that cultural meaning-structures are a necessity and crucial to being human, particularly in forming the life of faith. The thesis seeks to further explore the effects of faith on 'horizons of meaning.' Since, when an ultimate concern is formed, as faith it, "demands the total

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[194] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 1.
[195] Claude Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 12.
[196] Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 12.
[197] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 24.
[198] Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning,* 17.
[199] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth,* 2.
[200] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 6.
[201] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 17.

surrender of him [*sic*] who accepts this claim."[202] Furthermore, faith also, "promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name."[203] Therefore, the cultural milieu of contemporary Western Europe needs to be explored in relation to 'language' forming the imagination and ultimate concern. In this regard, the ideological ultimacy claims made by corporate brands are significant. The predominant method to communicate these significant meanings is through the mass-media. These messages appear to uphold and promote an ultimate concern based on, "success ... social standing and economic power."[204] These have become, "the god of many people in the highly competitive Western culture and it does what every ultimate concern must do: it demands unconditional surrender to its laws even if the price is the sacrifice of genuine human relations, personal conviction, and creative *eros*."[205] This perspective is complimented by John Henry Newman, who, according to Nicholas Madden, "identifies ambition for money, power, and success as the driving force in many of his contemporaries, and thinks of it as 'an intense, sleepless, restless, never-wearied, never satisfied, pursuit of mammon in one shape or other, to the exclusion of all deep, all holy, all calm, all reverent thoughts."[206]

These strivings have also become connected with questions of human self-worth. As John Drane points out, "material success has become a culturally approved sign of worthwhile achievement, people right across all social classes are struggling to establish themselves as individuals of true worth."[207] This perception of the human is promoted by the mass-media, in particular through advertisements. The brands appear to function as quasi-sacramental objects, whereby the ultimate concern lies not in the commodity, but rather in what all commodities strives to convey. These brands symbolise the attainment of success, social standing and economic power. The advertisements propose, "to each of us that we transform ourselves, or our lives, by buying something more."[208] However, there is a paradox in this system, as advertisements propose that buying more makes, "us in some way richer - even though we will be poorer by having spent our money."[209] Thus, advertisements are, "about social relations, not objects."[210] Their "promise is not of pleasure, but of happiness: happiness as judged from the outside by others."[211] Therefore, human self-worth is related to being an object of envy for others, communicated through brands. Thus, these symbolic brands share a dynamic relationship with the ultimate concern. Returning again to

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[202] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1

[203] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1-2.

[204] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 4.

[205] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 4. Italics in original.

[206] Nicholas Madden*,* "Newman: Conscience, the Matrix of Spirituality," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67 (2002): 146.

[207] Drane, *The McDonaldization of the Church*, 25.

[208] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 125.

[209] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 125.

[210] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 126.

[211] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 126.

Berger, he states that publicity, "is always about the future buyer."[212] Berger expands, "[I]t offers him an image of himself made glamorous by the product or opportunity it is trying to sell."[213] The objective of these representations is to become an, "object of envy for others."[214] The effectiveness of branded objects thus taps into various human yearnings, one being transcendence, another being as a signifier of success. The consequence, as Jim Corkery notes, is that contemporary Western European culture has become "I-centred, focused on my rights and possibilities, basically ego-centric."[215]

It is on the level of ultimacy where contemporary Western European culture, with its mass-media communicated narratives, and the upcoming counter-narrative stemming out of Christianity, collide. Both cultures use differing ideological representations in communicating truth and versions of reality, as will be further outlined in the following chapter. These differing 'languages' attempt to grasp the imagination in shaping some conception of an ultimate concern for humans. Therefore, both are a type of faith, since they are involved with what will concern one ultimately. The thesis holds that one is a limited faith, that of success, social standing and economic power. This faith, is promoted in the society of the spectacle and stands in contrast to faith in the truly Ultimate. This truly Ultimate is the ground of the Christian *Weltanschauung*, where human yearnings for transcendence and the infinite are truly sated adequately, permanently, and completely.

As has become apparent, there is a link between faith and 'language.' Tillich elaborates and states, "faith is real only in the community of faith, or more precisely, in the communion of a language of faith."[216] Thus, faith is formed by socio-cultural interaction through 'language' of a community, and perceived by such, as communicating a true perception of reality. Tillich continues, "nothing less than symbols and myths can express our ultimate concern."[217] This is of particular significance to the following chapter, as "symbol and myth are forms of the human consciousness which are always present. One can replace one myth by another, but one cannot remove the myth from man's spiritual life. For the myth is the combination of symbols of our ultimate concern."[218] The significance of narrative has surfaced a few times within the thesis, and will be discussed in chapter three. This is because what "we hold in faith is most frequently expressed in metaphor,

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[212] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 126.
[213] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 126.
[214] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 126.
[215] Corkery, "Does Technology Squeeze Out Transcendence - Or What?," 18.
[216] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 135.
[217] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 61.
[218] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 58.

symbol and story."[219] For Tillich and Coulson, there is a direct correlation between what humans hold in faith, and how it is expressed symbolically.

In chapter one it was pointed out that brands such as Nike also seek to offer a counter-narrative to the fear of death. The need for such counter-narratives will become further developed in the following chapter. Fundamentally, the mortality of the human is an essential dimension of being, and as evident throughout the history of Homo sapiens,[220] it needs to contain meaning. Karen Armstrong cites the Neanderthals' burying of their dead and the ritualisation around it as showing that, "when these early people became conscious of their mortality, they created some sort of counter-narrative that enabled them to come to terms with it."[221] This counter-narrative was in the shape of *mythos* metaphors. However, death, as N.T Wright points out, is something which, "our forebears took for granted (having large families because a sudden epidemic could carry off half of them in a few days) is banished from our minds, except in horror stories."[222] Wright adds that, "death is banished from our societies, as fewer and fewer people die in their own homes and beds."[223] He continues, "it is banished, too, from our deep-seated societal imagination."[224] Where death is still an everyday phenomenon, is in hospitals, yet, even here, according to Pauline Chen, changes are needed in the way doctors and nurses treat the death of a patient.

Chen describes the minutes after the death of a patient as follows: most caregivers, particularly doctors, will scatter - if not in presence then in mind. We immediately think about going to see the next patient, cleaning the room, getting the body ready to go to the mortuary. Anything to avoid confronting the reality before us because, for those of us who practice in wealthier countries, a patient who dies represents our professional failure.[225]

In other words, even where death is a daily phenomenon, the caregivers are framed within the cultural manufacturing/production line treatment of patients, which creates a 'natural' distance between reality and the vocation. The significance here is that the phenomenon of death, which should raise meaning-questions for those remaining, is slowly being marginalised, and narratives from brands such as Nike, counter the remaining fears for profit. Debord, in critiquing consumer

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[219] Coulson, "Faith and Imagination," 537.
[220] 'Latin. Literally meaning Wise Man [*sic*]'
[221] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 1.
[222] Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God* (London: SPCK, 2006), 10.
[223] Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 10.
[224] Wright, *Evil and the Justice of God*, 10.
[225] Pauline Chen, "Viewpoint: Carers Should Fall Silent at Patient's Death," BBC, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-15402968.

culture, states that the, "real consumer has become a consumer of illusions,"[226] and it appears that these illusions also seek to provide an escape from the reality that every human being is mortal. The Neanderthals realised their mortality and developed narratives to come to terms with this. In the society of the spectacle, death seems to be pushed to the outskirts of consciousness.

2.9 Conclusion

In chapter one the socio-cultural milieu of contemporary Western European culture was explored and, it was shown how mass-media forms a significant role in constructing meaning. Corporations utilise the mass-media to convey a certain state of affairs generated by consumption of a brand. These brand symbols exert power and influence, and exploit essential human yearnings in pursuit of profit.

This chapter has developed those propositions and sought to determine the effects of corporations on the 'cultural universe' in which the human has its being. The significance of 'language' to communicate meanings was explored, and revealed that it is through 'language' that the human comes to comprehension of reality. Rather "than thinking of signs and media as channels which translate pre-existing thought and reality into communicable form, signs and media are the only means of access to thought or reality which we have."[227] This is of significance, since contemporary Western European culture is immersed within representation, particularly images, and these form an ideological spectacle through which humans see reality. These ideological concepts are infused into the 'language' of culture, which in contemporary Western European culture means scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist values. Patently, this *Weltanschauung* has significant effects on the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. However, these developments have desacramentalised the cultural universe in which the human spiritual meaning-seeking quest is set. These values are represented in the 'languages' of contemporary Western European culture which communicate a reality limited to the material. This also assigns limits to metaphysical questioning, as the same parameters apply. The extent of these parameters depends on the culturally perceived truth contained in 'language.' Nevertheless, a culture in which 'paradise' is limited to material reality has significant implications. This *Weltanschauung*, with its narratives, as outlined in chapter one, contrasts starkly with the *Weltanschauung* of the Christian sub-culture.[228]

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[226] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 40.
[227] Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 7.
[228] Christianity, within the thesis, is described as sub-culture, which serves to indicate that within the various cultures comprising contemporary Western Europe, the practice of faith has been largely sidelined as a private matter. Its 'language,' and *Weltanschauung* thus exert minimal influence upon broader cultural meaning-structures. Despite this,

The purpose of the next chapter is to re-introduce the 'language' pertinent to the Christian faith, so that its narratives can be (re-)comprehended. These narratives have the potential to grasp the imagination of the human, and provide broader 'horizons of meaning' in the search for meaning, and transcendence. This has significant effects, such as the formation of an ultimate concern giving direction and meaning to life.

This chapter has sought to explain how, representation as 'language' cultivates the human, particularly through forming the imagination, which bears the potential "to call up things that are not present but which exist elsewhere, to create images in the mind of things that do not exist, to bring about representations to replace things (e.g., paintings and diagrams), and to represent things that are not present or do not exist."[229] The imagination, it seems, is an essential component of being human, since it is, "indispensable for a living faith."[230] In part, this chapter has shown the centrality of representation, as praxis to comprehending reality for the human. However, representing reality and thus assigning meaning is an ideological activity, reflecting cultural prejudices. It became evident, earlier, that the imagination in popular thought fails to understand the potential to open, "us to this experience of the Ultimate coming through finite reality, to the Depth at the heart of matter."[231] To represent this Depth, the Truly Ultimate, use must be made of analogy, whereby comparisons are made between two things. Thomas A.F. Kelly describes analogy as, "a dialectical theory in that it retains both unity and diversity, of the real and of how we talk about the real, in a single perspective, without doing violence to either."[232] For the human to form a perception of the Ultimate makes, "use of a certain matter that acts as an *analogon*, as an equivalent of perception."[233] In other words, through imagination the human attempts to create some mental image to 'make present' the Truly Ultimate. It is through this act of consciousness that the human uses objects based in material reality as analogy to represent the Ultimate mystery. In terms of representation it is through resemblance, "especially in the form of analogy (a lamb stands for Christ, for instance)"[234] that it becomes "a way of filling the gap between the concrete and the abstract."[235] There are thus "ways of finding points of connection and association that help us to make sense of the world."[236] These analogies thus function as signs, or possibly as intensified signs, symbolising mystery. Sartre, in reference to his absent friend Pierre, states that the imagination "is

there are perhaps certain cultures within contemporary Western Europe where the Christian *Weltanschauung* is a component of broader cultural meaning-structures.

[229] Jacqueline Adams, "The Imagination and Social Life," *Qualitative Sociology* 27 (2004): 278.

[230] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 3.

[231] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.

[232] Thomas A.F. Kelly, *Language, World and God: An Essay in Ontology* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1996), 60.

[233] Sartre, *The Imaginary,* 18.

[234] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 20.

[235] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 20.

[236] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 20.

an act that aims in its corporeality at an absent or nonexistent object, through a physical or psychic content that is given not as itself but in the capacity of 'analogical *representative*' of the object aimed at."[237]

The potential of material objects to function as meaningful analogons is conditioned by the culture and its 'language.' In other words, the effectiveness of Christian counter-narrative depends on the stance of contemporary Western European culture with regard to the truth contained in the 'language' used to communicate the narrative. This is explored within the next chapter.

The Christian *Weltanschauung* seeks, through narrative, to provide additional meaning-structures to the social imagination of contemporary Western European culture. The objective of the thesis is not to suggest imposing a Christian *Weltanschauung,* but rather to indicate the possibility of another *Weltanschauung* in expanding 'horizons of meaning' for 'Generation Y.' The counter-narrative can potentially, have these liberating effects, encouraging questioning, and exploration of 'horizons of meaning.' This liberation is warranted because, as chapter one showed, those living in contemporary Western European culture are experiencing a form of cultural oppression.[238] This is particularly true for 'Generation Y.' It is this imposition of a limited world of meaning that the next chapter seeks to counter.

To achieve this, the thesis will employ the Christian *Weltanschauung,* with its ultimate concern, rooted firmly in the Incarnation of Christ, which is "God's entry into the details of human existence."[239] The Christian *Weltanschauung* believes "that the particulars of life are vessels of grace."[240] The Christian faith is, "not the turning to a God outside of this world; it is, rather, a relationship with a God who in Jesus Christ has chosen to become immersed in this world."[241] As Ultimate concern, this belief shapes people's perception of reality, and how to live in relation to this concern. Additionally, this is reflected within the 'language' used by those who are part of the Christian community of faith, "because people of faith understandably wish to articulate meanings and worldview in their particular religious language which they rightly see as a core and necessary component of faith and of *fides quaerens intellectum.*"[242] The Christian sub-culture employs representations, particularly in narrative, to counter the dominant paradigm of contemporary Western European culture. This is the matter of inquiry for the next chapter, where the foundations

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[237] Sartre, *The Imaginary*, 20.
[238] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 13.
[239] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[240] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[241] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[242] Ian Linden, "Not Lost in Translation," *Doctrine and Life* 60 (2010): 25.

of the Christian *Weltanschauung,* its means of communication, are explored, considering that these have been undermined as 'truth bearers' within contemporary Western European culture. The narrative and counter-narrative, thus differ in representing reality, and an overbalancing towards one or another has detrimental effects. The next chapter will, therefore, argue for a balanced approach to comprehending reality.

Chapter Three

Image, Imagination and the Imaginable

3.1 Introduction

In chapter one, the meaning-structures of contemporary Western European culture were explored and critiqued. There, it was outlined how corporations, via the mass-media, are of substantial influence in the 'cultural universe' in which the human searches for meaning and transcendence. The significance of the mass-media, as tools for communication and conversation, lies in their capacity to give form to lived experience. In chapter two, this significance was drawn out further; there, "is no simple mirror of the world"[1] and the means to becoming aware of the world is through 'language', whose sign system shapes human consciousness and experience. The *Weltanschauung* communicated by the mass-media in contemporary Western European culture offers an experience of reality, described by Jean Baudrillard as "hyperreal."[2] The proposition of a hyperreal cultural environment fundamentally questions the objectivity of human models for representing reality which, as shown, are ideologically orientated, that is, occupied with certain ideas of what constitutes the real. The thesis has proposed that the 'horizons of meaning', and thus, interpretations of what constitutes the real, have been truncated in contemporary Western European culture. This truncation is carried through to the meanings communicated, and accepted as truth-ful, in the 'language.' In order to help reinstate broader 'horizons of meaning' for the human, this chapter sets out the case for a counter-narrative. This narrative is important since the world changes, "when we tell different stories about it."[3] The perceived truthfulness of a narrative, however, depends on the 'language' of the cultural environment; thus, differing modes of 'language' will be explored and critiqued. As Karl Rahner states:

> Every individual in his intellectual and spiritual existence lives by the language of all. He [*sic*] has his [*sic*] ever so individual and unique experience of existence only in and with the language in which he [*sic*] lives, from which he [*sic*] does not escape, and whose verbal associations, perspectives and selective a prioris he [*sic*] appropriates, even when he [*sic*] protests against them and when he [*sic*] is himself [*sic*] involved in the ever-ongoing history of language.[4]

It is clear that 'language,' as media to communicate meanings, is critical to the formation of culture and the human within that culture. Sallie McFague states that, "[I]f language always stands between us and reality, if it is the medium through which we are aware of both our relationship to

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[1] Webb, *Understanding Representation*, 18.
[2] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 30.
[3] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 18.
[4] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 49.

'what is' and our distance from it, then metaphor is both our burden and our glory, from the first words of children to the most complex forays on reality by philosophers."[5] The significance of religious metaphors, will become evident as the chapter develops. Their potency as 'standing in for' has been outlined in the previous chapters. McFague, additionally, summing up the positions of I. A. Richards, Max Black, Walter Ong and Paul Ricoeur, states that it is metaphor which is, "concerned with meaning: it is in the form of assertions, of judgements."[6] This point highlights the significance of re-introducing the representations of the Christian *Weltanschauung* which, through its symbols and metaphors, provides additional meanings and judgements. However, the "Christian experience of reality can only be adequately communicated to those who have a minimal familiarity with the Christian narrative or are at least prepared to become acquainted with it."[7] The thesis suggests a basis for becoming familiar with the Christian narrative by exploring the adjoining 'language.' The investigation of 'language' is crucial, since, "language is the basic and all-pervasive expression of every situation, [and] theology cannot escape the problem of the 'situation.'"[8] The 'situation' constitutes the cultural environment in which humans find themselves, which is, in this instance, the scientistic-technologicalist-consumerist culture of contemporary Western Europe. In the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture, there exists a particular word, the representation of which is a subject of this chapter, and that word is 'God.' The word 'God,' "exists in language in which and from which we live and accept responsibility for our existence."[9]

It is of importance for the thesis to underpin the Christian Ultimate as the true Ultimate concern, which functions as the foundation of the counter-narrative, in order to broaden the 'horizons of meaning' for contemporary Western European culture. This underpinning begins by examining the human being, inescapably seeking meaning in lived experience in the world, through cultural meaning-structures. It is through these meaning-structures that humans craft a conceptual 'model' of an ultimate concern by which to comprehend, and live within, the world. This quest for meaning, and transcendence, as previously outlined, is now situated in a predominately secular, authentically de-sacramentalised milieu, reflected in the ideological 'language' - which inculcates a *Weltanschauung* accordingly. This chapter will begin with the human, and their lived experience of the world and themselves as beings. How these experiences are interpreted is predominately

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[5] Sallie McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 34.
[6] McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 38.
[7] Lieven Boeve, "Religion After Detraditionalization: Christian Faith in a Post-Secular Europe," *Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005): 116.
[8] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God,* vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), 7.
[9] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 49.

determined by the culturally shared ideas, as has been shown in previous chapters. The thesis seeks to make the case for re-introducing the Christian *Weltanschauung* as medium of interpretation to give context to human lived experience in the world. It is, therefore, necessarily involved with ideas regarding God. God, which the thesis terms the Christian Ultimate, is the foundation of the Christian *Weltanschauung* and the substance of the counter-narrative. The thesis, therefore, explores how through grace and revelation, the Transcendent Ultimate, is part of the details of lived experience of the world. However, in a culture where lived experience of the world is analysed, segmented and measured by scientifistic enquiry, grace and revelation has increasingly become subjected to this mundane mode of 'language.' The thesis will, therefore, emphasise the unknowing and mystery surrounding grace and revelation. This seeks to show that despite coming into the details of lived experience, the Ultimate remains beyond categorisation. This chapter proceeds by exploring the role of imagination, and its accompanying mode of 'language' to communicate and substantiate this experience of Ultimacy. This will commence by using philosophical and theological concepts to explain and illuminate the experiences humans have in the world. In accord with Rahner, the thesis holds that these, "theological concepts do not make the reality itself present to man [*sic*] from outside of him, [*sic*] but they are, rather, the expression of what has been already experienced and lived through more originally in the depths of existence."[10] The thesis, thus, seeks to present a *Weltanschauung* that offers the potential to 'see' through material reality, to the Depth in the ordinary. This mystery can be found by, "anyone who looks not only at the surface of the world but tries to penetrate into the depths, where it reveals itself in its mystery, encounters that which is completely other than the world."[11]

3.2 Lived Experience in the World

The thesis has focused on the existential human predicament, namely that lived experience in the world is formed and interpreted by culture, through 'language.' The human is, "under the guidance of cultural patterns,"[12] which amongst others, include ideas of what being human means. The thesis investigates this question of being from the perspective that it can be understood as bounded by material reality, such as the positive sciences interpret being, or, as this chapter will explore, belonging to, and holding, transcendent characteristics.

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[10] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 17.
[11] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 40.
[12] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 52.

Humans are historical beings, so, "knowledge of oneself can never be complete."[13] In other words, every "finite present has its limitations."[14] Hans-Georg Gadamer expands, "[W]e define the concept of 'situation' by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision."[15] This is connected to 'language,' and the 'horizons of meaning.' This is the case, because a, "language-view is a worldview."[16] In other words, 'language' "is not just one of man's [*sic*] possessions in the world; rather, on it depends the fact that man [*sic*] has a *world* at all."[17] The ontological repercussion is that, "man's [*sic*] being-in-the-world is primordially linguistic."[18] Consequently, if "language covers Being in the way we have suggested, then it most properly embodies transcendence in such a way that being linguistic is transcendence."[19] As Martin Heidegger points out, in "medieval ontology 'Being' is designated as a '*transcendens*.'"[20] What can be properly ascribed as constituting 'Being' is complex, since, "[E]verything we talk about, everything we have in view, everything towards which we comport ourselves in any way, is being; what we are is being, and so is how we are."[21] He continues, "[B]eing lies in the fact that something is, and in its Being as it is; in Reality; in presence-at-hand; in subsistence; in validity; in Dasein; in the 'there is.'"[22] Material reality is thus a segment of the puzzle. However, to, "work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity - the inquirer - transparent in his [*sic*] own Being."[23] Heidegger elaborates, "[T]he very asking of this question is an entity's mode of *Being*; and as such it gets its essential character from what is inquired about - namely, Being."[24] Heidegger concludes that this, "entity which each of us is himself [*sic*] and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term '*Dasein*.'"[25] In short, the possession of culture, 'language,' transcendence, and questioning are key components of *Dasein*. These components are interwoven into each other, since, as example, the understanding of Being depends on, "the way the world is understood" and consequently becomes, "reflected back ontologically upon the way in which *Dasein* itself gets interpreted."[26]

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[13] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.
[14] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.
[15] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.
[16] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 440. Italics in original.
[17] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 440.
[18] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 440.
[19] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 21.
[20] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 22.
[21] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 26.
[22] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 26.
[23] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 27.
[24] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 27.
[25] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 27.
[26] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 37.

The human, as meaning-seeking creature, has two dimensions, which stand out: that of "*homo interrogans* (the human being who asks questions,)"[27] and "*homo orans* - that is, a being transcending himself [*sic*]."[28] The search for meaning and yearning for transcendence are shown earlier to be some of the elements specific to the human as self-conscious subject, which distinguish it from every other living organism. Rahner, as pointed out in chapter one, addresses the potential of this human capability to infinitely question, whereby discoveries lead to further extension of the 'horizon.' These dimensions are interrelated, since by the very questioning of material reality, the human has shown itself to be capable of transcending, even in speculative form, the finite.[29]

3.3 Transcendent Being

Ludwig Feuerbach points out that conscience is present in the strictest sense, "only in a being to whom his [*sic*] species, his [*sic*] essential nature, is an object of thought."[30] Humans, therefore, have the ability to contemplate the 'situation,' that is, the world in which they find themselves. Feuerbach adds, that consciousness, "in the strict or proper sense, is identical with consciousness of the infinite; a limited consciousness is no consciousness; consciousness is essentially infinite in its nature."[31] In human nature, it appears, there exists a yearning for meaning, for transcendence, and liberation of the finite in the mysterious infinite. Culture, as discussed earlier, is, according to the Christian *Weltanschauung,* an expression of this human yearning for transcendence.

Despite Feuerbach's critique of religion being, "revelations of human nature,"[32] his conception of religion being "consciousness of the infinite,"[33] opens up, rather than closes, 'horizons.' Religious consciousness, according to Feuerbach, is nothing else, "than the consciousness which man [*sic*] has of his [*sic*] own - not finite and limited, but infinite nature."[34] This experience of the human describes a yearning towards an inevitable mystery piercing the finite, since the human seems never to be sated by material reality, as the discussion on branded

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[27] Gerald O'Collins S.J., *Rethinking Fundamental Theology: Toward a New Fundamental Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 38.
[28] Michael Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 139.
[29] Man [*sic*] judges rightly that by his [*sic*]intellect he [*sic*] surpasses the material universe, for he [*sic*] shares in the light of the divine mind. By relentlessly employing his [*sic*] talents through the ages he [*sic*] has indeed made progress in the practical sciences and in technology and the liberal arts. In our times he [*sic*] has won superlative victories, especially in his probing of the material world and in subjecting it to himself [*sic*]. Still he [*sic*] has always searched for more penetrating truths, and finds them. For his [*sic*] intelligence is not confined to observable data alone, but can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable, though in consequence of sin that certitude is partly obscured and weakened. Vatican Council, *Gaudium Et Spes*, 15.
[30] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Haper Torchbooks, 1957), 1.
[31] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 2.
[32] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 5.
[33] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 2.
[34] Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 2.

commodities in chapter one revealed. This mystery is particularly strongly felt in events such as death, which the Neanderthals also attempted to comprehend through meaning-structures communicated by narrative. Sartre states that, as temporal beings, "every human purpose presents itself as an attempt either to surpass these limitations, or to widen them, or else to deny or to accommodate oneself to them."[35] Evidently, in mass-media, consumption stricken, contemporary Western European culture, the effect is that death becomes neglected, denied and forced to the outskirts of the social imagination. Moreover, because of the quasi-transcendence injected into branded goods, Depth is ransomed to a superficial remaining at the surface of the world, leaving the human un-sated and yearning for true Transcendence.

3.4 Questioning and Transcendence

For Rahner, the consciousness of the infinite is termed as being a "transcendental experience,"[36] which is, "the subjective, unthematic, necessary and unfailing consciousness of the knowing subject that is co-present in every spiritual act of knowledge, and the subjects' openness to the unlimited expanse of all possible reality."[37] The thesis has illustrated that the subject's openness to the unlimited expanse of all possible reality has been seriously truncated by the cultural representations offered by mass-media induced consumer culture. However, this transcendental experience is an essential aspect of the human, since, "it belongs to the necessary and inalienable structures of the knowing subject itself."[38] Nevertheless, the Ultimate true Transcendental experience correlates to, "knowledge of God."[39] This knowledge of God, "is not the kind of knowledge in which one grasps an object which happens to present itself directly or indirectly from the outside."[40] Rather, it is subtle, "always present unthematically and without name, and not just when we begin to speak of it."[41] In other words, humans are transcendent beings orientated towards the holy and absolutely real mystery.[42] Paul Tillich expands this concept, whereby an individual, "is driven towards faith by his awareness of the infinite to which he [*sic*] belongs, but which he [*sic*] does not own like a possession."[43] Hence, faith as "the state of being ultimately concerned,"[44] is linked to the, "passion for the infinite."[45]

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[35] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Methuen, 2011), 54.
[36] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith,* 20.
[37] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 20.
[38] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 20.
[39] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 21.
[40] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 21.
[41] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith,* 21.
[42] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 21.
[43] Tillich*, Dynamics of Faith*, 10.
[44] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 1.
[45] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 11.

Rahner further presents a significant proposition for understanding the human, which is the realisation that they consist out of person and subject. The human as subject, has been extensively covered in the last two chapters. Where, "as an individual and in humanity as a whole man [*sic*] certainly experiences himself [*sic*] in a great variety of ways as the product of that which is not himself [*sic*]."[46] Anthropology, psychology, sociology, biology, to name just a few examples, examine the human as subject to these forces. Heidegger terms this the, "ontical inquiry of the positive sciences,"[47] which, "is concerned primarily with *entities* and the facts about them."[48] To focus specifically on these factors, as happens in contemporary Western European culture, overlooks, "the totality of what he [*sic*] is, and especially is."[49] That is, both person and subject. This totality is experienced when, "[M]an [*sic*] experiences himself [*sic*] precisely as subject and person insofar as he [*sic*] becomes conscious of himself [*sic*] as the product of what is radically foreign to him [*sic*]."[50] The human, as *homo interrogans,* by raising, "analytical questions about himself [*sic*] and [opening] himself [*sic*] to the unlimited horizons of such questioning ... has already transcended himself [*sic*] and every conceivable element of such an analysis or of an empirical reconstruction of himself [*sic*]."[51] By reducing the human to its conditioning factors, such as biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural elements, the human has, in fact, affirmed, "himself [*sic*] as more than the sum of such analysable components of reality."[52] Rahner continues, "[I]t is this consciousness of himself [*sic*], this confrontation with the totality of all his conditions, and this very being-conditioned [that] show him [*sic*] to be more than the sum of his [*sic*] factors."[53] What this shows, is that the human appears to belong to the infinite that it is estranged from. This continually expresses itself in the very act of questioning, and search for meaning. No other animal on the planet has this potential. Mentioned earlier by Feuerbach, Heidegger, and again stated by Alister E. McGrath, "the most important thing which distinguishes human beings from other forms of life is the fact that they are aware of their own existence, and ask questions about it."[54] It is through the cultural meaning-seeking structures, whereby the human questions existence, that shows it also to be part of something beyond this world. The true Depth of the human reveals itself in a consciousness of God, which, "is an element of our consciousness and understanding of ourselves."[55] Michael Schmaus continues, "[C]onsciousness of the world is also an element of our

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[46] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 27.
[47] Heidegger*, Being and Time*, 31.
[48] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 31.
[49] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 28.
[50] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 29.
[51] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 29.
[52] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 29.
[53] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 29.
[54] Alister E. McGrath*, Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 224.
[55] Schmaus*, Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 22.

experience of ourselves. But these two do not take place alongside one another."[56] He concludes, "[I]t is rather a matter of one single movement of consciousness."[57]

3.5 Existentialism and Responsibility

To state that the human is both person and subject, "means first of all that man [*sic*] is someone who cannot be derived, who cannot be produced completely from other elements at our disposal."[58] Rahner expands, "[H]e [*sic*] is that being who is responsible for himself [*sic*]."[59] The human, as mere subject, would allow for a possible escapist attitude for individuals. Whereby an individual looks, "inside himself, [*sic*] looks back at his past and looks at the world around him [*sic*], and he [*sic*] discovers either to his [*sic*] horror or to his [*sic*] relief that he [*sic*] can shift responsibility from himself [*sic*] for all the individual data that make up his [*sic*] reality, and he [*sic*] can place the burden for what he [*sic*] is on what is not him [*sic*]."[60] Søren Kierkegaard challenged this escapist mindset, inaugurating the movement of existentialism. He stressed, "the importance of individual decision and an awareness of the limits of human existence."[61] Kierkegaard, in his challenge, was "first to emphasize the *subject* as a responsible person who must always be ready to stand alone before God without benefit of some social, even ecclesiastical, shield."[62] This is of significance to the thesis, since the propositions have predominantly been engaged with the existential,[63] ontic factors which shape the human. However, this chapter develops an understanding of the human as having a capacity for transcendence and being potentially open to God's self-communication. Such a being is called to take responsibility.

The human, seems to be enthralled with transcending the finite, asking questions and searching for meaning. However, the answers available, or more precisely, the perceived truth of the answers, are determined by culture, since culture encompasses the shared knowledge, ideas, truths, feelings, and values of a community. It is for this reason that a counter-narrative is necessary, employing metaphors, symbols, and analogies to give form to all of experience. Scientific endeavors can be interpreted as a genuine search for transcendence, whereby the very experience of questioning employed by scientists, philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and

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[56] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 22.
[57] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 22.
[58] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 31.
[59] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 31.
[60] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 27.
[61] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 224.
[62] Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (New York: HarperOne, 1994), 119.
[63] Existentialism, in its most basic form means an "attitude toward human life which places special emphasis upon the immediate, real-life experience of individuals." McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 224.

psychologists would enlighten, elevate the human to realisation of their infinite capabilities. Rahner and the Roman Catholic Church[64] share this understanding. However, due to contemporary Western European cultural 'language,' these are rarely successfully comprehended as such. This is because the Christian 'language' has been emptied of meaning and truth for contemporary Western European culture. It is increasingly unsuccessful in communicating its understanding of lived experience of the world. Therefore for contemporary Western European culture, scientifism adds validity to the rational, pragmatic 'language' as being the truthful means of representing the human. In this understanding, humans are limited to the finite experience of the world.

Richard P. McBrien, drawing on Maurice Blondel, states that the, "Christian message reveals the hidden (supernatural) dynamism present in human life everywhere."[65] McBrien continues, "[T]he message is not foreign to life; it explains what has been going on in life and where it is leading us."[66] The human yearning for transcendence and liberation is present in contemporary Western European culture, despite being truncated in pursuit of profit. However, a person, "can only grasp that the totality of beings is finite against a 'horizon,' or 'background,' or 'field' of infinity."[67] The Christian *Weltanschauung,* with its Ultimate as foundation, seeks to provide such infinite 'horizon.' This approach seeks to broaden the 'horizons of meaning' for contemporary Western European culture, since its ideologies are rooted in the finite material reality which materialises itself in the 'language' of consumption, economics, technology and scientifism. Tom Beaudoin states that a, "key component of the religious is a profound experience of a limitation,"[68] whether, "[f]rom guilt or awareness of death to ecstatic love or joy."[69] It is in this sense that, "religiousness is present whenever we find ourselves at the boundary of our existence and need to go beyond ourselves to make sense of life."[70]

John Calvin acknowledges the sensibility of transcendence when he states that there, "is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity."[71] Calvin went as far as to state that, "no nation [is] so barbarous, no people so savage, that they have not a deep-

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[64] When man gives himself [*sic*] to the various disciplines of philosophy, history and of mathematical and natural science, and when he [*sic*] cultivates the arts, he [*sic*] can do very much to elevate the human family to a more sublime understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty, and to the formation of considered opinions which have universal value. Thus mankind [*sic*] may be more clearly enlightened by that marvelous Wisdom which was with God from all eternity, composing all things with him [*sic*], rejoicing the earth, delighting in the sons [*sic*] of men [*sic*]. *Gaudium Et Spes,* 57.
[65] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 215.
[66] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 215.
[67] Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 120.
[68] Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith*, 30.
[69] Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith*, 30.
[70] Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith*, 30.
[71] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* vol. 1, ed. John T. McNeill (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 43.

seated conviction that there is a God."[72] For Calvin, this concept of inherent knowledge of God stems from the conception of *imago Dei,* stemming from Genesis 1:26, which reads, "[T]hen God said, Let us make man [*sic*] in our image, after our likeness." David Steinmetz, succinctly quotes a conversation between Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, regarding the importance of the concept *Imago Dei* for Calvin, and came to the conclusion that for Calvin, everything is rooted in this principle; "the entire human, rational nature, the immortal soul, the capacity for culture, the conscience, responsibility, the relation with God, which - though not redemptive - exists even in sin, language, the whole of cultural life."[73] For Calvin, therefore, when he, "introduces scriptural quotations, it is to consolidate a general knowledge of God, rather than to establish that knowledge in the first place."[74] In other words, the scriptural texts give context and interpretation to what is experienced in the world. This, so called, 'natural-knowledge' of God is critiqued by Immanuel Kant, whose view, summarised by John McIntyre, is that "all knowledge is an amalgam of the form prescribed by the mind and the matter contributed by the object."[75] This perspective is compatible with the critique Feuerbach poses to religion. Everything in the world, in this approach, stems from the human, who interprets the world and naturally doesn't point beyond itself. This is most adequately explained by the Copernican hypothesis, which basically states that "objects must be taken to conform to human thought, ... not that thought should conform to objects presented to the human mind."[76]

This is, in short, also the popular understanding of Kant. However, McIntyre points to the additional, frequently overlooked and misunderstood Kantian philosophical method entitled 'transcendental.' Material reality, as shown, consists out of objects confronting the human and the accompanying interpretations of the objects; however, "the transcendental method sets out to establish the existence of the *a priori* principles which condition the possibility of experience as we know it, and to demonstrate their objective validity in that capacity."[77] The term 'transcendental' comes eventually to not only refer to, "the method, but also to these *a priori* principles or conceptions which underlie experience as its necessary conditions; and he even goes as far at times as attributing the term to the faculty or the process from which they derive."[78] The faculty in question is, the previously mentioned, imagination. For Kant, the imagination, "imposes upon the

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[72] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 44.

[73] Emil Brunner and Karl Barth, *Natural Theology,* trans. Peter Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), 41 quoted in David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23.

[74] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 191.

[75] John McIntyre, "New Help From Kant; Theology and Human Imagination," in *Religious Imagination*, ed. James P. Mackey (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1986), 103.

[76] McIntyre, "New Help From Kant; Theology and Human Imagination," 104.

[77] McIntyre, "New Help From Kant; Theology and Human Imagination," 104.

[78] McIntyre, "New Help From Kant; Theology and Human Imagination," 104.

manifold a synthetic unity which [he] says is an *a priori* condition of the possibility of all knowledge."[79] Fowler has mentioned this understanding, regarding the active role of the imagination in interpreting and creating a *Weltanschauung*, earlier.[80] The faculty of the imagination, being a human faculty, and hence, grounded in the finite, is 'informed' by material reality. However, and here the critique of Kant and Feuerbach comes into perspective: how can the human know whether all conversation is not just ideological, and that all conversations regarding transcendence and ultimacy are not just conversations with itself? The Christian counter-argument to these critical questions is based on a key aspect of the Christian Ultimate, that is, grace.

3.6 Grace

Grace is, "essentially God's self-communication to us, and, secondarily the effect(s) of that self-communication."[81] More precisely, as Martin Henry drawing on Cornelius Ernst, states, rather than grace being a name given to one of God's gifts to us, the term 'grace' actually, "refers to the *totality* of God's self-communication to us."[82] Grace is, therefore, of crucial significance to the Christian *Weltanschauung* because it refers, "to the most basic and fundamental of Christian realities since it indicates the presupposition of all Christian spirituality."[83] In this context, the experience of grace must not be overlooked, as it, "has the special connotation of everything that pertains to a gift of love; it is totally gratuitous or unmerited and undeserved."[84] Roger Haight continues, "[G]race is not due to any right on the part of human beings and God is wholly free in bestowing it."[85] The initiation of God's self-communication, according to Hans Urs von Balthasar, is only possible through God's love.[86] As mentioned previously, human consciousness has a 'natural' sensibility towards the infinite; this is possible because, as God's creature, every human is, "a seed of love, God's image."[87] Balthasar illustrates this by pointing out that every human, "certainly has a pre-understanding (Vorverständnis) of what love is."[88] However, "just as no child can awaken to love until it is loved, no human heart can come to the knowledge of God without the free gift of his grace."[89] Hence, faith as the state of being ultimately concerned, "implies love, namely, the desire

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[79] McIntyre, "New Help From Kant; Theology and Human Imagination," 105.
[80] Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 28.
[81] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 180.
[82] Martin Henry, "Reflections on Grace (1)," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001): 197.
[83] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 6.
[84] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 6.
[85] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 6.
[86] See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992), 61.
[87] Von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, 62.
[88] Von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, 51.
[89] Von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, 62.

and urge toward the reunion of the separated."[90] It became evident in the second chapter that, "there is no human being without an ultimate concern and, in this sense, without faith."[91] Tillich elaborates, "[L]ove is present, even if hidden in a human being; for every human being is longing for union with the content of his ultimate concern."[92] In this understanding, all is graced, since all human experience, however interpreted, is inevitably caught up in this seeking of ultimates.

Juan Alfaro, additionally expounds that grace is, "God's personal communication and self-gift - an internal call to an immediate personal union with God."[93] He continues, "[U]nder the mysterious attraction of grace, man [*sic*] tends toward God."[94] This is significant for underpinning the Christian Ultimate in firm foundations by which it transcends merely human conversation with itself. In this understanding, it is God who initiates communication; humans could never speak of God if God did not take the initiative. As explored earlier, the human as *homo orans* and *homo interrogans* appear to be connected in this material reality. The human, according to Romano Guardini is, "urged to transcend, in an encounter with God, the world in which he [*sic*] exists historically."[95] Martin Henry explains, "[S]uch an encounter is only possible because of the goodness and the will of God who invites man [*sic*] to seek him [*sic*], and who himself [*sic*] goes out constantly in search of man [*sic*] in the course of human history."[96] Since human consciousness as subject to the finite should not be able to transcend its prison, it is remarkable that it does have the capability to 'escape the cave' towards the Infinite. In chapter one, the human was revealed as possessing the potential to live a thousand lives, but ends up only living one, due to the cultural webs. According to Alfaro, human, "existence involves a dramatic tension between an unlimited aspiration (the expression of his spirituality) and the powerlessness of realizing it (the expression of his created finiteness)."[97] It is precisely this inner tension that, according to Alfaro, "leaves man [*sic*] open to grace."[98] He concludes, the "greatness of man [*sic*] stands out because he [*sic*] can achieve the fulness of being only in the immediate union with the Infinite. Yet he [*sic*] is powerless to do this without grace."[99] The ability, in culture, to search for meaning, the 'natural' orientation towards mystery and the infinite, even if interpreted through secular 'lens,' can still be described as graced, even if the Ultimate 'horizons of meaning' are obscured. The thesis seeks to outline a method for comprehending transcendent 'horizons of meaning' against which the 'horizons' of

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[90] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 132.
[91] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 132.
[92] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 132.
[93] Juan Alfaro, "Person and Grace," *Theology Digest* 14 (1966): 3.
[94] Alfaro, "Person and Grace," 3.
[95] Martin Henry, "Reflections on Grace (2)," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66 (2001): 296-7.
[96] Henry, "Reflections on Grace (2)," 296-7.
[97] Alfaro, "Person and Grace," 3.
[98] Alfaro, "Person and Grace," 3.
[99] Alfaro, "Person and Grace," 3.

contemporary Western European culture can be analysed. Roger Haight, building on Augustine, states that grace can be seen, "as a force that expands the field or horizon of freedom to include the possibility of decision that transcends the self and this world in its intentionality."[100] Grace, from this perspective, has the potential to act, "as a medicinal force, as a sanative power of God releasing us from an internal bondage."[101] Internal bondage, in part, means succumbing passively, "to the mechanisms that structure the self, from within, from society, from the world."[102] Grace through this understanding, "can be seen as constituting human autonomy,"[103] linked to freedom of self-actualisation, and hence, the responsibility Kierkegaard alludes to. As Michael Paul Gallagher notes, culture is the, "expression of human freedom and transcendence,"[104] and thus, can be interpreted as being a graced milieu, through which the human attributes of meaning-seeking, transcendence, and liberation are to be actualised. In contemporary Western European culture, it has become evident that this actualisation of the human has become truncated.[105]

In summary, grace is an event where some sort of unveiling occurs which, "cannot be initiated by human activity."[106] The unveiling, "is not at the disposal of human inquiry and control, and, consequently, it becomes an event only by means of grace."[107] In chapter two, the problem of ideology was posed. The events of God's self-communication, may be interpreted in an ideological paradigm, however, the Christian Ultimate transcends this interpretation. The following section will explore revelation of God-self in terms of mystery, and as unknowable. This is needed in order to uphold the true transcendence of God-self, as infinite 'horizon.' Moreover, as mystery and unknowable, the Christian Ultimate can be understood in its most basic form as experience, before 'language' conceptualises and gives form to the experience. The significance for contemporary Western European culture is that grace causes, "a transformation of man's [*sic*] concrete, historical reality, a transformation which will, clearly, have social and even cosmic ramifications."[108]

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[100] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 48.
[101] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 50.
[102] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 50-1.
[103] Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace*, 46.
[104] Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols*, 25.
[105] The question arises, is contemporary Western European culture less graced? However, the nature/grace debate falls outside of the scope and parameters of the thesis, nevertheless, it raises interesting questions for further exploration.
[106] George Stroup, "Revelation," in *Christian Theology: An Introduction to its Traditions and Tasks*, ed. Peter Hodgson and Robert King (London: SPCK, 1982), 88.
[107] Stroup, "Revelation," 89.
[108] Henry, "Reflections on Grace (2)," 295.

3.6.1 Revelation: The Disclosure of Mystery

The transcendent counter-narrative has its foundations in grace and revelation, whereby grace, "insofar as it brings about a new awareness of the divine, is revelation."[109] Hence, grace and revelation are, "two phases of one and the same event which are conditioned by man's [*sic*] free historicity and temporality."[110] Rahner expands, "[T]hey are two phases of God's single self-communication to man [*sic*]."[111]

In the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture, there exists the word 'God,' which at a stage in human history was created to communicate a revelatory experience of mystery, whereby, "that which is essentially and necessarily mysterious means the manifestation of something within the context of ordinary experience which transcends the ordinary context of experience."[112] The emphasis upon mystery is of significance, since as John F. Haught states, "[W]ithout the backdrop of infinite mystery everything in Christian faith would have seemed shallow."[113] This section starts with mystery, since the "idea of *revelation* cannot become theologically intelligible unless its recipients first acquire a 'pre-revelational' appreciation of mystery."[114] Mystery, itself, "resembles a horizon that keeps moving forward ahead of us into the unreachable distance."[115]

The word 'God,' "reflects what the word refers to: the 'ineffable one,' the 'nameless one' who does not enter into the world we can name as part of it. It means the 'silent one' who is always there, and yet can always be overlooked, unheard, and, because every word receives its limits, its own sound and hence its intelligible sense only within a field of words."[116] The Christian Ultimate, thus "transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely," [117] and "religiously speaking, God transcends his own name."[118] Thus, in accord with the previous discussions, God is Mystery. However, the Christian Ultimate is present within the Depth of the ordinary, for whoever, "seeks God must seek him [*sic*] in the world, or he [*sic*] will not find him [*sic*]."[119] To seek and find God in the world, one additionally needs 'language' since, as indicated previously, every human, "has his [*sic*] ever so

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[109] Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2011), 70.
[110] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 118.
[111] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 118.
[112] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 109.
[113] John F. Haught, *Christianity and Science: Toward a Theology of Nature* (New York: Orbis Books, 2007), 20.
[114] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, 20.
[115] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, 23.
[116] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 46.
[117] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 51.
[118] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 51.
[119] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 39.

individual and unique experience of existence only in and with the language in which he [*sic*] lives, from which he [*sic*] does not escape."[120] The 'language' of contemporary Western European culture was discussed in the previous chapter. The consequence, demonstrated there, is the, "loss of the dimension of depth in his [*sic*] encounter with reality."[121] Tillich continues, "[R]eality has lost its inner transcendence or, in another metaphor, its transparency for the eternal."[122] However, material reality can function as conduit of the eternal, but the 'language' of a culture must facilitate and accommodate such transcendent 'horizons of meaning' if this is to be grasped. The counter-narrative discussed here seeks to expand the 'language' and available narratives, so that the available 'horizons of meaning' can be broadened.

According to Tillich, the revelatory event is, "first of all the experience in which an ultimate concern grasps the human mind and creates a community in which this concern expresses itself in symbols of action, imagination and thought."[123] The ultimate concerns in contemporary Western European culture come to mind here, particularly experiences of quasi-transcendence through brands, whose representation in the mass-media grasps the human imagination and thought, and creates communities such as those around Nike or Apple.

It becomes apparent that true revelatory experience, "is an event in which the ultimate becomes manifest in an ultimate concern, shaking and transforming the given situation in religion and culture."[124] This encounter occurs in the world, since, "transcendental knowledge or experience of God is an *a posteriori* knowledge insofar as man's [*sic*] transcendental experience of his free subjectivity takes place only in his encounter with the world."[125] Therefore, "our transcendental knowledge or experience has to be called *a posteriori*, insofar as every transcendental experience is mediated by a categorical encounter with concrete reality in our world."[126]

Revelation implies, "a special and extraordinary manifestation which removes the veil from something which is hidden in a special and extraordinary way."[127] Tillich expands, "[T]he hiddenness is often called mystery."[128] Hence, even when God does reveal God-self, "his [*sic*] mystery does not become thereby transparent - not that he [*sic*] wants to keep anything from us, but

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[120] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 49.
[121] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 43.
[122] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 43.
[123] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* 90.
[124] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 90.
[125] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 52.
[126] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 52. Italics added.
[127] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 108.
[128] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 108.

his [*sic*] very nature renders it impossible."[129] There is a, "deep longing in man [*sic*] to behold this mystery which is the transcendent core of the world."[130] Schmaus explains, "[I]n all the endeavors of the human spirit, and in all his attempts to shape the world, man [*sic*] is always on the way to those transcendent depths of mystery."[131] Hence, culture, in shaping the meaning-laden world, partakes in this quest.

God, as Mystery, is of significance, since this demonstrates the limitations of pragmatic-scientific 'language.' The word mystery cannot be, "applied to something which ceases to be a mystery after it has been revealed."[132] Therefore, "[n]othing which can be discovered by a methodical cognitive approach should be called a mystery."[133] George Stroup states that this understanding was shared by Kant who, "did not deny the possibility of revelation,"[134] but did insist that reason could not affirm revelation, and that the use of reason in theology was fruitless.[135] In this thesis reason alone is also understood to be inadequate for approaching the mystery of revelation, hence, its drawing on myth, imagination, symbols, and metaphorical thinking. If the Christian faith, is to have, "credibility in an age of science, mystery must mean more than mere hollowness."[136] Haught continues, "[I]n all of its slippery silence it must impress us as a fullness of being rather than a vacuous abyss."[137] For mystery to stay mystery it, "has to be immune to any process of erosion in the face of science's advances."[138] This is of consequence for contemporary Western European culture, since if one does not have, "a sense of the mystery surrounding existence, of profound inadequacy of all our thoughts and words, one will most likely identify God with our words: God *becomes* father, mother, lover, friend."[139] Therefore, 'language' fulfills "an essential role in the process of revelation."[140] Avery Dulles explains, "[T]he words serve to identify the revelatory events, interpret them, preserve their memory, and transmit them together with their saving significance."[141] Therefore, 'language' must be faithful to the mystery, which God is, since, "God can communicate himself [*sic*] in his own reality to what is not divine without ceasing to be

[129] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 42.
[130] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 42.
[131] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 42.
[132] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 109.
[133] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 109.
[134] Stroup, "Revelation," 99.
[135] Stroup, "Revelation," 99.
[136] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, 20.
[137] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, 20.
[138] Haught, *Christianity and Science*, 20.
[139] McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 2.
[140] Avery Dulles, "Faith and Revelation," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 83.
[141] Dulles, "Faith and Revelation," 83.

infinite reality and absolute mystery, and without man [*sic*] ceasing to be a finite existent different from God."[142]

The modes of communication through which mystery is revealed, can be separated into general revelation which, "normally means the self-manifestation of God through the regular orders of nature,"[143] and historical revelation which, "by contrast, is made to particular individuals and groups through particular events that occur, or have occurred, at special times and places."[144] Historical revelation reveals a God who, "has spoken and acted in the history of Israel and of Jesus Christ, or - to put this more fully - that, in the history of the Old and New Testament, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are disclosed as the God who cares for all human beings with infinitely merciful love."[145] Revelation, thus, reaches its pinnacle in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and in this the Christian *Weltanschauung* is rooted. For Barth, revelation, "means the incarnation of the Word of God."[146] That is, what appears to be an obstacle, that is secularity, is rather the answer to the human quest for meaning, since the incarnation "means entry into this secularity."[147] Barth continues, "[W]e are in this world and are through and through secular."[148] Therefore, "[I]f God did not speak to us in secular form, He [*sic*] would not speak to us at all."[149] Calvin, additionally claims, "[F]or God would have remained hidden afar off if Christ's splendor [*sic*] had not beamed upon us."[150] In all Jesus,' "utterances, words, deeds, and sufferings, he is transparent to that which he represents as the Christ,[151] the divine mystery."[152] More intensely, it is in, "the resurrection [that] he entered into the mystery of God, and so, in being proclaimed, he speaks out of the mystery of God."[153] Therefore, the "one who hears through this proclamation is called into the mystery of God."[154] A significant point for the later section on pragmatic *logos*[155] 'language' is that the, "way of rational knowledge does not lead to this encounter, but only the way of decision, in which man

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[142] Rahner, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, 119.
[143] Dulles, "Faith and Revelation," 82.
[144] Dulles, "Faith and Revelation," 82.
[145] O'Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, 65.
[146] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Word of God*, vol. 1.1, trans. G.W. Bromiley (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 168.
[147] Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Word of God*, vol. 1, 168.
[148] Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Word of God*, vol. 1, 168.
[149] Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Word of God*, vol. 1, 168.
[150] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, 544.
[151] God can "grant us a glimpse into the veiled mystery which he is, but it still remains a mystery. Thus his self-revelation cannot be subjected to intramundane standards. This holds good even for its most intense realization, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ." Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 42.
[152] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 135.
[153] Michael Schmaus, *Dogma 3: God and His Christ* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), 15.
[154] Schmaus, *Dogma 3: God and His Christ,* 15.
[155] *Logos*, apart from its foundations in Greek Philosophy, is also of significance to the Christian understanding of Jesus Christ, who is the "Logos-made-flesh." McBrien, *Catholicism*, 238.
The Christ, as Logos-made-flesh, comes to the fore in John 1:1-18, where John writes about the pre-existent union of God and the *Logos*. However, within the parameters set, the thesis will employ the word *logos* in the Greek philosophical sense, referring to its pragmatic and rational component.

[*sic*] submits himself [*sic*] to the divine mystery."[156] The Christian faith, consequently, "is the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the *ultimate* word of God to humankind."[157] Essentially, it is through the incarnation that "grace is communicated to all persons,"[158] whereby, through Christ, "*God once-and-for-all, in a specific human individual, is communicated to us, and that communication is absolutely, unequivocally accepted.*"[159]

Theology, as response, should provide, "an interpretive framework within which human experience may be interpreted."[160] One of the foundations upon which such interpretation work can commence is Scripture, which, "is the concrete means by which the Church recollects God's past revelation, [and] is called to expectation of His future revelation."[161] Barth goes on to state that the Bible, "is God's Word as it really bears witness to revelation."[162] Gabriel Fackre provides a counter-balance to approaching revelation, drawing on William Abraham who states that, to "pick out any one act or activity as the essence of revelation is to miss the total picture, yet this is what has happened in the history of the doctrine of revelation."[163] Hence, for the thesis, which is aimed at the grand narratives in contemporary Western European culture, the "'Great Narrative'"[164] model is more appropriate, whereby every, "chapter in the story of God's *deeds* includes *disclosures*."[165] The advantage of the 'Great Narrative' model, is that it recognises all the debates in Christianity as contributing to the whole. Fackre explains, that the "'Great Narrative' structure can also serve as a framework for locating and engaging the partisans in the traditional debates about revelation."[166] This allows for "[h]istoric disputants [to] appear at each turn in the tale."[167] Thus, "[P]ut positively, the varied points of view to be encountered each bear special witness to some phase of the narrative of revelation."[168] The advantage of narrative theology is that in it, "revelation refers to that process in which the personal identities of individuals are reinterpreted and transformed by means of the narratives which give the Christian community its distinctive identity."[169] Narrative theology is mindful of the, "historicity of human understanding and the role of scripture and tradition in the Christian community as the locus of revelation."[170] George Stroup continues, "[T]he narratives of

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[156] Schmaus, *Dogma 3: God and His Christ,* 15.
[157] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 499. Italics in Original.
[158] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 498.
[159] McBrien, *Catholicism*, 498. Italics in Original.
[160] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 225.
[161] Barth, *Church Dogmatics: 1.1, The Word of God*, 111.
[162] Barth, *Church Dogmatics: 1.1, The Word of God*, 111.
[163] Gabriel Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 8.
[164] Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 7.
[165] Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 7.
[166] Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 7.
[167] Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 7.
[168] Fackre, *The Doctrine of Revelation*, 7.
[169] Stroup, "Revelation," 109.
[170] Stroup, "Revelation," 109.

the Christian community (which are rooted in scripture but not confined to it) become the occasion and the context for the reinterpretation of personal identity."[171] The thesis, aimed at the 'situation' outlined in chapter one, acknowledged that, "human experience is inherently narrative in form,"[172] and that, in contemporary Western European culture, a significant number of the narratives available are through the mass-media which, as shown, provides a model by which to interpret the world. The thesis seeks to illustrate how the re-introduction of Christian narratives into culture broadens the 'horizons of meaning,' so that, in the words of Michael Warren in chapter one, the human may be liberated from cultural oppression.[173]

Conclusively, revelation, "always entails the interpretation and appropriation of those events or 'facts' and the imagination plays an essential role in this process of interpretation."[174] This is warranted because the Incarnation, "grounds the meaning and importance of the imagination in Christian life, for the Incarnation is God's entry into the details of human existence."[175] In other words, as shown in chapter two, the imagination employs material reality to form an ultimate concern, and the Incarnation has taught us that he has brought grace to all of created reality, and so, the forms created out of material reality by the imagination can be sacramental, that is, they can act as stepping stones towards the Transcendent.

3.6.2 The Religious Imagination

The pinnacle of God's self-communication took place in the Incarnation. This phenomenon licenses the search for transcendence within the Depth of the ordinary, since the "Incarnation is God's entry into the details of human existence."[176] Kathleen R. Fischer elaborates, "[F]aith in the Incarnation is belief that the particulars of life are vessels of grace."[177] To uncover this Depth, the imagination comes back into focus, which in the Christian context, functions as, "an intentional operation in which symbolic images, gestures, sounds, words, or actions disclose the ultimate horizon of God in human experience."[178] Once these representations become embedded in the imagination, the human is enabled to see, "the concrete in terms of its pervasive mystery,"[179] and, as explored in chapter two, partake in forming an ultimate concern. Of concern here is the creative aspect of the

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[171] Stroup, "Revelation," 110.
[172] Terrence W. Tilley, *Story Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 23. Italics in original.
[173] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 13.
[174] Stroup, "Revelation," 111.
[175] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 8.
[176] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 8.
[177] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 8.
[178] Stephen Happel, "Imagination" in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane (Collegeville: The liturgical Press, 1990). 502.
[179] Fischer*, The Inner Rainbow*, 8.

imagination, through which the human can find the Depth within the material, thus advancing to Reality through material reality.

The imagination, as chapter two outlined, is formed by material reality. However, it also holds the potential to, "open us to [the] experience of the ultimate coming through finite reality, to the Depth at the heart of matter."[180] The imagination is significant, since belief in God depends on the orientation of the imagination.[181] It is, "on the level of the imagination that we first encounter the divine in this world, for revelation is always given through the material; it is always symbolic, pointing to the ultimate through the finite."[182] The imagination can be orientated towards such 'horizons.' However, the sense of authenticity and truth of such 'horizons' will always be determined by culture.[183] Culture, as noted in chapter one, is engaged in creating meaning and, as such, also determines the epistemological basis upon which humans, subject to a particular culture, form their *Weltanschauung,* and consequently the range of the 'horizons of meaning.'

The Christian *Weltanschauung,* is concerned with mystery as, "a dimension of all knowing."[184] And in such a world, "the imaginative language of symbol and metaphor is again recognized as an appropriate tool of thought."[185] Ray L. Hart, drawn on by Avery Dulles, states that, since "the imagination is the power by which we anticipate and construct our own future, revelation must actuate the symbolic imagination."[186] The thesis here seeks to show that the 'Great Narrative' underpins the Christian *Weltanschauung,* actively stimulating the imagination, drawing on past revelations and the contemporary environment. The critique of contemporary Western European culture in chapter one is of significance since the, "Christian imagination must go halfway to meet the new dreams, mystiques, and mythologies that are gestating in our time."[187] The 'language' through which the imagination functions is the, "new and yet ancient way of experiencing and knowing, the way of myth and ritual, symbol and story, image and poetry."[188] Theology, "should redefine itself in relation to the dominant myths, dreams, images of the age, that is, with the contemporary quest-patterns of a changing world."[189] This chapter seeks to show that,

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[180] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 8.
[181] Donal O'Leary, "Imagination: the Forgotten Dimension," *The Furrow* 57 (2006): 520.
[182] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 10.
[183] Culture determines what the outcomes of the imagination are. For contemporary Western European culture, imagination is most frequently associated with creative, yet illusive unreality, frequently termed phantasy. Hence, even the faculty itself is doubted in establishing truth.
[184] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 2.
[185] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow,* 2.
[186] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 103.
[187] Amos Niven Wilder, *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Lima: Academic Renewal Press, 2001), 1.
[188] Fischer, *The Inner Rainbow*, 1.
[189] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 25.

"Christian witness must engage our times at the level of its unconscious axioms and inherited symbolics and not only at that of its ideas."[190] Amos Wilder continues, "[S]ince such cultural imagery is deep-rooted and powerful it can only be effectively encountered if Christianity draws on its own arsenal of vision."[191] According to Wilder, the Christian ultimate concern needs to become once more a case of, "liturgy against liturgy, of myth against myth."[192] In contemporary Western European culture, this means challenging the 'liturgy' of Apple, and the quasi-myths of corporations such as Nike, as outlined in chapter one. This is significant since, "our myths whether recognized or not are what animate us and direct us: they face us this way or that; they open and close our horizons."[193] This conflict is primarily played out on the grounds of the social imagination. This is evident since, "no one can deny the persisting power of the social imagination of mankind [*sic*], past and present."[194] Throughout the history of humankind, engagement between humans and the gods has always involved the, "symbolics corresponding to man's [*sic*] many-sided grasp of experience and the social imaginations by which he has oriented himself [*sic*] in the world."[195] The social imagination, formed by culture through meaning-laden representations, orients the human in the world and consequently, has practical existential repercussions.

3.7 *Logos and Mythos* 'Language'

It is on the plane of 'language' that the Christian *Weltanschauung,* as counter-narrative, and contemporary Western European culture collide. The Christian *Weltanschauung* uses *mythos* 'language,' which is a, "form of symbolic thought and expression."[196] Myth, more specifically, provides, "a figurative representation of a reality which eludes precise description or definition."[197] *Mythos* 'language' is, thus, closely bound to imaginative thought, and in general terms, "deals with a numinous order of reality behind the appearances of the phenomenal world."[198] This mode of 'language' conflicts in scope and meaning with the *logos* 'language,' whereby *logos*, as Armstrong renders it, is a, "pragmatic mode of thought"[199] that reflects conceptualisation and discourse in which thinking centres around materiality and practicality.[200] *Logos,* is, "forward-looking, continually on the lookout for new ways of controlling the environment, improving old insights or

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[190] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 29.
[191] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 29.
[192] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 28.
[193] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 78.
[194] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 78.
[195] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 92.
[196] Avery Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," *Theological Studies* 27 (1966): 6.
[197] Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," 8.
[198] Dulles, "Symbol, Myth, and the Biblical Revelation," 8.
[199] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 3.
[200] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 55.

inventing something fresh."[201] This mode of thinking and communicating seems to have become the predominant means to acquiring truth and knowledge in contemporary Western European culture. However, both modes of 'language' work through signs. Thus, both *mythos,* and *logos* 'language' employ symbols, metaphors, analogies, and narrative to communicate knowledge, ideas, feelings, and concepts. The difference ultimately rests on the perceived truth contained in the realities they point to and construct, since, *logos* 'language' is limited to a subject-object structure of reality. To find the Depth within the ordinary, *mythos* 'language' is essential.

Mythos is generally understood as, "a symbolic story about ultimate realities."[202] However, *mythos* has often in contemporary Western European culture, been understood as to be, "a story about purely [fictitious] persons, events and things."[203] This is often put in contrast to *logos,* which, "offers a rational and true account of reality and its causes."[204] Eliade, in regard to this contrast questions whether there, "are certain zones of the individual or collective consciousness dominated by the *logos.*"[205] The thesis takes the position that this appears to be the case.

The imagination as faculty has, in the pragmatic *logos* 'language' of contemporary Western European culture, been degraded by being associated with fictional fairy tales, fantasy, and hence, childlike behaviour. The function of being able to see into the Depth at the heart of the material has been forgotten in the practical material 'language' of contemporary Western European culture. This Depth, which the imagination opens up, should have existential consequences for the human agent confronted by broader 'horizons of meaning.' As Haight points out, "Depth appears more as the *horizon* of our experience than as a direct object thereof."[206] This Depth is hidden in the ordinary, which can be disclosed through imaginative force and 'language.' It is through the use of imagination and 'language' that 'horizons' can become explored. However, the 'language' is always finite, restricted in creating an understanding of the Depth. As Haight further explains, as "the geographical horizon is unavailable to us since it recedes as we explore further, so God might be understood in part as the ultimate horizon of all of our experience, always receding, encompassing, illuminating, but never falling within our comprehending grasp."[207]

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[201] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 3.
[202] Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, "Myth" *in A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (London: HarperCollins, 1991), 152.
[203] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[204] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[205] Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 37.
[206] John F. Haught, *What is God: How to Think About the Divine* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 15.
[207] Haught, *What is God*, 15.

3.7.1 *Mythos* and the Christian Counter-Narrative

Chapter one showed that signs are fundamental to 'language,' and intensified signs such as symbols, in particular, are crucial to the Christian *Weltanschauung*. However, the realities that 'language' can meaningfully represent depend largely on culture, hence the perceived truth and operative power of intensified symbolic signs are determined and constricted by it. The re-introduction of *mythos* 'language' in contemporary Western European culture, would function as the vanguard of the Christian counter-narrative, since if this mode of 'language' in representing truths and meanings is not accepted, then the Christian *Weltanschauung* cannot take root as an adequate means to broaden 'horizons of meaning.' To comprehend the Christian counter-narrative, contained in Scripture and Tradition, it is apparent that a lot will depend on whether the human in contemporary European culture, "can work his [*sic*] way back to the source and rediscover the profound meanings of all these faded images and damaged myths."[208] This is an important endeavour because the human mind, "does not operate merely on the basis of abstract concepts alone."[209] Rather, "[I]t needs symbolic-imaginative language to find and express the truth about our existence."[210] Unfortunately, the overbalancing towards *logos* 'language' has significantly diminished the role of the imagination, and of *mythos* 'language' through which this mode of thinking is communicated meaningfully. These both have become marginalised, cast as simplistic, and being indicative of being occupied with, "something which is not true."[211] *Logos,* on the contrary, occupied with 'historical truth,' (if such an objective perspective exists[212]), and scientific knowledge, is understood, in contemporary Western European culture, as the requisite approach to truth. Armstrong explains that unlike *mythos*, "*logos* must correspond to facts; it is essentially practical; it is the mode of thought we use when we want something done; it constantly looks ahead to achieve greater control over our environment or to discover something fresh."[213] This has caused the demise of *mythos,* whereby, "intuitive, mythical modes of thought [become] neglected in favour of the more pragmatic, logical spirit of scientific rationality."[214] Consequently, the concept of what 'truth' means has changed with the change in modes of thinking and representing, since what is true, "in our positivistic, scientifically oriented society is what corresponds with reality, with the facts."[215] It is through the overbalancing towards *logos* thinking and representation, that material

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[208] Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 18.
[209] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[210] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[211] Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 3.
[212] See Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 35-7.
[213] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 127.
[214] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 127.
[215] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 4.

reality, "has lost its inner transcendence or, in another metaphor, its transparency for the eternal."[216] As has become evident, "[O]ur scientifically orientated knowledge seeks to master reality, explain it, and bring it under the control of reason; but a delight in unknowing has also been part of the human experience."[217]

Mystery is an inevitable part of the human quest for meaning, as, "[O]ne of the peculiar characteristics of the human mind is its ability to have ideas and experiences that exceed our conceptual grasp."[218] In the cultural milieu of *logos* 'language,' the unknown is something that needs to be explored, explained, and accounted for by scientific enquiry, and as such, becomes known. The inability to comprehend and communicate the Depth in the ordinary, seems to have led to the phenomenon that contemporary Western European culture is, as shown, "unsure at the experiential level because we are, even the most religious of us, ... secular in ways our foremothers and forefathers were not. We do not live in a sacramental universe."[219] Contemporary Western European culture has a, "literalist mentality,"[220] whereby, "we do not see the things of this world as standing for something else; they are simply what they are."[221] Sallie McFague explains that, "[A] symbolic sensibility, on the contrary, sees multilayered realities, with the literal level suggestive of meanings beyond itself."[222] The great narrative of the Christian *Weltanschauung* grounded in grace and revelation, seeks to provide a 'way of seeing' these multilayered realities in the world. For this to be possible, there needs to be recognition of *mythos* 'language' in communicating truth. The conflict between the ultimate concern of contemporary Western European culture and the Christian Ultimate concern takes place in 'language,' since it is here that meanings are communicated, shared, and applied to lived experience in the world. Thus, the two modes of 'language' clash in thinking, speaking, acquiring knowledge, and values.

McFague, quoting William A. Beardslee, states that, "the original impact of the New Testament was made by a deformation of language, a stretching of language to a new metaphorical meaning which shocked the hearer into new insights."[223] Metaphor is occupied with new meanings, which are "generated by making words mean more than they ordinarily do."[224] This is of importance, since the metaphors of *mythos* 'language' allow for the possibility to imaginatively

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[216] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 43.
[217] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 5.
[218] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 5.
[219] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1.
[220] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 5.
[221] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 5.
[222] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 5.
[223] William A. Beardslee, *Literary Criticism of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 11 quoted in McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 80.
[224] McFague, *Speaking in Parables*, 9.

transcend the finite. This mode of 'language' to convey and provide new insight, through communicating meaningfully about the revealed Christian Ultimate concern, is key to the thesis in terms of broadening 'horizons of meaning.' The essential need for *mythos* 'language' is that it is, "impossible to express the experience of mystery in ordinary language,"[225] particularly finite bound *logos* 'language.' As outlined above, "that [which] makes itself known in a revelatory event is the stuff of mystery."[226] Considering this, it must also be stated that there, "can be no revelation without experience"[227] yet as "revelation transcends any human experience,"[228] it "never exists without an interpretation."[229] Therefore, 'language' partakes in the event of revelation, which contains the potential to transform the dominant paradigm in culture.

3.7.2 The Unknown

The beginning of this chapter referred to God as unknown or mystery, and it is in this regard that myth comes to the fore, since myth, "is about the unknown; it is about that for which initially we have no words."[230] Karen Armstrong continues, "[M]yth therefore looks into the heart of a great silence."[231] Essentially, a myth is, "a guide; it tells us what we must do in order to live more richly."[232] 'Language' as *mythos* will also provide an understanding of the significance of the Christian metaphors, since the power of metaphor lies in its potency "to evoke new insight,"[233] which can engage the imagination, and broaden 'horizons of meaning.' Even, "behaviorists [*sic*] recognize that metaphor is one of the few devices we have for leaping beyond the essential privacy of the experiential process."[234] In attempting to question and unseat some perspectives concerning 'language' about the Christian Ultimate in contemporary Western European culture, the thesis has focused on mystery, unknowing and Depth. The reason is that, "God might be understood, in part, as the ultimate horizon of all of our experience, always receding, encompassing, illuminating, but never falling within our comprehending grasp."[235] This becomes apparent when McFague draws on Augustine and states, "that even the person who says the most about God is but dumb, and yet, [Augustine] adds, our only alternatives are to speak in halting, inadequate words or to remain

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[225] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 109.
[226] Stroup, "Revelation," 89.
[227] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 82.
[228] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 82.
[229] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 82.
[230] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 4.
[231] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 4.
[232] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 10.
[233] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 3.
[234] James W. Fernandez, "Persuasions and Performances: Of the Beast in Every Body... And the Metaphors of Everyman," in *Myth, Symbol and Culture*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974), 41.
[235] Haught, *What is God*, 15.

silent."[236] It is with this in mind, that this thesis does not avoid talking about God, yet, does so by attempting to re-introduce a 'language' which safeguards the mystery, and at the same time, by engaging with the imagination, seeks to uncover the Depth within the ordinary. The Christian Ultimate, is Mystery and Infinitely Transcendent, hence finite bound human 'language' can never encapsulate the Reality that God-self is. As Rahner puts it:

> Are there any titles which I needn't give You? And when I have listed them all, what have I said? If I should take my stand on the shore of Your Endlessness and shout into the trackless reaches of Your Being all the words I have ever learned in the poor prison of my little existence, what should I have said? I should never have spoken the last word about You.[237]

It is for this reason that religious 'language' is not supposed to be understood literally. Armstrong notes that religious discourse is, "not to be understood literally because it [is] only possible to speak about a reality that transcended language in symbolic terms."[238] Furthermore, Armstrong, drawing on Philo, draws attention to the limitations of 'language,' by explaining that human comprehension of the Divine is not comprehension of "God's *ousia,* his [*sic*] essential nature," but rather of God's "*dunamis* ('powers' or *energeiai,* 'energies')."[239] Hence, revelation of God, as outlined, does not fully disclose God's inner, essential nature. Contemporary Western European culture, through *logos* 'language,' has attempted to apply scientific concepts and rules governing material reality as 'proofs' against the existence of God, which undermines the very experience of mystery that traditionally accompanied God-talk. The following section will, therefore, analyse *mythos* 'language' and the Depth it provides for lived experience in the world.

3.7.3 Myth and Meaning

The Christian *Weltanschauung,* based on the Great Narrative model, continually seeks to transform the cultural environment by adding revelatory narratives into it. Rudolf Bultmann explains the function of myth as follows, "[T]he real point of myth is not to give an objective world picture; what is expressed in it, rather, is how we human beings understand ourselves in our world."[240] He continues, "[T]hus, myth does not want to be interpreted in cosmological terms but in

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[236] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 1.
[237] Karl Rahner, *Encounters with Silence,* trans. James M. Demske (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), 4.
[238] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 24.
[239] Philo, *The Special* Laws, 1.43, quoted in Armstrong, *The Case for God,* 79.
[240] Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, trans. and ed. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 9.

anthropological terms-or, better, in existentialist terms."[241] Hence, myths as a mode of 'language' have existential consequences, in terms of lived experience of the world, and understanding of *Dasein*.

The Christian *Weltanschauung* shapes the human experience of Reality; it achieves this through myths, using symbolic, and metaphorical 'language' to point to that which is truly Transcendent in narrative form. A story is a myth, "if it 'sets up' a world for people to dwell in or constitutes a tradition for people to live in."[242] Terrence W. Tilley continues, "[T]o label a story a myth in this sense is not to label it false (or true), but to recognize that the story does certain work and evokes certain sort of responses."[243] The significant symbols of myth, thus provide a model by which behaviour can be directed, highlighting their initial significance to the cultural milieu.

Human consciousness, "does not operate merely on the basis of abstract concepts alone."[244] It requires, "symbolic-imaginative language to find and express the truth about our existence."[245] The Great Narrative model uses this symbolic-imaginative *mythos* 'language' to convey Ultimate meanings, especially through myths. The significance of myths cannot be overstated, since "our myths whether recognized or not are what animate us and direct us: they face us this way or that; they open and close our horizons."[246] The counter-narrative, proposed here, seeks to open them through its myths. These narratives provide meaning for the human. The narrative form of myths is of significance, since humans have another characteristic, that of "*homo narrans.*"[247] Humans have continued need of stories to give meaning to their world. As William J. Bausch states, "all human stories have meaning underneath the meaning (a good definition of myth) that evoke subtle or overt responses from us."[248] Myths, symbols, and imagination are all "related and all find their best expression in art, especially in the art of storytelling."[249] It is storytelling which, "engages the heart and indeed the whole person."[250] The potency of narrative, especially counter-narrative, is its ability to use the imagination to play creatively with the forms provided by material reality, and transform them, making them mean something else, to bring closer the Depth within the ordinary.

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[241] Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology*, 9.
[242] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 40.
[243] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 40.
[244] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[245] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Myth," 152.
[246] Wilder, *Theopoetic*, 78.
[247] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology*, 85.
[248] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 19.
[249] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 25.
[250] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 27.

However, taking human metaphors and symbols to correspond to the very Reality of God would be blasphemous, since it brings God into the subject-object schema of material reality. The mode of 'language' least wrong to deal with these realities is that of *mythos* since as a, "language that speaks truth beyond truth"[251] it employs "myth, poetry, and story."[252] Bausch expands, "[A]fter all, ordinary reality is always larger than our capacity to word it accurately."[253] Myths, in this sense, are "symbols of faith combined in stories about divine-human encounters."[254]

The function of metaphor, symbol, and analogy is in relation to communicating meaningfully about the infinite, through creative use of the finite. As shown previously, through use of the imagination material objects as *analogon* are used to direct one to an absent object; "this intention is not empty: it directs itself through a content, which is not just any content, but which, in itself, must present some analogy with the object in question."[255] Metaphor, symbol and analogy are means of representation where, "something distant is revealed in and through something near."[256] However, a distinction must be made between metaphor and symbol. According to McFague, metaphor, "finds the vein of similarity in the midst of dissimilars"[257] while, symbol, "rests on similarity already present and assumed."[258] In other words, whereas metaphorical statements "think of 'this' as 'that'" symbolical statements think of "'this' as *a part* of 'that.'"[259] Taking symbol to its supreme manifestation, Dulles states that Christ and symbol are intertwined, since symbol is an intensified sign in which the thing signified is really present. Thus, "Christ may be called the symbol of God par excellence."[260] Briefly stated, symbols participate in the reality they point towards, whereas metaphors are more indicative statements. Metaphor, despite also relating 'this' to 'that' accepts that it is, "impossible to express the experience of mystery in ordinary language, because this language has grown out of, and is bound to, the subject-object scheme."[261]

As chapter two showed, 'language' has ontological consequences. Thomas F. Kelly, accordingly, states that it is 'language,' which is the clue, "to be followed in constructing our ontology."[262] Additionally, it is also the foundation on which another *Weltanschauung* can be communicated and comprehended. Kelly analyses how meaning is generated and extended,

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[251] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 108.
[252] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 108.
[253] Bausch, *Storytelling*, 108.
[254] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 56.
[255] Sartre, *The Imaginary*, 19.
[256] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 80.
[257] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 17.
[258] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 17.
[259] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology*, 16.
[260] Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 158.
[261] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 109.
[262] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 60.

referring to this as the "theory of analogy."[263] For Kelly, it is in analogy that, "we see how meaning deploys itself by transcending its contexts, and by uniting those contexts often in new and unpredictable ways. This is the very essence of meaning."[264] Additionally, it is in metaphor, he goes on to state, that, "we see this unpredictable phenomenon at its clearest and most unpredictable, for in it we find things disclosively united which are apparently unconnected, and proportions established between things which are apparently disparate."[265] The imagination is the faculty primarily active in this progress of creating metaphors, whereby links, "are forged and held [...] between unobviously related realms."[266] The 'language' dominant in a culture either enables or discourages these connections between realms. In contemporary Western European culture there appears to be no truly transcendent realm to relate to.

The religious symbols used by the Christian community, "do exactly the same thing as all symbols do - namely, they open up a level of reality which otherwise is not opened at all, which is hidden."[267] As these symbols are related to the Christian Ultimate concern, namely God, it becomes apparent that metaphors and symbols participate in the revelatory event, opening up new levels of reality, and opening the human to the Depth within the ordinary. In relation to the Depth within the ordinary, Tillich states that, "[w]e can call this the depth dimension of reality itself, the dimension of reality which is the ground of every other dimension and every other depth, and which therefore, is not one level beside the others but is the fundamental level."[268] Thus, religious metaphorical, symbolic 'language' is key, since when, "speaking of the ultimate, of being and meaning, ordinary language brings it down to the level of the preliminary, the conditioned, the finite, thus muffling its revelatory power."[269] The religious metaphorical or symbolic representation, "represents something which is not itself."[270] It is through this, "making other things present, [that] symbols enter our imagination, affect our feelings and influence our behaviour."[271] Thus, "[R]ational explanations will always fall short of the potential range of meanings expressed by given symbols."[272] These representations are needed, nevertheless, since that which is utter mystery, can only be comprehended and articulated through these materially existent 'signposts'. The referring of symbolic, metaphorical 'language' of *mythos* as 'signpost' serves here to highlight the pointing-

[263] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 60.
[264] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 79.
[265] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 79.
[266] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 80.
[267] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 59.
[268] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 59.
[269] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God*, 124.
[270] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 56.
[271] Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia, "Symbol" in *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (London: HarperCollins, 1991), 232.
[272] O'Collins and Farrugia, "Symbol," 232.

beyond-itself character of these representations. As outlined in chapter one, signs such as words, images and sounds, "are the vehicles or media which carry meaning, ... which stand for or represent the meanings we wish to communicate."[273] Hence, myths with their symbolic, metaphorical 'language' form intensified signs that point towards the Transcendent, and partake in that reality.

3.7.4 Master-Metaphors and Grand Narrative

Myth shows that the human is bound by cultural meaning-structures, communicated through 'language,' in particular in the form of narrative. The 'language' of a culture is rooted in certain master-metaphors which, "govern whole systems of thinking, totalities of shared experience, the exploration and elaboration of which is conterminous with our developing understanding of whole ranges of reality."[274] Therefore, the master-metaphors of contemporary western European culture contrast with the master-metaphors of the Christian *Weltanschauung*. An example of such a master-metaphor for contemporary Western European culture, is Nietzsche's statement, "God is dead,"[275] which has enormous repercussions across culture. *Mythos* 'language,' counter to such finite master-metaphors provides mythical narratives that can be constructed on a master-metaphor such as, 'lived experience in the world is sacred.'

Such master-metaphors manifest themselves and are intertwined with the grand narrative of a culture, since, "stories give meaning to metaphors."[276] A master story, or grand narrative is, "a tale which comprehends everything, telling us not only how things are, but how they were and how they will be, and our place among them."[277] They are significant, since "[s]uch stories tell us who we are."[278] Humans, as "*homo narrans,*"[279] are significantly affected by such a narrative, since "[n]arratives and stories are among the most powerful instruments for ordering human experience."[280] The grand narrative originally comes out of a cultural system, constructed on certain ideological master-metaphors, which are communicated through 'language.' From the very beginning humans invented such stories. The grand narrative, in this sense, is the overarching cultural story. Myths are part of such a grand narrative, which gives meaning to lived experience in the world. A myth does not just give meaning to the world, but also provides meaning-structures to understanding the self. As mentioned, *mythos* 'language' is significant to communicating the

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[273] Hall, "Introduction," 5.
[274] Kelly, *Language, World and God*, 81.
[275] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1997), 5.
[276] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 11.
[277] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 8.
[278] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 8.
[279] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology*, 85.
[280] Macionis and Plummer, *Sociology*, 85.

experience of the Christian Ultimate, and understanding the *Weltanschauung* that follows. The Christian *Weltanschauung*, through *mythos* 'language' uncovers the Depth in the ordinary, and offers a Transcendent 'horizon of meaning' by which to understand lived experience in the world.

3.7.5 Myth as Model for Lived Experience

The Christian *Weltanschauung* is grounded in the grace and revelation of the Christian Ultimate, which is disclosed through mythic, symbolic, metaphorical narratives that function as intensified signs. These have a profound effect on the shaping of the imagination, and formation of an ultimate concern. 'Language' has a significant effect on the human, because "religious language is not only religious but also human, not only about God but also about us."[281] As 'language' comes from culture, the latter point is only a confirmation of an already mentioned phenomenon, especially if religion, "as ultimate concern is the meaning-giving substance of culture, and culture is the totality of forms in which the basic concern of religion expresses itself."[282] Culture, in this sense, concerned with meaning, forms and shapes the human in their quest for meaning, whereby the cultural grand narrative as, "a tale which comprehends everything,"[283] functions as a sort of 'life map,' which coerces the human to live one kind of life out of the thousands of others available. The human, following a religious narrative, is no different, since religious "man [*sic*] is not *given*; he [*sic*] *makes* himself [*sic*], by approaching the divine models."[284] Eliade continues, "[T]hese models, [...], are preserved in myths, in the history of the divine *gesta*."[285] The myth, in this sense, describes "the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the 'supernatural') into the world."[286] It is "this sudden breakthrough of the sacred that really *established* the World and makes it what it is today."[287] The result is that myth, "is regarded as a sacred story, and hence a 'true history,' because it always deals with realities."[288] For example, in the "archaic world the myth alone is real."[289] Eliade expands, "[I]t tells of manifestations of the only indubitable reality - the *sacred*."[290] These myths are part of the greater grand narrative, which provides a model that colours their lived experience in the world, and causes the adhering community around this ultimate concern to live in certain ways, as, "myth relates the *gesta* of Supernatural Beings and the manifestations of their sacred powers, it becomes the exemplary model for all significant human

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[281] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology,* 10.
[282] Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, 42.
[283] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 8.
[284] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 100.
[285] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 100.
[286] Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1963), 6.
[287] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 6.
[288] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 6.
[289] Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 40.
[290] Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 40.

activities."[291] As became evident with the Neanderthals, human beings, "fall easily into despair, and from the very beginning we invented stories that enabled us to place our lives in a larger setting, that revealed an underlying pattern, and gave us a sense that, against all the depressing and chaotic evidence to the contrary, life had meaning and value."[292] A recurring theme throughout the thesis, death appears to be one of the phenomena where meaninglessness needed to be overcome, since death causes an anxiety "about non-being [which] is present in everything finite."[293]

Referring back to culture, through 'language's,' shaping of the world of meaning for the human, it becomes apparent what effect *mythos* 'language' has. As Eliade points out, "from the beginning, religious man sets the model he is to attain on the trans-human plane, the plane revealed by his myths." [294] Therefore, the, "supreme function of the myth is to 'fix' the paradigmatic models for all rites and all significant human activities - eating, sexuality, work, education, and so on."[295] Myths, "gave explicit shape and form to a reality that people sensed intuitively."[296] A myth, thus, "is a story that establishes the world,"[297] and, additionally, "establishes a social order, and provides psychological space."[298] Myths exceed merely being fantasy stories, they provide a meaning-structure through which to see the world, and perhaps, more importantly, how humans see themselves. The Christian *Weltanschauung,* with its own myths, provides contemporary Western European culture with the 'language' of the revelatory Great Narrative, which illuminates the human experience. What humans have always intuitively experienced or questioned, is given context in the stories of Christianity. Gerard Loughlin, drawing on George A. Lindbeck, states that, "religion is a 'medium' or 'framework' that shapes the entirety of a believers' life."[299] He continues, "[T]he discourses and practices of religion, its 'language-games' and 'forms of life,' provide a 'scaffolding' for religious feeling and experience."[300]

In contemporary Western European culture, there exists the notion that the humans which proposed these stories are of lesser intellectual capabilities than contemporary humans. However, as Claude Levi-Strauss states, these humans, "are perfectly capable of disinterested thinking; that is, they are moved by a need or a desire to understand the world around them, its nature and their

[291] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 6.
[292] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 2.
[293] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Existence and The Christ,* vol. 2, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 67.
[294] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 100.
[295] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 98.
[296] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 5.
[297] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 46.
[298] Tilley, *Story Theology*, 46.
[299] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 39.
[300] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 39.

society."[301] He explains further, "[O]n the other hand, to achieve that end, they proceed by intellectual means, exactly as a philosopher, or even to some extent a scientist, can and would do."[302] Myth, once again, "describes the various and sometimes dramatic irruptions of the sacred into the world,"[303] and additionally, it is these irruptions "narrated in the myths, that *established* the world as a reality."[304] As we have seen myths as models, provide absolute values and paradigms by which the human can understand and order life. In other words, referring back to the imagination and faith, myths provide the human with ideologically 'charged' 'language,' which ignites the imagination into forming an ultimate environment or ultimate concern. With regard to the transcendent, myths, "are the most general and effective means of awakening and maintaining consciousness of another world, a beyond."[305] According to Eliade, it is this 'other world' which, "represents a superhuman, 'transcendent' plane, the plane of *absolute realities.*"[306] He continues, "[I]t is the experience of the sacred - that is, and encounter with a trans-human reality - which gives birth to the idea that something *really exists*, that hence there are absolute values capable of guiding man [*sic*] and giving meaning to human existence."[307] These meaning-laden representations are found in *mythos* 'language' which interprets and shapes the lived experience of its users. This was the case with the human in archaic cultures, where their cosmogonic myth provided an exemplary model by which they "tirelessly [conquered] the World, organizing it, transforming the landscape of nature into a cultural milieu."[308] However, once a myth also settles and takes root in the cultural 'language' it, "helps man [*sic*] to transcend his own limitations and conditions and stimulates him [*sic*] to rise to 'where the greatest are.'"[309]

The crux is that through, "the telling of stories the world is what we make it."[310] More than that, "[I]t is also what makes us."[311] The telling of stories is deeply rooted in the human; it is a part of culture, a means of representing meanings for humans. Loughlin states that the, "world is dominated by master narratives, above all economic and political ones, which dictate what is important, what matters and counts, what is real."[312] However, the Christian, "understands the world in biblical ones; the Christian takes the biblical narratives, above all the narratives of Christ,

[301] Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 12.
[302] Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, 12.
[303] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 97.
[304] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 97. Italics in original.
[305] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 139.
[306] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 139. Italics in original.
[307] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 139. Italics in original.
[308] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 140.
[309] Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, 147.
[310] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 29.
[311] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 29.
[312] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 29/30.

as the fundamental story by which all others are to be understood, including his or her own story."[313]

The following example will provide the existential contrasts between the representational cultural milieu of *mythos* and *logos* orientated cultures. As addressed at the beginning of chapter one, culture in its root meanings is bound to agriculture. Moreover, for *mythos* 'language,' myth is often employed and, "myth is bound up with ontology; it speaks of *realities,* of what *really* happened, of what was fully manifested. Obviously these realities are sacred realities, for it is the *sacred* that is pre-eminently the *real.*"[314] This is where naturally a *mythos* 'language' orientated culture differs from *logos* 'language' orientated culture, for whatever, "belongs to the sphere of the profane does not participate in being, for the profane was not ontologically established by myth, it has no perfect model."[315] Now relating this knowledge to agriculture, where the root meaning of the word culture comes from, the following from Eliade:

> Let us think, by comparison, of agricultural work in a desacralized society. Here, it has become a profane act, justified by the economic profit it brings. The ground is tilled to be exploited; the end pursued is profit and food. Emptied of religious symbolism, agricultural work becomes at once opaque and exhausting; it reveals no meaning, it makes possible no opening toward the universal, toward the world of spirit.[316]

The thesis is exploring the roles of culture and 'language' in providing meaning-structures, which shape an attitude towards lived experience in the world. Dominating trends in contemporary Western European culture dictate that lived experience in the world no longer contains the sacred, or a Transcendent Ultimate 'horizon.' However God's self-revelation is ongoing, it, "is the participation of the creature in the divine life; in other words, the deification of creation."[317] Schmaus continues, "[T]his divine aim is the ultimate basis for God's self-communication to man [*sic*]."[318]

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[313] Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, 20.
[314] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 95. Italics in original.
[315] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 96.
[316] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 96.
[317] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 41.
[318] Schmaus, *Dogma 1: God in Revelation*, 41.

3.8 Critiquing Contemporary Western European Culture and *Logos*

3.8.1 Christian Counter-Narrative

The significance of the Christian Ultimate concern, grounded in the grace and revelation of God, is that it claims that its, "meanings and values are the decisive ones for life; they are salvific."[319] Warren continues, "[S]uch a claim to ultimate meaning is also a claim to be able to judge reality by those ultimate norms."[320] Chapter two found that religious traditions remain the custodians of truthful images of the ultimate environment. The means to communicate these images is through *mythos* 'language,' which provides the basis to transcendent meaning-structures that give Ultimate significance to lived experience in the world.

Wilder claims, that the, "opportunity of our time is that depth is again calling to depth."[321] The recognition of an opportunity was also advanced in chapter one, in the yearning for true transcendence being incompletely and inadequately answered by the quasi-transcendent experiences of consumerist brands. The human, thus, continues to seek for adequate fulfillment. The search for Depth is part of the human quest for meaning. In such a 'situation,' Christianity has the potential to, "ask questions about ... scope and ultimacy."[322] Therefore, the seeking for transcendence, temporarily met by quasi-transcendent experiences, provides the possibility of true transcendence. Wilder elaborates, "[T]he Spirit is not to be quenched, yet the spirits should be tested."[323] Religion, "is the self-transcendence of life in the realm of the spirit,"[324] and the myths that inform and model the Christian *Weltanschauung* can be a template by which to test the spirits. The thesis proposes Christianity as achieving such objectives, since, as David Power states, "[I]t is a perception as old as Christianity that faith in Jesus Christ brings freedom."[325] He continues, "[A]s the inner freedom of the Spirit, it is a life-force for a person and for a people that gives rise to new perceptions new relations, new ways of being, free from fear, free from restrictive attachments, free from oppressive external pressures."[326] This liberatory aspect of the Christian *Weltanschauung* was explored above, specifically in the form of grace as "medicinal force."[327] Warren, drawing on George Gerbner,

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[319] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 21.
[320] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 21.
[321] Wilder, *Theopoetic,* 21.
[322] Wilder, *Theopoetic,* 22.
[323] Wilder, *Theopoetic,* 22.
[324] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God,* vol. 3 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), 107.
[325] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 22.
[326] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 22.
[327] See chapter three, footnote 101.

states that, "television tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time."[328] These narratives, which reflect the dominant grand narrative of culture, seek to grasp the human imagination to form an ultimate concern. In contrast to the Christian Ultimate concern, the narratives in contemporary Western European culture do not provide liberation, rather, they uphold and communicate a dominating paradigm, based on scientifist *logos* 'language.'

3.8.2 The Need for Balance

The thesis has explored two categories of knowledge, and, 'language.' These two categories are termed *logos* and *mythos*, both of which are connected to meaning-structures. Consequently, the overemphasis of one mode of 'language' has repercussions, in particular on knowledge of truth, lived experience in the world, and understanding of *Dasein.* The thesis has concentrated on contemporary Western European culture, which appears to be partial towards *logos* 'language,' where propositions must correspond to material reality. Nevertheless, this does not fulfil the whole of human yearning. As Wittgenstein notes, "[W]e feel that even when all *possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched."[329]

Comprehension of the human merely as subject, through ontic inquiry, can be understood as stemming from this *logos*-istic mode of thinking. It is these limitations of *logos* that contemporary Western European culture needs to re-discover. Armstrong shows that *logos,* for example, "cannot assuage human grief or find ultimate meaning in life's struggles."[330] She continues, "[F]or that, people turned to *mythos* or 'myth.'"[331] It becomes apparent then that *logos,* despite its impact, has, "never been able to provide human beings with the sense of significance that they seemed to require."[332] Armstrong elaborates, "[I]t had been myth that had given structure and meaning to life."[333] The limitations of pragmatic, material bound, *logos* 'language' are pointed out by Wittgenstein, who states that, "[l]ogic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits."[334]

Logos has shortcomings, and this is where *mythos* plays a key role. A significant aspect of myth is symbolic thinking and, as Eliade expounds, the symbol "reveals certain aspects of reality -

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[328] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 8-9.
[329] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 88.
[330] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 3.
[331] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 3.
[332] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 128.
[333] Armstrong, *A Short History of Myth*, 128.
[334] Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 68.

the deepest aspects - which defy any other means of knowledge."[335] He continues, "[I]mages, symbols and myths are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfill a function, that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being."[336] Myth in this sense, "gives expression to a certain understanding of human existence,"[337] which is expressed in its knowledge of, "another reality than the reality of the world that science has in view."[338] *Mythos*, "knows that the world and human life have their ground and limit in a power that lies beyond everything falling in the realm of human reckoning and control - in a transcendent power."[339]

This knowledge is not possible through *logos* 'language' in contemporary Western European culture, since it fails to represent true transcendence by inherently, and conceptually removing advertance to the existence of God. However, even the, "rationalism of ancient Greece was not opposed to religion."[340] On the contrary, *logos* was often a means to transcend material reality, since "[P]hilosophia was a yearning for a transcendent wisdom; it had a healthy respect for the limitations of *logos,* and held that the highest wisdom was rooted in unknowing and its insights were the result of practical meditative exercises and a disciplined lifestyle."[341] Tillich supplements this, by stating that, "faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy."[342] He continues, "[T]here is no conflict between the nature of faith and the nature of reason; they are within each other."[343] Reason, is fundamentally linked to mystery, where "genuine mystery appears when reason is driven beyond itself to its 'ground and abyss,' to that which 'precedes' reason, to the fact that 'being is and nonbeing is not' (Parmenides), to the original fact (*Ur-Tatsache)* that there is *something* and not *nothing.*"[344] It is important to keep this in mind because in contemporary Western European culture, *logos* is perceived as being capable of standing on its own without *mythos* meaning-structures.

It is clear that *logos* 'language' has its merits. However, when it comes to the Christian Ultimate, this means of thinking, speaking and gaining knowledge, is inadequate, because the Christian Ultimate far exceeds the bounds of 'language,' in particular *logos* 'language.' This chapter has made this evident in its discussion of human experience of grace and revelation, through mystery and unknowing. Haught outlines, that humans on their religious quest

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[335] Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 12.
[336] Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, 12.
[337] Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology*, 98.
[338] Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology*, 98.
[339] Bultmann, *New Testament & Mythology*, 98.
[340] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 78.
[341] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 78.
[342] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 88.
[343] Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, 88.
[344] Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Reason and Revelation, Being and God,* 110.

"instinctively look for symbols that will bring into focus the original revelation of mystery that lies at the limits of our lives and awareness."[345]

The imagination, myth, metaphors and symbols are the vehicles essential to representing that which transcends the world infinitely. The counter-narrative, communicated through *mythos* 'language' seeks to safeguard this mystery. The re-introduction of *mythos* is to provide a balance of 'languages,' whereby a basis is set on which Ultimate Transcendent 'horizons of meaning' can be discovered and explored. Throughout the thesis it has become apparent that how the human experiences the world depends on webs of meaning in which it finds itself. 'Language,' is the method by which these meanings are communicated in culture, it determines what is imaged and imaginable in this sense, since every, "social environment sets its own limits to the modes of expression."[346] The re-introduction of *mythos* 'language' is important for contemporary Western European culture, since without it the capacity for true Transcendence is severely hindered, particularly for 'Generation Y' who live in a branded world where individuals are faithful to the logo as significant 'model' for life.

The thesis, therefore, proposes a balance between *logos* and *mythos.* This is in line with the ancient Greeks, who understood that *logos* and *mythos* are, "two recognised ways of thinking, speaking and aquiring knowledge."[347] In this cultural milieu both were seen as essential, "and neither was considered superior to the other; they were not in conflict but complementary."[348] Thus, there existed a balance between *mythos* and *logos*. A balance would let *logos* and *mythos* both have their own sphere of knowledge, an outcome truer to the essence of both. Both should interact as two spheres of knowledge, but avoid adulterating or constraining each other unnecessarily. An overemphasis towards either mode[349] would dilute the potency of the whole to provide broadened 'horizons of meaning.'

3.9 Conclusion

Evidently, the Christian *Weltanschauung* is based on the grace and revelation of Gods-self, which as an unmerited gift comes into the material reality in which humans find themselves. That the name 'God' exists in language testifies, to a certain extent, that there is an experience of mystery, a

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[345] Haught, *Christianity and Science,* 29.
[346] Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, xxxvi.
[347] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 2.
[348] Armstrong, *The Case for God*, 2.
[349] The advanced proposition regarding overemphasis cuts two ways, whereby Christian communities also should be careful not to overemphasise *mythos*, dispensing with *logos*.

Depth that the human senses. However, access to this Depth, needs to be made possible by the imaginative 'language' in culture. If the representations are ideologically oriented towards pragmatic *logos* 'language' then, as has become apparent, the human loses the means of representing Depth adequately. In contemporary Western European culture, *mythos* has become discredited, as only related to fiction and fantasy. In this context, this chapter has aimed to contribute to the present-day scenario in contemporary Western European culture, and advocated a return of *mythos* to the cultural milieu, to re-establish a balanced representation system, which would provide the human with more tools to understand and contribute meaningfully to the cultivating of culture. Myth provides the human with a 'map' that sets out patterns by which to interpret. The necessity, significance, and effects of these mental 'maps' has been some of the underlying themes throughout the thesis. According to the Christian *Weltanschauung* the decisions one makes within this world do matter ultimately. Contemporary Western European culture is called upon to reconsider its 'horizons of meaning.'

Conclusion

4.1 Concepts of Ultimacy and the Quest for Meaning

The thesis, as was indicated in the Introduction, has examined the nature and extent of dominating 'horizons of meaning' in contemporary Western European culture, and determined the contribution of the Christian *Weltanschauung* in that context. The central concern has been questions of meaning - at the core of which are the human and culture. The latter of these, the thesis contends, should, "itself be formed in the image and likeness of human personhood;"[1] however, it has become eminently clear that a great proportion of people are increasingly passively subjected consumers of corporately-generated, profit-orientated, attenuated meanings. The thesis is a response to this reality.

In chapter one, the thesis set out how transnational corporations communicate their meaning-laden narratives through the mass-media, significantly contributing to the shaping of the cultural environment of contemporary Western Europe. The thesis showed that this cultural trend developed at an extraordinary rate, from the 1980s onwards, due to technological developments, having immense impact on the 'webs' of meaning, particularly for 'Generation Y.' The thesis, as response, deployed the Christian *Weltanschauung* as infinite 'horizon' against which backdrop the 'horizons of meaning' of contemporary Western European culture may be more clearly pondered, examined, and critiqued. This approach has striven to create awareness and encourage the questioning and exploration of the culturally available 'horizons of meaning,' such that contemporary Western Europeans might move, "beyond being passive consumers of others' significations."[2]

In chapter two the thesis highlighted that awareness and knowledge of ideas, beliefs, and values are deeply rooted in, and constrained by, the 'language' of contemporary Western European culture, hindering the comprehension of the Christian *Weltanschauung* as 'truth bearer.' Thus, it proposed that a radical reassessment and re-interpretation of 'language' is required to provide adequate comprehension of, and access to, transcendent 'horizons of meaning,' since, as chapter three explored, contemporary Western European culture is overbalanced towards *logos*, and disposes of *mythos* as 'language' to communicate Ultimate meanings. The thesis has, consequently, made the case for a balance between *mythos* and *logos* 'language,' each sustaining a differing mode of thinking. It should be noted, however, that Christian communities should be careful not to overemphasise *mythos* and dispense with *logos,* as this leads to fundamentalism. The result of such

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[1] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media*, 63.
[2] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 13.

an overemphasis would have significant repercussions, since *mythos* narratives would lose their character as 'signs' towards incomprehensible mystery and rather become mistakenly literally interpreted and the dominant mode of knowledge for comprehending lived experience in the world. A balance between both modes of 'language' is therefore crucial. This allows each to have a sphere of competency without the violation of the other. This is for the betterment of humans since a more comprehensive range of 'webs of meaning' are made available and the potential of transcendent 'horizons of meaning' becomes evident and attainable.

Chapter three revealed that the Christian *Weltanschauung* provides narratives that open humans to a deeper, lived experience in the world. These narratives provide a balance to the attenuated meaning-laden narratives portrayed in the mass-media. The aim of drawing attention to such a radical, foundational recasting of 'language' is to enable humans to access and engage with the Christian *Weltanschauung* and employ it to explore 'horizons of meaning.' The thesis has established that the re-presentation of the Christian *Weltanschauung* in the contemporary cultural environment functions to provide a backdrop against which humans can perceive the limited 'horizons of meaning' communicated by transnational corporations. The "cultural oppression,"[3] to use Michael Warren's phrase, in contemporary Western European culture has undermined the role of humans as cultural agents and their ontological understanding of themselves as potential participants in true Transcendence.

Overall, it has emerged that 'language' is not only significant for humans in providing comprehension of, and access to, transcendent 'horizons of meaning,' but is also connected to their understanding of freedom. A *logos*-istic, "materialistic conception of the universe is radically incompatible with the idea of a free man [*sic*]: more precisely ... in a society ruled by materialistic principles, freedom is transmuted into its opposite, or becomes merely the most treacherous and deceptive of empty slogans."[4] In this materialistic conception of the universe, commodities, and more specifically, brands, have come to take on meaning which, through a quasi *ek-stasis*, offer a quasi-transcendent experience. In chapter one it was made clear that such an experience is confined to the finite and fails to satisfy the infinite aspirations and yearnings of the human as spiritual being. The infinite 'horizons' offered by the Christian *Weltanschauung* challenge this limited version of reality, proclaiming, "that we do not belong entirely to the world of objects to which men [*sic*] are seeking to assimilate us, in which they are straining to imprison us."[5] In other words, the thesis, apart from providing a case for active cultural agency, is also a call to become more fully human,

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[3] Warren, *Seeing Through the Media,* 13.
[4] Gabriel Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society,* translated by G.S. Fraser (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2008), 14.
[5] Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society*, 16.

that is, to become an actively engaged responsible person, rather than solely a subject. As person, the human looks to the finite and to the infinite. The need for Depth is essential, since, "man [*sic*] cannot be free or remain free, except in the degree to which he [*sic*] remains linked with that which transcends him [*sic*]."[6] The thesis is clear that this does not imply that the human has to escape material reality; on the contrary, it calls for more in-Depth living since the, "Christian who speaks of the body or of matter with contempt does so against his [*sic*] own most central tradition."[7] The Christian *Weltanschauung* holds that, "[M]an [*sic*] is a body in the same degree that he [*sic*] is a spirit, wholly body and wholly spirit."[8]

The human, considered as mere subject, would appear to be partially an effect of scientifism, whereby, as discussed in chapter three, the human is reduced to individual analysable material components. However, the thesis is clear, humans must not be solely seen as products of material analysable factors; rather, and ultimately, the human is person. Emmanuel Mounier states that the, "essence of the person, being indefinable, is never exhausted by its expression, nor subjected to anything by which it is conditioned."[9] He continues, "[N]or is it definable as some internal substratum, as a substance lurking underneath our attitudes, an abstract principle of our overt behaviour."[10] The world, through the ontic lens, consists predominantly of subject-object relationships. Arguably, such a cultural environment provides a fertile base which corporations, through the mass-media, exploit for profit by promoting commodities that build and encourage subject-object relationships. However, one of the questions considered in chapter three was, "whether science does, or ever could, present us with a picture of the world which is complete, self-sufficient and somehow closed in upon itself, such that there could no longer be any meaningful questions outside this picture"?[11] The thesis does not deny or undermine the extent and usefulness of scientific knowledge, but rather has sought to question, "whether it is entitled to deny or rule out as illusory all form of inquiry that do not start out from measurements and comparisons and, by connecting particular causes with particular consequences,"[12] Thus, there is also a call for balance between the material and the spiritual. Emmanuel Mounier states that, "'abstract materialism' and 'abstract spiritualism' come to the same thing; it is not a case of choosing the one or the other, but 'the truth which unites them both' beyond their separation."[13]

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[6] Marcel, *Man Against Mass Society,* 16.
[7] Mounier, *Personalism*, 4.
[8] Mounier, *Personalism*, 3.
[9] Mounier, *Personalism*, xviii.
[10] Mounier, *Personalism*, xviii.
[11] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, translated by Oliver Davis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 34.
[12] Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, 34.
[13] Mounier, *Personalism*, 9.

The objective of the thesis has been to make the case for a re-opening of culture to, "an ultimate, which then functions as an organizing and ordering principle for everything else."[14] The *mythos* of the Christian *Weltanschauung* facilitates this function by providing a narrative of Ultimacy which opens the meaning structures by which to comprehend lived experience. The thesis has identified the goal of this process as Ultimate concern, towards which humans direct themselves in faith.

4.2 Ultimacy and Existential Responsibility

In concluding, it should be noted that the propositions explored and critiqued in the thesis have also suggested the possibility for further investigation into particular areas which were beyond the limits of the thesis. The thesis has, for example, occasionally touched upon the theme of death, which is, clearly, fundamentally linked to the ideas of existence, being, and 'horizons of meaning' discussed. The connection between existentialist thought and the questions explored herein suggests potential for still further exploration, in particular elaboration on the significance of responsibility and choice as key characteristics of human being - understood in relation to a backdrop of Transcendence and Ultimacy. Experience of finitude was shown in chapter three to call on cultural meaning structures to give order to the apparent chaotic meaninglessness which accompanies death. Furthermore, the realisation of existing is essential to the human, as Mairet points out, "although his [*sic*] personal fate is simply to perish, he [*sic*] can triumph over it by inventing 'purposed,' 'projects,' which will themselves confer meaning both upon himself [*sic*] and upon the world of objects – all meaningless otherwise and in themselves."[15] The fact that the human exists contingently and thus will die, is part of the human predicament to which answers must be sought. However, as has been seen, in contemporary Western European culture, "the great majority reassure themselves by thinking as little as possible of their approaching deaths and by worshipping idols such as humanity, [or] science,"[16] or, as the thesis has illustrated, consumer commodities. John F. Haught, in relation to this point states that, "[n]on-being is terrifying to us... and so we attempt to avoid it by tying our fragile existence to things that seemingly provide refuge from it."[17] Haught continues, "[h]owever, since all such things are themselves merely finite and therefore subject to non-being also, the security they give us is only fragmentary and ultimately illusory."[18] However, the questioning that arises by facing the meaning of death may provide a catalyst for liberating the human from

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[14] Jon Sobrino, "Central Position of the Reign of God in Liberation Theology, in *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology,* ed. Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuría (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 38.
[15] Philip Mairet, introduction to *Existentialism and Humanism,* by Jean-Paul Sartre (London: Methuen, 2007). 14.
[16] Mairet, introduction to *Existentialism and Humanism*, 14.
[17] Haught, *What is God?* 55.
[18] Haught, *What is God?* 55.

bondage, since finite realities, such as, "specific objects, persons, events, nations, cults, possessions,"[19] cannot provide ultimate meanings to adequately answer the fear of non-being. The facilitation and foregrounding of the transcendental questioning nature of the human, proposed herein, should lead to a necessary broadening of available 'horizons of meaning' for human persons.

The finiteness of humans is linked to existential questions and choices. Existentialism, as shown, can be approached from a secular or a religious perspective, however, both perspectives find common ground on the significance of choice, and thus the existential obligation to responsibility and action. The Christian *Weltanschauung* emphasises this specific point. It is through grace as sanative force that the human can be liberated from cultural oppression in contemporary Western European culture. To achieve such liberation, choice is fundamental in the taking of responsibility to question, contest, and even restructure the 'webs of meaning' of contemporary Western European culture. Jean Paul Sartre, as secular existentialist, declares that, "there is no reality except in action."[20] He goes further, adding, "[M]an [*sic*] is nothing else but what he [*sic*] purposes, he [*sic*] exists only in so far as he [*sic*] realises himself [*sic*], he [*sic*]is therefore nothing else but the sum of his [*sic*] actions, nothing else but what his life is."[21] However, the thesis has illustrated that the human is significantly more than Sartre's truncated portrait allows. Choice and responsibility are, thus, not merely materially significant, but are ultimately significant, particularly through the call to cultural agency. The human, as responsible agent will always still have to say, "it is I myself, in every case, who [has] to interpret the signs."[22] The thesis has set out to re-present the Christian *Weltanschauung* as means by which to interpret the signs in lived experience in the world. This model makes the demand on humans to choose their actions responsibly as cultural agents, such that their choices reflect the meanings of their Ultimate concern. Since these choices, through grace, reflect the hidden Mystery and Transcendent 'horizons of meaning' they can offer liberation from the illusionary concepts of ultimacy in contemporary Western European culture.

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[19] Haught, *What is God?* 56.
[20] Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 47.
[21] Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 47.
[22] Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 43.

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