

Art, Architecture & Art History
Greek Sculpture and the Four Elements

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Appendix B: The structure of a world
view (Kluback & Weinbaum 1957, 25-27)

J.L. Benson
University of Massachusetts Amherst

APPENDIX B.

THE STRUCTURE OF A WORLD VIEW (KLUBACK & WEINBAUM 1957, 25–27)

Normally when world views undertake to resolve the enigma of life, they conform to identical structures. A structure is invariably a compound of thoughts; in it and on the basis of a cosmic picture questions of the importance and significance of the universe are decided, and from it are derived life's ideals, its highest good, and supreme principles of conduct. This structure is determined by an inherent psychical order according to which the concept of reality in the course of life is the basis for the evaluation of situations and objects in delight and disgust, in pleasure and dislike, and in approval and disapproval. In turn, this appraisal of life is the basis of the determination of the will. In our lives we pass through these three phases of consciousness (from cosmic picture to valuation and on to the formation of the will), and in that process we behold the unique nature of psychological existence, namely that in such interaction the substratum remains operative: relationships (already contained in our attitude) made us form our judgment of objects, determine our pleasure, and direct us to aim at fulfillment, and these relationships determine the building up of different levels and hence constitute the whole edifice, indeed a structure, where eventually the permeating influence of the soul finds its expression. This complex appears in its simplest form in the lyric poem. It is a situation, a sequence of feelings and, often resulting from them, a desire, a striving or an action. Each relationship tends toward a form in which recurring attitudes are structurally combined. By the same token world views tend towards uniformities in which the structure of psychological life is expressed. The foundation is invariably a cosmic picture: it originates from our perceptive behavior which itself follows immutable laws of phases of cognition. First we had observed occurrences within us and objects outside of us. Next, however, we clarify such observations by emphasizing fundamental relations of reality with the help of the elementary operations of thinking. Once these observations have receded, we depict and classify them in our world of ideas which lifts them above fortuitousness. In these preliminary phases the spirit gained in stability and

freedom, but it completes its dominion over reality in the region of judgments and concepts, where finally the relatedness and true being of reality are adequately and uniformly comprehended. When a world view evolves fully, the process regularly begins in these phases of the cognition of reality. On the basis of a typified cognition there rests another typical behavior, and this, too, follows analogous phases according to immutable laws. Becoming conscious of our self, we enjoy the full measure of our existence; we ascribe to objects and persons around us a certain effectual value because our existence was enhanced and broadened by them. These values are then determined by us according to their prospective influence, useful or harmful; and while we measure them, we are seeking an absolute standard of measurement. Thus conditions, persons, and objects assume their importance in relation to the whole of reality, and this whole itself is stamped with meaningfulness. While we pass through all these psychological phases, a second layer, as it were, is built in the structure of the world view; the cosmic picture becomes the foundation for a full valuation of life and for a comprehension of the world. In the same way that psychological life followed certain laws, the valuation of life and the comprehension of the universe lead to an upper level of our consciousness, another layer, if we will: here we find the ideals, the highest good, and the supreme principles, in all of which the world view finally receives its practical energy—as it were, the sharpness with which it penetrates our life, the outer world and our very soul. At this stage the world view becomes creative, formative, indeed reforming. But even this highest layer of the world view is subject to change through various phases. From momentary intent, striving, and tendency there develop permanent aims which are directed toward the realization of a concept; here also is determined the relation between means and ends, the choice between goals, the selection of means of attainment, and the final systematization of all aims into a highest order of our practical behavior—a comprehensive plan of life, a highest good, the highest norms of action, an ideal of shaping one's personal life as well as that of society.

Such then is the structure of a world view. What was dark and confused in the enigma of life, appearing there as a bundle of tasks to be performed, will here be sublimated into a conscious and necessary relationship of problems and solutions; this progress goes through uniform phases, themselves circumscribed by inward laws: consequently every world view has a development of its own and thereby reaches true fulfillment. Thus, but only in time, does a world view receive and acquire permanence, firmness, and power. It is a product of History.