

**PROCEEDINGS for the School of Visual Arts 21st Annual National
Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: ART EDUCATION,
RELIGION AND THE SPIRITUAL**

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JAMES ELKINS KEYNOTE SPEECH OCTOBER 18, 2007

Maryhelen Hendricks: I would like to introduce Mr. Elkins, Professor of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His writing focuses on the history and theory of images and art, science, and nature. Some of his books are exclusively on fine arts, for instance, *What Painting Is*, *Why are our Pictures Puzzles*, *The Poetics of Perspective*, and of course most famous and infamously right now, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*. Other of his works include scientific and non-art images, writing systems in archaeology, for instance, *The Domain of Images*, *On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them*. And some are about natural history, for instance, *How to Use Your Eyes*. And then there is a small category which includes *Why Art Cannot be Taught*, a *Handbook for Art Students*, and *What Happened to Art Criticism*. I think those are just plain ornery. His current projects include a series called “The Stone Summer Theory Institute,” a book called *Success and Failure in 20th Century Painting*, and another, *Theories of Modernism and Post-Modernism in the Visual Art*. A very busy man, and his *Wikipedia* posting needs updating if any of you would like to take a hand at that after this. Jim and I have decided that it will be a fairly short keynote address, something in excess of thirty minutes, because want to preserve the last part for the questions and answer. I have a feeling that the Q and A will be at least as good as the talk itself. And then you will be able to go right for the parts of his book that irritate you or please you the most. Okay? So, with no more ado, will you give a hand please to Jim Elkins? Thank you.

Jim Elkins: Okay. Thank you very much. So we agreed this is not really going to be a keynote talk at all, because this is actually like an hour-plus talk. It is an ordinary kind of a keynote talk I suppose, but there is so much to discuss, and I have been hearing great things about the discussions that have been going on. I want to make sure that we leave lots and lots of time. So what I have done is, first of all, went up to my room, took out about half the slides, and second, I am just going to stop when we get on toward six o'clock no matter where we are. So there is not going to be any grand conclusion, which is probably a smart idea anyway. Okay, so a couple of points of reference for this talk: first of all, the book; and then talks that I was invited to after the book came out, especially from Christian institutions. These were a real eye opener for me. And all of the invitations I have gotten in the wake of the book except one are from Christian institutions. Some of the slides that I have, if I get to them, I put in intentionally in talks to those institutions to see if I could shock and dismay the people in those institutions. And I failed for an interesting reason which I am going to try to get too. And then there was a day-long panel discussion called “Re-enchantment” that at least a couple of you have been to. We are working on a book for this now. We had Boris Groys, the increasingly bizarre Terry [DuDuve] there talking about how to be post-Christian. I'm co-editing this book with David Morgan who was also at that event. This is going to be volume seven in this series called *The Arts Seminar* which, as I think some of you know, is a very inclusive kind of an art theory project in which we transcribe these conversations and then everyone gets to edit them to their heart's delight so that the transcript sounds nothing like what actually happened, and everybody sounds really intelligent and speaks at great length and says improbable things like, “I would like to mention the following seven points in my reply,” and things that normal human beings don't really say. But at any rate, then we send it out for comments to 40 or 50 people who weren't at the event. And that is what we're doing right now. Third point of reference is a wonderful essay by a wonderful artist named Peter Petrovski who works in Poznan, Poland, and is about to come out with an English language translation of his book on post-war Eastern European art. This is a wonderful little

essay which could be an amazing thing for you if you're not already aware of what has been going on in Poland, where artists who do sacrilegious works can actually be thrown in jail even today. And then some anecdotes from a trip I took to Malta earlier this year, in which I met, in the very, very tiny art community of Malta, which has only four hundred thousand people in it, artists who lead double lives. They have to work the Church, because there isn't anyone else there to give them jobs. So they have two modes. They have the Church mode, and then they have their real art mode. Basically this talk is in three parts. I am going to outline the problem, and then some examples of what I consider to be the gulfs of misunderstanding on the two sides, or three or four sides of this depending on how you count them, and then five models of the alienation of religion in contemporary art that come from the book. All the examples here follow on from the book. Only a few of them are actually from the book. And what I have done in taking out slides is just to try to get a little sampling of ones that I think would be good for our conversation. Okay, so first of all, just to outline the problem, and to put my cards on the table, I understand this has already caused trouble. There was a bit in the book—this is David Morgan's fault by the way, I would like to say, because it was David who read a version of this before it was published and said you can't write this book unless you at least try to come up with some kind of consensus definition of religion and spirituality for the purposes of the book only. And I guess the only thing I would say about this is that what really counts from my point of view is that what I would call spiritual, and I am not, I don't mind if terms get changed around, but in the book what I call, has as its essential characteristic, the word "partly." It's partly private and partly communicable. That seems to me to be a very important thing. Otherwise you're talking about mysticism or solipsism, and it becomes a different conversation. Given those kind of heuristic definitions, then my claim is basically that there is very little talk of religion in the art world, a little bit more talk of spirituality, but maybe not too much more. There are three forms of this absence. First of all, talk of religion is absent from magazines and journals, except when the art is critical of religion, as we all know. And is, all my art students in Chicago know, the quickest way to get to the headlines is to do something really irresponsible with some major religion. The trick is staying in the headlines if you do that. And then religion is absent from most of the central texts on modernism and post-modernism. Here of course, come immediately value questions, like who cares what the central texts are, and who reads them, and all the rest of that kind of thing, but at any rate it is. Some of you know I took as one of my two epigraphs this wonderful line from Tim Clark's book, *Farewell to an Idea*, "I will have nothing to do with a self-satisfied, leftist, claptrap of artists' substitute religion." That is great. We tried to invite him and a number of other people to our Re-enchantment Event and they wouldn't participate. And without naming names, I will just say that someone as well known as he is said it would just be too painful to sit at a table in which anyone was going to talk about religion. So they wouldn't come no matter who it was. Then as my single example here, I would mention this text book: *Art Since 1900*, which is now the major default textbook for graduate students in art, art theory, art criticism, art history, 20th century art. The four authors there, who I'm sure I don't need to go over this, they have equally little time for the idea of art as substitute religion or any of its compatible phrase. And then, religion is absent from pedagogy of studio art. This was one of the two main reasons that I wrote that book to begin with. The first reason being to try to breach these gulfs. But this was the second reason, because I noticed that students that I had, who were doing religious works or had something to say about religion, or maybe they were almost willing to say something about it, almost daring, they couldn't get any critiques. They were also not taught, art students in general are not taught, of course in any systematic way, about how religious ideas are expressed. And that is obviously a generalization. But that was the

other thing that got me started. Some examples of these gulfs of misunderstanding: the only secular institution that invited me after that book was out was MIT. Caroline Jones, who is there and is a Greenberg Scholar, has a big new book on Greenberg, put together this conference called *Deus Ex Historia*. Before the conference, I e-mailed her and said who is your religionist? Who is practicing any religion who is actually coming to this conference? She said Bruno Latour. Well, Bruno Latour is a French sociologist of science. I said he doesn't count. He didn't come anyway. As it turned out, she had a couple of artists from the group called The Land, who went on and on in a very sincere way about spirituality and how all art that has to do with landscape has to do with spirituality. Afterwards, some of the people in charge of organizing the conference said things like they wish that they then fall through a hole in the floor. I said well that's the way some people talk when they have convictions. That's the kind of dialogue that maybe the conference should have invited. But so, anticipating something like that, I brought in some slides to show people, basically, that there's more stuff out there than is dreamt of, *et cetera*, in their philosophies. These are really kind of random, but I just really wanted to show you what I was showing them, because I knew that these slides, these artists would not be taken seriously or even thought of as worthy of consideration in that particular context. Ann [UI] is just a very sincere artist who does paintings that she identifies as having religious content. This is a thing called a post-modern Pentecostal lectionary blog. And the person who does this has paintings. As you can see, some of them look like [UI], and some of them look like Ernst Haeckel. This is one that looks like Haeckel. And this says, "The empty banquet hall, or it's my party and I'll cry if I want to—God." The medium here is very interesting. It's watercolor and espresso. And then in parentheses (mostly espresso). Then there's the ocean of art, which is basically very well-meaning and abstract in its connection to spirituality and religion, and that is to say there would be a sense, here, like, for example, at the bottom paragraph, the artist statement, "My purpose as an artist is to express my personal vision of the world in a way that glorifies God," and so on, but the kind of art that is used to make those expressions would strike people who come out of the art world, quote unquote, as, well, in this case, what is it, late impressionism, belated impressionism, something like that. And then, of course, there's public church art, which gets widely ignored, almost systematically ignored by almost all art historians. That's just a random example of one. It's nice because it shows the church inside the church. So it doesn't fail to pass the all-important test of self-reflexivity and maybe even irony. Who knows? And then official church art, of course, that shows up in Sunday schools and all their equivalences. No one pays attention to that. Then, just to show that you shouldn't be afraid of things that seem to be somewhat silly, because we're supposed to be respecting other people's beliefs, so this is equine-assisted psychotherapy. It's actually not for the horse, right? It's for the person. [UI] paint on the horse. The horse doesn't look so happy about it, but you know, you never know. And then two more. I was wanting to show that this conference, the people at MIT, that there were many people who were close to the art world in various ways, incrementally close, but would still be rejected. This is an artist who I don't otherwise know, Steve Brudniak. He says, "The translucent black field acts as a catalyst for meditation as inspired by the paintings of Mark Rothko." But the copper-colored frame would qualify this as kitsch, you know —up the street at Columbia for example, it wouldn't count. And even when you get very close and you're dealing with kind of minimalist, in this case minimalist, post-minimalist things. Karen Arm, for example, does these things that could be thought of as neo-geometry, pattern paintings, all kinds of different things, but she aims at understanding systems, structures and the spirit, and that kind of declaration within. That would make sure she's not in the textbook. So this is the body of the talk. And I'm just going to go through this and see how far I get. Name a couple of things as I go along. Just to review, in the book I have this

idea that there are five principal kinds of relations between religion and contemporary art, avowedly religious art, art that can be assigned to new faiths (NRMs, new religious movements), art that's critical of religion, art that burns away liturgy-defined viable belief, and art that can be said to be unconsciously religious. Not to dwell on these, because I know that a number of you are already been tearing them apart, but I think the fourth and fifth are the most important. I give the fifth very short, the fourth very short shrift in the book and I want to try to repair that a little bit. Okay, first of all, avowedly religious art. There are four themes within this topic. First, that the art world venues for work that declares itself to be religious are rare and idiosyncratic. Second, native styles are very widely accepted. And my initiation to this, by the way, was years and years ago, 20 years ago, I was a juror for a show called "Religion and Art" that was in Chicago. For three days we on the jurors panel were rejecting, by a two-to-one vote, against me, every time a religion's artwork came up. It would be rejected. The other two jurors rejected. So, the way that worked was sometimes we would get a nice picture and then someone would read the artist statement and say oh no, that's a monk. And we'd go oh, I see. Right? And then they wouldn't be in the show. The only one that made it through into the show of that category was someone who identified himself as Native American and showed us kind of Mandela-like drawings, round drawings, that he refused to, or he declined to specify what they meant. That was okay, because that made them abstract. Then art commissioned by churches and temples is often watered-down modernism, and this is a point of disagreement between me and David Morgan, my co-editor, because he studies contemporary Protestant, mostly North American art of that sort. Religious art can often seem too sentimental and un-ironic for the art world. This is where I have slides that were attempts to shock the people in the Christian colleges. So the first of these themes that these venues are rare and idiosyncratic. There's a museum in St. Louis that I'm sure some of you have been too, and there's the Vatican, the appalling and amazing Vatican Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, which last time I checked is not even on their website. Maybe someone could correct me. I think they're kind of embarrassed by it. So if you go on the Vatican website you don't even see it. But most of these are temporary exhibitions. This is one called "Five Artists, Five Faiths." It was two years ago. Or maybe a year and a half ago in Chapel Hill. This one's unusual because it was systematic. You get five faiths and each one was represented by an artist willing to represent the entire faith. So you got a web page here of this artist, and then you see the red link on the right goes over to Greek Orthodox faith. You can go over and find, and read one page about Greek Orthodoxy and then when you're tired of that you can go on to the left panel and go on to something else. Here's an example. The Islam page, and the person, Ahmed Mustafa, when you go to his page you see things like this that he makes. These are cubes that have, this is cube, the Kaaba in Arabic, expresses his belief in the attitudes of [UI] perfection, the artist uses the cube to visualize something vast and un-measurable. My general misgiving of this kind of art is that it doesn't, it's [UI]. It doesn't actually do anything more than ornament religious practice from the point of view of the religion's practitioners now. I'm not talking about the general kind of artistic judgment. But it's, I guess I was saying unnecessary and extra-liturgical from the point of view of churches or mosques it's okay. But it doesn't make contact with what's central and expressions of the faith. Here's a more typical one that I contributed an essay for. It was a show that was in Hartford called "Faith." It has quite a miscellany of works in it, which I think is much more typical. This is Matt Collishaw who does videos. It's a still for one of his videos, which have this kind of over-the-top physicality, as in Mel Gibson. Also they have kind of kitsch colors, Salvador Dali, that kind of thing. And then there's Wally [Broad], who's definitely acceptable to the art world, you might say. This is a video that is presented as if it were made by a security agent who was supposed to be performing surveillance on a

certain part of a boardwalk, and instead did videos of the sunset. And then this woman, Arlene [Sachet], I don't know her so I don't know how to say her last name, does a wide range of kinds of sculptures but also sculptures that fit my fourth theme, in which details have been, in this case, not burned away, but simplified in order to make the worlds more accessible, or usable, or plausible, or believable, as repositories of religious belief. So, oh, okay, and then there's another one like this which has essays by Eleanor Hartney and some other people. She says in her essay, the contemporary world tends to see art and religions as enemies. So there are some places, some of these exhibitions will start out from that as a beginning point, and then try to do some bridge building. But, the general conclusion that I've drawn from, I would draw from these kinds of exhibitions is, when I say idiosyncratic, what I really mean to say is un-theorized. The boundaries of these kinds of enterprises are so unclear that sometimes there's not really, it seems unnecessary to actually call them faith, or something else like that. But they need to be, they could be re-conceptualized. The second theme here is about native styles. And by native styles here I mean all these things: regional, local, native, tribal, provincial, indigenous, are often acceptable in art world contexts. An example among thousands is this Peruvian artist named Felix Espinoza who does works in two different modes. He's got his School of Paris mode, which you see on the left, and then he's got a kind of regional, vernacular, contemporary Catholic icon painting style. And I don't know enough about Latin American contemporary vernacular painting to know if that's Peruvian or not. It looks Mexican. But I don't really know the difference. At any rate, it would be taken to be authentic. And in the rhetoric of the art world it would be not outsider art, of course, but it would have that, it would share in the authenticity that art of that type might be said to have. But there is a line that's drawn by the art world for a reason which I wouldn't ever try to defend between those kind of things and art that represents established religions. This I got in a Hare Krishna temple in India, and I got it, you can get it in English. You can get it in like 20 languages. And each one has a slightly different version of the painting. It's a somewhat horrifying painting from my point of view, but really kind of wonderful. Of course, there's something about the fact that it represents an established belief system that would put it on the, beyond the pale of the kind of criticism I was just suggesting. And this, in North America I think this would be the most prominent example. These paintings by Arnold Freiberg, which are in current editions of the Book of Mormon. And David Morgan tells me that he tried to get permission to reproduce these. They're in a gallery in Salt Lake City, the originals. And he couldn't get permission. So this may be an illegal reproduction as far as I know. But these kind of things, I think, would be, it would be extremely difficult to apply serious, straight forward, concerted, reflective language of art criticism to works like this when they would remind people, first of all, of Charleton Heston, and maybe second of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and from there the list of associations only gets worse. Third theme then, art commissioned by churches and temples is often weakened-down modernism. And Espinoza's School of Paris paintings would be an example of that. Here's another example. An artist named [UI] [Annan]. This is from his website. He does metaphysical religions paintings. And so some of them are narratives, The Give of Melchizedek at the top. And you can see that red sold sign, by the way. And this is—I always advise my students, if they're going to set up a website, never put "sold" on it, because every artist website has "sold," and if you go back a year later it will be the same painting. It will still say "sold." And it's just like, don't believe it. But the more common kind of paintings that he does are things that are almost abstract like that one at the bottom. And here are the details. So that kind of nearly abstract, but basically expressionistic painting is very common in my experience among Jewish painters who are, younger Jewish painters who are interested in keeping contact with the tradition, and yet carrying on in an acceptable, in a way that's

acceptable to the art world. The kind of abstraction that gets done often comes from Kandinsky and Mark and people like that. And of course, it fits with the prohibition against images. In other words, it has a kind of built-in acceptability no matter where the style strays, so long as it doesn't become completely abstract or overly-figural. And just one other example along these lines. Someone named Paul Mihill, whom I don't know, who has a website of petroglyphic paintings, which he spelled wrong, and these are things like this, so this would be derivative of [Van Goth] in general, and I [UI] down there with decorative elements from 1960s art, like yellow submarine or something like that. But the idea behind work like this would have to be something like that the event of the crucifixion was the agony of the crucifixion can be adequately expressed by bending the crosses and putting in psychedelic colors. And there's something very odd about that implicit claim in paintings like this. And the fourth theme that religious art can be too sentimental for the art world. This is John Bell who has a big website where he sells e-cards and things like that. There's a Biblical voice [UI] at the bottom of each one of these things. This one is from Psalm 32, "You are my hiding place. You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance." When I showed this slide at the Art Institute, my students were all laughing at it, saying oh well, you see, you know, child molestation goes with the Church, [UI]. It seemed to them like the only available reading of it. But when I showed this slide at places like Westmont College, there was, you know, nodding and interest and, you know, who knows what. But there was no laughter, which points to a division of interpretive communities, you might say. These cards that this guy Bell does are made with a version of software called Brice, where you build up landscapes out of triangles and then you put texture maps on them and then you flood the sea to the level that you want, and then you lower some clouds onto it. It's basically for people who don't think the real world is Technicolor enough. It's got to be very, very beautiful. And it is only a short step from there to this kind of thing: space art, fantasy art. This particular artist also used Brice. He says so on his website. In this case he says so. And he's influenced by Thomas Kincade, who I'll talk about in a bit. So new religious movements, I have a fair amount to say in the book about that. I just want to say two quick things about that here. First of all, that it's often syncretic in its symbolism. This is one of the Maltese artists that I met named Pierre Portelli. And this is, if you can see that, it's a mixture of mass cards and other things from the Church, and tarot cards. So it's a very, very straightforward application of a modernist grid to a kind of, to make a kind of hybrid concoction which, of course, he doesn't talk about it in that way, like I have succeeded in fusing the tradition of tarot with the Catholic Church. But this would be an example of his art that he does outside of his Church commissions. And then second, that art that's made in the name of new faith is often very inventive in its symbolism, and that is enough, strangely, unaccountably, to put it off, to make it suspect in the eyes of some serious art critics. So here's an example of that: Rose's spiritual art. There's Rose. She's an international spirit guide and psychic. And she has a great biography. She says at the bottom, "I have worked as a professional spirit guide, artist and psychic for the last 15 years, and have been featured on the Australian news show Today Tonight," and so on. So it goes on and on. This is the kind of painting that she does. So these are four moods. And also, you know, to do you good. In other words, this is active art. And they have a kind of eclectic symbolism, basically, that comes out of Indian art. Sometimes, like the one on the left, she does things that are very close to actual Hindu iconography in this case. Although I know very little about Hindu iconography, but know enough to know that the Ganesh on the left is wrong, because it has these little stickers on its crown which you can get in India. You get them in pharmacies in India, and they are little tiny things that you are supposed to put on your bindi dot on your forehead. And they come in hearts, moons and clovers and all these, and they are gaudy. But I know this is wrong

because I have a friend who was in India and liked those stickers so much—she was an artist—that she put them all over her forehead. And she was one time at a bus stop and this woman came up to her, and without speaking pushed them all into one dot, and then walked away. So the Ganesh might not be too accurate. So from, in the general Indian inspiration she does things like Insight on the right. But from here, then, you can get incrementally closer to art world practices. And in the full version of this talk, this is what I try to do. I start out from things that seem way out. I'm going to try to demonstrate continuities that bring them into the art world. So Shahzia Sikander is an example of someone who has gotten a lot of play in the art world. And partly that's because the things that she does are more historically specific. So, in this one little left she's got the Venus de Milo and then some Indian sculptures, and I have absolutely no idea where she got this thing. But if somebody knows who could tell me, I don't know what in the world that is. But anyway, most of the time she makes allusions that people can spot. And that one on the right is from a [Bronzino] painting plus an Indian sculpture which I can't place, which shows the limits of my own knowledge there. And more recently she's been getting a bit more abstract, which I think is treacherous, but which she takes to be universalizing. So, in the case of that, this is a series she calls Land Escapes. And they're from Persian miniature paintings, but with the details erased and color areas substituted. And most recently she's been doing animations. She's a 2006 MacArthur Fellow. And she was elected as a Young Global Leader in 2006 by the World Economic Forum. I don't know what that is yet. It sounds great, though. Okay third, art that criticizes religion. So, this is the place where I tried to put in things that would disturb the people in Christian colleges. They of course all knew about these, but I tried to define things that were worse than these. And I found a few. And the problem here is that when the work gets straightforward, then it can seem uninteresting to the art world, and also, potentially, I thought, offensive to people outside the art world. Here was my best example. It's a guy name Paul Booth. If you go to this guys's website, you want to make sure that you have broadband connection and good earphones. Because what happens is you wait like five minutes for the page to load, and then this heavy metal music comes slamming into your earphones. And the screen shakes, it's got this java script stuff going on, and skulls coming down, candles, and all kinds of things. If you can get things to stop shaking long enough you can click on them and you get led into his website. He does tattoos and stuff like that, and also heavy metal CD covers. So here's an example of his evil pumpkin shoulder tattoo. And it's also a blog, and down at the bottom someone has written "That's fucking nice! It fits the shoulder perfectly. I hope someday to have something this impressive." That's what the person wrote. But the ones that I was after for the talk were things like this. There's a page of photoshopped images of Jesus which are, as far as I can see, as far as I can judge, very sincere. His idea is something like Mel Gibson's, that is to say, that you've got to, suffering is not adequately represented if it's represented in a straightforward way. You really have to go over the top. And so this one, the blog, the entry says, beautiful, dark suffering. This is the one I thought would cause offense, in which Jesus is chewing off one of his fingers. And this one was even too much for his follower, who wrote down at the bottom, "Is Jesus eating his own finger?" And then put a little Devil emoticon next to it, which shows, it's okay. Right? Somebody pointed out to me, this is also a rapper's gesture, which I hadn't thought of in this context. But still, it doesn't mean that it's not serious. It is serious. So, when I showed these images in Westmont College, for example, and then again in Lipscome and got the same kind of response afterwards, in conversation afterwards, it turned out that they weren't really particularly upset because, the people I had talked to, it seemed to them that it's widely known that there are a lot of people who would sort of get Christianity wrong. What really upset them was something completely unexpected. It was Thomas Kincade. And the reason why Thomas Kincade upset them is

because there is a notion in parts of the Christian community at least, that “we” outside of the community perceive them as being all like Kincade, because Kincade is openly Christian and therefore seems like an ambassador of Christianity in some weird way. So, it’s pictures like this that were of concern, not because they’re kitsch so much, but because they would seem to represent a community. I don’t think people in the art world worry about that enough. And that’s an interesting sign. Well, for your conference next year you can talk about politics, you know. I’m wondering about how the nation’s divided. That’s a really interesting division there. Okay. Last, art that burns away liturgy to find viable belief. I think this is the most important one. I’m going to, been calling this last. I think I’m not going to make it to the 5th one. So, some themes here. First of all, that artists who work in this mode mistrust everything that you can think of as a sort of trapping of the Church: liturgy, credenda, ritual, holy text, church hierarchy, vestments, narratives, the whole lot can be mistrusted. And the artists are often after something. They describe themselves as being after something that’s somehow inside those forums, it’s somehow in there and can be taken out, can be gotten out. And I think—this was in the book—but I think one of the best books here, and one I recommend to artists, student artists who are working on this, is Rudolph [Otto’s] book on those subjects. There are these points of reference, the sublime and negative theology, western mysticism that can also articulate in some ways what the students are interested in. It’s basically a mistrust of the parents, the parents’ religion. You know, that’s where it starts. And then everything identifiable in the religion, and the mistrust spreads to a mistrust of language, which of course artists of some sorts are prone to anyway. That’s why negative theology can be a really interesting tool, because it can be a way of talking without actually proposing a positive concept. Then there is also this bibliography. So if artists are inclined to, if they are that kind of artist, then they have a lot to read, which can take them further into this material. This is an example from Malta. An artist named Mario [Bayla], which is a blob of tar with crucifixes in it. He had nothing to say about what this meant when I asked him about it, because it just means something like I see, you know, there’s rubies in the mud. There’s something there which can be salvaged, but they have to stay in the mud to have value. They can’t come out of it and parade around the Church. A very interesting articulate artist named Raphael Vella did this piece which he put up in The Hague. But it’s also been shown up in Malta. This is “Names of God,” stenciled, or cut out of metal plates, and then put out as if they’re on a laundry hangar. And there’s a very, very interesting little factoid here, which I hadn’t noticed, which I think should be broadcast far and wide, and that is, in the Maltese language, spoken by only these 400,000 people, and Malta is of course, a heavily Catholic country, the word for God is Allah. It’s on this one right here. In Westmont, I talked for some length about this artist, who presents himself as Christian in the way that Thomas Kincaid does. His website, his artist’s statements, his interviews. He wants people to know that his art stands for a kind of a Christian life. And at the same time his art is incrementally close to things that could work well in art world galleries, except maybe that sometimes he becomes—they’re very serious. They have kind of lugubrious titles sometimes, and in this case he’s got something from T.S. Elliot’s *The Four Quartets* next to it. But very close. They’re nearly abstract, they’re very large, they’re empty. They would fit in with the aesthetic of post-minimalism in general. And he has these cross-over commissions. He has a piece in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and a number of museums have his work. So, when I gave that talk in Westmont afterwards, people said oh, that’s interesting, because we had just had them here a few months ago and he’s coming back again because we were having a show. And, would I like to write the catalog for the little university gallery that [UI] show of this stuff. I said okay. I wrote the catalog entry, an 800 word essay and they rejected it. I wrote them and said how could you reject it? You asked for it. The woman said, well, I liked

it but the Dean says that we can't print it. Why? Because, as said, Fujimura is not a major artist in the art world, and she said the Dean said he is. So it was never published. There is also this question of what kind of sublime, as in these dark, large Fujimura paintings, what kinds of sublime are acceptable within, on the margins of, and outside the art world. I have a couple of examples of that kind of issue. This is DoDo Jin Ming, who's not a very well known artist. But he does silver gelatin prints. I actually don't know what—it's a negative, of course, but I don't know what's actually going on in the field in that case. But most of his work is like this: really exquisitely printed pictures of boiling ocean waves. My sense of this kind of work is that it's very close to something that could be bought by a major museum. It would go along with their [UI] or something like that. But that's a [UI]. But there's too much drama. So the acceptable flavors of the post-modern sublime are extremely quiet and empty. They have to be seen to be proceeding from a kind of heritage of abstraction that is not gestural abstraction. In the book I mentioned Tacita Dean's videos, "The Disappearance at Sea," which have this kind of quality, and so does her writing, and so do a number of other things she's done. Very empty, very low volume, emotional volume, low volume in terms of gestures. A lot of quiet. Richter is an interesting example along these lines too, where he's done a few things that have to do with religious themes like this one, Rhombus Series, inspired by St. Francis of Assisi. But works like this, I would think, would be completely unacceptable by an artist, even by Richter, except that he's done lots of other things. If these were the only things that he had done, I don't think that they would be shown. So they are supported. This would be like another strategy. You can take your minimalist, or minimizing artworks, and you can make them in such a way that they are supported by adjacent artworks. The cover of my book is an interesting example of this kind of reticence, because the publisher was concerned about what to put on the cover. He didn't want to put Rothko or something, because it would look like I was proselytizing for some kind of, you know, spirituality in high modernism or something. So they, the publisher thought of this idea of having Cristo, and he contacted Cristo and Jean Claude, and they had a copy of the book and they wrote back to him, so I wasn't actually part of this conversation. And they wrote back to him saying fine, you can have these images, you can have them royalty-free. So that implies to me a tacit acceptance of, that they would be willing to have at least that project associated with something that had the name religion in it. But of course that's very different from going for an interview and saying yes, there's deep religious meaning in our artworks. Okay, so I don't think I do this whole category much justice in what I wrote. I think there's a lot more out there, and I just want to mention a few things. This is a person who's currently a student of mine in The Art Institute. Very interesting person, Dayton Castleman. Very ambitious, and very sincere. Comes from a Christian community, a non-art Christian background, as he describes it. This is an example of his stuff, a piece called "Tilting at Giants," which was 12 aluminum farm windmills hung in a church, meant to conjure the Pentecost, the 12 candles, the Great Wind. But there was no wind in the church, so we didn't quite, can't get his, you know, spinning propellers and things like that. So it's an allusion, it's a Biblical allusion, but it also alludes to installation art. And this, to me, is one of the challenges about how to make these two discourses work together, and not just have someone who goes into the church say oh yeah, I see that's also something that has to do with installation art. But to try to get those two conversations to work at the same time. I think that kind of thing is very rare. Much more common is stuff like this. This was an exhibition in Glasgow of contemporary art that was done in churches. Sorry, but it's, go on to make the point about this here. This is another one that was in Denmark. And I think you could go on and on. I have other examples in there. And then very often then, these, the conversation splits into two parts. You have the part which addresses the religious, or spiritual, content of

it, and then the conversation stops and starts again with the question of the history of installation art. The settings in churches and synagogues and so on can seem like a bridge, but I don't think acts as a bridge. I think I'll just do one or two screens of this and then I'll stop. The last category, just to round it out. I put in the book this bit about Jeffrey Vallance. He has examined the eyes of the miraculous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which I happen to have just seen last week. Had never seen it before. I had no idea they had people movers underneath it to keep it going. It was great. So Vallance went to text that was written in the '20s in which a person said that when he looked into the eyes he found reflected in the eyes the original people, the priest and the other people who witnessed the miracle. And then Vallance went in with his microscope at 2,500 magnifications, supposedly, and found simian faces, 70 simian faces that are even smaller. And the reason that I put this in the book is because it seems 99 percent post-modern fun. But the one percent is interesting, because Vallance is actually, was really interested in this when he did it. There's a big text on his web page describing history of apes and monkeys in Christian symbolism. In other words, he's attracted to it in a way that he can't quite account for by having some fun at the expense of the Church and all the rest of that. I think I'll stop with this, because I can't do better than an image like this for that kind of thing. It would seem to be 100 percent irresponsible. It's an artist named Bruce Duncan, and it's called "Pieta with Hindenburg." It's the Michelangelo Virgin with the Hindenburg which, as my wife observed, looks like a flaming turd. It's quite the strange image. He's even done something strange with the Virgin's breasts and made them kind of swirly patterns, which a Freudian would probably want to talk about. And in the background it's somehow in a cave in some obscure way. And in the background is Saturn. So it's also kind of a new religious movement thing. But actually, despite the fact that I don't think you can stop from finding these things, this kind of thing funny and silly and amusing, but despite that, I think the note that I would want to end on is that it's always possible to find that one percent of interest in what's really going on, really, in the end, is that the artist is actually trying to find some accommodation to, some lingering interest, which might even grow to a larger interest, and might even become something which could become a viable religious or spiritual practice. So I tend to be very, very forgiving with things like this even when I have no idea what I am meant to be forgiving. Okay, so I'll stop there so we have time to talk.

[applause]

Okay. So, questions? Yes.

UF: (UI)

James Elkins: Well that was the beginning of the fifth point. That was the beginning of it. The whole part of that last, the fifth thing is that there are a lot of practices where the artist, if you say to the artist I see some serious religious content or spiritual content in what you're doing the artist will deny it in all sincerity, completely deny it, say no, I'm just not. You know, I'm interested in this, that and the other thing. And that, what I was calling unconscious religion, I think it's very common. I see it a lot in younger artists, where there are things that their practices imply, or forms that their practices use that come out of the history of religious art, but which they, the artists don't see as connected to that history. That's more or less where it was going. Yeah?

UF: I can understand that the art critics don't review religious art because artists who do art for churches don't do art on spec that they mostly show and then the pastor or somebody

[UI] church. It's commissioned usually by an architect or a committee. So it doesn't get reviewed. But what I don't understand is why the art that is called religious art, that is produced in the past 20 or 30 years, is so awful?

Jim Elkins: That's what the woman in front of you just said.

UF: I mean it's, I do liturgical art, and people love it. It doesn't look anything like that. I can't think of any words that surpass four letters to describe what I've been seeing. But is there a reason for it to be quite that bad? Is it almost a joke that that, then, becomes the symbol of what serious, quite good art, in thousands of years of tradition that does exist, that does move people, why is there that dichotomy?

Jim Elkins: Well, I mean, I would like to try to counterbalance some of these things that I was showing just in order, basically they're to argue over. But they're not serious, ambitious works of contemporary, religious art. But, to counterbalance that, maybe I should just introduce the kind of serious, long-range argument that would account, that would attempt to account for that, even for works of art which are at their most adequate possible modes, right, for their time and place. The long-term argument is the one that's made by people like Tim Clark and Tom Crow and people like that. And it is basically that art and politics, and at the exact same moment art and established religion, went their ways at the time of the end of the industrial revolution and the French revolution. And ever since then, it's been more and more difficult to find ways to plausibly put them together. So that the kinds of connections people make are often adventitious and ephemeral, and ultimately unconvincing. Or, they're very convincing but they don't make contact with contemporary art. That's why it's important, I think, to note that a lot of the commissioned artwork in churches in North America and South America too is, I call it watered down. That was a bit mean, but I mean, it's a form of expressionism and cubism which is palatable to the congregation. But that takes it out of that conversation about what is contemporary. And people like Clark and Crow are very uncompromising on this subject. Most people aren't that uncompromising. But even if you're not that strict, you could doubt the possibility of putting these things together in any predictable way. In other words, whatever might actually bridge this would be unpredictable.

UMI: I just got done teaching an aesthetics theory class, Hegel, where to fast forward or accelerate the schematization of the phantom architecture of history, is maintaining the *weltgeist*, or the world spirit, at first it's symbolic art, it's to the side. It's not realized. And that's where you get the distortion, where it's trying to refer to something else with seven arms on a Hindu statue. For the Greeks it came together. And then for the Romantic period, I guess that's forever for here on out, the *weltgeist*, it's just not going to happen where it's cohering, it's not going to be, world art is no longer going to be world historical. And it almost sounds like you're saying that. But when I was watching the slides, I was saying, do you think it's impossible that there could be great, spiritual religious art now, or is it simply a kind of empirical thing that's happened?

Jim Elkins: I mean, I'm not a Hegelian, so I don't think it's impossible, just very, very rare. And even in relation to someone like Tacita Dean, personally speaking I'm not interested in that particular kind of very quiescent kind of sublime. But then again, that is one of the few genuinely viable modes of the sublime. And if the sublime is one of your stable of viable concepts, then that is a way forward. So it's very narrow, but it is a way forward. It's legitimate in that sense, and it's real. Hegel is just too depressing. [UI]

UM2: So I had a question. You seem to accept the canon of art history. You, you know, you talk about Tim Clark, and you talk about Tom Crow. In a way, aren't you sort of creating art history or the art world as a type of religion? There is talk, Bruce here gave a talk about the idea of dogma within the art world. I don't know. Do you have a comment on that?

Jim Elkins: Yeah. So this is where it becomes a very concerted conversation, bordering on an argument. The main disagreement that I have with David Morgan is that he thinks that all different kinds of art co-exist more or less like apples and oranges. And at one point we were talking about this. He said well, there's fine art, there's religious art, there's clown painting, there's children's art. I said yeah, you're right, there are these things, and you could do that geographically too if you want to, and temporally. But the point where we disagree is one which is, it's hard for me to articulate without even making me doubt myself, my own credentials as someone other than an archconservative folkie. But the way I would articulate it is something like this, that the reason why that's not the case, why it's not just apples and oranges is that the critical discourse which informs these other practices comes out of fine art practice. So it's not so much that I would be interested in defending something or spreading the gospel of fine art--and it is definitely, you know, it is a belief system, and in that sense I would completely agree with what I gather that you were arguing. But what I would argue is that you can't understand even clown painting unless you have some familiarity with modernism and its discourse, because clown painting doesn't actually generate, hasn't yet generated an independent discourse, and certainly it hasn't had that discourse, clown painting discourse hasn't had any influence back on modernism and post-modernism – except Kenny Shaw and a few people like that, but you know. So it's a kind of a discourse argument. It's not really a valuation at all, except that I suppose, and I would be interested in discovering where sources of clarity, what sources of clarity are, and so the clearest are often in some ways the most objectionable. That would be the [UI] of the world, for example, that kind of thing. So I suppose, I mean, that is definitely, that's a proclivity of mine. But it's not a value judgment. And if I were somehow put in charge of, you know, the next big textbook other than *Art Since 1900*, well, it would have clown painting in it, but I wouldn't try to make it, I wouldn't have a glossary of clown painting, you know, along side the glossary of post-structuralism.

UM3: So, couldn't religion be a discourse to disrupt the modernist discourse of art history.

Jim Elkins: Yeah. Well, I mean, absolutely. And one of the reasons why I like this topic so much is that in whatever setting I go to talk about this, people are really immediately engaged with the actual issues, because these are life issues that have to do with your life, your behavior, you know, your beliefs, and all the rest of that. And that's just really refreshing. The only people for whom these are not that form of issue are the people who refuse to sit down at the table because the word religion is too painful, right? So it's actually, it would, so I'm actually trying to answer that and say that is, it definitely has a transformative power and I could see it in every conversation that I'm aware of that takes place around this kind of subject. I don't remember if I mentioned this in the book, but some of you will know Martin Marty's anthologies, which came from a big conference called *Fundamentalism Observed*, which is now like three volumes or something. I mean, it was, it is three volumes. Somewhere in the introduction to that he says, in passing, no fundamentalists attended our conferences, which is completely amazing to me. And then, all of a sudden, of

course, it makes perfect sense. You have to have some of those lapsed fundamentalists in order to start the conversation.

UM4: If you admit that more or less the requirements that you put forth, irony, ambiguity, uncertainty, and such, are really dogmatically held, you do admit that?

Jim Elkins: Yes.

UM4: Okay. And that's okay. In post-modernism we all recognize that we all have dogmatically-held beliefs. My question would be something like the following: Do you see any way in which those dogmatically-held beliefs could themselves be subject to some kind of ironic scrutiny, could themselves be held a little bit less certainly, could themselves be –

Jim Elkins: Well, give me an example of one in particular that –

UM4: Well, for instance, you know, irony is a good thing. I'm all in favor of irony. But it's not clear to me that irony is necessarily –

Jim Elkins: That wasn't ironic. That was sarcastic.
[laughter]

UM4: It's not clear to me that irony is necessarily a *sine qua non* of good art. That you can have good art that wasn't ironic, maybe still ambiguous or maybe still uncertain. It strikes me that, for instance, some of the art of my friends, who are actually in the room at the moment, so you know some of them, is actually, if you look at it, ironic and ambiguous and uncertain. But my question is still, not the question that this is the case –

[End Tape 1]

[Begin Tape 2]

Jim Elkins: - wonderful person, and people like him can often, the stuff can be really, really be engaging because it really comes, it really doesn't present itself first as an art world artifact in his mind. Right now he's working on a FEMA trailer, you know, the ones for Katrina, which he wants to, he wants to get a real one and then fill it with a zillion watts of fluorescent tubes so that it glows, so that it's a manger trailer. But he's not thinking of it in a campy way yet. He can do that kind of thing after the fact. But this is all a question from his point of view. But there's a whole different question about art world reception, and that's why I was saying the conversations divide. Because I didn't see that installation of his when it was in the church, the one I showed, but I could easily imagine that if you know there's an exhibit of that sort in a church, you're of two minds. Part of you is thinking of the history of installation, and the other is wondering what's going to be said about the belief.

UF: It doesn't have to be –

Jim Elkins: No, it doesn't have to be, but that's the problem. Yep.

UF: That's what I'm saying. That's the problem. [UI]

Jim Elkins: Yeah. No, it doesn't have to be, no.

UM4: So couldn't that make it in the art world? That installation?

Jim Elkins: Yeah, it remains to be seen. I kind of think— there are a few, I mean there are people like, there are works like that out there which are, you know, they're rare, but they're out there. But they were, then there's a problem of valuation, isn't there? Because then there would be communities interested in the success of works like that. And actually the reason I showed the [UI] and the [UI] is because, as you guys all know, these are both very committed people who have, in different ways, very complex ideas about what they're doing. And the challenge within the art world has, in part, been to try to keep people's minds on that, when it tends to keep dissolving away into these kind of polemics.

UM5: [UI] and I was just curious. This is a very short question. I'm not sure why I walked over here. I'm curious what your reaction would be if one of these other artists who were creating works that were somewhat laughable started creating works that were not, but continued doing this at the same time. How would that work? So your acceptance of Gerhard Richter's religious works. I'm just curious.

Jim Elkins: Yeah, I wouldn't, I have no idea. I'd have to wait and see, right? I mean, what if, if Richter decides he's going to paint nothing but candles and other, right? Then that would be problematic. They have to be somehow, they have to be intricately connected, don't they?

UF: So what do you think, then, about the Art and Times Department, the Art and Technology Times Department, I think it's called, at the Art Institute of Chicago?

Jim Elkins: The Time Arts Department.

UF: The Time Arts Department. I'm sorry. I lost part of it for a while. There are people who are really working these elements of, for example, artificial light. They're working with sound. And all of this work, in itself, is really, could be just like [Floutman's] work or Sonya's work or Steve [UI]'s work, and all of this could be very sublime and religious in itself.

Jim Elkins: Yeah.

UF: But are already actually there. And could be in churches, could be in public places.

Jim Elkins: And is.

UF: Yes, and is, of course. And churches are included. Or airports. Same thing. So we don't really have to, sort of. I mean art in itself is—

Jim Elkins: Yeah, no, I mean, this is, I mean, to me this is the single biggest unsolved problem in art world discourse. Because it's so common. There's a student right now in that department that you were talking about who is doing, who did things like, oh she had a, I think, an installation where you could go and bake bread, and then you would eat it. And the title of it, so it wasn't, it wasn't overtly religious until you saw the title, which was "The Body is the Bread."

UF: Mm hmm.

Jim Elkins: And then she did a piece where she did a big trough and people were washing their feet. And, you know, sort of. I suggested to her the problem with that is that it implied Jesus hadn't washed enough feet, because she had this big trough and [UI]. But then she's actually the odd man out at the moment, because these other people are doing things, like you say, just using light, right?

UF: Right.

Jim Elkins: Just trying to form, [UI], and just, you know, some big environment that's got to work in a certain way.

UF: Right, right.

Jim Elkins: So, yeah, it's everywhere. It's the discourse that's not adequate to it. It's the ways of talking about it.

UF: Well I think the discourse that you mentioned there, or you demonstrated is the discourse. It's a hostile discourse.

Jim Elkins: Yeah.

UF: It's between irony and hostile, hostility. Saying, really most of the artists really say the hell with religion – I'm sorry. That was really caustic, but the hell with religion. In other words, we can do much better. That's really what they're saying, all these artists. That's what I see.

Jim Elkins: Yeah. We have to do better. Because yeah, yeah. In the fourth of my themes, that religion is kind of ruined, yeah.

UF: Yeah, and it is, because it could also just discard the powers of the dichotomy of all the religions all over the world and really do not do any good. I mean religion itself, or light in itself, or –

Jim Elkins: Well you know, I mean, just to put this in really, really broad terms, I think that the problem would be, will be solved in some unimaginable future when someone could show slides like I showed and no one, including me, would laugh. Because we would be so attuned to the sincerity, to different kinds of sincerity and unusual uses and appropriations of art materials and methods and forms and histories, that we would be willing to be sympathetic from the very beginning.

UF: Yes, exactly.

Jim Elkins: And I don't see how that could happen. But, I mean yes, in the future. But I mean right now? I don't see how that can happen.
[laughter]

UM: This is one of those would you help me ask my question questions. Because it seems like it's boiling down to a relationship between writing about art and actual practice and

production. And so, in my mind two things are ping ponging. What Mark C. Taylor in his work is figuring, and Tim Hawkinson, overtly Christian member, Christians individual arts. Was it Whitney retrospective? So here are, you know, people who are clearly, in terms of writing about art and making art, on the inside cusp. And so are they being accepted, is Tim Hawkinson being accepted because he's quirky and kind of kooky and, you know, has got that stuff going on? And if so, what is that saying, then, about inner – yeah! Thank you! You read my mind.

Jim Elkins: We just finished a–

UM: –and Mark C. Taylor.

Jim Elkins: We just finished, finishing the editing of a really big series of events on art criticism. And, I mean the art world discourse from my point of view is so incredibly disorganized and non-conceptual and profligate and careless and, you know, unread, that you could make any diagnosis you want of that. And I'd like you to say he's the exception that proves the rule, or Mauritsa [Catalan] or someone like that, you know, he's our real religionist even though he's a mile away from it and that kind of thing. With Mark C. Taylor, I'd say something different. We were talking about this earlier, that the only objection that I have to that particular way of looking at things is that it's such a small percentage of art practice. It talks to a very small percentage of art practice. I mean –

Yeah. It's not the predominant way of thinking and talking. I mean you could say the same thing about Tacita Dean, of course, but with that kind of post-theological reflections are of intense interest to a very tiny group of people and an even smaller group of artists. So that's not to discount them except to say that that's not the explanatory model that can help with the whole overall problem. That's why I have those painting on horses example.

UF: Do you have any [UI]? This isn't so much a question as it is an argument.

Jim Elkins: Good.

UF: I actually see it changing. And I've been thinking this for the last nine months or so. Because when I saw the intake of students (I'm the head of the MFA in Glasgow), and when I saw the intake of students this past year I saw a lot. I mean I would say maybe ten percent, 15 percent, which is a lot, of students who are interested in religion. They're not claiming that they're religious; they're just talking about religion. So it's that kind of distancing. But still, when you interview them there's definitely that point of view, much to the consternation of my staff, who are all like ugh, can't have that. But when I was in Berlin this summer, I noticed the same thing in some of the really emerging galleries. And I was talking to students last year, I said we should put together a show called "The New Sincerity". And they said yeah, great. So I know what you're saying and you're right about it historically. But I don't know. I just sort of feel my toe–

Jim Elkins: But can you? Can you have a show called "The New Sincerity" without being insincere?

UF: I can. I can.
[laughter]

UF: Because, and you said you don't know how the discourse will happen. The discourse happens, would happen so easily because it's a new thing. You know, everybody would go oh yeah, we'll jump on that bandwagon. Right? And I think in some funny way it sort of piggybacks on Islamic sincerity for religion, which kind of makes it cool. That's just my –

UM: [UI]

Jim Elkins: Yeah.

UF: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, this is fun.

Jim Elkins: That's great. No, I won't add anything too that. Okay. Thanks. So should we stop?

Maryhelen Hendricks: I think that that's probably time. We're going to all retire to the other room for a reception.
[applause]

INTRODUCTION TO “REPORT FROM THE HINTERLANDS”

Theodore Prescott
Messiah College, PA

I want to welcome you to this panel, “Report from the Hinterlands: Teaching Modern and Contemporary Art within Christian Liberal Arts Schools.” I am Ted Prescott, a Distinguished Professor of Art at Messiah College in Grantham, PA. Late last spring a friend handed me the poster advertising this conference. I was struck by the goals of the conference to “ ... focus on the role of religion and spirituality in modern secular art education” and to seek to determine whether “ ... there is a place in the curriculum and course work for discourse about religion and the spiritual?” In the description it seems that religion and spirituality are conceived of as being *outside* of the formal education of artists, and a major issue appears to be how and under what terms religion or spirituality should “ ... enter the dialogue.”

I was struck by this because I have labored in two institutions where the place of religion and the arts suggested by the conference description are reversed. In these institutions religion acts as the gate keeper. Historically, a few faithful sentries at those religious gates have questioned—and perhaps some still question—whether modern and contemporary art belong inside. So I contacted the conference director Maryhelen Hendricks, who graciously agreed to review a proposal that looked at the conference topic from the other side of the contemporary divide between religion and art.

Since the complexity of this topic exceeds the scope of any paper, I asked the other presenters here to join me, and was delighted when they agreed to create a panel. Like me, they are all employed by Christian liberal arts colleges. This fact may lead you to expect that you will be treated to a well rehearsed choir, singing one song in four part harmony. I hope instead you will find four voices with four views that have enough dissonance to hold your interest. Because of this, we have decided to wait until the end of all four presentations before we open the floor to discussion, so that your questions may be addressed to one or several of us as you see fit.

Finally, a word about the panel’s title, *Report from the Hinterlands*; it is of course tongue in cheek, though in my case the “leave no doubt about our identity” name of my institution and its relatively rural setting provide ample reason for suspecting the description is literal. I chose the name because the conference description suggests, and the keynote speaker James Elkins proposes, that working out of religious conviction may disqualify one from being taken seriously in the world of contemporary art. If that is true, these panelists all come from the hinterlands, regardless of the quality of their work or their actual place of origin.

To begin my own presentation, I’ll briefly sketch our program, and describe two criticisms I have of contemporary art that are nourished by Christian conviction, and which shape my teaching. For the purposes of this paper, the characteristics of contemporary art I describe are drawn from Elkins’s book *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*. While I am critical of what I think are Elkins’s beliefs, we “religious” owe him a real debt of gratitude for initiating this discussion. I appreciate his goal of drawing various “sides” into discussion, and the spirit in which he conducts his work.

A CRITICAL SPIRIT?: TEACHING MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART OUT OF RELIGIOUS CONVICTION

Messiah College was founded in 1909 by the Brethren in Christ Church, which is a Protestant denomination in the Anabaptist tradition. The college has roughly 2900 students. The Department of Visual Arts has about 115 students in three majors: art education, art history, and studio art. We have 7 full time and 3 part time art faculty members.

If I had to choose one descriptor for our department, I'd say "modern," though I don't mean that in a strict sense. I am thinking of the work of both our faculty and students. Faculty stay abreast of current developments, and often communicate those to students. One way of describing our pedagogy is in terms of what we show our students. In my sculpture courses, I would estimate the ratio of modern and contemporary to pre modern work I use to illustrate lectures to be roughly two to one. When I require students to do research on artists who are related to what they are studying, I often stipulate that their subject must be living. Then too, our gallery exhibits contemporary work almost exclusively, as we do not have the budget or the security to mount many exhibits with historic material. I mention this because the critical reflections that follow are couched within a respect for and qualified promotion of modern and contemporary idioms, along with some of their attendant values.

When I show examples to my students, I privilege contemporary work. But that does not mean that I want them to devote all of their energies to trying to *be* contemporary. In some circles to be insufficiently contemporary threatens one with oblivion, while embodying the spirit of the age can bring the laurels of fame. It's interesting to me that many of my students are anxious to express their moment, even as they are so clearly of it.

I am reminded of novelist Flannery O'Connor's ruminations in her essay *Total Effect and the Eighth Grade*, in which she discusses the shortcomings of teaching contemporary literature to eighth graders. She was responding to teachers who believe teaching contemporary fiction helps students "relate". O'Connor argues that they are surrounded by the realities of their own time, and have no perspective from which to relate to them.¹ Is it that we can only *be* contemporary after we can understand an alternative to our time?

But my concern is really different. I mix and match examples for students because I believe in a liquid stream of history that flows in both directions. The past and the present are in dialogue, and to participate in that is to be educated. Students should explore the great treasure houses of historic imagery to enlarge their knowledge and their imaginative capacities. My guess is that most faculty in secular institutions encourage this. So one question that arises is: how does a deep attraction to historic forms or ideas—say religious ones—by a serious art student become filtered or flattened by dominant discourses?

To talk about history raises complicated and contested issues. I am not proposing a view of history, but would like to challenge one idea about it. For me, a result of embracing the Christian faith as a young adult, fresh out of graduate school, is that it changed my perception of the past. Having drunk deeply at the well of modernist ideas about the inevitable advance of history, I was convinced the past had nothing to offer me.

Progress is one of the core ideas within modernity. The only systematic study of the idea in art I know of is Suzi Gablik's 1977 book, *Progress in Art*.² Gablik's work was a careful attempt

to explain succession and change—particularly the transition from representation to abstraction. She drew heavily on Piaget’s research about cognitive development to explain that. Gablik believed in a type of artistic progress, but it was not teleological in nature, and she was careful to allow for a development that is open, and subject to unpredictable changes. To the degree that she saw the new as better than the old, it is because for her it demonstrated greater cognitive complexity in terms of systems. But given her subsequent assessment of modernism in *Has Modernism Failed?*, I don’t believe she sees progress as inevitable.³

The views of history I’m opposing were inherited from the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on rationality, science, and a belief in the potential for human perfectibility. These share a conviction that progress means *replacement and improvement*. These ideas have been amply criticized, yet their legacy has a radioactive half life. I believe it is this Enlightenment view of progress that—stripped of grand convictions—makes “the contemporary” such a nervous, bitchy muse.

I sometimes find the Enlightenment idea of progress at work in James Elkins’s *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*. You can hear it in the chapter on “The End of Religious Art” when he says, “Because I work in the art world I feel uncomfortable when I am asked to comment on art in churches that has just a pinch of modernism in it, *especially if the artist was emulating art that was already conservative in 1950*.”⁴ I generally find myself agreeing with Elkins’s judgments about modern religious art, but not because a work isn’t sufficiently “advanced”. Rather, it is the mediocrity that is troubling. Why churches accept mediocrity so easily is an interesting question, but it’s not the one Elkins is posing. I think his questions about the place of religion in art are muddled by his idea of progress. At the end of the same chapter Elkins quotes Hegel: “it is no help to adopt again ... past world views.”⁵

Progress is real—this paper is possible because of sulphur drugs, not leeches, and who still argues for the divine right of kings? But the unfolding of time does not render all things obsolete. In what sense does Jeff Koons’s work invalidate or replace a Byzantine icon? Are the only artistic subjects and ways of thinking the ones that are present tense, as Courbet once argued? Yet even Courbet painted a patently religious subject—*The Burial at Ornans*. Elkins takes pains to make it clear at several points in his book how strange it is that there is so much religion—including religious art—right here in our time. But one would never know about that by looking at contemporary fine art. So in what sense is fine art contemporary?

This is why it is a bit hard for me to take the claims of primacy—as opposed to interest—about contemporary art very seriously. Contemporary art is quite interesting for those of us who take pleasure in engaging it. But it borrows prestige and authority from the past, by virtue of being in an assumed shared category—“art”. Elkins perpetuates this when he argues that there is only one category of art, and claims that this art—as opposed to different types of art, such as religious art, graphic design and commercial art—is characterized by priority, influence, invention, history, quality, and significance.⁶ These claims deserve some scrutiny. For instance, to what degree can one claim priority or influence for contemporary fine art in light of the vast influence the technology and imagery of media has had on it? Does not influence flow in two directions? I believe it is particularly hard to argue that the category “art” today has priority because it *represents* our culture and time.

The idea of art's representative role is worth pondering. It may originate in art history, where judgments are made that an art work is the best example of a class of objects, or is representative of the typical imagery of a movement. But we also often hear that art *represents* a culture, or a people. That may have been true for fifteenth century Florentine art, but in what sense does that apply today?

The very story of modernity with its emphasis on uniqueness and invention mitigates the idea that our arts are the expression of a common culture. Even as post modernity has hacked away at beliefs about individuality and originality, it has also fractured the idea of a commonality by emphasizing tribal discourses. So in what sense does Janine Antoni or Matthew Barney represent *us*? The critic Holland Cotter recently mused on this problem in an article on the idea of national identity and the art found in the various Smithsonian museums. Writing about what he sees as the Hirshorn's lack of a distinctive contemporary profile he said, "... maybe it is simply that a 'national museum' identity short-circuits a 'contemporary art museum' identity. You can't be Smithsonian and subversive. You can't be avant-garde and on the Mall."⁷ So, is it not more accurate to say that for people who like and follow contemporary art, Antoni and Barney represent relevance and importance, rather than representing the totality of our culture?

I want to make it very clear that I am not attacking all contemporary art, or the reality of progress. I am attacking the idea that through some ineluctable process of history we have come to a place where images become art by the a priori exclusion of certain beliefs or practices, a historicist and artistically pernicious claim.

I turn now to the second problem found in modern and contemporary art. When you read Elkins's book on "the strange place of religion" what you encounter is *an account of the art world in historical-critical terms*. What else is there, you might ask? I once heard Philip Pearlstein speak with some passion about how artists and art works are the "paint tubes", the raw materials with which critics and historians fashion their creations. He clearly thought there was an alternative—the experience of the work of art itself. This was also the conclusion of the literary critic George Steiner in his 1989 book *Real Presences*.⁸

Steiner had become weary of the enervating distraction of so much secondary discourse about art. He had come to view critical and interpretive works as a "parasitic" growth that clouded and deformed our experiences. He even proposed imagining a society where all talk about the arts was prohibited. Speaking of the visual arts he said "Grammatical—logical discourse is radically at odds with the vocabulary and syntax of *matter* ..."⁹

There is much more to Steiner, but what I want to direct your attention to is the dichotomy between "grammatical-logical discourse" and the "syntax of matter". It is a fundamental human condition, present whenever thought mediates embodied, sensory experience. It seems there is always tension between these two modes of being. We may long for holism, but often thought and sense experience are divided, and vie for our attention.

We often look at the history of Western art through the relations between texts and images. Perhaps the relations were sometimes harmonious, as in some Christian art where image and text had mutuality because they shared similar *ends*. But there is a considerable body of texts that are devoted to explicating the principles of art, and which seek to direct artistic outcomes. Here, the corpus of the art work is shaped by the stipulations of the text, and its

success is gauged by textual standards. Sometimes these are written by artists whose own work seems oddly ill-served by their rhetoric. At least that's the way I experience a Vasari or a Hogarth.

This text-image dichotomy is simplistic, but useful to see how theory affects artistic practice and assessments of art's worth. Theorizing took a new turn in the modern period, and the tensions between the imperatives of theory and the making of art objects intensified. The Ur-Conceptualist, Duchamp, for example, explained his move away from painting as driven by the desires of leaving both "retinal" painting and the artist's "paw", or hand. Duchamp said he admired Seurat, "... who made his big paintings like a carpenter, like an artisan. He didn't let his hand interfere with his mind."¹⁰ For Duchamp, and for the artists who follow him, the hand is a mechanical extension of the mind. Thus the *idea* is the engine of art, which breathes life into dumb matter. In a way it is a secularized version of the old spirit/matter dichotomy that haunts the Christian faith. In this secularized hierarchy, language mediates ideas, which dictate form to matter.

Although I have no way to substantiate the intuition, I suspect that artist's interests in critical theory and the development of conceptual art in the 1960s and after is related to the vast post war expansion of art programs within liberal arts colleges and universities. In those institutions the machinery of promotion and tenure gets oiled by adept wordsmiths, who master the argot and parse the documents of their guild. If this is true, academia has become a quasi patron of the arts, promoting work that speaks its language. It is certainly true that academia has created a profession of interpretation, which approaches art through texts.

One consequence of this is that the circumstances around art's production, such as the interests of artists or uses of art that are not easily verbalized, do not matter much in contemporary accounts of art. There are examples of this in *The Strange Place of Religion*. At one point Elkins describes the popularity of Carl Jung's ideas among artists, and his near oblivion in academia, where scholars prefer ... "Lacan and other post Freudians".¹¹ It is particularly poignant to read Elkins on the Bill Viola piece that included the ambient sounds from inside the Duomo in Florence. Elkins acknowledges the religious nature of Viola but wonders "... what, exactly, is religious about the ambient noise of cathedrals? It is a question no one quite knows how to answer."¹² Does art that fails to support "answers" help explain religion's near invisibility in contemporary art? What is poignant is that Elkins's desire to find ways to talk about religion in art seems frustrated by his theoretical commitments. It is interesting that he closes his discussions by commending the silent, wordless "via negativa", or apophatic tradition in theology, but is unwilling to accept anything like it for art.¹³

The question I want to ask is what happens to those aspects of art—which are considerable—that neither require nor stimulate verbalization? If matter does not dumbly conform to grammatical-logical categories of thought, is it then meaningless? I would argue that it requires an alternate view of knowledge, one exemplified by Michael Polanyi, a physical chemist who wrote extensively on the subject of non verbal knowledge, which he called tacit knowledge. Polanyi used the surgeon as an example of someone who leaves texts to train "... their eyes, their ears, and their sense of touch ... since ... textbooks are so much empty talk in the absence of personal, tacit, knowledge."¹⁴ To me this way of thinking offers a needed corrective to an excessive emphasis on the verbal apprehension of art.

Christianity is certainly a word heavy religion, starting with the creation narratives, where

God speaks, and light appears. But in those narratives there is a repeated emphasis on the *goodness* of the made thing. Each creation act is followed by God *seeing* goodness. In the Christian tradition the goodness of matter and the created order finds its apogee in the affirmation of the two natures of Christ—fully human, fully divine. Simply put, divine disclosure is embodied as much as it is spoken.

The hand is clearly important for someone like Polanyi, but it is clearly undervalued in discussions of contemporary art. We get a sense of this occasionally in *The Strange Place of Religion*, as in Elkins's example of Asian students at the Art Institute who confront the fact that most Western students don't really care about their superior drawing skills.¹⁵ Elkins has written more directly about skill in *Master Narratives and Their Discontents*. He thinks that apart from "popularity and market values" skill would be hard to defend.¹⁶ He says, "It is a sign of just how deeply academia and the art world are divided from the rest of the public that it has been necessary for me to cite newspaper articles as the principal theoretical sources for the defense of skill."¹⁷ But I don't think this is quite right. I believe the *skill* of critical facility is highly valued by academics. They just wouldn't call it a skill.

So in summary, my understanding of the Christian faith leads me to question Elkins's description of contemporaneity and the approach to the meaning of art objects. But my basic problem is not even the view of progress, or the totalizing effects of critical discourse. It is rather the series of negations that I find being contemporary involves by Elkins's accounting. To be contemporary is to be critical, and to transgress. We can't be too serious, too happy, too skillful, or too direct if we want to be contemporary. We can't really *love* anything, unless we ironize our affections to keep us safe from conviction or commitment. The loss of so much humanness or human experience is a high price to pay for the chance to be considered contemporary. To me it is a striking inversion of the religious renunciation of the world for the sake of heaven. Whether or not Elkins's account is accurate is an open question. I can certainly think of a few contemporary artists who appear to love things, or are skillful. Even so, he *has* described attitudes within contemporary art that marginalize religious conviction. The question is, should we assume these attitudes are canonical?

I believe that making things well will stand my students in good stead, and that love of beautiful or moving things is not necessarily sentimental. And, while my colleagues and I know how important it is for students to speak intelligently about art, we are either naïve enough or religious enough to believe that made things have an intelligibility before and beyond words. We have been fortunate to have a few very good students who have gone on to graduate school, exhibit regularly, get commissions, and in general are able to make their way in the broader art world. And a few are quite conversant with the ideas that animate contemporary art. But I don't see too many that are attracted to the kind of work that creates problems for religion in contemporary art. That may be because it has never been our mission to produce religious artists. It is one option available to our students, but most are simply not interested in the kind of work that is identified as religious today. Our goal is for our students to become artists who know both the matter and thinking in their chosen areas, and who have some knowledge of current "master narratives", but are not prostrate before them.

NOTES

1. Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983,

- page 138.
2. Suzi Gablik, *Progress in Art*, New York: Rizzoli, 1976.
 3. Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984.
 4. James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, New York: Routledge, 2004, page 44. (italics added).
 5. Ibid, page 48.
 6. Ibid, page 3.
 7. Holland Cotter, "This Art is Your Art", *New York Times*, Sunday, July 1, 2007, Section 2, page 22.
 8. George Steiner, *Real Presences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
 9. Ibid, page 16.
 10. Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors*, New York: Viking, 1968, page 24.
 11. Op cit, page 52.
 12. Ibid, page 93.
 13. Ibid, page 107.
 14. Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, page 31.
 15. Elkins, op cit, page 30.
 16. James Elkins, *Master Narratives and Their Discontents*, New York: Routledge, 2005, page 125.

TEACHING SPIRITUALITY THROUGH ART

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Spirituality for our soul is as air and food for our body. Intangibles can be essential. In our modern society where materialism is rampant and values have deteriorated or are non-existent, art teachers are called to foster in our students transcendence in mind and behavior. How can that be done? On the one hand, we can emphasize the de-materialization of art making its elements—line, form, space, color—most important in creation. The elevation of the spirit, for example, can be taught through ascending lines or the use of different tones of blue. We may also suggest themes in our drawing and painting classes which encompass solidarity, equality and respect for each other—no matter the gender, race or national origin—and for this world we live in, sickened by pollution, warming-up and weakened by disappearing species.

I believe art should be sublime but, at the same time, it should awaken consciences and strive so our life here and now is enhanced by spirituality expressed through responsibility. Only then we shall become better human beings. We shall be lifted spiritually, take a glimpse at creation, become aware of the power of God, the endless pursuit of true happiness. Odilon Redon, in his book *To Myself*, which is his journal from 1867 to 1915, writes on May 7, 1875, “What a pleasure to read in a quiet room with the window open onto the forest. I came back to old Dante, he will no longer leave me. We are moving towards a serious friendship”. Here we see Redon’s deep involvement with nature and with the spirit of one of the greatest writers of all ages, Dante. Among the mystical artists, Redon shines with a special light. His work transcends the corporeal, and even though we apprehend it through our senses it propels us well beyond material existence into the world of the spirit. Writing on Millet “...the poet was never absorbed by the painter, he had his vision. He looked for one found in the ‘plain-air’, an absolutely new world. He gave moral life to clouds...”

Redon quotes Schumann—“Be a noble artist, and all the rest will be given to you.” He translates his attitude towards the spiritual in these words: “...the love of beauty and the search for beautiful patterns must always maintain our faith.” Presenting the work and thoughts of artists such as Odilon Redon will no doubt strengthen the student’s sense of the spiritual.

Sir Herbert Read, in his book *A Letter To a Young Painter* tells us about the hazards of public education. He says:

... there is no doubt that most systems of education might have been deliberately designed to stultify the aesthetic sensibility of a child...My own view...is that the psychic imbalance of prevailing systems of education is directly responsible for the moral delinquency of our populations and their inevitable drifts to annihilating wars... (p. 196)

It is essential in the teaching of art to discuss the act of creation. As we artists know this is something which goes beyond explanation. It makes us reach towards diversity, taking us into another sphere of existence. It goes beyond the self. We go around and around, delving

into solutions until we finally reach the light we search so anxiously. Creation gives us peace after much struggle and unrest. We strive towards a perfection which is unattainable. No matter how much of the yearning subsides in us, we still rest in the certitude that what we have given form to has our own soul in its midst—the best of us, the whole of us. We must instill in our students the importance of creation, a *sine qua non*, without which there is no true art. Composition, joining together all act elements, can transform a realistic painting into an abstraction in essence. All good art must enhance the sublime, the supra-natural, the spiritual.

Projects involving the crucial issues in our 21st Century should be presented as challenges to the students.

- How can we control pollution?
- How can we help solve earth warming?
- Famine?
- How can peace prevail over war?
- How can we stop abuse in the family, towards minorities, towards the deprived?
- How can we stop drugs?
- How can we become better human beings?
- Students must sense, think, rethink, express their visions

Herbert Read in “Letter to a Young Artist” quotes Conrad Fiedler “On Judging Works of Art”.

... although the artist’s creation has been made possible only on the basis of an extraordinarily intense feeling, nevertheless this artistic creation has been made possible by his still more extraordinary power of mind, which even in moments of the most intense sensory experience preserves unimpaired the calmness of objective interest and the energy of formative creations.

These are some suggestions given to me by my “Art Appreciation and Drawing” students.

Wendolin Abraham writes: “Nature is the source of inspiration for many. We are constantly searching to discover in it elements we could use in our art work, involving ourselves in the conservation of nature. Such great responsibility makes us become one with nature because it is part of us and we part of it. This communion contributes even more towards the search for our identity and our purpose here in earth.”

César, a “Drawing I” student wrote: “Art goes hand in hand with spirituality, since you can express much through a work of art thus allowing you to reach tranquility.”

Ilean, another “Drawing I” student expressed herself saying: “Each person uses her own perspective to give significance to that which is incomprehensible. The same happens with art. In art you must have vision and imagination to express what we feel and think...”

Francheska: “Being in contact with nature you may feel and appreciate spirituality.”

Anonymous: “Using nature for artistic creations.”

Yaritza and Angelic: “Transmitting a positive image through a drawing or painting. You may also transmit a thought, a feeling, such as love, sadness, joy.”

Marangely: “...in art...we can't help but reflect and meditate on its significance.”

Melissa: “Art is the best way to express God's love towards us, human beings. Through art we can show the beauty of life, emphasizing nature which we destroy. We can realize what we have and what we waste. Art helps us forget materialism, war, hate, violence and reminds us of all the beautiful things we have.”

TEACHING IN TONGUES: CHRISTIANS, ART PEDAGOGY, AND POSTMODERNITY

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In this paper I attempt to sketch out three main areas that I see affecting the teaching of art in a religiously-affiliated institution, and by extension, any school. For context, I teach studio art at Gordon College—a four-year, Christian liberal arts school that is situated on about 800 acres of semi-rural New England land on the north shore of Boston. It draws approximately 1600 students—primarily from suburban, middle-class evangelical Christian communities scattered across the U.S. We have about forty international students from twenty-five different countries, including African, Asian, Filipino, and various European countries—and a small number of urban African American and Latino students. All our students and faculty sign a statement of faith that is quite specific in terms of both belief and conduct reflecting our self understanding as Evangelical Christians. That context being told, the three areas of interest I want to discuss in this paper are tradition, community, and what I'll call intellectual hospitality (for lack of a better way of framing it). I hope that relevance to our conference topic will come clear fairly quickly.

TRADITION

In his essay, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*¹ the 20th century German philosopher, Hans Georg Gadamer states that tradition is not so much a matter of conservation as transmission, and that every act of transmission necessarily involves a corresponding act of *translation*. The conservative mood is therefore not necessarily the best mode for continuance of any given tradition, and in fact may undercut or truncate that tradition by its very refusal to “translate” it into meaningful terms for a current generation of participants. In other words, hanging on too tightly to a particular iteration of a tradition will cause it to arrive still-born in the next generation. Gadamer doesn't stop there, but goes on to indicate that whether or not we realize or acknowledge our debt to a particular tradition does nothing to affect the reality of our participation in it or dependence upon it. So the opposite is true as well—*i.e.*, failure to be aware of or acknowledge our debt to tradition results in the illusion of autonomy and imagined originality. One is hard pressed to decide which is worse—being frozen in our conservatism or so addicted to novelty that we are inured to how derivative our work really is, imagining we've “discovered America” long after the Vikings, Amerigo Vespucci, or Christopher Columbus planted their flags. We have a debt to tradition that must be paid, and whether we acknowledge and own up to it matters.

Therefore I want to offer a frank admission of my own debt to, and willing participation in a particular tradition: Christian faith and its tradition of liberal learning, which stretches back more than a millennium and a half in Europe. Arguably it's the basis of western civilization and nowadays supplies the religious worldview of much of the global south. It's the tradition that gave us Harvard, Yale, Princeton, University Penn, and Dartmouth—all formerly Christian colleges. But how did conservatism and Christianity come to be so closely associated in our day and what fostered the gradual secularization of academia? Well, that's a whole other topic, but worth at least pondering momentarily in light of Gadamer's notion that

tradition is about transmitting and translating culture from one generation to the next, not about creating a safe museum for its preservation.

To be traditional therefore is not necessarily to be conservative—and Christianity is nothing if not traditional, but needn't be retrograde culturally speaking. To have a sacred text or a set of doctrines requires tradition—but the issue before us this morning is whether or not religious ideas and traditions are relevant to the making of art and the educating of artists. What are the implications of James Elkins' observation that traditional religious ideas and language have little if any purchase in contemporary art?

I mention Gadamer's concept of tradition here in order to signal to you that I own up to a particular interpretive strategy for expressing the issues and ideas that pertain to my discipline: namely, teaching contemporary studio art and art theory to young Christian men and women in my local context. The mission statement of Gordon College says we equip students to enter the public square not only with knowledge in their specialization, but with broad literacy. We are also mandated to inculcate Christian wisdom—a complex mix of ethical, moral, philosophic, and theological insights that conditions all receptivity to information or knowledge. In fact, our conviction is that without wisdom, knowledge is not only useless, but potentially dangerous. Think nuclear physics leading to atom bombs, or genome mapping resulting in the practice of eugenics. What is it that helps us decide what's allowable or right given our growing technical knowledge? Presumably teaching art is no different from teaching medicine or atomic physics in this regard and also requires wisdom, ethics, and philosophical rigor. In a word, teaching art in a Christian college requires a robust grasp of the tradition of liberal learning, but an equal commitment to and knowledge of religion and ethics.

And this two thousand year tradition has always insisted that religious and ethical education be yoked to liberal learning and vice versa. The fact that demagogues espousing Christian faith have sometimes dominated the airwaves in recent decades does nothing to actually undermine the real Christian liberal arts tradition. These self-styled spokesmen for evangelical Christians have certainly generated negative publicity and some have committed egregious errors in public policy—all of which has been laid at the feet of the church. I'd argue that the stereotyping that has resulted from media attention to religious demagogues seriously undermines genuine dialogue—and the topic of this conference goes to the heart of that issue.

Like Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, prejudice is the last refuge of a tired mind. So the Christian stereotypes in the news, in films and on TV, like all other forms of profiling, are convenient for those suffering intellectual fatigue. I hope our panel today helps dispel some of this and energizes a few tired minds.

But back to the issue of tradition.

My title, *Teaching in Tongues: Christians, Art Pedagogy, and Postmodernity*, makes a somewhat joking reference to the practice in our tradition that sometimes reinforces the stereotype of the backwoods Christian. It's known as "speaking in tongues" or glossolalia—originally the miraculous ability to proclaim the Christian gospel in a foreign language unknown to the one speaking it. It is worth telling the story behind this because it pertains to my main point about community and artistic communication in this paper. The story of speaking in tongues derives from the *New Testament Book of Acts* which tells about the

followers of Jesus hiding out in Jerusalem, fearing for their own lives after their teacher's ignominious public execution. These same followers, we are told, became suddenly bold and fearless when they encountered Jesus after his resurrection from the dead. The story tells of him appearing to many over a period of forty days wherein he broke bread, eat with them, showed them his wounds, and discoursed on the future, promising them the coming of the Holy Spirit who would enable them to remember everything he had taught and guide them into all truth. We have Caravaggio and company to thank for giving us vivid images of this story.

[SLIDES: Caravaggio's *Incredulity of Thomas*, *Supper at Emmaus*, etc]

About a month later as the story goes, Christ ascended into heaven [SLIDE: Rembrandt *Ascension*], and while they were gathered in a room together, one hundred and twenty of Christ's followers received the promised gift of the Spirit and began proclaiming Jesus' message in foreign "tongues". Whereupon, thousands of pilgrims to Jerusalem, who had traveled from dozens of disparate lands to celebrate the Passover feast and perform their duties in the Temple then heard Christ's disciples testifying about his resurrection in their native languages. The disciples had never studied these languages, and so the spiritual phenomenon of speaking in tongues is said to have reversed the curse spoken of in the ancient Old Testament story from Genesis about the Tower of Babel. [SLIDE: Brueghel's *Tower of Babel*] In that story the opposite of the tongues phenomenon took place: sudden confusion descended upon the builders of the infamous Tower and each one began speaking his own private "tongue"—bringing a halt to the building of the infamous Tower and giving us the word "babble"—idiosyncratic gibberish. Speaking in tongues is seen as the opposite, where each one hears and understands in his own language the good news of Christ's rising from the dead—ending the worst curse of all, death.

To many in our broader culture, the language of contemporary art appears to be a Tower of Babel—not only to unsophisticated Christians, but also to the overwhelming mass of average citizens for whom modernism and postmodernism have served up incomprehensible images, artifacts, and theoretical constructs that amount to unintelligible gibberish (except to those initiated into the esoteric mysterious of contemporary art). A recent article on Damien Hirst's latest show *Beyond Belief* is a case in point. Even literate, highly specialized art critics labor over the meaning and value of contemporary art which nearly requires a code-breaker to decipher. Here is a brief quotation from the British journal *Prospect*: [SLIDE: Hirst's *For the Love of God*]

The skull, wittily titled *For the Love of God*, is certainly dazzling and very much of its time. With its widely reported but unverifiable [\$98m] price tag, it is a work that an artist could only afford to make at a time when the art market is booming. It embodies the fact that art works have become the crown jewels of our age, yet it also reaches far back in history—its prototype is an Aztec skull decorated with precious stones. It glorifies death, and it ironises the Christian message that your wealth is not taken with you to the grave. Yet its aesthetic value remains uncertain. Has Hirst found a new way of capturing the imagination of a mass audience? Or is *For the Love of God* a gimmick: grotesquely extravagant in its execution and inane in its meaning? This question hovers over all Hirst's work.²

The reviewer, Ben Lewis, continues to muse over the question of whether Hirst's work is simply banal or if perhaps the subject of his art is banality. Lewis has a problem of translation even within the specialized community of those literate in contemporary art. If it is hard for Lewis to unpack Hirst to his specialized audience, it is doubly difficult to translate contemporary art and its traditions for evangelical Christian students whose religious background predisposes them to be suspicious of modern art—and especially of the abject or transgressive forms it sometimes takes. My students just do not live in the “world”, the community, that values the same things as the one in which Damien Hirst is honored and his work praised. They are limited by the language and values of their community. On the other hand, I think contemporary artists and art aficionados need to see that they too operate within limited and limiting “worlds of art”—speaking their own peculiar “tongue”. As a teacher I try to translate contemporary art in to terms accessible for my students, as an artist I try (perhaps quixotically) to engage in another kind of “translation”—that of bringing the Christian iconographic tradition into contemporary art idioms—not simply illustrating Christian beliefs, but actually translating the tradition. In a sense, what I aim at is overcoming the curse of the Tower of Babel—and its modern equivalent—the phenomenon of highly specialized arenas of discourse and belief which result in sealed-off communities who become more and more suspicious of one another's language, values, and culture.

In fact, what I do all the time in my own studio as a painter is attempt to be a translator in Gadamer's terms—hoping that my paintings are neither irrelevant nor narrowly locked into our current moment. I unapologetically make art for posterity despite the widespread doomsday mentality which causes many to retreat from the future. Interestingly, one thing I think the middle-brow evangelical Christian may hold in common with high-brow postmodernist artists is the feeling that it has all been done before and that nothing we make can really last. But this is beside my main point. My central question involves what Yale philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff has called works and worlds of art.³

To my way of thinking there just isn't such a thing as “THE Art World”. There are, rather, many such concurrent worlds of art which have sometimes conflicting narratives, aesthetics, and cultural values. These systems of visual meaning-making may actually have a significant common ground, yet they often retain a unique orientation to their respective audiences and have sometimes enshrined very different aesthetic and spiritual values. In his book, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* James Elkins explores this problem with regard to religion and present day avant-garde art. He tries to see how and why religion has been excluded from contemporary art—and comes to the conclusion that this is the inevitable outcome of a progression over several centuries—a kind of refinement and purification of fine art—purification, that is from all systems of meaning exterior to it. A kind of art *qua* art.

COMMUNITIES OF CONVICTION

In order to develop this concept of multiple systems of visual meaning a bit, I employ a working concept I call *communities of conviction*. I use this term to indicate the many worlds of art inhabited by groups who share within their own circle a roughly common language of visual meaning-making. By conviction I mean the fact that participants in a particular tradition of art are *convinced*—that is, they share common convictions about criteria, aesthetic strategies, canons of taste, a credible narrative of recent art history, and a pantheon of “great artists”—even if these features are largely unconscious or barely articulable. To test this idea simply mention highly established New York artists like Jasper Johns and Robert

Rauchenberg [SLIDE] outside the fairly specialized community of this world of art, and you get a blank stare. Go a little deeper into the pantheon and mention Matthew Barney or Robert Gober or Kiki Smith [SLIDE] and there will be utter incomprehension. Presumably the name Norman Rockwell would register in one of those other worlds of art. Almost certainly the name Thomas Kinkade would garner nods of approval in one community and but snickering in another. One of the crossovers of recent years which allowed an artist previously excluded from a particular artist-pantheon was Robert Rosenblum's catalogue essay for the Norman Rockwell retrospective that made a stop at the Guggenheim. In a rare confession (for New York art critics), the writer acknowledged that he had been dismissive of Rockwell but had changed his mind after relinquishing certain modernist convictions. Donald Kuspit has similarly canned his modernist credo and is now on attack mode against models of triumphant modernism like Richard Serra. Artist-pantheons ebb and flow as they always have, and the last word on who's in and who's out of any particular community's history books is an open question.

So there are many worlds of art and various communities of conviction using the art made in those contexts. The fact that many of these groups do not acknowledge or even know of one another's pantheons or canons is not surprising—and I believe that this is because different traditions are in operation, whether conscious or unconscious; whether recent or ancient. And different traditions generate different criteria and they value different aesthetic strategies and agendas. The rancorous and dismissive manner of describing works outside one's tribal context is an indicator of the very different sets of criteria employed by various groups.

Here is a brief quotation of Donald Kuspit's recent review *Hyping Serra* as a case in point

... Serra's sculptures lay claim to a similar haughty transcendence—and will sustain it as long as they last, but they will survive only in the catalogue of the exhibition. Like every catalogue, it is a spur to memory, giving shadowy life to the art it analyzes and idolizes. (But then the theory-babble seems more memorable than the sculptures.) Serra's sculptures are not exactly among the wonders of the world—although they are among the wonders of modern art by reason of their "cosmic" scale (such scale confers status, even if it often functions to hype a small idea) ...

There's no mistaking the tone: words like hype, and phrases like "small idea" say it all. Kuspit is no longer a true believer in one group but has "converted" to another—namely the group attempting resuscitation of criteria from a relatively recent past-figurative realism. His caustic dismissal of his former group's hero is a sad phenomenon to me.

INTELLECTUAL HOSPITALITY

And this brings me to my third area of concern in teaching—what I've called intellectual hospitality. In a more generous and respectful manner than the foregoing Kuspit quotation, James Elkins is nevertheless equally confident of his criteria in his book under discussion at this conference. In that essay he argues that in the world of avant-garde contemporary art, religion has no role to play—except perhaps as an absence—in a kind of apophatic negation. Though he may be right, Dr. Elkins' idea that religion and contemporary art are now incommensurable entities is predicated on his belief that his particular artistic community of conviction is somehow especially fitting for our times and has a sort of norming power with its

aesthetic criteria—what he calls primacy. There are plenty of other art communities who would dispute that stance (and one of the new training grounds for primacy is New York Academy’s Graduate Program in Figurative Art). Like my colleague Ted Prescott discussed in his paper, I too take Elkins’ approach to be a neo-Hegelian story about the progress of art history *away* from religion. A kind of purification tale where art becomes progressively more and more *itself*—as opposed to being a servant of other criteria, other stories. Again, from my point of view this is one particular story—and one that valorizes the concept of art *qua* art—art as independent of anything exterior to its own inner necessity—to use Kandinsky’s term. I am personally a marginal participant in the world of art to which Dr. Elkins believes he belongs, yet I have a strong sense that the criteria of that world of art are far from normative—and in fact are probably highly idiosyncratic when a broad historic view is adopted or when those criteria are viewed anthropologically (which I hope to illustrate in a few moments).

In any case, Dr. Elkins’ concept that religious art and art-*qua*-art are incommensurable visual systems is really only true if one accepts as binding the criteria of the recent avant-garde art tradition. Unless that is, one becomes a participant in this particular community and its traditions. I try to show my students that a positive outcome of postmodernism is that all triumphal or totalizing systems have been deconstructed and shown to have imperial tendencies—and this is not a bad thing from the point of view as a partial outsider to the dominant art culture of the avant-garde. As a religious artist making sincerely meant religious paintings in the 21st century, I find a tradition that valorizes doubt and irony to be suffocating. And though I live and work in such a world of art, I do so as an alien or sojourner. Like the old Saxon *mearcstapa*—border-stalker or wasteland-haunter—who is not fully welcome in any one community, I find myself a bit of a stranger here. I am also a bit of a stranger in my own religious community for obvious reasons—yet I find a community of conviction growing among other border-stalkers who participate in non-ironical contemporary religious painting.

Finally, I am actually arguing here for members of any given community of conviction to exercise a kind of charity, magnanimity toward outsiders to their own group—a sort of intellectual hospitality. I argue for suspending disbelief regarding aesthetic tastes and criteria of others and granting the proverbial benefit of the doubt to a person’s aesthetic or artistic values. I realize that this seems Pollyanna-ish. Yet without this hospitality of heart and mind toward one another we are doomed to continue the tradition of Babel, speaking only to ourselves, and we may be thereby tempted to engage in dismissive rhetoric like that of Professor Kuspit. To my mind, stereotyping, prejudice, and dismissive rhetoric constitute a failure of imagination. If one cannot conceive of any value attaching to the art of another community, one lapses into name calling and preemptory judgments.

I confess up-front that I have been among the worst offenders of this problem, dismissing both my Christian sisters and brothers over their appetite for religious kitsch and sentimentalism—and disrespecting some of the prominent names of the current international avant garde because I do not share their criteria or their tastes. It’s a bit like the fashionable who, like the devil, wear Prada and look down upon those of us who wear GAP jeans or a suit from Penny’s.

Mind you, I am not arguing that in order to teach contemporary art and art theory to evangelical Christians one needs to posit a completely relativistic scale of artistic criteria and

values. Yet I am indeed arguing for a perspectivalist posture—at least for the time being, while the jury is out on our century and its artifacts. In effect I am saying that in order to teach contemporary art in a Christian college I must remove the obstacles to understanding the criteria and aesthetic tastes promulgated in whichever world of art I am examining with my students—essentially approaching each community of conviction anthropologically—including our own. Often I use the following story to make my initial argument—and I think its principals apply both ways, to evangelical conservatives viewing artifacts produced in the dominant avant-garde subculture, and to avant-gardists considering the cultural values of their artistic neighbors.

[SLIDES—Colin Turnbull and Mbuti people]

Here's the story: in his book *The Forest People*, the anthropologist Colin Turnbull tells of his journey into the Ituri Forest—home of the diminutive Mbuti people—usually called the Pygmies of the Congo. After having made careful arrangements through a Mbuti translator, the anthropologist arrived by prop-plane to a rough landing strip cut out of the area bordering the forest. He was met by a delegation of the Pygmies, which included their chieftain. Turnbull asked (through his interpreter) if he might be allowed to photograph the chief with a new invention—the Polaroid Land Camera (which allowed nearly instant photographs to be made on the spot—high-tech for 1960). Since the Mbuti had never heard of the device and had never seen a photograph they readily agreed. When Turnbull proudly displayed the newly developed black and white photo of the chief, he handed it to the little man fully expecting a look of astonishment in the chief's face. To his own amazement the chief took the photo in hand, turning it sideways, upside-down, backwards, and every direction and then handed it back to the anthropologist with a shrug. Turnbull realized in a flash that the Mbuti chieftain had not seen anything intelligible on the flat surface of the photograph—only odd monochrome markings which were unintelligible to him. The chief had no way to read the image since he had no tradition of two-dimensional representation or script in the Pygmy traditions.

Turnbull thus begins his narration of a sojourn among a people with a radically different grid for reality. His own interpretive grid had to shift drastically in order to understand and communicate with the Mbuti—and his entire concept of cultural communication was altered. Another story from Turnbull tells how the anthropologist took the pygmy chief for a airplane ride and was surprised the find the man confident that the trees seen from above were not trees at all but ants! “Trees are high and stretch above us giving us protection. They are the Mother. Ants are small and below our feet.”

So a community of conviction supplies the needed conceptual grid for comprehension of, and moving about in, a world of perception—and by extension, that world would include aesthetic judgments and general knowledge. Though we're quite confident that our own definitions allow us to perceive the world more accurately than the Mbuti pygmies, the difference between the two grids is minor compared with the infinitely complex and baffling nature of cosmic reality. If our civilization lasts, our conceptions and convictions will inevitably seem quaint to those living in the year 3007. Our conceptual grid is small and weak and time-bound, as are our aesthetic tastes and understandings.

And this inevitable “smallness” should cause us to be charitable when assessing the aesthetic judgments and values of other tribes—other communities of conviction. My teaching within

the subculture of evangelical Christians is based upon this intellectual hospitality and the belief that all benefit from epistemological humility. We cannot really *know* that Jeff Koons or Richard Tuttle or Matthew Barney will be remembered as having made significant contributions to posterity in the arts and humanities. What we can know is that within a certain community of commitment and conviction these artists are currently held in high esteem—for their inventive and intelligent use of certain traditions and conventions of high postmodernism. I do not happen to share all of those traditions, though some seem inescapable in our time. Yet I am confident of my own pantheon of artists and my aesthetic criteria—while being more and more aware of the finitude, weakness, and smallness of all I hold close.

From a Christian perspective, without this epistemic humility, any community of conviction is doomed to become insular, in-bred, and ultimately self-destructive. It is the very existence of otherness that insures the artistic bloodline will be refreshed and renewed. Purists and fanatics of every community eventually destroy themselves and sometimes bring down entire civilizations. The twentieth century proved that in spades and the 21st is apparently even more vulnerable to fanaticism. And for the record, from my perspective fanaticism is distinguishable from fundamentalism if you're willing to do the intellectual work required. Fanatics kill and maim—fundamentalists historically have simply tried to maintain basic beliefs in the face of a frontal assault on their faith by hostile critics. I'd submit to you this morning that those of us who hold dear the legacy of modernism in art are fundamentalists of sorts—*i.e.*, we have our convictions and hold them close—but hopefully we'll resist the temptation of fanaticism that snickers and dismisses those outside our enclave.

In conclusion I'd like to show you a few examples of my own and few colleagues' works—as I said, somewhat quixotically hoping that something of my tradition could be translated for those of you who might be skeptical that “anything good could come out of Nazareth.”

[SLIDE from Broken Beauty <http://www.abrokenbeauty.com/>]

NOTES

1. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. by Hans-Georg Gadamer. trans. N. Walker. ed. R. Bernasconi, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
2. cf. *Prospect*, Issue 136, 2007; Ben Lewis, *Doubting Damien*.
3. Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Worlds and Works of Art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980.

CONNECTIONS SCIENCE, ETHICS, RELIGION, AND SPIRITUALITY

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Science: Ethics: Religion: Spirituality: I see connections. I am very aware of these connections because they frequently come up in discussion in my Bioethics Classes. When I saw the title of this conference: “Art Education, Religion, and the Spiritual,” it resonated with me. I want to show both teachers and students the importance of making these connections. The first three elements are academic disciplines that can be studied in colleges and university; the latter, spirituality, rarely comes up for discussion.

I am a biologist. I teach Biological Science and Bioethics at a college of art (PNCA in Portland, Oregon). Science is science but bioethics is a unique discipline, and a good opportunity to combine humanities and science. In fact, when I taught bioethics at a college in the state of Washington, students could choose to receive credit in either Humanities or in Biology (Science). It was one of the few classes on campus that was dual listed in more than one discipline. Both departments agreed on this dual listing, because it is such a logical connection. Bioethics is the discipline which combines Science ... the biology of a situation ... and Ethics ... the philosophy of a situation. It is a study of dilemmas that occur when our increasingly advanced technology gives us many options, and we have to make a decision, which may or may not be the best decision for all involved.

Bioethics is not a new phenomenon, but the word “bioethics” itself is quite new, having been first used in the 1960s when kidney dialysis machines were invented. When dialysis for kidney failure became available, there were not enough machines to help everyone that needed one. There was a committee established in Seattle, Washington hospitals to determine who was going to be able to get to use a kidney dialysis machine. Some would die before they could receive treatment. In essence, this committee decided whose life was most valuable and they decided who would get treatment. How is such a decision made? Not easily, for sure. Making the decision would be made based on people’s values, their ethics. Should the physician who has kidney failure get the dialysis machine? The physician’s wife? The fishmonger on the wharf? The homeless artist selling his artwork on the street? The first publicity about what was essentially an ethics committee (called at that time a Life or Death Committee)¹ included a shadowy photograph in Life magazine that showed the members of this famous committee. The need to ration the life saving treatment led to the development of biomedical ethics as we now know it. Since that first public discussion, there have been many more occasions to have public discussions about bioethical issues (e.g. stem cell research and physician assisted suicide) as technology increasingly affects our lives.

And the number of private discussions, among families and their health care providers, is even greater. Many of you are may be dealing with aging parents and may be involved with making a decision about where an aging parent might live. In Oregon, we have the very controversial assisted suicide law, which adds another layer to these end-of-life and quality of life discussions. These are real life issues that our students should be ready to encounter in their lives. We make these decisions based on our values, our morals, *and* our knowledge.

It has often been said that we are in the middle of a religious revival—an increase in religious fervor. Do we also see an increase in ethical fervor? Are people living more ethical lives? A number of well known people, preaching religion, show us a different view. I think of the evangelists Jimmy Swaggert, an Assembly of God preacher who frequented prostitutes. There was Jim Bakker, another preacher involved in a sex scandal, also found guilty of accounting fraud. He was found to be living a lavish lifestyle, using funds solicited from believers who believed they were contributing to spreading the word of God, not to the preacher's opulent life style.² Just this month, the son of Oral Roberts, who was heading the University with his father's name, was found to be living a similar life style, using church funds.³ Another preacher, Ted Haggard of the New Life Church, confessed to sexual immorality and acknowledged purchasing methamphetamine and soliciting a male prostitute.⁴ The self-righteous conservative member of the U.S. Senate, Senator Craig of Idaho, who frequently denigrated gays and voted against civil rights for gays, pleaded guilty after his arrest in a gay Minneapolis airport restroom. He pleaded guilty to misdemeanor disorderly conduct charges.⁵ The priests involved in the scandal of sexual abuse of children in the Roman Catholic Church can hardly be ignored. These people demonstrate a phenomenon that belies what *should* be happening, what we expect. It is thought that people who are religious *should* have good ethics.

Different religions have different ethics but in all cases, people who say they believe in a religion should live by the tenets of that religion. If they believe the dogma, they should live the dogma and be an ethical person. In our society now, we often see a dis-connection. Why is this?

Why is there such a dis-connection in what these people say and what they do? A key thing, I think, is that they are not being true to themselves. This is the antithesis of spirituality. As educators, how do we help students make connections in their lives between their passion, which we know is art—and their values, their religion, their spirituality? Spirituality and artistic creativity are not the same thing, but I see a strong connection between them. We cannot teach this spirituality, but we can help students be spiritual, to be at ease with whom they are and be able to express themselves truly. This is not a new problem. It was the great artist Albrecht Dürer in the 1500s that encouraged people to be true to self.⁶

Do a person's values drive a person's spirituality? I think that being true to self is a key to being spiritual and I think artists need to have their own unique spirituality to be creative persons. Can we help students find their center and develop spirituality? What is the impetus for creating a work of art? If a person is spiritual, are they more likely to be inspired, to be in a zone of concentration? If a student creates a work of art, does the spirituality show through that work? Students in schools of art need to know how to harvest that spirituality to create. They need to know how to harvest that when they are in school and they need to know how to continue to harvest that years from now. Georgia O'Keeffe is an example of a long living artist whose art continually showed her spirituality spark. How can we help students prepare for that?

First, let's explore connections or ... lack thereof ... of the four elements.

Between Science and Religion: In Biology classes, the topic of evolution is taught and in many classes is in the forefront throughout the semester. In fact, many college biology departments have written philosophy statements and teaching statements that state that

evolution is the uniting factor in all of biology and this fact is made clear to students of science classes. It is not necessary for a student to believe that evolution occurs, but students in such a class need to be able to answer the questions to pass a test about the concept and process of evolution and thereby pass the biology class. Charles Darwin, (1809-1882) who had earlier studied in seminary to be a minister, struggled with proposing the concept of evolution. He delayed presenting his theory for many years. In his final writings, Darwin did not argue against God, but against a simple understanding of the world. In our science classes, it is easy to dismiss the questions that may come up about religion. We do not expect a connection between religion and science.

Between Religion and Ethics: In Bioethics class, it is not possible to dismiss religion because a connection between ethics and religion, our second 2 elements, exists, and a positive correlation between the two is expected. The bioethics classroom can become a powerful forum to address scientific questions and their connections with religion, ethics, and spirituality. This connection exists in our academic discussion in the class, but what is it that our students see in the world? How can we transfer this connection to their real world?

Between Science and Ethics

The 1950s television show *Dragnet* comes to mind as I think of the connection between science and ethics. As the detective was interviewing people on that show, he attempted to keep them on track with the issue. “Just the facts, Ma’m, just the facts”, Sgt. Friday would say. Science is the facts, the knowledge, what *is*. There is an *is/ought* Dichotomy and the ethics is the *ought* part of the situation. What ought to be done, given the facts? It is the objective combined with the subjective. It is rare when all the facts that need to be known are known, so knowledge is almost always only partial. But, having the objective knowledge, does not give you the subjective knowledge to make a decision. That subjectivity comes from your ethics, religion, and spirituality.

Between Science and Spirituality

Does knowledge dilute spirituality? Albert Einstein, one of the greatest scientists of our time, said:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.⁷

He knew that knowledge does not breed indifference. With all that he knew and all that he formulated in his mind about the universe, he still saw the wonder of it all.

Between Religion and Spirituality

A person can be religious and not spiritual, and a person can be spiritual and not religious. One element does not guarantee the other, nor does one negate the other. A group of humanists in Portland, Oregon, not religiously connected, congregate on Sundays to share their lives. This gathering is part of their spirituality, not religion.

Between Ethics and Spirituality

This is the core of the issue of connection or the lack of connections. What are your values? Are you true to those values? Are you true to self? Values frequently come from religion, but as is demonstrated by our society today and the above examples, being religious does not necessarily mean you have good values. Good values can come from a variety of sources, besides religion. Some other key sources are from family, school, society, books, media, peers, and laws.

To make an argument for including Science and Ethics in the Liberal Arts Curriculum in art education, I will show the presence of these elements in an historical perspective. Artists that I have chosen to demonstrate connections of science, religion, ethics, and spirituality are:

Leonardo da Vinci	1452-1519
Albrecht Dürer	1471-1528
Edward Muybridge	1830-1904
Thomas Eakins	1844-1916
Modesto Brocos y Gomes	1852-1936
Karl Blossfeldt	1865-1932
Georgia O'Keefe	1887-1986

The first example is Leonardo da Vinci, a true Renaissance man who was both an artist and scientist. In his drawing of the Fetus and Lining of the Uterus, he originated the scientific illustration with cutaways and exploded views. His technique was very innovative and artistic. Although not totally accurate, in that the uterus is not so round as he portrayed, it was scientific in the amount of detail he was able to reveal.

Da Vinci had the mark of a true scientist, using strong powers of observation. When I taught botany, I had a member of the art department come to my laboratory and teach my students how to draw. He was always impressed that my science students were better “seers”, better observers than his students were. *This* process of observation is something that can be taught. In using the scientific method and running a scientific experiment, you must formulate a hypothesis; in order to formulate a hypothesis, you must have observed enough to know what question to ask. So the first step in the scientific method is not to formulate a hypothesis as many people think. The first step is observation. Leonardo da Vinci felt that observation yielded truth.⁸ One of the quotes of Aristotle that has come down through the ages is that “sight is the noblest sense of man”. This statement holds in good stead whether you are talking about science or about art. It is noted too that many Renaissance critics agreed with him.⁹ A contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci in the 1500s was Albrecht Dürer, the man I quoted earlier as saying one should be true to one’s self. For both Leonardo da Vinci and Dürer, observation yielded truth. Dürer agreed with Aristotle and the new Renaissance critics that “sight is the noblest sense of man”.

Dürer’s work, *A Great Piece of Turf*, is a work in which plants can be identified down to species. This preciseness demonstrates that he too used his powers of observation, and he appreciated the connection between nature (science) and art. He said “Depart not from nature according to your fancy, imagining to find aught better by yourself.... For verily art is embedded in nature; he who can extract it, has it.” “Nature holds the beautiful, for the artist

who has the insight to extract it.”¹⁰ Notice, he didn’t talk just about technique here. The beauty was in nature, but it needed to be extracted AND to do that, he said, you needed insight. Did he mean spirituality? Was this insight spirituality?

Dürer was also a very religious man and his work demonstrates this. Six years after Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door, he made a woodcut of the Last Supper. Like Luther, he did not believe that bread and wine became the body and blood of Jesus. In his woodcut there is an empty plate in the foreground which symbolized the commemorative, not reenactment, of bread and wine becoming body and blood. His art is making a religious statement.¹¹

Dürer also painted *The Fall of Man*, certainly a religious work. In this work, however, he also showed his understanding of science; he had studied and used correct arithmetic ratios of body proportion. You can also see here naturalism, a commitment to observation of foliage and animals. The animals represent four Humors proposed by one of the first known physicians, Hippocrates. He shows the choleric cat, the melancholic elk, the sanguine rabbit, and the phlegmatic ox. Also separate from science, are his paintings of The Apostles, of which it is said they may be his greatest work; it is said that he painted these with integrity and spirituality.¹² This is what we want viewers to say of our students’ art. But in these, he also showed St. Peter in the background, subtly, showing his religious views, making a point about Peter not being head of the church.

In the 1800s, the concepts of empiricism, positivism, and realism were very important philosophical models that were discussed in educated circles. Empiricism is defined as the search for knowledge based on observation and direct experience. Positivism is a Western philosophical model that promoted science as the mind’s highest achievement. The founder of positivism, August Comte, (1798-1857) believed scientific laws governed environment and human activity and could be revealed through careful recording and analysis of observable data.¹³ This careful recording and analysis of observable data showing things as they are began to be seen in art works in the 1800s; this genre was Realism.

Thomas Eakins, a religious man, painted religious paintings such as *The Crucifixion*, but he was also a Realist. His ambition was to paint things as he saw them rather than as the public might wish them portrayed. He painted his famous *The Gross Clinic* with realism. It’s too brutal Realism prompted the art jury to reject it for the Philadelphia exhibition that celebrated the American independence centennial in 1876. (He anticipated it was good work, however, and he copyrighted the painting.) Is this art? Is it just science? Eakins believed in painting realistically. Each one of the people in the painting of *The Gross Clinic* has been identified.

Eakins believed that knowledge—and where, relevant, scientific knowledge ... was a prerequisite to his art. Photography and daguerreotype were beginning and Eakins incorporated these techniques into his art also. Anatomical drawings, from da Vinci and Eakins and many others, became an instrument for the education and practice of physicians and surgeons. They are a connection between science and art.

Karl Blossfeldt was a photographer who made his own camera. He used technology to create art! He captured, I think, the spirituality of nature. His photos revealed the amazing detail

found in nature by zooming in so close to a plant to give lovely abstract forms, such as his classic fiddleheads of ferns.¹⁴

Edward Muybridge used science and art in his work. Most say his work is more art than science.¹⁵ Muybridge used the technology of serial photography to determine if all four hooves of a horse were off the ground at the same time. He used photography to show the movement of humans on stairways. It was a new way of making art. Also, there is an ethical question that arises as he admitted he substituted images when exposures failed. From what I learned in my Photoshop Class, I realize how easy it would be to violate copyright law. The Legality and Ethics of this technology could be quite a nightmare, or a windfall, (as my son, a copyright attorney, may view it).

A clash between Science and Ethics is shown in the painting, *Redemption of Ham, A redencion de Cam*, by Modesto Brocos y Gomes.¹⁶ He accompanied a sociologist to Brazil to study indigenous populations there. He drew three generations, showing the offspring of an indigenous person in Brazil and a white person, and that child, having offspring with another white person, and so on and so on, with each future generation being of lighter color. This was an era when eugenics was popular. Included in this study is a table of whitening, with percentages and extrapolations, showing when there would no longer be Negroes in the country. Using data, it gives the appearance of being scientific, with numbers projected. Even if the science were valid, the presumption that eliminating the black race is a good thing and using art to demonstrate it, is unethical.

Last, I leave you with the works of Georgia O’Keeffe. To me, as a scientist, O’Keeffe communicates the spirit of nature with color and form. Her work of *Jack-in-the-Pulpit* makes you want to jump inside the flower, even if it were not scientifically accurate. Her drawing of *Shell* graced the cover of a general Biology textbook by Keeton. *Shell* is beautiful in nature and perhaps more so in her drawings; I wonder how many students knew which was which. *Poppies*, a joyful exuberant work, talks to me of science and spirituality. Is this spiritual expression of her work a reason she lived to be nearly 100 years old? Her spirituality shows through her work: this is what we would hope our students would be able to maintain through their many years of work.

From an historical perspective, we leap to the recent science of mind and spirituality being studied as brain science, trying to understand the left and right brains. A series of lectures at the University of Pennsylvania (Templeton Research Lectures) have focused on the Constructive Engagement of Science and Religion and have included the developmental perspective of the brain.¹⁷ Neuropsychologists argue that religion and spirituality are intimately linked with human biology and psychology throughout the life cycle. The brain helps to translate and interpret the experience and eventually modify outward behaviors accordingly. I feel that humans need a wide variety of experiences in order to find their spirituality. I would argue, too, that we humans need a wide variety of experiences to truly know ourselves and our ethics. This is why young college students need to address the issues of spirituality in their lives and in their work.

Neuroscience and cultural anthropology suggest that Spirituality is more about human connection than about solitary contemplation. Spirituality is distinct from religion in that it draws a circle that draws people in; in contrast, religion draws a circle that draws people out. It is argued that too often critics place spirituality in the realm of self-contemplation and

wistful metaphysics, which is to miss the visceral hard-wired socially oriented basis of spirituality. I am reminded again of the humanists meeting in Portland on Sunday in lieu of organized religion. Perhaps for them it is spirituality. Sharon Salzberg, an author who writes about faith and spirituality, wrote that the true opposite of faith is the sundering of connection.¹⁸ Spiritual joy is evoked by a loving connection.

And so, the conversation continues about Science, Ethics, Religion, and Spirituality. As one of the best thinkers of our time, Einstein saw the connection. Perhaps it is our duty as educators to help art students see these connections. Again, quoting Einstein,

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

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SEEING CLOSELY: PHOTOGRAPHS OF PLANTS AS SPIRITUAL IMAGES

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Rob Kessler is a photographer whose work illustrates two books from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: *Seeds* (2006) and *Pollen* (2006). These look like coffee-table books, but thanks to the text provided by plant scientists Wolfgang Stuppy and Madeline Harley respectively, they are full of information about plant development, morphology, and evolution. However, it is undoubtedly the photographs and scanning electron micrographs which make the books so appealing.

The philosopher David Topper (1990) contends that most images of natural objects have both aesthetic and empirical value, and that they can be placed somewhere on a spectrum between these two extremes. I will argue that Kessler's photographs can be said to glide to both ends of this spectrum since they provide a great deal of morphological information while at the same time being works of great beauty, particularly because the electron micrographs have been artificially colored. In addition, I will make the case that the combination of scientific and aesthetic qualities in these photographs gives them a spiritual dimension because of a link to the sublime. The cell biologist Ursula Goodenough (1998) describes a relationship between our understanding of nature, for example the structure and function of seeds and pollen, and a religious response to nature. This relationship is rarely made explicit in the biology classroom, but through the art of Rob Kessler, such a link can be at least subtly introduced.

I want to begin by putting Kessler's images in context relative to the history of photography. Plants and plant parts were ideal subjects for early photographers because they were of a good size relative to the equipment available, and most importantly, they did not move as animal subjects tended to do. Some of Henry Fox Talbot's early experiments were done with plants (Thomas, 1997). Also, plants could be flatted for nature printing, where the specimen is placed directly on photosensitive material, as in the cyanotypes done by Anna Atkins (Armstrong & de Zegher, 2004). Plants continued to intrigue photographers through the 20th century. At the very beginning of the century, the British gardener Charles Jones produced meticulous portraits of garden fruits and vegetables apparently to document these ephemeral products (Sexton & Johnson, 1998). Karl Blossfeldt's purposes were different. He taught art and design and saw his photographs of plant parts as sources of inspiration for his students (Adams, 1999).

Later on in the 20th century, art photographers used plants as studies in form, often accentuating their erotic connotations. This applies to the work of Imogen Cunningham (Lorenz, 1996), Andreas Feininger (1956), and Edward Weston. Later, color work became more common and more accepted in art photography as the dazzling flower photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe indicate. Today, Irving Penn is still producing stunning images of flowers. On the more scientific side, William Harlow (1976) published a book called *Art Forms from Plant Life* that contains many stunning plant images, though he was not a professional photographer but a professor of forestry. And a professor of dental radiology, Albert Richards, became noted for his X-rays of flowers.

In all these cases, the images were made without the use of magnification. But as many examples from botanical illustration indicate, it is sometimes necessary to enlarge plant parts in order to study their intricacies. To give just one example, Jacob Bigelow (1817), who produced the first illustrated botanical volume in the United States, displayed not only the plant as a whole, but made enlarged drawings of key plant parts, usually floral parts. This was a common practice, especially because the flower parts, which were often small, were crucial in identification and classification.

USING THE MICROSCOPE

While the light microscope and then the electron microscope were very useful in imaging plant structures, they required thinly cut specimens, making it difficult to get a three-dimensional impression of a structure. This problem was addressed by the scanning electron microscope (SEM) which creates an image of surfaces in 3-D. Because of the high magnification and the excellent resolution, these images are magnificent, but they are all in black and white. The SEM detects electrons bouncing off the surface of the specimen; there are no light waves involved and therefore no color. But that doesn't prevent microscopists from adding color, and especially now, with sophisticated computer graphics, the possibilities are manifold and the results can be spectacular.

One of the earliest and still one of the most accomplished artists/technicians in this field is Lennart Nilsson (Krook, 1984). While he is best known for his images of the interior of the human body and of embryos, he also made images of many other forms of life, including an SEM image of 78-million year old flower fossil. Obviously there is a great deal of art as well as science in this image. It is not only falsely colored but also set against a blue sky to make it appear as if it has come back to life. This is a perfect example of the problems with using colorization for SEM images. Yes, it makes them wonderful to look at but it also makes it difficult to remember what the image is really about. This is a fossil, a piece of rock, not a living thing photosynthesizing in the sun, as this photo suggests.

Dee Breger (1995), a microscopist who works at Columbia University, also uses SEM colorization, but her work remains more scientific. Why? First of all, there are no misleading backgrounds. Second, the colors are muted, and they are not so much used to signify those of a living thing as to show contrast between different structures and thus make the image more intelligible. Kessler's work lies somewhere between that of Nilsson and Breger. His colors are brighter, but he does use a plain background—a black background that accentuates the color and makes for a striking photograph. In fact, I think “striking” is the best word to describe both Kessler's books. They are amazing feats of scientific photography and they are also aesthetically wondrous. This combination is why they are so engaging.

But Kessler's images have to be approached with caution and with some sense of what we are actually seeing. None of the images he presents are without computer manipulation. First, they have been falsely colored. In some cases, more than one color is used to differentiate between different structures as in the image of the broomrape seed, where the seed itself is deep rose and the surrounding covering is yellow. In other cases, the entire seed is one color, and this makes it look very artificial because the colors Kessler uses are very bright, and most seeds are not so brightly colored. He doesn't attempt to replicate nature in the colors he uses, and seems instead to be trying to replicate the colors found in a psychedelic light show.

This makes them visually riveting but disorienting, perhaps more for a scientist than for a layperson, since a biologist would have more familiarity with the actual material.

Something else is done to these images besides colorizing them. They have been cleaned up, which computer graphics makes so easy that it is extremely tempting, even in the realm of scientific photography. There are not stray fibers or dust particles in these images, no seeds with little nicks or other imperfections. While I'm sure that Kessler strove to get the best specimens he could, I suspect that he did make them a little more perfect as he processed images. While this may smack of deceit, it is important to keep in mind that botanical illustrators have been doing this for centuries. The specimens they depict usually have no blemishes; they are close to what are called type specimens, those used to typify the species. Visual tidying is done in other sciences as well (Lynch & Edgerton, 1988), though in light of recent cases of visual misrepresentation, scientific journals are taking a closer look at the practice (Couzin, 2006).

Kessler's volumes are coffee-table books, but they are also solid introductions to areas of plant science. Each expert in the subject matter, the authors of the scientific texts in the two books seem to have taken different approaches. Harley's essay on pollen is less complex, less filled with information and terminology. In other words, it is more readable, though less substantive than the essay Stuppy contributed to *Seeds*. I found that Harley's approach better fits the glossiness of the book. The pictures are so mesmerizing that the reader wants to move on to them and not get bogged down in terminology in the text. However, in both cases, the text provides needed information so the images can be more than just pretty pictures. The images tell a great deal, but only to the mind that is prepared to understand them, and this requires some study. There is a lot going on here, an interaction between text and image. These books are so well crafted and organized that the reader can derive a great deal from this interaction.

I think this work, which was carried on at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, is an exemplar of how to communicate science to the public. The collaboration between scientist and artist means that the information is accurate and the imagery engaging. There are, of course, some caveats about such collaboration. There is a limit to the amount of information that can be included, so these books are hardly texts for a botany course though they do provide excellent supplementary material for such a course. Also, the use of false coloring can be misleading and could raise the expectation that Day-Glo colors are common in nature and that structures are colored in ways that make them easily distinguishable from each other. A little time spent looking at untreated specimens under the microscope will disabuse students of this assumption. Yet despite these problems, work like Kessler's is important. Felice Frankel (2002), who is known for her creative scientific photography, writes that "Using compelling and accessible pictures is a powerful way to draw the public's interest to the world of research. When the public develops a more intimate association with science the results will be both a richer society and one supporting the important efforts in scientific investigation" (p. 1).

THE SPIRITUAL

While support for science is essential, I am more interested in Frankel's comment on an intimate association with science coming out of appreciation of such images and leading to a "richer society." What could this mean? I would like to argue that in part it could mean a society that is more willing to admit its spiritual dimension. It might seem strange to see

science as supporting the spiritual when these two realms so often appear at odds with each other. This perception arises in part from a conflation of spirituality and religion. While the two are related and spirituality often arises from religious experience, the two are hardly synonymous, and I would argue that spirituality is related as much to aesthetic experience as to the religious.

This is evident even in the words used to describe these experiences: wonder and awe are words commonly used by spiritual writers. These words also relate to the aesthetic, and more importantly in the context I am presenting here, to the scientific. The link between science and wonder is becoming more commonly talked about today than in the past. The connection between wonder and science which Daston and Park (1998) explored for the late Middle Ages and Renaissance is now being recognized as important to modern science and society as well. George Levine (2006) writes of the sense of wonder that drove so much of Darwin's work and suggests that Darwin was not only a rational empiricist and mechanist, but a person charged with the grandeur of life as well.

Edward O. Wilson (2006), the father of sociobiology and hardly a member of the religious right, has recently argued that both scientists and believers should look beyond the rift between science and religion caused by the evolution/creationism debate to the commonality they share: a wonder at the richness of life. From this sense of wonder could come efforts by both sides to preserve the living world. Francis Collins (2006), the molecular biologist who headed the government's human genome project, has argued for a rapprochement between science and religion based in part on a sense that there is an awesomeness in nature that science cannot explain but that is more accessible through spirituality and religion. These writers are all getting at the same idea: that there are other ways to look at the natural world than just scientifically and that one of these other approaches leads to the spiritual.

Ursula Goodenough (1998) wrote in a similar vein several years ago in *The Sacred Depths of Nature*, essentially an introduction to the major ideas of biology with spiritual commentaries at the end of each chapter. Goodenough is a distinguished cell biologist who, like Collins, sees something beyond science in her study of nature. Coming from the opposite side, Elizabeth Boyle (2006), a Dominican nun and like Levine, an English professor, has argued that the same metaphors are frequently used in science and religion. For example, the idea of evolution is one that permeates religious thinking especially in what is called process theology where God is seen as evolving, developing, being completed, through his creatures. Boyle covers many other metaphors and ranges over the realms of physics and astronomy as well as biology. I found it interesting that she mentions her practice of reading the *Science Times* in the Tuesday *New York Times*, and using the ideas she learns about as entry points for meditation—definitely a beautiful way to link science and religion and very much related to my point that wonder and awe are central to both.

James Elkins (2004) in his book on religion and art writes that at the heart of religion is a nonverbal experience. This is obviously true of art as well, though it seems the opposite of science which depends on verbal and written communication. As J. M. Ziman (1968) notes, science is public knowledge. But equally important to keep in mind is Gerald Holton's (1973) idea that science has both a public and a private side. The public side is what is published, the private is how science is actually done, and this is where the tacit, the nonverbal comes in (Polanyi, 1962), and thus where the affective, the aesthetic, the spiritual are to be found. Depending upon one's view of religion, this part of science may be called different things, but

in every case, there is awe and wonder involved. This is a real and valid and vital part of science: why would anyone pursue a field that provided no psychic satisfaction, whatever it is called. The private side of science is also the side that is difficult to convey to students since it is nonverbal. Images such as those created by Kessler are one way to open this door, the door of awe and wonder, to students—whether they are interested in art or science—or both or neither. Such images are likely to enrich their lives no matter what their viewpoint.

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CONNECTING ART WITH SPIRITUALITY WITHIN THE INDIAN AESTHETICS OF *ADVAITA* VEDANTA

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According to the Indian philosophy of *Advaita* Vedanta every entity has five characteristics namely, existence, cognizability, inherent appeal, form, and name. Of these, the first three characteristics are seen as spiritual and the following two constitute the appearance of the entity in the world. This vision holds that it is specifically the characteristics of form and name that distinguishes one entity from another while it is the three former characteristics, which all entities have in common, that spiritually unites everything. According to *Advaita* Vedanta, existence, cognizability, and inherent appeal, stem from Brahman, the Being of all beings, whose nature is *Satcitanandna* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss). Form and name being individual are relative; existence, cognizability, and inherent appeal being eternally present in all entities are real. Religious or sacred art within this thinking is that art which has the potential to take the beholder, through an act of concentration on the work's form and name—its appearance in the world, into a deeper experience, into a momentary “glimpse” of *Satcitanandna*. This epiphanic experience is conjointly for the beholder an awakening experience of recognition to his or her own inherent spiritual depth, for the same mysterious nature of *Satcitanandna* that underpins the artwork underpins the beholder.

I. *ADVAITA* VEDANTA

Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) one of the cardinal exponents of the perennial understanding of art and aesthetic experience made the claim that in the traditional thinking of the East, philosophy does not “mean either a mere epistemology or the mere history of ‘what men [*sic*] believed,’ but rather an all embracing metaphysics or science of first principals and of the true nature of reality”.¹ And as a necessary and vital adjunct to this comprehensive theory or vision of reality, art provided the means to verify such a vision in actual experience. Religion also, like art, played a similar role of verification through community-centred ritualistic practices, guiding followers along a certain path that re-linked (*re-ligio*) them with their shared vision of reality. According to Coomaraswamy's traditional view the embodiment and enactment of an all-encompassing vision of reality established for each individual a felt sense of integral unity—body, mind, and spirit in harmonious accord—which then became reflected into a wider social harmony creating, over time, an integrated spiritual culture.

The Hindu philosophy of *Advaita* (non-dual) Vedanta (end of Veda) is one such traditional philosophy based upon the ancient wisdom teaching of the Upanishads. Shankara (Samkara), toward the end of the eighth century CE, was the first to fully consolidate *Advaita* Vedanta into such an integrated philosophy making it today “the most widely accepted system of thought among philosophers in India”.² For Eliot Deutsch, the idea of knowing as direct experience in a conscious act of being is a cornerstone of *Advaita* Vedanta. He writes:

The Advaitin is convinced that “to know” is “to be;” that one acquires knowledge only in an act of conscious being which is akin to what one knows and is the content of direct experience. “Disease,” Samkara notes, “is not

cured by pronouncing ‘medicine,’ but by taking it.” *Advaita Vedanta* is a religion as much as it is a technical philosophy; it is a way of spiritual realization as well as a system of thought.³

The goal of *Advaita Vedanta* (from here on referred to in this paper as simply Vedanta) is to find what is real, in an absolute sense, beyond the duality of subject and object, sleep and wakefulness, life and death. Get that, they argue, for thou art that: imperishable, stable, constant, and immortal—this is your real self, the only real knowledge; the rest is hearsay. The reality that Vedantic philosophers are seeking is therefore not a category of knowledge. What is real, within their way of thinking, can never be an object of knowing; it can only be known through lived experience, a knowing which is synonymous with self-identity. In the same way, for instance, that a person knows that he or she exists but not as something separate from his or her self-identity.

Vedantists see themselves as occupying the middle ground in Western philosophy between the polar opposites of idealism and realism for they argue that both mind and matter are not opposites but rather belong “in the same category—both are objects of knowledge”.⁴ This philosophical position makes it difficult for Western philosophers to engage with Vedantists. For instance, when both idealists and realists ask Vedantists, what then is real, if mind and matter are mere categories of knowledge? The Vedantists reply: pure consciousness, but not, they stress, as some quality of mind or metaphysical essence but as experience, as a state of being. Soon after a moment of knotted silence, the Western philosophers usually respond with something along the lines of, if this is the case then what you’re saying is that everything in the world, including our personal feeling and thoughts, are all unreal? Here the Vedantists generally fall back upon their beliefs by stating,

The world according to Shankara, “is and is not.” its fundamental unreality can only be understood in reference to the ultimate mystical experience of an illumined soul ... [when] all perception of multiplicity ceases [and] there is no longer any sense of “ine” and “hine,” [for] the world as we ordinarily know it has vanished⁵

And here the discussion, more often than not, comes to an abrupt halt.

But another possible way of trying to understand Vedanta is to focus upon its approach to aesthetic experience. For aesthetic experience, regardless of culture, raises issues that straddle idealism and realism. In this paper, I will attempt to present a discussion on how aesthetic experience could be interpreted along the lines of Vedanta and how Western art could be viewed as an expression of a deeper spiritual reality, albeit defined in Vedantic terms. The goal of such an undertaking will not be to arrive at a set of definitive answers but rather to establish an open dialogue in which an empathic understanding of ideas is preferred.

To facilitate this dialogue I have chosen to use the text *An Inquiry into the Nature of the “Seer” and the “Seen” (Drg-Dsya-Viveka)*⁶, which gives a clear and concise overview of the core insights of Vedanta and deals directly with the issue of perception, and the writing of the early twentieth century New York painter Robert Henri, whose approach to art is representative of a certain, persistent approach in Western painting (his work *The Art Spirit* first published in 1923 is now, in 2007, celebrating its eighty-fifth edition).⁷ To set the parameters of the dialogue I will use the work of Eliot Deutsch, philosopher and author of

Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction (1973), *Studies in Comparative Aesthetics* (1975), and *Essays on the Nature of Art* (1966), which offer a unique perspective on art grounded in traditional Asian aesthetics.⁸

II. CONSCIOUSNESS IN ADVAITA VEDANTA

The text, *The Inquiry into the Nature of the Seer and the Seen*, consists of forty-six *slokas* or verses, which the introduction describes as “excellent . . . for the study of higher Vedanta”.⁹ The opening verse begins:

The form is perceived and the eye is its perceiver. It (the eye) is perceived and the mind is its perceiver. The mind with its modification is perceived and the Witness (the Self) is verily the perceiver. But It (the Witness) is not perceived (by any other).¹⁰

What is critical here is the acknowledgement of a “Witness” or “Self” that transcends the conscious mind. Here the writer is not asking the reader to accept this so-called reality on faith, or as a deduction of some sort; and certainly not as a fact, for facts belong to the world of appearances. It is also not a question of simply applying an introspective process to discover this Self for introspection also only arrives at facts. And nor can this Self be defined as an emotion, for an emotion, as Sartre has convincingly pointed out, is “a certain way of apprehending the world” and is “a quality . . . which is given [by the viewer] in the [very] perception [of the world]”.¹¹

As presented in this verse, the Self appears to be impersonal; but here again, personal and impersonal, are categories of thought and cannot be applied in this situation. In the same way, the Self cannot be imaginatively apprehended under Kant’s forms of sensibility of space and time for Self has no relationship to space or time. So how can it possibly be accepted as real? The text actually bypasses this question and instead asks the reader to make a sharp distinction between mind and pure consciousness and for the sake of understanding to personalise the idea of pure consciousness as the Self. This idea of Self as pure consciousness is what is real for Vedantists, for the definition of reality they follow is that what is real does not change and pure consciousness does not undergo change (but as we shall see later, this does not mean that the Self as pure consciousness is dormant or inactive; quite the opposite, it is creative). It only means, it “cannot be sublated by any other experience”—it is the foundation, so to speak, under which there is no other foundation.¹²

But what does it actually mean that Self is pure consciousness? Here the text is more direct and defines it as the source of illumination, without which the ego-self could not think it’s thoughts, feel it’s feelings, or imagine it’s imaginings. The ego-self may appear to have an independent existence but “its appearance as [either] subject, object . . . [or] the means of perception is [only] possible on account of the reflection of [pure] Consciousness in it”.¹³ According to Vedanta, the mind is nothing but the storehouse of “latent impressions (*sanskaras*) that derive from past experiences”.¹⁴ And it is these impressions organised around emotions that determine the pattern of our lives: as the old saying goes “What is upon us is from us”. In day-to-day living, Self gets caught up in these impressions and identifies Itself with them, and in a sense is used by them; but, alternatively, in free and creative action, Self uses these impressions to create an image of Itself in a work of art.

While the mind, like the body, is subject to change, Self as pure consciousness, states the text, “does neither rise nor set. It does not increase; nor does it suffer decay. Being self-luminous, it illumines everything else without any aid”.¹⁵ To reinforce the idea of this transcendence of consciousness the text argues that in the three states of deep sleep, dream, or awake it is only the mind that is affected not consciousness. The state of deep sleep occurring when the mind is totally inactive; the dream state when the mind is active and creates and experiences its own world; and the waking state when the mind experiences the world of external objects with a separate ego-self.

Later, another term, Brahman, as infinite, eternal, “Existence-Consciousness-Bliss” (*Satcitananda*) is introduced in the text and also equated with “Self”. For clarity of understanding, Brahman can be seen as the infinite, *impersonal* aspect of pure consciousness, while Self as a *personal* aspect of Brahman imagined to exist within each person. In equating Self with Brahman the text affirms the crucial point that the Self can never be a possession of the ego-self, for Self’s nature is divine, and being divine it cannot be circumscribed. In this regard, each person does not have his or her own “piece” of pure consciousness. Each person only partakes of Its pure universality, along with all life in existence. But as pure consciousness is infinite, there are an infinite number of ways in which this partaking can take place: everyone has their own divine song to sing.

Brahman as pure consciousness is universal and “no separate universe”, as stated in the text, “can be conceived of which ... is not of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss”.¹⁶ Brahman by nature is also creative; it makes universes. The word Brahman itself “comes from the root *brh*, to grow, burst forth, and suggests a bubbling over, a ceaseless growth ... [and yet while] the world emanates from Brahman and returns to Brahman ... Brahman remains ever-complete and undiminished”.¹⁷ By way of clarification, in verse fourteen of the text it states, “The manifesting of all names and forms in the entity which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and which is the same as Brahman, like the foams etc. in the ocean, is known as creation”.¹⁸ Thus Creation does not occur *ex-nihilo*, out of nothing, but is a self-projection of Brahman occurring within Brahman Itself. And within Vedanta this provides the model for human creativity for it is Brahman as Self within each person that creates.

Focussing in upon a single bubble, a separate entity in creation, the text states, “Every entity has five characteristics, *viz.*, existence, cognizability, inherent appeal, form and name. Of these, the first three belong, to Brahman and the next two to the world”.¹⁹ In other words, every entity in creation—fire, trees, artworks, literally everything—has part of its existence in the mundane world of name and form and part in the transcendent existence of Brahman. The mundane world is the world of differentiation according to name and form. In the transcendent existence of Brahman, where all entities have their ontological roots, the following characteristics are manifest: all entities exist (have existence) all entities are cognitively registered by an observer (the text says all entities “shine”) and all entities have inherent appeal or attractiveness (the text describes them as “dear” thus bringing in a loving element). These three qualities then are the manifestation of Brahman as “Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.” The text stresses that while all entities in existence manifest these “universal characteristics” of Brahman they cannot be categorized under the headings of name and form.²⁰ Even this very act of the differentiation into three distinct characteristics is a distortion of Brahman’s non-dual reality.

This then is a brief overview of the “all embracing metaphysics or science of first principals and of the true nature of reality” according to Vedanta. The spiritual task of the Vedantists then is not simply to accept this vision as a belief statement but to incorporate it into their daily lives and living; to know it on the level of lived experience. It is certainly not something that can be coolly tested beforehand in the hope of discovering its worth. In fact, there is no other way of knowing the reality it points to except to personify and embody it, in others words, to become it.

A practical way to begin to confirm Self as one’s real identity is through a meditative practice that turns consciousness back upon itself and away from the ever-changing mental impressions (*sanskaras*) that continually sweep in and out of our view demanding attention. A practical way to obtain a glimpse of Self as Brahman, as “Existence-Consciousness-Bliss”, is through living a creative life in which the ego-self is not the prime agent of action. The practice of art is one such creative life.

III. THE ARTWORK

Morris Graves (1910-2001) was an American painter who seriously studied Eastern thought in the thirties. Later he came under the influence of Coomaraswamy who gave him spiritual direction as an artist. This influence can be seen in a statement he wrote in 1948 in one of his catalogues on the different “spaces” that are to found in life and the need to be aware of these “spaces” so as to fully appreciate an art work. He writes:

The observer must be mindful of the simple fact that there are three “space”: PHENOMENAL space (that is space “outside” of us). MENTAL space (that is space within which dreams occur and the images of the imagination take shape).

The third “space” is the SPACE OF CONSCIOUSNESS (that is the space within which is “revealed”—made visible upon subtle levels of mind—the abstract principles of the Origin, operation, and ultimate experience of consciousness.

It is this SPACE OF CONSCIOUSNESS from which come the universally significant images and symbols of the greatest of religious works of art . . . The observer is only cheating himself [*sic*] out of the fullest *enjoyment* and *information* of a painting if he makes the foolish demand that the painting function within a “space” from which it did not originate.²¹

Graves’s depiction of “spaces” raises the idea of an artwork coming from a “space of consciousness” from the transcendent realm of “Existence-Knowledge-Bliss”. However to accept the simplistic implication that all realistic and naturalistic artworks (including most photography) belongs to the “phenomenal space”, that artworks of a subjective nature, surrealism, personal expressionistic artworks etc belong to the “mental space”, and only works that use “universally significant image” like religious art is from the “space of consciousness” is to be misguided. For this kind of assessment does not take the viewer beyond the surface appearance of an artwork, beyond an attempted superficial understanding of an image, and it blocks any intuitive entering into the image where its mysterious power lies. A more insightful approach toward understanding this idea of art rising out of a deeper

space within the artist, call it the space of pure consciousness, comes from the philosopher Eliot Deutsch.

According to Deutsch, “a work of art, even though culturally embedded ... has its own intentionality, which is precisely its aiming to be aesthetically forceful, meaningful, and beautiful”.²² Firstly, what needs to be noted here is that in Deutsch’s estimation an artwork is “living”, has being or consciousness in other words. It has its “own intentionality”; although, of course, this intentionality can only be known intuitively. In the same way, for instance, that a person can only realise the existence of his or her being, or that of another person, intuitively. Although Deutsch names “aesthetically forceful, meaningful and beautiful” as three separate aspects of an artwork, he stresses that these are not experienced as distinct in an aesthetic experience. Rather they “interfuse, intermingle, and together are the *process* of our relating to works of art”.²³ In the dialogue that follows, I propose to use Deutsch’s three categories, attempt to link them to my previous discussion on the tri-nature of Brahman as “Existence-Consciousness-Bliss” (also best understood not as separate characteristics but as “interfused”, “intermingled” and “together”) and add remarks from Robert Henri’s text, *The Art Spirit*, thereby grounding them in the reality of a Western painter’s experience.

Firstly, Deutsch states that an artwork is aesthetically forceful “to the degree to which it manifests an immanent spiritual power, which power or rhythm of being is everywhere present in the work and is discerned as a unique vitality”.²⁴ To have any aesthetic experience, according to Deutsch, the artwork has to become “an object of consciousness” that is totally assimilated by the viewer. By assimilation Deutsch means that we “take on” the artwork “as a condition of our own being; we incorporate it into our emotional texture and freely accept it. Assimilation is a kind of empathetic embrace ... an *awakening* of our feeling to what is presented in the artwork”.²⁵ In other words, aesthetic experience is not simply a surface aesthetic shock but an “opportunity” to enter more deeply into an “intimate and transformative relationship” with an artwork.²⁶ In terms of Vedanta, Deutsch’s notion of the total “assimilation” of the artwork by the viewer, suggests a deep communion (not communication) at the level of pure consciousness between that of the viewer and of the artwork, a type of union even. Thus awakening a sense of the same “immanent spiritual power” mysteriously abiding in the artwork as well as in the viewer. In this regard, the artwork acts like a mirror to Self’s recognition in which aesthetic force provides the mysterious power of identification. In Vedantic spiritual practice this could be compared to having an obscure and passing contact with the reality of ultimate “Existence” as named in the first characteristic of the tri-nature of Brahman as “*Existence-Knowledge-Bliss*”.

In a revealing letter to one of his students Henri highlights how this same potent glimpse might occur in the free (even pure) creative act of the artist:

The object of painting is not to make a picture – however unreasonably this may sound. The picture is a *by-product* and may be useful, valuable, interesting as a sign of what has past. The object, which is back of every true work of art, is the *attainment of a state of being*, a state of high functioning, a more than ordinary moment of existence. In such moments activity is inevitable, and whether this activity is with brush, pen, chisel, or tongue, its result is but a by-product of the state, a trace, the footprint of the state.

These results, however crude, become dear to the artist who made them because they are records of states of being which he has enjoyed and which he would regain. They are likewise interesting to others because they are to some extent readable and reveal the possibilities of greater existence.²⁷

Or again:

Art is simply a result of expression during right feeling. It's a result of a grip on the fundamentals of nature, the spirit of life, the constructive force, the secret of growth, a real understanding of the relative importance of things, order, balance. Any material will do. After all, the object is not to *make art*, but to be in the wonderful state which makes art inevitable.²⁸

It could be argued that Henri's "spirit of life", sensed in a moment of inspiration or "high functioning", is what Deutsch senses in the artwork as an "immanent spiritual power" or is described in Vedanta as the sheer creative power of "Self" acting on its own accord. For Henri, once an artist attained this breakthrough moment his advice was to "to work at great speed. Have your energies alert, up and active. Finish as quickly as you can".²⁹ In doing so, he believed, "The brush stroke at the moment of contact carries inevitably the exact state of being of the artist at the exact moment into the work, and there it is, to be seen and read by those who can read signs, and to be read later by the artist himself, with perhaps some surprise, as a revelation of himself".³⁰ The "revelation", no doubt, being a realisation that the creative power of Self is not an ego-self initiative but rather linked in some way to the same creative power that created the universe. In Vedantic terms this could be equated with the creative power of Brahman. Henri makes this same link when he states, "both nature's tree and the artist's painting [show] the manifestations of the [same] principles of its origin".³¹

Secondly, Deutsch also mentions that an artwork needs to be meaningful if it is to be alive and vibrant with consciousness. He writes, "A work of art is inherently significant, is meaningful, to the degree to which it realizes the possibilities that it itself gives rise to; realization being a bringing of the work to a right conclusion and exhibiting of the process by which the right conclusion is reached".³² In this instance, when the artwork is seen as an expression of pure consciousness then meaning is "recognised" or "apprehended" by the viewer in an act of consciousness.³³ To reaffirm that an act of consciousness is required and not one of reflective judgement Deutsch warns, "We are not called upon to know what the work "means" but to apprehend that meaning as it is the work".³⁴

What Deutsch is perhaps suggesting here is that the viewer should not project his or her meaning onto the painting through interpretative thinking but let the painting speak for itself, on its own terms. It is a little like saying the meaning of Henri's painting is Henri's painting and not something else apart from it. A possible way of understanding this is to recognise that the so-called meaning of an artwork belongs to the artwork itself in the sense that the artwork is its own enclosed act of self-illumination. In Vedantic terms, it is an act of Self using whatever material is at hand to illuminates its own Face (so to speak), which when completed—at a moment of "right conclusion"—leaves the traces of Its own creative process as if revealing the contour lines on its own Face. In Vedantic spiritual practice this could be compared to having an obscure and passing glimpse of "Self" as pure knowledge creatively and ultimately involved in knowing its own nature, as named in the second characteristic of its tri-nature of Brahman as "Existence-*Knowledge* -Bliss".

Henri's comments to a fellow painter, after viewing one of his paintings, conveys something of this meaningful and self illuminating play of pure consciousness in the artwork:

The lines with which you have indicated the rain appear to have an easy haphazard look. But they cannot be haphazard for they have a fine rhythm they make me follow you into the spirit of the rain. They have the science of design in them and the science is, as it should be, beautifully covered.³⁵

And concerning another painting of seven pears (painter unknown) Henri wrote that it

evokes everything—cathedrals, beautiful ladies. Such was the spirit of the artist that for me he projected universal essentials of beauty. In his seven pears he evidently found a constructive principle and expressed it.³⁶

Henri's comment nicely leads onto Deutsch's last observation about an artwork, namely, "a work of art is beautiful to the degree to which it presents as its own presence a formal achievement, a radiance and splendour of form, that is appropriate to it".³⁷ Here the viewer is asked to "*discern* that the work is rightly beautiful", and this means, in the case of a painting, to pay close attention "to the colours, lines, shapes, and rhythm as they at once have their own integrity".³⁸ While discernment places emphasis on the viewer having an already developed sense of artistic judgement this is not an end in itself. The act of discernment is the contribution of the viewer while the artwork contributes guidance and control over the viewer's experience of itself. And when a feeling-tone is felt in the viewer that is supported by and felt to pervade and unify the artwork a heightened experience or "radiance" occurs and the work is declared by the viewer to be beautiful. In Vedanta, this declaration is described by the term *rasa*, which connotes a relishing or a tasting of the artwork. For John Plott *rasa* is an "ontological underlink between feeling-tone and its object/expression or embodiment".³⁹ But where does this *rasa* experience reside? For Deutsch "it is neither subjective nor objective; it neither belongs to the artwork or to the experiencer of it; rather it is the process of aesthetic perception itself [and] it defies spatial designation".⁴⁰ Numerous remarks are to be found throughout Henri's writing that point to the idea of beauty as *rasa*, as being essentially a "process of aesthetic perception". He writes:

Beauty is no material thing.
Beauty is not copied.
Beauty is the sensation of pleasure on the mind of the seer.
No *thing* is beautiful. But all things await the sensitive and imaginative mind that may be aroused to pleasurable emotion at the sight of them. This is beauty.⁴¹

In Vedanta, the kind of feeling tone that contributes to *rasa* is caused by the expression within the artwork of a generalized or universalized emotion and not a personal one. In Indian aesthetics it is usually agreed that there are eight such emotions that are drawn from the shared, human store of life-experience and these are delight, anger, humour, courage, sorrow, fear, disgust, and wonder. From a Vedantic perspective, the purpose in expressing these generalized emotions is for the cultivation of a "sensitive understanding" of life and to allow for possible personality transformation.⁴² There are passages in Henri's writing that

point to his preference for art to express the *rasa* of universalized delight (*rati*). For instance, when Henri tells his students,

A work of art ... is the manifest of [an artist's] very positive nature [caught] in great enjoyment.⁴³

Try to paint canvases that will show how interesting landscapes look to you—your pleasure in the thing.⁴⁴

Great works of art should look as though they were made in joy. Real joy is a tremendous activity; dull drudgery is nothing to it. The drudgery that kills is not half the work that joy is.⁴⁵

But within Vedantic understanding there is a higher *rasa* that is the essence of all aesthetic appreciation and that is *santarasa*, the peaceful or serene *rasa*. More specifically, *santarasa* is the realisation of silence that comes through the deep appreciation of any artwork. “Silence in art”, writes Deutsch,

is not empty, like a container into which one might put anything, rather the art-work that is right for itself participates in a silence that is the profoundest truth of being, the silence which is a dynamic harmony of all being and becoming.⁴⁶

While some of Henri's writing hints at this state, Thomas Merton finely expresses it after he was deeply moved on seeing the gigantic Buddhist statues of Polonnaruwa in Sri Lanka in 1968:

Looking at these figures I was suddenly, almost forcibly, jerked clean out of the habitual, half-tied vision of things, and an inner clearness, clarity, as if exploding from the rocks themselves, became evident and obvious. The queer *evidence* of the reclining figure, the smile, the sad smile of Ananda standing with arms folded (much more “imperative” than Da Vinci's Mona Lisa because completely simply and straightforward). The thing about all this is that there is no puzzle, no problem, and really no “mystery.” All problems are resolved and everything is clear, simple because what matters is clear. The rock, all matter, all life, is charged with *dharmakaya* [the cosmic body of the Buddha, the essence of all things] ... everything is emptiness and everything is compassion. I don't know when in my life I have ever had such a sense of beauty and spiritual validity running together in one aesthetic illumination ... I [now] know and have seen what I was obscurely looking for. I don't know what else remains but I have now seen and have pierced through the surface and have got beyond the shadow and the disguise.⁴⁷ (Merton, 1975, pp. 233-236, author's italics).

In the text, *An Inquiry into the Nature of the 'Seer' and the 'Seen'*, the word “*Rasa*” is directly equated with “the Supreme Self or the nature of the Highest Bliss”.⁴⁸ In Vedantic spiritual practice, the experience of *santarasa* could be compared to having an obscure and passing glimpse of “Self” as serene Bliss as named in the last characteristic of the tri-nature of Brahman as “Existence-Knowledge—*Bliss*.”

NOTES

1. Quoted in Roger Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy His Life and Work*, Princeton (NJ) 1977, 275.
2. Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, Honolulu, 1973, 3.
3. *Ibid.*, 4.
4. Shankara, *Crest-Jewel of Discrimination* (trans. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood), Hollywood, 1978, 8 (orig. publ. 1947).
5. *Ibid.*, 8.
6. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka: An Inquiry into the Nature of the 'Seer' and the 'Seen'* (trans. Swami Nikhilananda), Mysore, 1976.
7. Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*, Philadelphia, 1958.
8. Eliot Deutsch, *Studies in Comparative Aesthetics*, Hawaii, 1975; and *Essays on the Nature of Art*, New York, 1996.
9. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka*, v.
10. *Ibid.*, 1.
11. John-Paul Sartre, *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, New York, 1952, 52 & 58.
12. Deutsch, 1973, 15.
13. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka*, 8.
14. Deutsch, 1996, 21.
15. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka*, 6
16. *Ibid.*, 190.
17. L. Harris, *Neoplatonism and Indian Thought*, Norfolk-Virginia, 1982, 31.
18. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka*, 18.
19. *Ibid.*, 26.
20. *Ibid.*, 27.
21. Quoted in Lipsey, 224. (Author's use of upper case and italics.)
22. Deutsch, 1996, 33.
23. *Ibid.*, 32. (Author's use of italics.)
24. *Ibid.*, 33.
25. *Ibid.*, 31. (Author's use of italics.)
26. *Ibid.*, 31.
27. Henri, 159. (Author's use of italics.)
28. *Ibid.*, 226. (Author's use of italics.)
29. *Ibid.*, 26.
30. *Ibid.*, 16 & 17.
31. *Ibid.*, 67.
32. Deutsch, 1996, 33.
33. *Ibid.*, 31.
34. *Ibid.*, 32.
35. Henri, 181.
36. *Ibid.*, 227.
37. Deutsch, 1996, 33.
38. *Ibid.*, 32. (Author's use of italics.)
39. John Plott, *A Philosophy of Devotion*, Delhi, 1974, 282.
40. Deutsch, 1975, 2.
41. Henri, 79. (Author's use of italics.)
42. Deutsch, 1975, 11.
43. Henri, 16.
44. *Ibid.*, 18.
45. *Ibid.*, 175.
46. Deutsch, 1975, 18.

47. Thomas Merton, *The Asian Journals of Thomas Merton*, New York, 1975, 233-236. (Author's use of italics.)
48. *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka*, 33.

ZIG JACKSON'S INDIAN RESERVATION SERIES: DISCUSSING THE ISSUES OF LAND

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The year 2005 marked a long overdue recognition of Zig Jackson and the Native American community. The United States Library of Congress accepted twelve large silver gelatin prints by Jackson, a Native American of Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara descent, into their collection. This was the first time in history that photographs by a Native American had been acquired by Library of Congress, and not as an “exotic other” captured by the camera. Of the 18,000 images of Native Americans that the library owns, Jackson makes history for becoming the first Native person to stand behind the lens.¹

The series created in 1997, entitled *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation* consists of 20 images that show Jackson in full traditional Indian attire next to City Hall in San Francisco or industrial factories blowing smoke into the air.² Four of these photographs from the series that I will discuss today all show road signs and focus on the western American landscape. The signs mark the division between public land and Native American reservations. Instead of romanticizing the land, as was the norm with European-American photographers, Zig Jackson uses his images to deconstruct the idea of Euro-American possession, spirituality, and concept of land ownership. Words such as “property,” “ownership,” “progress,” and even “landscape” are alien to Native American language, thus he constructs the images to be analyzed from a native's viewpoint.³ Although in terms of composition these photographs are simple and direct, they speak volumes about the idea of land. His images also suggest that Native Americans can go against “traditional” Indian iconography and still create work accepted as conceptual and contemporary art today.

Jackson grew up on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota. Schooled first on the reservation, he left for the Intermountain Indian School in Utah, where he was then introduced to photography. Jackson has lived in an array of places—ranging from the reservation in North Dakota, to the plains of Oklahoma, the Southwestern mountains of Santa Fe and the bustling city of San Francisco—and he delights in taking road trips to visit the places which are important to Native Americans. He packs his car at the end of each semester and drives to Native American reservations throughout the country to learn the “etiquette” of the native peoples.⁴ He learns languages, social mannerisms, and cultural differences between tribes. According to Jackson, the Native peoples are as diverse as the land on which they live. What the people share, however, is an affinity for land which has been systematically taken away.⁵

In January of 1997, Jackson received a Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation Grant for excellence in the photographic arts. This allowed him to create the series *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation*.⁶ One example from this series is entitled *Entering Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation*. The image depicts land on both sides of a long and empty road somewhere on the Jicarilla Reservation in Northern New Mexico. The white road sign glaringly stands in the middle of the image. Jackson has captured much of the road, which takes up the entire bottom left fourth of the photograph. The gravel and pavement are a focal point of the photograph, and seem to gradually merge into the land itself. There are no fences or ditches to

separate the road from the unpaved land. The desolate land is covered with brushy vegetation, but it appears to grow nothing else. Although this image is just one of the four photographs that make up the series, the same themes of roads, signage, and bleak landscapes are reiterated in all.⁷

Although the four images of *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation* were shot in four different states throughout the West, they depict similarities of the land as well as the shared culture of Indian reservations. Each image focuses on an empty landscape and road signs which designate boundaries. In all of the images the viewer stands from the outside and looks into the designated land. The photographs capture feelings of emptiness, loneliness, and segregation from society. The reservations, or at least the houses and offices of each tribe, are not seen in the image, they are instead implied by the reservation's names prominently displayed on the signs. Only the land is visible, as well as a road which points the viewer in the reservation's direction. Neither the sort of breathtaking terrains such as Yellowstone National Park nor the stunning vistas of Santa Fe are shown. Instead, the photographed land is desolate and disconnected from urban life. The seemingly empty landscapes repeated in each of the four images suggest that this land is the unwanted parts of the country to which Native Americans have been restricted.

Another common thread among the images of *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation* is the irony of the invisible lines that each of the road signs define. The signs, with phrases like *Entering Wind River Indian Reservation*, denote the "boundaries," which divide the Native American's land from the rest of state. On one hand, the signs claim power of ownership for those who live upon the reservation. However, despite this delegation of property to the Wind River tribe, this land is not sought after. Instead, it is land which embodies harsh climates, difficult terrain, and unpicturesque landscapes. Regardless of aesthetics, at one time Native American land extended far beyond these small borders in which they are now confined. Jackson's images depict the boundaries of Indian Reservations which mark the irony of confining people to only a fraction of land which was once theirs. Through these images, Jackson gives the viewer a glimpse of the central importance of the land from the Native American perspective.

The landscape that Native Americans regard as home is more than just the layout of the terrain. In Jackson's photograph, *Entering Wind River Indian Reservation*, the land consists of a rocky crags and sparse grass. In the image, the one man-made incursion is the road that recedes back into the distant mountains. This central Wyoming land appears unusable and even inhospitable. The area shown is beautiful in its own right—for tall buttes loom in the background—but the arid environment poses a challenge for living inhabitation. This Wyoming landscape does not possess rushing rivers or snow-capped mountains often associated with the region. Instead, the area seems dry and harsh, unlike the vacationing mecca of Yellowstone, which is only 200 miles to the North.

According to Native American authors, Patricia Clark Smith and Paula Gunn Allen, "land" to Native Americans, has much spiritual significance outside of aesthetic beauty:

The land is not only landscape as Anglo writers often think of it—arrangements of butte and bosque, mountain and river valley, light and cloud shadow. For American Indians, the land encompasses butterfly and ant, man and woman, adobe wall and gourd vine, trout beneath the river water, rattler

deep in his winter den, the North Star and the constellations, the flock of sandhill cranes flying too high to be seen against the sun. The land is Spider Woman's creation; it is the whole cosmos.⁸

Zig Jackson's photograph does not show the beautiful buttes and bosques; instead the image highlights the road and signage. This is not a landscape depicted from a prospect view, which overlooks glorious hills or breathtaking canyon gorges, rather, the view is from the ditch along side of the road.

Home, for many, means a place that one may call his or her own. Home, for Euro-Americans, means area, a plot of land, or a house built upon an exact place. Land, as property, is a tangible place that one may claim to own. Jackson makes issues of "property" visible through his photograph entitled, *Entering Fort Berthold Indian Reservation* (1997). The scene shows oceans of prairie grassland with a road leading off into the distance. The road is only a small detail, for the central focus of the image is the road sign reading, "Entering Fort Berthold Indian Reservation." Aside from the road and the sign, there are no buildings, homes, or structures showing human habitation; there is only wide open North Dakotan prairie land as far as the eye can see. This North Dakotan land is not an arbitrary reservation Jackson chosen at random, instead, this photograph depicts the entrance into Fort Berthold, Jackson's homeland.⁹ Although the land appears serene, it has a long history of tragedy and invasion.

Acknowledging the importance of this particular land to Jackson is fundamental to understanding his images. The Fort Berthold Reservation, in North Dakota, is the home of three tribes: the Mandan, the Hidatsa, and the Arikara. According to Native history, the Mandan peoples arrived to the area first, gradually moving up the Missouri River and settling in the region around 1000 A.D.¹⁰ The Hidatsa—historically a nomadic tribe joined the Mandan in 1600 A.D. The powerful nation of the Mandan and Hidatsa tribes prospered up until smallpox ravaged the village sometime before 1796, and again in 1837.¹¹ The first infestation reduced the Mandan/Hidatsa tribes significantly, and the remainder traveled and were taken in by the Arikara. All three tribes intermarried, and settled together forming a village at Fort Berthold.¹² They became known as the "Three Affiliated Tribes."

The land of the Three Affiliated Tribes was severely affected by the encroachment of whites. In 1874, Edward P. Smith, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, encouraged the Three Tribes to leave Fort Berthold and resettle in Indian Territory in modern day Oklahoma. The Three Tribes complied to a degree, but instead of moving their entire tribes, they sent a delegation to Oklahoma country. The delegates returned to Fort Berthold pleased with the new Oklahoma land, for Fort Berthold was plagued with an arid climate, poor water, drought, and grasshoppers. However, the remaining tribe refused to leave their homeland of Fort Berthold, for they did not want to lose the attachment to their homeland which was the place of their ancestors.¹³ Land, to the Three Tribes, was far more than soil and rock, thus they decided to stay.

The land debate between the Three Tribes and the government regarding the Fort Berthold Reservation continued into the twentieth century with the construction of the Garrison Dam in 1946. That year, the Corps of Army Engineers created a dam on the Missouri River which flooded 550 square miles around North Dakota and displaced more than 900 Native American families.¹⁴ Of the many reservations that were affected, the Fort Berthold area was the

hardest hit. The Three Affiliated Tribes alone lost more than one-fourth of their land—150,000 acres—and the remainder was divided into five areas all separated by bodies of water. Over 80% of the families from Fort Berthold were forced to relocate. Many people also lost their jobs, for the majority was either farmers or ranchers, and 94% of their agricultural and ranching land was swallowed under water.¹⁵

The tragedy of this loss was multifaceted. Along with losing their farm and ranching land, they also lost their neighborhoods with the flood. The land before the dam, known as Elbowoods, contained the heartbeat of their community. This land housed the Indian Bureau, the hospital, the Indian school, and was a common place for all three tribes to gather. After the flood, they had lost the land which was a central part of their lives and the home of their people for nearly a millennium. Their ties to their land, both religious and emotional, were nothing that could ever be compensated for or replaced.¹⁶

Land, to the Fort Berthold Native Americans, means more than just property, for property can be replaced, but land cannot. This had been the place of their ancestors for a millennium. It was “theirs” only because they loved, lived, and fought for it, only to have it swallowed up by a man-made lake. Jackson’s photograph points out this arbitrary nature of property; the “owner” does not necessarily give individuals power over the land. Therefore, unfortunately the Native American “owner” of the Fort Berthold Reservation, despite the road signs claiming this land to be his or her property, does not have a loud enough voice to be heard.

According to many Native Americans, having land does not incorporate the “ownership” idea that Euro-Americans enforce. Euro-Americans have claimed territory from the beginning of their invasion. Land reclamation continued after the pioneers, throughout westward expansion, and into today. Today, Native Americans fight not only for the “ownership” of their actual land, but what lies upon and beneath it. They fight against nuclear intrusions, oil and mineral excavation, and logging, fishing, and hunting rights.¹⁷ Lucy Lippard defines land in two ways: as a “the raw material for habitation and use,” and as a “distinct spatial and spiritual element.”¹⁸ The latter definition—the Native American understanding of the land—is suggested ironically in the landscapes of Jackson’s work. In the image, *Entering Fort Berthold Reservation*, the road sign points out the arbitrary ownership of the land. The sign, put in place by the state, divides the federal and private land. No longer does the land hold spirituality or have an essence; those few words on the sign transformed the land into a commodity.

Regardless of tribal affiliation, many Native Americans have a passionate connection to the land, and ownership is not the reason for their love. In 1854, Chief Seattle, who lived in the area of Washington State that now bears his name, poignantly spoke about Native American love of the land:

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the Indian. We are part of the earth and it is part of us.¹⁹

Thus, the land is not there for our use and disposal. Instead, the earth should be appreciated and respected for the gifts it gives. More recently, Native American authors George Longfish

and Joan Randall claim land to be the “interwoven aspects of place, history, culture, physiology, a people, and their sense of themselves and their spirituality.”²⁰ This connection to the earth is far from superficial. Native Americans’ attachment to the land is deeply rooted in the memory of their ancestors, the trees and animals that live upon it, and the priceless nature of the place. According to Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, a painter, the reason that Native Americans have an attachment to a place, even if they move away to urban environments, is because a tribe’s culture is rooted in a specific area. The foods, the ceremonies, and the art of Native culture are all created from the plants, the animals, and the land upon which it is rooted.²¹

In complete contrast to the Native American spiritual attachment of the land, Euro-Americans have historically regarded the earth a place to dig, drill, gather from, and sell. When one owns land, he or she claims rights to what lies on top or beneath the soil. The Fort Berthold Reservation’s land is more valuable than meets the eye, for oil was first discovered there in 1953.²² Though “ownership” of land means the “owners” have rights on whether to dig or drill, in 1997 an amendment was passed which entitled the Secretary of the Interior to have leasing rights of minerals on Native land. The amendment was to permit the “Secretary of the Interior to approve any mineral lease or agreement affecting individually-owned Indian land.... The amendment also authorizes the Secretary to execute any mineral lease or agreement affecting individually-owned Indian land on behalf of an Indian owner who is deceased.”²³ Therefore, deciding how to use the land was no longer a decision of the Native peoples of Fort Berthold, for the decisions to drill have been usurped and made by the U.S. Government.

Five years later, the National Energy Technology Laboratory, affiliated with the United States government, proposed a plan to “explore the potential of the Fort Berthold Reservation and create a market to attract independent [oil] operators.”²⁴ Due to the oil beneath the earth, the land was found “attractive for development.”²⁵ Ironically, although the oil officially belongs to the people of the Fort Berthold Reservation, for it lies under *their* land, they are only able to claim less than half of the proceeds.²⁶

Jackson’s photograph alludes to this irony of “ownership,” for even with the signs that stake claim for ownership in the land, the Native Americans do not have full rights. Although incongruous to the Native American tradition of the sacredness of the land, the logistics of modern life requires boundaries of ownership to be set. However, despite Jackson’s statement about the absurdity of ownership, his reservation’s claim to oil—regardless if residents have issues against drilling or want to keep profits for themselves—are not decisions they are allowed to make. The government, again, decides for them what they can and cannot own. Therefore, the arbitrary nature of “ownership” from the Native American perspective is illustrated by Jackson’s road sign’s boundaries.

Ownership of the land can lead to progress, through oil drilling, road construction, or new development building. In terms of any of the aforementioned, progress, despite the complete transformation of the land from natural to developed, is the key to achieving American success. Oil, new developments, and construction projects create money and jobs. To contradict progress, traditional features of Native American life—the land, the ceremonies, the ancestors—should still be respected. However, progress on Native American reservations can also be seen as a positive aspect. Native Americans deserve quality schools and

sustainable jobs upon their reservations. Only when corporate America comes wanting the oil, minerals, and trees upon their land does progress take a turn for the worse.

Jackson's image of *Entering Fort Berthold Reservation* also alludes to progress. Whereas this land once had been wide open prairie as far as the eye could see, it now contains a road. A road can be seen as progressive: a lifeline to civilization. A road can also be invasive by bringing people to farm, to drill, and to use and abuse the once pristine land. Jackson's image does not favor one aspect or the other with the inclusion of the road. Instead, he illustrates that progressive uses of the land have both positive and negative results.

The landscape, to the Native American, consists of more than progress, property, and ownership. Often, it is the case that roads are planned and built in Native American communities without regarding the desires of the peoples. In one example, in 1987, the United States Forest Service had plans to build a road directly through the Chimney Rock area in Six Rivers National Forest in Eureka, California. The road would cause complete destruction of the land that was used by Native Americans for religious ceremonies. To fight this destruction, the Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association took the builders to court.²⁷ The Native Americans lost the case, and the court decided that the Forest Service was allowed to build on the land, for they claimed that the government could not operate "if it were required to satisfy every citizen's religious needs and desires."²⁸ Due to the government's ruling, as recent as 1987, the Native American's religious practices were severely altered because of the destruction of their land.

As shown through the work of Zig Jackson, many Native Americans view the land through its spiritual value and not its monetary worth. The issues that his work brings up—landscapes, ownership, property, and progress—are concepts that non-Native Americans should note. Jackson's work gives Natives and non-Natives a necessary look into how land is valued by those who call reservations home. One can only hope that more Native American photographers will have work accepted into the Library of Congress, for seeing the world through a Native American perspective can give non-Natives a new appreciation for land.

NOTES

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2. The four photographs discussed in this paper were not part of the series obtained by the Library of Congress.
3. Lucy Lippard, "The Color of the Wind," in *Our Land/Ourselves*, ed. Deborah Ward (Albany, NY: University Art Gallery, 1990), 7.
4. Liz Kay, "Road Signs, Tribal Lands and Hot Dogs," *Press Release for the Andrew Smith Gallery (August 17 - September 17, 2001)*, <http://www.andrewsmithgallery.com/exhibitions/zigjackson/zigpress.html>.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Jackson, *Exhibition Catalogue: Zig Jackson: Native American Photographer*. This grant also allowed him an exhibition. The exhibition of *Entering Zig's Indian Reservation*, was shown at the American Indian Contemporary Arts Center in San Francisco from October to mid-November of 1997.
7. Another Native American artist who incorporates signage into their work is Edgar Heap of Birds.
8. Patricia Clark Smith and Paula Gunn Allen, "Earthly Relations, Carnal Knowledge," in *Desert Is No Lady*, ed. Vern Norwood and Janic Monk (New Haven: Yale University, 1987), 176.

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12. Adrian Dunn, "A History of Old Fort Berthold, North Dakota," *History* 30, no. 4 (1963): 158.
13. Lawson, "Federal Water Projects and Indian Lands: The Pick-Sloan Project, a Case Study," 27.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Ron Meyer, "Fort Berthold and the Garrison Dam," *North Dakota History* 35 (1968): 234.
16. Lippard, "The Color of the Wind," 8.
17. Lucy Lippard, *Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: New Press, 1998), 14.
18. Deborah Ward, ed., *Our Land/Ourselves: American Indian Contemporary Artists* (Albany, NY: University Art Gallery, 1990), V.
19. George C. Longfish and Joan Randall, "Contemporary Native American Art: Contradictions in Indian Territory," *Journal of Arts Management and Law* 18, no. 2 (1988): 24.
20. Ward, ed., *Our Land/Ourselves: American Indian Contemporary Artists*, V.
21. Bradford B. Williams, "Status of Mineral Resource Information for the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, North Dakota," (United States Bureau of Mines, North Dakota Geological Survey Administrative Report, 1978), BIA-40. The oil was found and first drilled by the Pan American Petroleum Corporation.
22. U.S. Senate. *Amendment to Permit Mineral Leasing Rights*, 105th Cong., 1st sess., 1997, S. 1079, 105-139. This bill (S. 1079) was amending the mineral leasing act of 1924. According to the 1924 bill, which "authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to lease the unallotted lands within *any* Indian reservation in the States of Arizona, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming, for the mining of gold, silver, copper, and other metalliferous minerals, including magnesite, gypsum, limestone, and asbestos." The bill does not state rights to North Dakota or the drilling for oil. *See more, Opinions of the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior Relating to Indian Affairs* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1924) (2005 [cited May 4, 2007]); available from <http://thorpe.ou.edu/solicitor.html>.
23. Although this statement was written in 2002, five years after the publication of Jackson's series, the knowledge about the reservation's oil was known since 1953. However, the amendment made in 1997 did coincide with the creation of the series. I do not know if Jackson had this in mind when he was creating this photograph.
24. *Demonstration of Integrated Remote Sensing Analysis to Identify Oil Exploration Leads in the Williston Basin, Fort Berthold Indian Reservation* (2004 [cited April 4 2007]); available from http://www.netl.doe.gov/technologies/oil-gas/Petroleum/projects/EP/Explor_Tech/15453.htm.
25. Dale Wetzal, "New Bill Would Regulate Oil Drilling on Reservation Land," *The Bismark Tribune* (March 21, 2007). According to this newspaper article, North Dakota governor, John Hoeven, suggested the legislation and has been involved in drafting the bills. The bill allows the state to regulate the drilling, and gives Gov. Hoeven authority to negotiate the revenues.
26. They took action against the Secretary of Agriculture, Richard Lyng. The court case was labeled, "Lyng v. Northwest Indian CPA."
27. Lyng v. Northwest Indian CPA, The OYEZ Project, 485 U.S. 439 (1988), http://www.oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1987/1987_86_1013/; March 27, 2007.

SPIRITUALITY AND SYMBOLISM IN THE PETROGLYPHS OF THE SOUTHWEST

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Petroglyphs are intentional marks made on natural geological surfaces, in situ. Coined by the German scholar, Richard Andree, in the late 1800s, *petro* is the Greek word for stone and *glyph* means to carve or engrave. Petroglyphs are symbols drawn by prehistoric cultures. They were used by the ancients as a means of conveying a message. Petroglyphs are pecked into patina of stone, chisled with antler, or etched with the acidic juice of cactus (Harris, 1995). Percussion, abrasion, scraping, and grinding are methods for creating petroglyphs. Most petroglyphs are engraved on cliffs or rocks that are covered or “patinated,” with a coat of “desert varnish.” Desert varnish is a thin layer of brown or bluish black material that is believed to be the residue of bodies of dead bacteria, which have been impregnated with iron and manganese salts leached from the rock itself over an untold number of years. By cutting through the desert varnish the artist exposes the lighter rock underneath, thus creating the picture. Petroglyphs are dated by measuring the discrepancy in color and accumulation of desert varnish between the indented, lighter area and the darker, coated area of the rock surface.

For the purpose of this paper, concentration will be on petroglyphs found in the four corners of the Southwest, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. The makers of petroglyphs in the Southwest were primarily Puebloan peoples. The Anasazi, Hohokum, Fremont, Mimbre, Mogollon, Havasupi, Hopi and Pima Nations, Navaho, and Zuni can trace evidence of their ancestors through the petroglyphs. The practice of making petroglyphs is on-going into the present day for the Hopi and Pima Nations, the Navaho, the Zuni, and others. Thousands of petroglyph sites are found in the Southwest, though most states in the United States can report petroglyphs of their own.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Study of Petroglyphs has been riddled with difficulties and gaps, due to the changing nature of the relationship between the white man and the Native American. As an early pioneer in the field in 1893, Garrick Mallery wrote, “Picture-Writing of the American Indians,” published by the Smithsonian (Reprinted 1972). In the 1920's, STYLES of petroglyphs, design elements, and methods of creation were recognized. In the 1960's and 70's, systematic research began. Development of meticulous site recording procedures were refined at that time. In the 1980's and 1990's, came intensified interest and data collection. For the first time, Native American living experts were consulted. The oral history and tradition, and the role of petroglyphs in contemporary Native American culture was finally considered.

Very little has been written about petroglyphs in the field of art education. Dr. Peter Smith wrote a single article in *Art Education* (1999), most of it about the lack of research thus far. Recently there has been a second article in *Art Education*, by Paula Eubanks (2007), with some recommendations for using the historical treasures in teaching art to grades 4-8.

SPIRITUALITY

According to the beliefs of the traditionalist modern Native American, the spirituality of the ancients can be summed up with the simple realization that everything is and was spirit (Harris, 1995). The belief system of the ancients can be demonstrated in the following chart:

Belief System of the Ancients

God(s)	All Equally Spirit
Humans	
Nature (Earth, Air, Water)	
Animals	

This credence differs from other systems of belief, such as Christianity or Catholicism, where God, The Creator, is presumed to rise above animals, nature, and humans in terms of spirit. Keep in mind, that Native American belief would dictate that a rock is as spiritual as is man. The belief places a balance between all things. Man and nature are equals. Man's place in the universe is on the same level as animal, mineral, vegetable, and even air.

SYMBOLISM

A dozen samples of symbols of spirituality from Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, have been selected to be examined in this article. The meanings of the symbols are ascribed meanings, resulting from past research that makes it possible to generalize across location. The symbols date from A.D. 750-1450, and are identified as follows:

1. The Place of Emergence. Three concentric square shapes, rounded corners, one surrounding another.
2. Life Force. An embryo form, similar to the familiar dark half of the Yin Yang.
3. Mutual Responsibility. Two opposing, squared off, horizontal "U" shapes, one overlapping the other by nearly half.
4. Kiva, or Ceremonial Center. Reminiscent of the outline of a basketball court with a large dot in the center. Middle of lower side of the square interrupted in the center like a short hallway, leading out.
5. Good/Life. Like a plant stalk with a thick stem, and two pairs of thick simplified, inverted horn-shaped leaves, attached to stem. Upper leaves reduced in size and above bottom. Symmetrical sides of design.
6. The Creator. Two separate circles, each topped with an alaph. Three dots within each circle for the eyes and mouth.
7. Life. Outline of rectangle, opening in the center of the base line with two parallel lines extended from the opening up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the top line.

8. The Creator. Darkened Circle with white lines equally crossed from the center, out $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to four sides.
9. Communicating to Spirits. Black circle heads, either open or closed with single rung ladders attached, and stemming upward for twice the length of the “head.” Most complex of the symbols chosen.
10. Evil/Bad. Outline of circle with one half filled in black and one half filled with small (rather than tiny) dots (to cover 50% of the area).
11. Snake Dance. Figurative profile of three Native Americans dancing in ceremonial headdress holding carved sticks.
12. God of Death. Dark outline of circle, negative space in center of two eyeballs and mouth, mouth and eyeballs individually surrounded by second set of circles.

These twelve symbols embody some of the more common, yet most significant spiritual symbols used in the petroglyphs. The symbols can appear singularly or in large volume on rock or cliff faces in dramatic, wide open settings. Water or water sources are often present near the sites. Ceremonies and Spiritual awakenings took place at the sites to go along with the carvings.

The visual qualities of the symbols are simplification, repetition, symmetry, and repletion. There are parallels in the symbolism of petroglyphs to natural artistic development, the kind that occurs in all human beings between the ages of four and eight years old. Symbols stand for more, rather than less, to all. Symbols are generalizable to populations in use, function, and interpretation.

In graphic design, prevalent in art in the media, and therefore, in visual culture, these same qualities are a contemporary standard. Regard for the visual qualities of simplification, repetition, symmetry, and repletion has been heightened in contemporary visual culture, because of the global appeal of the visual qualities and their comprehend-ability. Symbols are the consolidation of multiple voices producing a phenomenon of unified understanding.

INTERPRETATION AND RESPONSE

Perhaps the most valuable response to petroglyphs is that **PEOPLE WERE HERE BEFORE US**. Acquiring a sense of the ancient past, along with evidence of the continuous thread of traditional mark-making can give students and student-artists a better sense of their own place in history. Knowledge of the past helps us place ourselves where we belong in the continuum and develop our own identities in the present. Petroglyphs were used for purposes of identity. Either they identified “place,” as in this is a highly spiritual place, or “ownership,” as in this territory is inhabited by a specific group of people.

Today, we think of art as a form of personal expression, something created by the artist for others to view. There is no evidence through either archeology, ethnography, or cross-cultural studies that petroglyphs are meant to have that kind of artist-audience relationship. However, they are a form of message, saying, “I was here,” and a narrative, which if not addressed to an audience, is than addressed to thyself, nature, or the gods.

Ceremonial functions involving hunting, stalking prey or spiritual awakenings are connected to petroglyphs. Symbols were made to summon a spirit, to call it from the sky, along with other offerings, prayer, ceremonies, and/or smoke. Pecking the rock released the spirit from it. Shamanism was practiced, and drawn symbols may later appear in a waking vision or a dream. Myths, death, health, and social obligations were all themes and functions of petroglyphs.

Interpretation of petroglyphs is often a matter of conjecture, because some are over a thousand years old. As these early cultures died out, or evolved, their messages may have been lost or altered in meaning with passing generations (Harris, 1995). Still, we are obligated to seek the most authentic information about petroglyphs and to take the finest care of these historic treasures. As researchers in the field of art, as art educators, who analyze drawings, we can have a part in interpreting the meaning of petroglyphs. The cautionary advice is to keep an open mind and to make efforts toward a broader interpretation, rather than a narrow, an exact, or a definitive one. We are not the authorities on these early cultures, nor should we pretend to be. Yet, if our goal is to gain some insight into these treasures, than that is a worthy goal.

Turning to the descendants of those who wrote them, we still find discrepancy. Though some theories say that most Native Americans of the Southwest came from one people, today we have many tribes and nations. Each group has their own interpretations of the symbols that were drawn by their ancestors. What a Hopi sees may differ from what a Zuni reads or a Havasupai interprets, despite agreement that the Puebloans were the ancestors of all three.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

Petroglyphs long experienced a kind of orphan status. First, they were the province of the scientist, but scientists were dissatisfied with them because the archaeologists couldn't satisfactorily date them. They were carved in rock surfaces that straddled multiple strata. At the same time, the art world had not intervened, as petroglyphs did not conform to the function of art, but more to that of artifact. As we study art and artifacts with a multi-centric, rather than a Euro-centric view, art historians and art educators need to give petroglyphs a fresh look.

Young students may be able to relate to petroglyphs as a form of "tagging" (establishing identity) or graffiti in ancient times. The importance of the PLACE in petroglyphs, preceded the creation of them. In other words, where it was was considered BEFORE what was going to be carved was decided. The author's experience with young children reveals a constant search for identity among them, so in that way the students can find common intent with the ancients in the message of visual art.

The ambiguity of the interpretation of petroglyphs supports cultural tolerance, and an open-minded attitude toward defining art. Turning to the descendants of those who made them for information, advice, and interpretation will be an important factor. While theories say that most Native Americans of the Southwest came from one people, today we have many tribes and nations, each with their own interpretation of the symbols that were drawn by their ancestors. What a Hopi sees may differ from what a Zuni reads or a Havasupai interprets, despite agreement that the Puebloans were the ancestors of all three. Gaps and lacks in

research make the study of petroglyphs a dynamic field with plenty of room for new theory. Perhaps the ancients did not leave behind a decoding key, or perhaps we have not yet found it.

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WHAT CENTRAL AMERICAN INDIGENOUS CULTURES MAY SUGGEST ABOUT ART AND SPIRITUALITY

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I am an active painter who has taught studio art for many years. I have also had rich and persistent opportunities to do field research in rapidly acculturating indigenous tribal communities in Central America. The prospect of participating in this conference has stimulated in me new reflections regarding intersections between spiritual issues, the challenges of doing meaningful scholarly work, personal artistic practice, and the educational formation of young artists. To this end, this paper is not so much scholarly as it is synthetic. From original field research I will present two distinct shamanic forms of drawing: one related to healing, the other a curious kind of charting of time, space and human consciousness. Both examples provide provocative outsider points of view that are, I believe, relevant to the topic at hand. In this light, by inference and in some cases explicitly, I will discuss persistent issues faced by First World artists as they construct and reconstruct their artistic identities. I am most especially interested in speaking to those who experience, or vie to experience, extraordinary states of consciousness through their own art or that of others. The special relevance of this line of thinking is, I believe, in acknowledging that we are in a cultural milieu that apparently finds it difficult to discuss spirituality as something free of specific religious entanglements, rather than viewing it as a universal aspect of consciousness and the dynamic phenomenology of beings in the process of becoming increasingly aware. I will conclude with a few additional remarks about my hopes for the future of art education.

In a few isolated places in the world, indigenous groups still exist as relative holdouts against the general tide of global acculturation, aggressive missionary activity and tourism that is homogenizing and flattening cultural diversity. This phenomenon extends, of course, to the making of things and related spiritual assumptions and practices that animate the will to create. My thesis is that from an interdisciplinary perspective these diminishing communities and their cultural patterns present provocative conceptual, ontological and therefore spiritual examples that may potentially lead to fresh examinations of some of our assumptions, hopefully leading to searching questions about our construction of artistic culture. I am most assuredly not presenting an argument for the appropriation of other cultural and spiritual traditions or their art forms, nor am I hoping for another wave of earnest, though faux urban artists-shamans. Rather, I suggest that through thoughtful analysis and introspection we might find fresh reason to challenge unexamined assumptions about who we are, what we are doing and for whom we are doing it. I mean this as a gentle tug at the sleeve, to momentarily draw attention away from the usual way we think about the making, teaching and viewing of art. While we are justifiably concerned about the loss of planetary bio-diversity and the alarming implications of global climate change—and though it may seem all but insignificant by comparison—artists too should be concerned about the loss of diverse spiritual perspectives that inform artistic will and identity.

For more than twenty years I have had the privilege of working in the field with Sorbonne-educated Costa Rican ethnomusicologist, Dr. Jorge Luis Acevedo. Together we have attended to the integrated arts and spiritual practices of several rapidly acculturating indigenous tribal groups in the hinterlands of Costa Rica, specifically the Boruca, Maleku, Térraba, Bribri-

Cabécar and Guaymí. Two of these groups have become all but assimilated by Latino peasant culture during the years of our study, the others live in poverty in remote areas, exploited and struggling, now increasingly opposite the cheery faces of zealous missionaries who are eager to convert them from their pagan ways.

Nearly everyone in these cultures is an artist or craftsman. Handicraft provides subsistence income between harvest seasons, and so entire families work together. Until recently, most such art and craft has been anonymous as collective expressions of tribal identity. Increasingly, however, those with particular skills, affirmed by market interest, have started to sign their work and develop a nascent sense of local, if not touristic, celebrity.

Though my colleague and I have attended to the full range of weavings, carvings, paintings, beadwork and other crafts, we have given special emphasis to the more esoteric art forms of shamans. Our first example is from the Cabécar and Bribri, two closely related and famously fierce and insular groups living in the Talamanca Mountains of the Cordillera Central of Costa Rica. These widely scattered communities have retained a particularly modest sense about the place of humankind within an elaborate cosmology, which in turn is correlated with a complex hierarchy of spiritual roles, shamans if you will, though frankly the term is too general to signify very much with these groups. They include the herbalist who keeps a pharmacological garden, on through a wide range of *awápa* “doctors” who serve in ways that range from simple healers to psychotherapists, social workers, political advisors, *brujo*-witches, even prophets. Special individuals are chosen in childhood by accomplished *awápa* shamans to live and train with them as apprentices. Personal characteristics, such as memory, intelligence and what they simply call “resistance” are determinative in the selection. Training lasts for seven to ten years, culminating in an all-night oral examination by a panel of advanced *awápa*. Graduation is not guaranteed, and retesting is infrequent. Successful apprentices memorize many spiritual songs in a special shamanic dialect since they are believed to be the means by which forces of nature are called forth. Such chants are also rhythmically effective in moving the consciousness of patient and shaman out of daily awareness into a transcendental state.

Mature practicing *awápa* distinguish themselves by their special abilities to diagnose illness, apply herbal remedies, sing healing chants for hours on end, fabricate various plastic arts, musical instruments and medicinal collars, even to listen to pairs of magical *sia*, “male” and “female” stones that speak. Others carve special funerary benches and human effigies.

The most exalted spiritual practitioners are the mysterious *usékra*, believed to have dominion over weather, earthquakes and the mood and moral fiber of entire communities. The *usékra* normally live in a special enclave in the mountains. There they take responsibility for the health and well being of humankind as a whole, extending the “self” to the unified natural and supernatural order; personal identities having expanded beyond the person as they have become interwoven with an extensive and indeterminate cosmology in which daily individual consciousness affords but a glimmer of the larger fabric of existence. Respect for such individuals is measured by their efficacy, not as a result of self-assertion or celebrity. At all levels, *awapa* are believed to possess the ability to transform themselves into their *nagual* animal spirits, their alter ego, or *otro yo*.

My theory is that the hallowed notion of self-expression as commonly used in First World culture hides a great many unexamined connotations and imprecise notions, many of which

are starkly opposed to spiritual values such as the willing suspension of pettiness and the capacity to identify with otherness. I choose to accept the seemingly farfetched notion of the nagual, the other me in dynamic self-transformation as a psychological and spiritual challenge, quite apart from accepting indigenous local beliefs literally. To get outside my little self, the little me I was before, to surrender in ecstasy, passing into a larger field of being—that is the formula, the challenge and the transferable link to spiritual practice in art.

A very special art form resolutely not grounded in self-expression is the Bribri and Cabécar *ulú*, healing cane on which cosmology is writ large and diagnostic references to the human patient is but a practical necessity. The identity of the artist-practitioner is even less important. Humility permeates all levels. Illness is not something the healer seeks to eradicate so much as relocate out of the body, returning it into nature in respect for the animal spirits believed to be the *dueños*, literally the owners of what are to us, when displaced, diseases. The intent to heal by means of killing that which is not ours to take, even microbes or parasites, runs deeply against animistic beliefs. In the case of the *ulú*, the object of art, if you will, mythologizes the patient, not the artist, reconstructing and realigning the patient's identity as spiritual forces are wooed, named and fixed.

Awápa draw on the canes in stages over four nights of song, curative touching of the patient's body by the hands of the healer and the tip of the cane. Herbal smoke is passed around the body as a *lipia*, a cleansing. Sessions are usually conducted in a *U-suré* conical roundhouse, a three-dimensional symbol and mirror image of the unseen subterranean underworld, the *inframundo*. Individual markings relate to the *awá's* diagnosis, the clan of the patient, and the necessary remedy as perceived by the entranced healer. *Awápa* handle the canes with great tenderness, sometimes whispering to them as if they were sentient beings. The drawing are not considered objects of display, rather they are usually quietly buried in order to return their absorbed spirits to the earth. When one asks an *awá* to name a specific character drawn on the cane, the name of the image is a passionate and ethereal song, beckoning forces of nature.

Our second example is from the Guaymí tribe that lives along the Panamanian and Costa Rican border. Subsistence farmers, in recent years they have also become prolific painters and weavers as well, working in paint on rough bark cloth with vegetable dyes, transforming the traditional means of decorating barkcloth clothing into framable rectangular pictures, suitable for tourist consumption.

The most sacred drawings done by shamans are however, more relevant to our interests, though they are more humble, usually done on cheap school notebooks in pencil or ballpoint pen. After years of interviews, my research colleague and I have come to the startling understanding that Guaymí circular shamanic drawings allude simultaneously to temporal events and spatial objects; that the round shape of is considered one of innumerable possible cross-sections of the world tree, the axis mundi. Such sacred journals are known as “*America Libre*” drawings. The elaboration of them is considered proof of the spiritual efficacy of the *sukia*-shaman, and apprentices memorize the drawings of their masters until they can faithfully reproduce them. Like other divinatory Guaymí drawings, they are considered oracles gleaned through trance and then returned to the community as spiritual maps, combining temporal and spatial elements. Indeed in Guaymí culture, so great is the importance of the spiritual leader that when he or she leaves the community, however briefly, an effigy must remain lashed to the center post of his or her hut to insure that the world the

community inhabits will not collapse. As *sukia* Pedro Bejarano makes clear, his responsibilities as a spiritual leader radiates outward from himself as an individual to his family, the collective, and ultimately to the natural and unseen realms of existence.

What of this interesting if strange ethnographic material is transferable to us today? As James Elkins asserts correctly, religion is indeed in a “strange place” in the international art world and its academies; to which I say thank goodness. That searching, even searing discourse about spirituality in art is also in a strange and inarticulate, even a mute place, is decidedly not a good thing. We are, I believe, in need of thoughtful distinctions and more articulate ways of discussing matters related to the phenomenology of what we do and who we become when we are doing it. Indeed, we are in a compromised climate if we are to assume all legitimate art and all perceptions related to its making are based on consciousness at its lowest and most mundane common denominator, as if art delivers its content to mankind with about the same depth as CNN informs travelers in an airport. Taking a page from the natives, we should, I believe, begin to take responsibility for the psychic and somatic effects of our work on others and, moreover to begin constructing knowledge about why and how sensory experience, including art, affects the body. While we cannot and should not try to transplant exotic paradigms, we may be inspired by them to create a more sympathetic and critical intellectual environment through art that more deeply values global consciousness and the human yearning for wonder, redemptive aesthetic arrest, and self-transformation.

A few years ago I was on a panel at USC with, among others, critic and art celebrity Dave Hickey discussing the subject of beauty in contemporary art. We didn’t agree about much as I recall, but we did about the notion that we would do well to rescue beauty from triviality in art criticism and art education. He went so far as to assert that beauty would be the issue of the nineties, a notion repeated in his 1994 essay *Enter the Dragon, On the Venacular of Beauty*. I am not sure Hickey’s challenge has resulted in much. I find that it lacks a robust articulation of states of consciousness in which beauty—even terrible beauty—is most vivid. I am thinking of those perceptual states in which aesthetic experience hushes and mind rattles the bones, in short: aesthetic arrest as the antechamber to spiritual expansion. Given the drift of global religious radicalisms, the topic of our conference may be taken as an additional if not prior challenge to that of rescuing beauty, one that is still more difficult and I believe more urgent.

I am concerned that even now, outside the intellectual comforts that intellectual conferences such as this afford, a vital distinction between spirituality and religion is not commonly making its way into critical and academic discourse. For teaching artists to be shy or unprepared to discuss unnamed states of consciousness amounts to a tacit betrayal of what is for most teaching artists their core *raison d’être*. The continuing confusion of the terms religion and spirituality—even by Elkins in the conclusion of his otherwise promising 2004 title on the subject—is to me disappointing but points to at least one of the problems. Without enlarging the discussion of artistic spirituality, exploring it deeply as the sensual ground of being upon which art is possible, we are doomed to impoverished spirit-drained art pedagogy and flaccid art criticism, hiding its vacuity in haughty intellection. In the absence of more to say, we teaching artists teach technical tricks, foster narcissism and then urge our most serious students to develop a lust for celebrity.

What we can learn and perhaps teach about art praxis is the power of the dissolution of our petty selves in service to otherness. I look forward to greater interdisciplinarity in academe as

we rescue art and the wider topic of aesthetic expression and its effects from encrusted professional conceits and unhealthy habits of mind. To do so we must take back what has been co-opted by religious fundamentalist and other extremists who would seek to demean the perennially fresh spiritual awareness we know through art and its making. Spirituality, and the art that springs from it must inform religiosity, not the other way around.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAND

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The presence of place has touched artists from cave painters and petroglyph makers to contemporary artists that respond to the land. This paper offers a window of engagement to connect the physicality of the land and the art making process. The presentation begins with an overview of the ancient rock art at the base of Idaho's Owyhee Mountains, along the Snake River, and offers examples of the ways in which contemporary artists respond to this particular place and the character of this particular landscape.

Open horizons edged by mountains create a fierce visual beauty that characterizes much of the west. The jagged tips of the mountains grow white with snow in late October and passes can close in early November. Ancient people and early settlers adapted to the harsh winters by seasonally moving to the valleys, and often to temperate pockets along the Snake River, the focal point of this paper.

The primary lens for this paper focuses on the Snake River and the rock cliffs, basalt mountains, and the surrounding desert landscape. In Dakota, Kathleen Norris says:

I was handed an essential connection between the spirituality of the landscape I inhabit and that of the fourth century monastics who set up shop in Cappadocia and the deserts of Egypt. Like those monks, I made a counter cultural choice to live in what the rest of the world considers a barren waste.

Contemporary desert dwellers share her affinity for those places that others often see as barren. The Owyhee Mountains dominate the landscape of southwest Idaho. These mountains shelter wild horses seasonally moving from black rock hills to the tree line. The surrounding desert supports cattle grazing, horsemen, hikers, and artists. The later part of this paper will offer some glimpses into the contemporary art influenced by this land.

The magnitude of the powerful mountains between the earth and sky offers a constant reminder of the vulnerability of human beings. Rock art may have been an intimate conversation between the artist and a powerful rock cousin. The first artists here worked in stone, fashioning a variety of tools. For thousands of years, indigenous people pecked images on many of the rocks near their winter camps. The first part of this paper will offer a window of understanding the art of the early indigenous people that lived along the Snake, surrounded by the Owyhee Mountains, in a place currently called "Celebration Park".

PART I

The Ancient Artists, Black Rock Boulders and The River: The Rock Art at the base of the Owyhee Mountains along the Snake River.

Native American tales often begin with an origin story, holding true to oral traditions that work hard to begin at the beginning. To honor this oral tradition, it seems appropriate to begin with the story of the rocks that formed the palette and canvas for the ancient artists. The story of the rock art along the Snake River begins with the flood that occurred about 15,000 years ago when Lake Bonneville, the giant predecessor of the Great Salt Lake, erupted and in volcano like fashion hurled water, sediment and rock along the Snake River causing erosion along the river, cutting canyon walls deeper along the way. At narrow flume like points along the river basalt boulders were deposited in heaps like marble piles for mythic gargantuan players.

One of these bolder deposits along the Snake, at the base of the Owyhee Mountains holds a treasure trove of rock art. Tom Bicak, Park Planner and Director of Canyon County Parks had the vision to create Celebration Park, Idaho's first archeology park. Boulders that geologists call melon gravel are scattered throughout the park. We know the approximate age of the rocks as we know the approximate date of the Bonneville flood, and the melon like shape of the rocks resulted from their tumble through the water and the abrasion of the canyon walls

Data suggests the arrival of human beings along the Snake River somewhere between 15,000 and 10,000 years ago. The question of the canyon's inhabitants at the time of the flood remains a mystery, but the rocks testify to the presence of ancient artists after the flood. Indigenous people inhabited this area, primarily in the winter months, for thousands of years, taking advantage of the relatively moderate temperatures in their seasonal movement following a variety of food sources.

Kennewick Man made national news when researchers concluded that he was an approximately eight-thousand-year old Polynesian. About ten years later a road crew in Buhl Idaho found someone that may have been a close relative. "Buhla" was unearthed in 1989 and thought to be about 11,000 years old and of Polynesian decent. In fact one of the rock art elements in the park appears to be the same dragonfly motif used in Polynesia, supporting the idea that North America may have been populated by Polynesians traveling in reed rafts.

Interpolation may reveal a great deal about the original rock artists of the Snake River. According to Todd Shallat, an Idaho historian, Buhla was "buried with a brand new obsidian stemmed point under her head, an unused bone needle with a fine eye, and a notched bone ornament." The burial placement of some of these objects clearly indicates the belief in some sort of after-life or spirit world, and many experts argue that most rock art had some sort of ceremonial purpose.

Some of the rock art along the Guffey Bar in Celebration Park dates back about 10,000 years old, to the approximate arrival date of the Polynesian travelers. The possibility exists that relatives and off spring of Polynesian decent created some of the rock art in the park.

Like most rock art these images could be grouped as representational, abstract, and non-objective groups. Among the non-objective images we find primarily dots and curvilinear elements. The approximate age of the images has been determined by examination of the patina and rock samples. It is clear that these same image groups occurred through time-one did not predate the other.

The rock art in this area occurs, with few exceptions on the south and east sides of the rock, on the part of the boulder free from moss and lichen. Tests with thermal probes reveal that the rocks with images are consistently warmer than the rocks without images. Clearly artists through out time have possessed the ability of find a warm place to work in the winter.

One of the oldest reoccurring rock art symbols in this petroglyph field is an image referred to as hook and dot. Some rock art experts connect this image with the atlat, an effective weapon for hunting big game, although the local Indians say it refers to a tribal encampment. Alex Patterson suggests that it is a reference to the moon in *A Field Guide to Rock Art Symbols of the Greater Southwest*. This illustrates the problem with ascribing meaning to the rock art, but many of the possible ascribed meanings seem to point to some sort of ceremonial purpose. The possibility that this might be the case is supported by the fact that the site was the winter home of indigenous people as old as Buhla. Many tribal groups experience an increase in ceremonial and artistic activity during the winter months that demand less travel and encourage sticking close to the home fires.

If we were to look at tribal areas of the Southwest around the four corners area, cultural continuity is greater as the harsh conditions impeded the progress of the onslaught of European expansion. Rock art researchers have found ceremonial images of the Anasazi in Canyon De Chelly that share similarities with Hopi Kachinas. Navajo historians have documented similarities between ceremonial rock art sites in Largo Canyon and symbols currently used in sand-paintings.

An argument could be made that some of the rock art had ceremonial meanings connected with hunting rituals. Anthropomorphic figures appear in almost all rock art, but some of those at this location appear to be atlat throwers, perhaps associated with a hunting ritual. This was documented by Alex Patterson in *Rock Art Symbols*. The atlat was capable of felling large prey like the woolly mammoth.

Because the rocks with images give off very distinctive and harmonic sounds when struck, it is possible that they were a primary part of hunting and other rituals. The pecking of the images could have filled a drum-like ceremonial function. Additionally, the makers seem to be interested in magic or prime numbers, as the dot groups are for the most part prime numbers.

According to Lucy Lippard in *Overlay*:

The Incas are believed to have known about writing, but to have forbidden it: the Andean quipus—knotted mnemonic cords often identified as language/number systems—may have only been personal memory aids, illegible to others.

The odds are great that at least some of the rock art at the Celebration Park site functioned as mnemonics to enhance the remembered stories.

The rock art at this particular site has a large number of dot pattern groups. It is not know if the purpose was mnemonic, percussive, or artistic, but the dots these petroglyph boulders possess are almost exclusively grouped as prime numbers. The percussive quality of the rocks would support the idea of a ceremonial purpose and the indivisible nature of prime numbers could support a magical or scientific interest.

Some of the rock art at this site makes clear references to stellar and solar phenomena. We find many references to the moon, the sun, and dots could be star references. Additionally most societies have ceremonies connected with the equinox and or the solstice. The “Star Glyph” of Celebration Park still brings local Shoshone, Bannock, and Duck Valley Indians for various rituals.

Tom Bicak, The Park Director and Developer, talks about the “Star Glyph”:

Three of the six arms of this snowflake-like petroglyph have an astronomical correlate. The other arms do not correspond to anything solar, lunar, or stellar as far as we know. One arm corresponds to the direction of true North. It indicates the position of Polaris; all other visible stars appear to rotate around this seemingly stationary orb. Another arm corresponds to the vernal equinoctial sunrise and it corresponds to the autumnal equinoctial sunrise pointing the direction of the sunrise on the first day of spring and the first day of Fall. Predicting changes in seasons through solar events would have been very important to the inhabitants as changes in seasons cause changes in food resource availability.

One of the older rock art pieces, the “cupuole”, offers a high probability of ceremonial purpose; it appears to function in the same way as the *sipapu* of the southwest, offering a doorway to the spirit world. These holes with an interior lip could have helped vision quest participants travel to the spirit world, while providing a physical finger hold in this world. The ceremonial purpose of this rock also seems to be supported by the boulder like seating that surrounds it.

Most of the rock art of this area is readily accessible, unlike that of the Anasazi in the Southwest. The Anasazi, of the southwest, painted pictographs high on the walls of Canyon de Chelly. Although their Hopi ancestors recognize some of the kachina-like figures, the space surrounding the paintings would not have allowed for large tribal ceremonies. The rock seating that surrounds many of the petroglyphs of Celebration Park implies that the rock art was created to interact with a larger audience.

PART 2 CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS RESPOND TO THE LAND

The land that the ancient rock artists traveled continues to inspire a variety of artistic responses. This presentation includes examples of some site specific works that I created during a residency at Celebration Park, as well as examples of my paintings that respond to the landscape. Other art examples include paintings by Tom Bicak, the Park Director, Jan Boles, a photographer whose work has appeared in *Art in America*, and Anna Marie Boles, an artist interested in the topography of the land.

Land in our contemporary society is primarily a commodity to be bought and sold at a profit. The indigenous cultures that came before the Europeans perceived the earth as alive in a way that made the sale of a specific plot of land beyond imagination. The artist’s perception of the elements of landscape often echoes this older more spiritual vision. Earth and sky become powerful symbols of opposing forces. They speak to the timelessness of the forces of nature and the landscape itself.

Lucy Lippard in *The Lure of the Local* accurately observes that:

The separation of sacred and profane that has reigned for most of the twentieth century has become blurred again at the advent of the twenty-first century-and not just with demands for voluntary school prayer. Virtually all ancient spiritual models in every culture emerge from or exist in intimate relation to land or place.

The site-specific works that I created relate to the physical tactility of the land. My paintings section and divide the land and sky, but they only occasionally relate to specific pieces of earth and sky. These site-specific works selected three focal points at Celebration Park. They physically frame or reflect the view in rectangular structures, and offer the viewer an interpretation of the landscape. My paintings have elements that imply two-dimensional windows and doors, and these site specific works allowed me to create a solid three-dimensional interpretation of my vision.

The Rock Art Totem is the most directly interpretive. This piece serves as a contemporary interpretation of some of the rock art symbols. It also functions as a subtle interpretative sign post for those seeking the rock art. During the winter visitors often arrive at the park and can not find the rock art as the flat light can diminish perception. My petroglyph totem stands in front of one of the large fields of melon gravel that formed the surface for the ancient petroglyph peckers. If one looks at the totem, the rock art on the boulders becomes more apparent. The wooden totem supports plastic plates with images of specific glyphs. It functions as a wordless interpretative exhibit.

The second piece was built into an existing space on one of the decks. This particular work frames Guffey Butte, and brass rods focus the viewer's attention on the basalt outcroppings towards the top of the butte. A board painted black, frames the work with words and images that appear only in limited light situations. This echoes my paintings with their sections of black with pencil drawings hidden on the surface. The rectangle below provides a more painterly interpretation of the land and sky. The wood offered an opportunity to physically carve out one of the small coffin shapes that appear throughout my works on paper in two dimensional form.

The last work offers a view of the Con Shea Basin, the Snake River and the surrounding topography. My paintings often represent the mountains as flat black with words barely visible on the surface. In this work the mountains become black metal blades with words scratched on the surface. The words on the metal blades read: "She sings of the mystery of these hills of days when smaller was better- when childhood knew that simple things are more difficult-that mystery sings louder than money- that truth sleeps in these mountains". With the help of the Park staff, I transmuted the black basalt to black metal. A symbolic blue trough represents the river and steps lead up to the green of the Con Shea basin. The wood frame of the work offers numerous windows for the viewer to see both the work and the land, water, and sky.

These works are entirely about the place: the largest is a reference to the canyon, the river, and the Con Shea basin. This is in contrast to the classic "earth art or "land art" approach of the 1970s that Lucy Lippard refers to:

This macro view of art on the land disturbs me because artists tend to wander in with a preconceived idea, often a pretty grandiose one, rather than giving the land itself time to speak. Surrounding landforms are usually secondary to the earthworks rather than part of them, and the places own history and identity are rarely acknowledged. Any place is diminished when it becomes merely a backdrop.

The works that I created, with the help of the Park staff, refer to very specific places and include the landscape itself as part of the image. In fact the land itself is seen as subject and content.

My primary medium is paint and my current paintings of the Owyhee Mountains often focus on the dramatic aspects of the sky with the duality of the land depicted as mountains, flat black with words hidden on the surface. The blackness of the mountains represents the silence that balances our lives of sound. Black in Navajo iconography represents the dirt or earth, the direction of the North and its mystery, ceremony, and protection. The mountains in my painting share this iconography. These images draw from a tradition of symbolism that seeks to capture the spiritual essence of the object. The dots in my paintings are like the percussive pecking of the rock artist of the Snake River, and the small figures recollect the anthropomorphic rock art figures.

The medium of these works is a blend of watercolor, gouache, pencil and ink. None of these images are prints although printmaking has influenced the way that I organize space. Prints often deal with borders and edges. The compositional arrangement of the forms retains a printed character. Many of the works have symbolic boxes that represent windows, doors, and the coffins that in some cultures offer a window to another dimension. They all draw their life blood from the volcanic rock of the Owyhee Mountains in a way that shares some similarities to the work of the photographer Jan Boles.

Jan Boles speaks about his work:

The Owyhee Mountains have been attracting my photographic interest since I first saw them in 1958. In those days, I thought of the Owyhees as lonely high desert mining and ranching country, with very few limits as to time and space. Since 1983, when I began making panoramic pictures, my view has changed. Now the Owyhees are a contested space, with competing demands for recreation as well as resource extraction. But now as then, the disputes over land use are played out on a dramatic volcanic landscape that can be very unforgiving to the uninitiated. There are not many good roads out there. You do not know what getting stuck in the mud means until it happens to you deep in the Owyhees. As often as I visit these mountains, they are never the same. This and the following view were made from the same vantage point under different weather conditions and times of day.



South of Marsing



South of Marsing

These two views seem to have no human presence. There are times in the Owyhees when you can feel like the only human on earth. Vast distances are part of the appeal of the Owyhees. This view hints at Owyhee space.



On the Coyote Grade

Tom Bicak, Celebration Park’s creator, designer, and builder has spent more hours in the area than anyone other than the ancient artists. His paintings reflect his interest in the flat surfaces of the mountains; the brilliantly lit architectural objects are a direct reflection of this particular place. The bright light of his paintings echo the intensity of the sky and horizon in the Owyhees and along the Snake.

Anna Marie Boles speaks about her work:

My fabricated constructions and drawings act as vehicles for exploring the scattered, erased, and often unclaimed narratives of life in the West. I am inspired by cartography and the rectangular survey system set forth on the American landscape. I use electronic topographic maps, on-line USGS quadrangles, and my own digital photography. There is a constant search for the materials and media that represent the conflicting issues of my study. Though the materials change, my larger cartographic and historical framework remains.

Her drawings offer a twenty-first century tactility that speaks to the senses. She offers a bird's eye view similar to that of the areas many raptorial birds.

Lucy Lippard seems to refer to the artists of this Owyhee valley when she says:

The sense of place, as the phrase suggest, does indeed emerge from the senses. The land and even the spirit of the place can be experienced kinetically, or kinesthetically, as well as visually. If one has been raised in a place, its textures and sensations, its smells, and sounds, are recalled as they felt to a child's, adolescents, adult's body. Even if one's history there is short, a place can still be felt as an extension of the body, especially the walking body, passing through and becoming part of the landscape.

The work and Jan and Anna Marie Boles is steeped in a half century of contact with the Owyhees and the area that surrounds Celebration Park. The rock art inspired Tom Bicak to lobby for the creation of a park; his vision created an educational program that makes the rock art accessible to thousands of visitors annually. His paintings reflect the architectural aspects of the land and its brilliant light. My work includes both paintings that share some iconography with the rock artists: pecked dots and human figures, and site specific works that bring us full circle referring back to the rock art and the surrounding buttes, basins, and the Snake River.

This fusion with the land happened for the ancient rock artists as their seasonal trek took them from the cool mountains of summer to winter along the Snake River with its flat light and unending source of material for rock art. Their art making resulted in intimate contact with the actual physical elements of the land as the mountains that surround the river are hewn of the same black basalt, and the black sand granulated from the same volcanic rock.

Contemporary artists may not use the actual rock, but their work also reflects an intimacy with this particular place at a very different point in time. Along the Snake River, at the base of the Owyhee Mountains both the ancients and the artists of the twenty first century create works imbued with the spirit of the land and works that speak to our conscious senses and our spiritual subconscious. Boulder fields of remnants of the flood speak to our collective mythology and make the presence of place more tangible, more timeless, and more tactile.

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SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS: TRADITIONS IN EASTERN CHEROKEE ARTS AND CRAFTS

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To work with one's hands is to forge an enduring spiritual link to the makers before us.

Spirituality was a multi-layered cultural tradition of indigenous ethnic groups worldwide. The shared cultural need to garner understanding of the spirit world was expressed by countless human hands creating and contemplating the realm of the unknown. Early makers and cultural groups developed a variety of visual and kinesthetic rituals to interact with the spiritual realms which influenced their communal lives. However, the basic questions remain unchanged as successive generations attempted to grasp the intangible and ethereal aspects of spirituality. Traditions continued from maker to maker as each visual voice attempted to reach a higher connection.

To be “spiritual” acknowledges our need to belong to or to strive for the understanding of something greater than the “self”. When discussing these concepts with my Cherokee students and local artists, their beliefs fell into one of two categories: the majority have a strong belief that spirituality is a vital aspect of the creative process, and a lesser group believe that spirituality does not exist and furthermore, that the creative process is based on an internalized psychological compulsion to make or work with one's hands. These opposing viewpoints presented a challenge for me to examine spirituality as an aspect of their cultural heritage and how outside intrusions interrupted the spiritual journey of the Eastern Cherokee. Consequently, the differences expressed by my students may be a social variant by physical age, the forced influences imposed on previous generations within their family history from outside sources or the lack of belief or acceptance of a power greater than themselves.

The geographic world of the Cherokee before the arrival of the first Europeans in 1540 covered about 140,000 square miles across eight southern states where these people had lived for approximately 11, 000 years. Their communal structure was based in hunting, trading, and agriculture and they lived in small communities, located in fertile river bottoms. Within these communities they lived in wooden frame structures covered with woven vines and saplings with walls plastered with mud. Up to 50 log and mud huts were grouped around a town square utilized for ceremonial and public meetings. The central structure in the settlement was a council house for the gathering of the clans within the community. The Revolutionary War devastated these settlement patterns when the villages were destroyed resulting in nuclear families in single dwellings.

The world of the Cherokee was further radically impacted later by two federal government events that changed their culture, traditions and physical environment, the Removal Act and the introduction of federally run Boarding Schools. Each of these atrocities impacted the essence of being Cherokee and interrupted the continuation of generational learning, their unique understanding of spirituality and virtually every aspect of their cultural life and traditions.

Clearly these intrusions were not warranted against the sovereign nation of the Cherokee in the early 19th century. Cherokee society was stable and their governmental system and social order paralleled the principles of the U.S. government in the basic need for order and the well being of all citizens. In the early decades of the 1800's, they established a democratic government with a Chief, Vice-Chief and a Council of 32 elected members who upheld their Constitution and Code of Law. In 1821, a Cherokee silversmith named Sequoyah invented a system of writing known as the Cherokee syllabary. Within two years almost all citizens were able to read and write (National Park Service, July 2007).

The events leading to the removal started under Thomas Jefferson's administration which encouraged the "assimilation of the Indian people to adopt the ways of the white race (Indian Removal, 2007)". By 1823 the Supreme Court handed down a decision that Indians could occupy lands, but could hold no title to their lands since the "right of occupancy" was subordinate to the United States "right of discovery (Indian Removal, 2007)." The discovery of gold on Cherokee lands in Georgia fueled the Removal Act of 1830 under the administration of Andrew Jackson setting in motion the exodus known as the "Trail of Tears" for all Cherokee people to be relocated to present day Oklahoma.

The loss of community elders clearly impacted the spiritual and artistic life of the Eastern Cherokee left in the region. They struggled to survive the grief of losing their homeland. The Cherokee people resisted the relocation until 1838 when the government sent in 7,000 troops to force them into stockades at bayonet point. Throughout this process the Cherokee citizens were not allowed to take any personal belongings as they were forced from their homes (Indian Removal Part 4). The material culture created by generations of makers was stolen as each family was removed. This action created a loss of continuity to the personal connection and spiritual rhythms of everyday existence through the use of treasured objects.

Cherokee individuals had lived in the relative isolation of the Great Smoky Mountains wilderness for generations. To avoid being detected by the authorities, about 1,000 additional Cherokee found refuge by hiding in the region. Out of this refusal to be forced placidly from their land, the sacrifice of an aging farmer named Tsali and his son's, played an important role in the establishment of the current Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians also known as the EBCI.

In response, the authorities attempted to remove his extended family from their farm located outside the boundary, but Tsali fought for his freedom and the freedom of his loved ones. The family attacked their military escort on the second day of the journey, resulting in three fatalities. Tsali's two sons were captured and executed by firing squad, and shortly thereafter, Tsali surrendered to his friend Will Thomas on two conditions: to be tried for his actions by his own people and that all individuals who had escaped the removal would be allowed to remain in their beloved mountains. His self-sacrificing actions allowed all people in hiding to settle the region freely (Ingram, 1972). The selfless actions taken by Tsali and his family was further strengthened in 1860 by William Holland Thomas the adopted son of Drowning Bear; a successful business man who grew up among the Cherokee. He purchased 57,000 acres of land scattered across the region on behalf of the EBCI members to establish the Qualla Boundary for the Eastern Band to secure their future survival in the region (NPS. July 2007).

Another major onslaught against native spirituality and generational learning began in the late 1800's with the introduction of boarding schools to "civilize" the children of Native Americans through assimilation. The religious orders that founded these schools had specific outcomes to train these children to emulate the morals, customs, dress and cultural characteristics of white European society. To understand the depth of change these individuals wanted to establish we need to look at the words of Capt. Richard Henry Pratt who founded the Carlisle School in 1879. His educational philosophy was to "Kill the Indian and save the man." To reinforce this philosophy, students were not allowed to speak their native language, their names were changed to Christian names selected by the staff, the hair of all male students was cut short and their native clothing was replaced by European styles deemed "more civilized" (Beadle, 2006). The experiences these children faced were uncertain and the impact on their lives, positive or negative was unchangeable.

Eventually, twenty-five such boarding schools were located across fifteen states and by 1899 these schools served approximately twenty thousand students from fifty-eight tribes (Child, 2007). Among these educational institutions was the boarding school located on the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee. Founded in 1880 by the Quakers, this school served students of the region until 1954 (Beck, 2003). After 1954 the school functioned as a day school similar to the national educational model of the era (Kinsland, 2007).

However, the transition from home to boarding school was difficult and in many cases, these children suffered from depression in the guise of homesickness. Rarely were they allowed to visit their family or community because "relatives and other community members would hinder the work of assimilation ..., and the students would lapse into their former "degraded" lifestyles". This aspect of isolation was certainly disruptive to their traditional family structure; one mother wrote the following excerpt to the superintendent of the boarding school her daughter attended, "it seems that it would be much easier to get her out of prison than out of your school" (Child 2007).

There were instances when the boarding school life provided a positive experience. In one example, the grandmother of one of my co-workers believes during World War I, the boarding school in Cherokee was perhaps the only way she survived the hardships of the region. Her family was so poor they could only feed the male family members since they worked on the family land; what they produced was scarcely enough to feed each family member once a day. Usually the five girls in the family went to bed hungry. The family eventually sent their daughters to boarding school since the family could not provide for nine children.

Each of the girls had a positive experience and remember being happy. They had three meals a day, a warm bed in which to sleep, their clothing was furnished and they received a basic education and learned a variety of hands on skills such as sewing, cleaning and cooking. (Nations, 2007) Clearly, there were problems within the boarding school educational model across the US, but the surviving students I interviewed in Cherokee indicated a positive learning experience (Wesbrooks, 2007).

Throughout these years of cultural interruption, the people of Cherokee struggled to survive with an economy well below neighboring communities outside the Qualla Boundary. In the early periods of the 20th century, the National Park Service formed the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which in turn allowed the Cherokee to utilize their generational

traditions of making utilitarian and decorative objects such as baskets, wood carvings and pottery as a means for families to earn money by selling these objects to tourists and other individuals who traveled through the region. In the early period it was not unusual for these early artworks to sell for a few cents. For many families the making and selling of these handmade works was their only means for these people to earning a living (Nations, 2007).

From the hands and teaching of these individuals', others in the community learned to honor the old ways and cultural traditions of their society. This sharing of knowledge formed the beginnings of a Cherokee crafts revival. These early individuals initiated the process for the continued renewal of their ancestral knowledge for future generations and this lead to the formation of the Qualla Arts and Craft Cooperative to showcase works by juried artists from the region. Rooted in these traditions, the resurgence of Cherokee knowledge, across multiple artistic and academic disciplines, are currently at the forefront of the EBCI community.

The founding of the Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts has been a major initiative to create the premier Native American institute east of the Mississippi. The mission of the institute is to provide an educational environment for the advancement of Native art and culture with a specific vision to nurture indigenous culture through artistic expression. Our primary emphasis for all students is to preserve, perpetuate and expand cultural values and traditions through historic study while encouraging and nourishing the unique visual voice of each student. Our legacy for the community is to preserve the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Cherokee past while promoting artistic freedom that looks toward the future. In support of these goals, the program is establishing environmental, generational and spiritual connections across the educational community.

The environmental aspect of our curriculum will be tied to the new heritage landscape program to be located at the state-of-the art Cherokee school complex currently under construction. A primary aspect of this massive undertaking is the inclusion of specialized gardens dealing with endangered native plants important to Cherokee culture and history. This environmental piece of the program is presently a collaborative effort of regional plant groups, colleges, universities and federal agencies who are working on the garden plans to re-establish medicinal plants, traditional food plants and plants important to the making of traditional local craft processes. The focus is not only on the gardens at the complex since the master plan includes re-establishing these botanic materials in their natural habitats across the region. The OICA students will have an opportunity to master cultivation, learn renewable harvesting and master processing techniques for the materials utilized in their crafts media. This understanding of the pre-industrial connection of materials to process is critical to link the spiritual to the authentic act of making.

The tradition of generational teaching is another important aspect being introduced to our students. Our goal is to insure each student receives a strong academic background in each traditional Cherokee studio medium offered in the program. These teaching techniques will forge an in-depth exploration with each master teacher, thus allowing life-long bonds to be formed through working relationships within the community. These treasured tribal members will share and mentor these emerging artisans. Throughout this experience each studio will utilize a team teaching approach with generational experts in ceramics, fibers, basketry and woodcarving. Through these Cherokee masters, each individual will learn traditional methods, media and techniques with a significant focus on locating natural resources in the area. To balance artistic growth, new techniques from artisans working outside Cherokee

traditions will explore using alternative technology, techniques and media. This blending of the old and the new will enrich and prepare each individual to continually expand their visual voice as they continue their academic studies in fine arts.

The spirituality component of the program is an ethereal concept that cannot be taught or measured through traditional educational methods. As an instructor, I can speak of abstract concepts and the power of spirituality in the production of significant works of art. However, to communicate this profound and passionate experience is perhaps only possible to those who have an intuitive understanding and acceptance of their internalized spiritual self. To encourage this lifelong search was a major aspect in the planning of the curriculum and instructional methods.

Each interrelated aspect is essential to the program goals and the long-term success of all OICA students. As each individual matures and develops, a lifelong connection to the environmental, generational and spiritual realms, of Cherokee traditions they will become master artists and teachers. It will eventually become apparent their primary responsibility within the community is to continue the tradition of sharing their knowledge with the upcoming generation who will look to them for guidance and inspiration as future makers.

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THE QUEST FOR ESOTERIC KNOWLEDGE IN MODERNIST VISUAL ART

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Kandinsky tells us that he was driven to move in the direction of what he sometimes called “non-objective” art—what the man in the street would call “abstract” art—because he had come to believe that only by doing so could he achieve one of his primary aims as a painter: to help his viewers escape their preoccupation with the material world and experience, instead, the spiritual reality, or “spiritual harmony,” that he believed the rise of materialism and modern science had led them to lose sight of. Unfortunately, though, Kandinsky says very little about what the spiritual reality he wants to reveal or bring back to his viewers in fact amounts to. He clearly thinks that certain artists experience this reality and that some of these artists feel an “inner need,” as he puts it, to try to express it in their work. And he apparently also believes that, when successfully expressed in a work, this spiritual reality, or harmony, can sometimes be communicated to a receptive viewer (or listener or observer or reader, in the case of the non-painterly arts).¹ But he says remarkably little beyond this, perhaps believing that the spiritual reality he has in mind is something that cannot be described but, rather, simply has to be experienced to be known.

He would certainly be standing in a long and venerable tradition if he took this latter stance. This, after all, is the stance taken by countless others, both artists and non-artists, before him, and is an especially common stance in various mystical traditions that embrace the idea of special, esoteric knowledge of the spiritual—traditions in which we have reason to believe Kandinsky had some interest, as we shall see.

At the same time, though, it’s tempting to at least *ask* whether *something* can be said about the sort of knowledge or experience Kandinsky has in mind. Is it, for example, knowledge of, or experience in, *an entirely separate realm*, on his view, which exists completely independently of the material world? Or is it, rather, knowledge or experience that, while very different from our ordinary (“natural” or “empirical”) knowledge and experience, is nonetheless knowledge and experience that is ultimately securely grounded in the natural (material) world? (Think here of differing conceptions of “*nirvana*” in certain popular, Western reconstructions of Buddhism: for some, nirvana is a real, non-material place, entirely separate from our natural world, to which one hopes to escape in due course, if one is fortunate enough; for others, nirvana is, while real, a state of mind—a psychological state, that is to say—that is accessible, without postulation of other realms, to those of us, in the natural world, lucky enough to achieve it.)

For those tempted to look for clues, in his writings, about what Kandinsky thought about these matters, there is certainly no dearth of material to study. For Kandinsky was quite prolific when it came to expressing his views about art and the responsibilities of the artist, both in his formal treatises on these issues and elsewhere.

Simplifying considerably, two distinct possibilities seem to me to emerge, *apropos* the preceding concerns, from a careful study of Kandinsky’s extant writings (including, here, not just his two published treatises and his relatively short autobiography, but also his short art reviews, his correspondence with friends and colleagues, his more philosophical “occasional”

essays, and so on). One possibility, suggested, I believe, by what Kandinsky says about the *mechanics* of the process by means of which a viewer (or reader or listener, etc.) comes to have the spiritual knowledge Kandinsky has in mind, is that Kandinsky isn't really talking about anything *like* a separate, ontologically independent realm into which one enters after viewing (or reading or listening to) the relevant work. Rather, he's simply talking, on this interpretation of his remarks, about *a state of mind*—a perfectly naturalistic psychological state, that is to say—which he, perhaps somewhat fancifully, characterizes, *en passant*, as it were, as a “spiritual” state.

Another, very different possibility—suggested, I think, by his brief but much-studied remarks about Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy, but also by some other remarks we'll consider below—is that Kandinsky is indeed talking about a separate and ontologically distinct realm, when he talks about “the spiritual” and the importance of accessing it, and hence that he really is what philosophers would call a *metaphysical dualist* of some sort in his views about these matters. If this second interpretation is right, other, quite important questions arise for Kandinsky and his commentators, as we shall see: questions about the nature of his general philosophical commitments, for example, and questions about the very difficult issue of how it can be possible for an artist to enable us to access an independent, non-material (“spiritual”) realm with works that are themselves distinctly *material* in both their construction and their constitution.

In what follows I shall limit my remarks to the question of whether, all things considered, we should understand Kandinsky in the first (essentially “monistic” and “naturalistic”) way or in the second (“dualistic”) way instead. Though perhaps less intriguing than the question of how his “non-objective” art is supposed to enable us to experience the spiritual, this question is one that must be answered before that other question can be effectively addressed.

I

I want to begin with the first of the two possibilities sketched above. And I want to start the defense of this first option by calling to mind the essentials of Kandinsky's theory of how the artist, whether a visual artist or some other kind of artist, typically elicits a state of “spiritual harmony”—which I shall suppose is also a state of *spiritual knowledge*, on Kandinsky's view—in a sensitive viewer (or reader or listener, etc.).

Kandinsky describes this process in two different ways. On one way, the artist is imagined as someone who, having himself experienced what Kandinsky calls an “inner sound,” expresses his experience of that “sound,” or of the “inner meaning” that Kandinsky thinks it represents, in a work of art. That work, properly and sympathetically viewed (or heard or read, etc.), then—at least in certain circumstances—elicits the same “sound,” or *the experiential grasping of the same “inner meaning,”* in the viewer (or listener or reader, etc.). On this way of understanding the relevant process, clearly hearing the “inner sound,” or, less metaphorically, clearly grasping the “inner meaning” of the work, just *is* accessing or experiencing the spiritual knowledge, or harmony, Kandinsky is talking about.

On the other way of understanding it, the process of achieving the relevant sort of experience or knowledge—the “spiritual harmony,” that is to say, that some art can offer us, on Kandinsky's view—involves what Kandinsky calls “vibrations” in “*the soul.*” Here we are to imagine the artist, having himself experienced the relevant “vibrations,” creating a work, in

light of that experience, that enables sensitive viewers (or listeners, etc.) to experience them as well. It is experiencing these vibrations in the soul, on this way of conceiving of the relevant process, that constitutes the experience of “spiritual harmony,” on Kandinsky’s view, and hence that constitutes, as well, experience or knowledge of “the spiritual,” on his view.²

I think it’s easy to see why one might think the first of these ways of understanding the relevant process—that is, the process whereby an artist enables a viewer to experience the spiritual knowledge and harmony Kandinsky talks about—supports a reading of Kandinsky according to which there’s no need for him to believe in a special, ontologically distinct, non-material world that makes spiritual experiences possible. After all, a naturalist could certainly believe that art makes special experiences possible, in just the way this first description sketches, without in any way abandoning his (philosophical) naturalism.

What about the second, “vibrations-in-the-soul” way of understanding the process that interests us? Offhand, it might seem that talk of “the soul” here, much less of “vibrations” in the soul, ensures that, at least on this way of understanding the relevant process, Kandinsky is indeed committing himself to a dualist metaphysics in which the world of “spiritual harmony,” and spiritual knowledge and experience more generally, is a world that is quite distinct from the material or “natural” world in which we live our ordinary lives.

This will seem to be the case, though, only if we take Kandinsky’s talk of the soul, and of vibrations in the soul, in a certain way—namely, in a way that *ensures* that souls, and what happens in and to them, are, by definition, not part of the material world. Once we do this, there’s no question that Kandinsky is committed to the sort of dualism described above, with all the challenges this entails. The question for us, it seems to me, is whether we *should* take him to be using ‘soul’ in this way or whether there’s reason to believe he’s speaking loosely or metaphorically when he uses this term, as well as when he uses the word “vibrations”. (For the sake of brevity, I’ll call this special, “separate-world” use of the relevant terms their “literal” use, and I’ll say that when someone uses these terms in this way, they are using them literally. This presupposes that in their everyday, literal use, these terms presuppose the existence of an independent, non-material world, but I think no harm will come of this, as long as it’s understood that I make this assumption only for the sake of ease of reference.)

Now, suppose the only reason we had for interpreting Kandinsky literally, when he uses the relevant terms, rested on the fact that he uses them in passages where he is describing the process whereby an artist can enable a viewer (or listener, etc.) to experience “spiritual harmony” and its correlative knowledge of “the spiritual” (the knowledge that follows trivially, that is to say, from the fact of one’s having had the experience of spiritual harmony). One could, despite the absence of any other reason for taking him to be using these terms literally in the relevant context, still insist on taking him to be using them literally. One could also, though, and quite plausibly, it seems to me, decide *not* to take him to be using these terms literally in the relevant context—still supposing for the moment that there are no other reasons for deciding this issue one way or the other—but to be using them loosely or metaphorically instead. After all, it was quite common, at the time Kandinsky was writing, to use these and other, similar terms in a wholly metaphorical or non-literal way.

Why might one choose to read Kandinsky, in the relevant passages, as using the relevant terms in a non-literal or metaphorical way? One might reasonably choose this option, it seems

to me, because of the enormous philosophical burden one would be placing on him by doing otherwise, and because he would be losing nothing, given our current assumptions—about the absence of other reasons for taking him to be using the relevant terms literally—on a non-literal or metaphorical reading.

There are, of course, what seem to be additional reasons—over and above his use of them in his description of the process sketched above—for taking Kandinsky to be speaking literally when he uses the relevant terms in that context. And we'll look at some of those other reasons in a moment. My point here is simply that if those other reasons turn out not to be convincing—as reasons for taking Kandinsky to be speaking literally when he talks about “the soul” and “vibrations” in the soul—then the philosophical burden we would be placing on him by taking him to be using these words literally, in the passages where he actually uses them, seems to me to be a good reason not to take him to be using them literally in those passages.

II

Quite apart from his use of the words “soul” and “spiritual” in the passages we've been discussing, there are, of course, as I've just noted, a number of other reasons that might be given for thinking that Kandinsky really does mean to be talking about an independent, non-material realm when he talks about the spiritual realm into which we enter when we experience the “spiritual harmony” that is created in sensitive viewers (or listeners, etc.) by certain works of art. Here, because of limits of space, I'll talk briefly about just two of these other reasons (the two I take to be the most important additional reasons that a careful reading of Kandinsky's written work might lead one to identify). One has to do with Kandinsky's occasional but, to some commentators, quite important references to Madame Blavatsky and what she called “Theosophy.” The other has to do with Kandinsky's comments, especially in *On the Spiritual in Art*, about what he sees as a coming age of heightened spirituality, an age he seems to think is slowly approaching and whose advent he clearly expects non-objective art to support.

The relevance of Kandinsky's occasional allusions to Madame Blavatsky and Theosophy is straightforward. Whatever else it was, Theosophy was a doctrine that quite clearly involved belief in some kind of Deity and in a non-material soul that continues to exist after the death of the body. When, for example, in *The Key to Theosophy*, to which Kandinsky explicitly alludes in an important early passage in *On the Spiritual in Art*, Blavatsky imagines someone asking her whether Theosophy is really just a form of Buddhism, she replies as follows:

One great distinction between Theosophy and *exoteric* Buddhism is that the latter ... entirely denies (a) the existence of any Deity, and (b) any conscious post-mortem life, or even any self-conscious surviving individuality in man.³

In context, Blavatsky is clearly distinguishing here what she calls “exoteric” (or Theravada) Buddhism from what she calls “esoteric” (or Mahayana) Buddhism, which latter, she says, emphatically affirms a belief in exactly the two things she has just said exoteric Buddhism denies. Presumably, the thought of those commentators who make much of Kandinsky's alleged interest in, and occasional allusions to, Theosophy is that, in light of passages like the one just quoted, this interest, and these allusions, clearly suggest that his references to “the soul,” and to the spiritual realm in which it experiences spiritual harmony, are references to something that exists, and to experiences that occur, in the non-material world postulated by

“esoteric” or Mahayana Buddhism, which they presumably believe is a world quite independent from the material realm in which we spend so much of our ordinary lives. On this view, if Kandinsky was a committed Theosophist, then he was clearly a believer in an independent, non-material realm. And given that such a realm, if one believed in it, would be a natural home for “the soul” and the spiritual “vibrations” Kandinsky talks about, it is tempting, at least for some, to conclude that for him the soul and its vibrations do indeed inhabit and take place in that realm.⁴

The fact is, however, that we have no reason whatsoever to suppose that Kandinsky *was* a Theosophist, as this line of thought assumes, and some very good reasons to suppose that he was not. Certainly, nothing Kandinsky himself wrote, publicly or privately, supports the assumption that he was a Theosophist, and what little we have on this score from the letters and memories of his friends suggests that Kandinsky was clearly neither intellectually nor temperamentally inclined to take views like those of Blavatsky seriously.

If this is right, though, why do we find Kandinsky referring to Theosophy, even if only occasionally, and doing so with apparent approval? A full answer to this question is impossible here, because of limitations of space. Very briefly, though, I think the gist of a correct answer would go as follows. (a) Kandinsky’s most important allusion to Theosophy, by far, is in a well-known passage in Chapter III of *On the Spiritual in Art*, to which I return in a moment. The other allusions, especially the next-best-known one, in Kandinsky’s correspondence with Franz Marc, where he says they must be sure to include a “statistical” reference to Theosophy in the first edition of *Der Blaue Reiter Almanach*, do not support attributing anything *like* a strong connection (on Kandinsky’s part) with the spiritualist side of Madame Blavatsky’s movement. (Indeed, when the *Almanach* was in fact published, Kandinsky and Marc did not include in it any reference to Theosophy whatsoever, with or without statistics.) (b) The famous reference to Theosophy in the first edition *On the Spiritual in Art*, it seems to me, simply does not support the claim that Kandinsky took Theosophy seriously, *as a philosophical system*, much less that it’s the sort of system *we* need to take seriously in attempting to understand his work and the philosophical commitments that underlie it. On the contrary: in context it’s quite clear, I believe, that the reason Kandinsky included this passage was simply to re-enforce his view that large numbers of his contemporaries were tiring, as was he, of the contemporary European preoccupation with “the material” and “the material realm.”

Here is the relevant passage, in full:

On the other hand [Kandinsky has just been talking about science and its use in dealing with certain kinds of problems], the number is increasing of those men who put no trust in the methods of materialistic science when it deals with those questions which have to do with “non-matter,” or matter which is not accessible to our minds. Just as art is looking for help from the primitives, so these men are turning to half-forgotten times in order to get help from their half-forgotten methods. However, these very methods are still alive and in use among nations whom we, from the height of our [supposed] knowledge, have been accustomed to regard with pity and scorn. To such nations belong the Indians, who from time to time confront those learned in our civilization with problems which we have either passed by unnoticed or brushed aside with superficial words and explanations. Mme. Blavatsky was

the first person, after a life of many years in India, to see a connection between these “savages” and our “civilization.” From that moment there began a tremendous spiritual movement which today includes a large number of people and has even assumed a material form in the Theosophical Society. This society consists of groups who seek to approach the problem of the spirit by way of the *inner* knowledge. The theory of Theosophy which serves as the basis to this movement was set out by Blavatsky in the form of a catechism in which the pupil receives definite answers to his questions from the theosophical point of view. Theosophy, according to Blavatsky, is synonymous with *eternal truth*. “The new torchbearer of truth will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organization awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from his path.” And then Blavatsky continues: “The earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now,” and with these words ends her book.⁵

To be sure, in a fuller discussion one would want to say more about what Kandinsky has in mind here in his reference to the non-scientific methods of inquiry that he implies are the proper alternative to the nineteenth century’s scientific methods. But while a fuller discussion is impossible here, and while what would be said in such a discussion would not be able to be said on the basis of anything Kandinsky himself explicitly says about these matters, since he doesn’t explicitly say anything more about them, my own clear sense, absent that fuller discussion, is that at the end of the day we would be right back where we started: with no more evidence for an “independent-non-material-realm” interpretation of what Kandinsky has in mind here, than for an interpretation that has him eschewing a simple appeal to natural science but not, at the same time, endorsing a view that requires us to postulate a world above-and-beyond the world that natural science assumes and aims to explain.⁶

This brings me to the second reason that might be given for supposing Kandinsky has an independent, non-material world in mind when he talks about “the spiritual” and the importance of embracing it over the material world. Quite apart from his possible interest in Theosophy, it might be said, and in other, related movements that were popular in his time, there is no question that Kandinsky was a deeply religious man who was seriously concerned about the rampant materialism of his age and who felt very strongly that art must have as its goal the furtherance of the anti-materialist, spiritual revival he was apparently hoping for. In this broader set of spiritual commitments, it might be said, which were so central to Kandinsky’s life and art, we surely find reason to suppose that he believed that the natural, material world we ordinarily think of ourselves as inhabiting was not the only world there is, or even the most important one.

Here, however, things get tricky. On the one hand, it is certainly right to say that Kandinsky gives us every reason to believe he felt very strongly that there was more to life, and more that was of the utmost importance, than the concerns that are central to us when all we are thinking about is eating and drinking, making a living, exploring the natural world with “materialistic science,” as he called it, and so forth. And it is equally true that, in expressing his feelings about these matters, Kandinsky writes as though escaping the limitations of the material world entails entering another, seemingly independent “realm” or world—a spiritual

realm, that is to say, where what's truly valuable and important is clear to us and truly or properly valued.

Nonetheless, and on the other hand, to say just this, as important as it is, is not to say that in saying the things he said on this score Kandinsky was thereby committing himself, explicitly or implicitly, to belief in the existence of a world entirely independent of the natural, material world in which we conduct so much of the business of ordinary life. Recall the distinction, glossed above, that gives us two very different ways of thinking of the notion of "nirvana" in Buddhist thought. On one way of conceiving it, nirvana is a place in its own right, entirely separate from the natural (material) world, to which one hopes to escape one day, by living the right kind of life in the natural world. On the other way of conceiving of it, nirvana is, while real, not a "place" at all but, rather, a *state of mind* that one can enjoy, in the natural world, only after a life of self-discipline and rightful living.⁷

This same distinction, it seems to me, can be made in connection with Kandinsky's remarks about the spiritual advances he wants his work to promote and the "world" or "realm" he expects us to inhabit if he and other artists like him are successful in their ambitions. Either this world is one that will exist independently of the natural world, on Kandinsky's view, or it is one that, like nirvana or samadhi on the naturalistic reading sketched above, will be constituted by a certain special way of living, or being, *in the natural world*. Unfortunately, as with his remarks about "the soul" and the "vibrations" that successful art allegedly creates in it, Kandinsky's remarks about the great spiritual epoch he foresees do not enable us to say which of the possibilities just sketched is the one he favored.

Given this, it might be said that we simply have to be agnostic on the question of whether Kandinsky's conception of the spiritual is ultimately one that commits him to a dualist metaphysics, where one level of reality is naturalistic and another "supernatural," or one that allows him to make his claims about the spiritual without postulating "other worlds" in which the spirit or soul resides. And so far as Kandinsky's actual personal views are concerned, this is surely right. It doesn't follow, though, that in thinking about Kandinsky's philosophical views about the spiritual in art, we have to remain agnostic about what he would have to have believed for these views to be true, or at least interesting. For, as we have seen, it's possible for Kandinsky to say everything he wants to say about art and the spiritual and still remain, philosophically, a metaphysical monist and naturalist. And this is important, it seems to me, because of the huge philosophical burden the alternative would place on him and on anyone who wants to embrace his views about these matters. For not only would the alternative view require him to explain the nature and possibility of the other, non-natural (non-material) world that this alternative postulates, it would also require him to explain how objects made and perceived in one world—namely, the natural, material world—could have the effect of transporting those who perceive them into another world—namely, the non-natural, non-material "spiritual" world this alternative postulates. And this, it seems to me, is a burden we should spare him if we can.

NOTES

1. As is well-known, in addition to painting, Kandinsky was especially interested in music and in its ability to communicate the state he had in mind. But he also believed that other art-forms had the capacity to communicate this state, and his remarks about some of them, like his remarks about music, are both intrinsically interesting and also quite helpful in understanding his views

about painting. See especially his discussion of Maeterlinck's use of drama for the sort of end Kandinsky had in mind.

2. Kandinsky has a great deal to say about what exactly causes the relevant vibrations in the viewer's (or listener's, etc.) soul, but I have to skip these details here for the sake of brevity. Very briefly, Kandinsky's view is that, in the case of a painting, only three things, independently or in combination with each other, could possibly cause the relevant sorts of "vibrations": (i) form; (ii) color; or (iii) something—some "object"—the viewer sees in the painting.
3. *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 14; emphasis in original.
4. See especially Blavatsky's comments on "ecstasy," and also on "Samadhi," on p. 10 of *The Key*. Some writers, I think, believe Kandinsky has something like this state in mind when he talks about the special state that some art induces in attentive viewers (or listeners, etc.).
5. *On the Spiritual in Art*, trans. M.T.H. Sandler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), pp. 13-14.
6. Recall Blavatsky's distinction, noted above, between what she calls "exoteric" and "esoteric" Buddhism and notice that, if we interpret these as names for Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, respectively, we will have two forms of Buddhism both of which reject a simple "materialistic" explanation of certain phenomena, but only one of which requires belief in anything like an independently-existing non-material realm.
7. Notice that a similar point can be made about rival conceptions of "samadhi" and that, while a "state" on either way of thinking of it, samadhi can be conceived either as a state that takes one out of the natural realm and into another (non-material) world or as a state that, while very special and very unusual, is a state one can achieve, and can only achieve, within the natural world (since that, on this latter view, is the only world there is).

KIERKEGAARDIAN SUBJECTIVITY: RELIGION AND ART

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Much of the history of western art is filled with works of art about religious stories and themes. In the middle ages and the Renaissance, religion was often the motive for creating art objects. But is there a more fundamental, substantive connection between art and religion, one beyond these occasional historical intersections which has a certain timelessness? I am struck by the closeness between a certain epistemology of religious knowing and the cognitive element, if there is such, in art. This paper is an exploration of this epistemology and its presence in religion and in art.

There is a long tradition in Western philosophy and literature of a distinction between two modes of knowing. The distinction runs as distant in time as Plato's Understanding (*noêsis*), the type of knowing which can penetrate to the Ideas without the aid of sense experience, and Opinion (*Eikasia*), experience of the physical world. But the variation of the modes which I will pursue emerges in the eighteenth century in, among others, the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743-1819), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). I shall focus on Kierkegaard, but first a glance at Kant and Jacobi. A central distinction in Kant's epistemology is between understanding (*Verstand*) and reason (*Vernunft*). For Kant, understanding has as its object sense experience. Reason, on the other hand, can go beyond the bounds of sense. It can *infer* to truths which have no correspondence to sense-experience—namely, soul (in the sense of a permanent self behind the flow of experiences), cosmos (in the sense of the totality of things related as causes & effects), and God (the Being of all beings). Reason can arrive at these three not through features of the physical world, but unconditionally—from nothing other than reason itself. Although the language of understanding and reason in both German and English is counter to common usage, the basic idea is that Understanding is bound to the world of our senses. Reason, by contrast, can escape the sensual and penetrate the spiritual.

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi dramatically reinterpreted the powers of understanding and reason and thereby ushered in the idea that there is an epistemology of art, the spiritual, and relating to other persons. According to Jacobi, Kant did not correctly grasp the power of reason. Kant held that reason could, in a very laborious way, infer to the suprasensible. For Jacobi, reason has the power to *directly* perceive suprasensible reality, including the spiritual. According to the historian of ideas Arthur Lovejoy, the effects of Jacobi's proposal were profound. It liberated philosophy from the limitations of Hume's radical empiricism (Lovejoy 5). Jacobi's distinction was widely used and transformed in the next few decades by Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Carlyle, Coleridge, and Emerson.

Accordingly to Lovejoy, what is common to all of these philosophers and literati is the position that there is a way of knowing which is different than that which deals with sense experience. All of the nineteenth century defenders of such a way of knowing maintained that the knowledge attained through this way of knowing cannot be expressed in literal language (Lovejoy 37-38). Thus Schelling wrote: "This Absolute within us cannot, I think, be framed in human speech; only an intellectual intuition which one has gained for oneself can supplement the inadequacy of our language" (cited by Lovejoy 37-38). Lovejoy calls this the "philosophy

of the ineffable” (38). A second characteristic of this special type of knowledge is that it looks inward for its truth. Schelling’s early motto was “look in and not out.” (cited by Lovejoy 42). This inward knowledge was regarded as the only true knowledge because of its immediacy (Lovejoy 46). The idea here seems to be that one can uncover certain kinds of truth not by looking outward (seeing, hearing, smelling), but by turning within one’s own memories, reflections and imagination, and that this knowledge is more direct or immediate than sense experience and all that is inferred from sense experience.

A final feature of this special way of knowing is that it is the psychic locus of creative freedom. Jacobi expresses this by asserting that “to be free and to be a spirit (or mind, *Geist*) are one and the same. Where spirit is, there is invention, the power of creation, originality, selfhood” (Jacobi, *Werke*, VI, 174; cited by Lovejoy 154).

KIERKEGAARD

Although this dual epistemology emerges in the German and English worlds of letters and philosophy in the eighteenth century, it was the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who developed this distinction in a form which has had a profound influence on modern thought.

In a journal jotting from 1846, Kierkegaard comments that

if the natural sciences had been developed in Socrates’ day as they are now, all the sophists would have been scientists. One would have hung a microscope outside his shop in order to attract customers, and then would have had a sign painted saying: “Learn and see through a giant microscope how a man thinks” (and on reading the advertisement Socrates would have said: “that is how men who do not think behave”) (Kierkegaard, *Journals* 430).¹

This anecdote dramatically expresses Kierkegaard’s position that there are realms of existence which cannot be adequately known by the methods of science.

In developing this position (in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1846; henceforth CUP), Kierkegaard makes a distinction between subjective and objective knowing. Objective knowing is the kind used in science and in knowing objects in general. By contrast, subjective knowing is used in knowing the self, other persons, and God (CUP 211). Kierkegaard goes on to demarcate some of the differences between subjective and objective knowing.

Objective knowing focuses on the object; subjective on the relationship between the subject and the object (CUP 211). Second, objective knowing is cold and calculating, without passion. Subjective knowing involves passion, an intense involvement with persons. Objective knowledge, he writes, can ramble on the long road of approximation without being impelled by passion. But subjective knowledge has an urgency (CUP 212). Third, in objective knowing the accent is on what is said; in subjective knowing the emphasis is on how it is said. “The objective accent falls on WHAT is said, the subjective accent on *how* it is said” (CUP 213). For the scientist, the content is what is important. In interpersonal relations, by contrast, the manner of the relationship is what is important. And he adds, “in respect to God, the how is what. He who does not involve himself with God in the mode of absolute devotion does not become involved with God” (*Journal & Papers* 2.1405).

Fourth, another difference centers on certainty. Objective knowing hews to the illusion that it can achieve certainty through the “approximation-process” (CUP 214). But with subjectivity, one gives up this quest for certainty in favor of a richer knowledge, the knowledge of self, other persons and God. “The paradoxical character of (subjective) truth is its objective uncertainty; this uncertainty is an expression for the passionate inwardness, and this passion is precisely truth” (CUP 216).

A final difference between these two modes is risk. The risk in objective knowing is low; nothing much hinges on accepting or rejecting yet another chemical formula. But interpersonal relations are always risky in the sense that there is no assurance that they will be rich and lasting. And this is especially true of one’s relationship to God.

Which of these modes of knowing yields more truth? Without denigrating the quest for scientific knowledge, Kierkegaard asserts that when dealing with persons and with God, subjective knowing is the more important. It is this knowing which translates into the risk of living one’s life in a certain way. Kierkegaard proposes that much of modern thought accepts only objective truth and refuses to recognize subjective truth. He presents this irony about subjective truth: subjectivity is untruth if it refuses to understand that subjectivity is truth, that is, if it desires to become objective (CUP 217).

When Kierkegaard declares that truth is subjectivity, he is not offering a general theory of truth. Subjectivity is not appropriate for knowing nature. But it is not only appropriate but essential for knowing self, other persons and God.

The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation-process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness. (CUP 211)

And again, when the “objective approximation-process” approaches God, the result appears to be comedy—that is, appears ridiculous from viewpoint of objective knowing. “Or suppose a man who says that he has faith, but desires to make his faith clear to himself.... Now the comedy begins again.” (CUP 221) Kierkegaard seems to argue that using the objective approach toward knowing theological propositions leads to their distortion, to a “strange understanding” (CUP 221). Thus it is not objective knowing itself which is the problem but objective knowing which forgets its limits.

In sum, subjectivity does not mean, as the contemporary usage of this word so often does, the purely personal and as such arbitrary and relative. Rather for Kierkegaard, it is a way of knowing characterized by “inwardness.” And for Kierkegaard, inwardness is the way to uncover the highest truths, including God. Moreover, for Kierkegaard, it is not rationality as such that is opposed to religious faith, and, as I shall propose in a moment, art; rather it is modes of rationality which have forgotten their limits. Subjectivity is for Kierkegaard a type of rationality, only dramatically different than the rationality of science.

There is in Kierkegaard’s writings an explicit discussion of an aesthetic stage and aesthetic way of living. This is only loosely related to his dual epistemology, but I will briefly describe it here and will take note of it later. Kierkegaard proposes that there are three stages to what

constitutes the good life, the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. It is not sequentially necessary to move through each stage in order to reach the highest stage. Each by itself constitutes a vision of the good life, but each successive stage is a better stage. The aesthetic way of living is to live for the present, the sensuous, and the immediate, in the sense of unmediated by the ethical considerations of any sort (Westphal 23). The esthete lacks any firm commitments except to a life of immediate pleasure. The ethical is living according to rules; it is the tendency to absolutize customs, rules and laws. It is the “deification of the established order” (*Practice in Christianity* 88), and is driven by the search for security. Finally, the religious way of living frees itself from the rigid rule-boundness of the ethical way. Rules still have a role but they are always subordinate to the subjective commitment to the transcendent. This way is filled with risk, but it is the richest way of living because it is living in a relationship with God.

TURNING TO ART

Turning to art, I want to suggest that in a Kierkegaardian vein, religion and art share this concern with subjectivity and inwardness. This is the deep structure which links them.

The strongest emphasis on interiority in art is expressed in the Croce-Collingwood theory of art. The theory, not surprisingly, emerged in late stages of the Romantic movement in Benedetto Croce’s *Estetica* (1902) and received its most articulate form in the reformulation by the British philosopher Robin Collingwood in his *The Principles of Art* (1938). The theory states, in brief, that art is the expression of emotions. This expression is a process which moves from dim, hidden feelings to those which are explicit and clear. As such, artistic expression is an exploring of emotions. Works of art, then, are embodiments of the emotions expressed in and through art objects.

Collingwood’s theory is problematic as a general theory of art. Many artists do not appear to create out of a deep-felt need to express feelings. Rather they create in response to a patron, or to solve a color or compositional problem, or to make money. Nonetheless, the expressionist theory does, I propose, highlight an important feature of art and artistic creation—namely, that in some way it is centrally engaged with the subjective, the insideness of humanity. Even the most representational of art cannot help but reflect the interiority of the artists. Ernst Gombrich’s analysis of western art in his classic *Art and Illusion* (1960, 2nd ed. 1962) supports this claim. To explain the fact that art in the West evolved in many diverse styles despite the long commitment to mimeticism, Gombrich proposes that artists learn schemata and then see nature according to these schemata. Representing is a process of matching schemata with reality. The artist does not begin with visual impressions but with his ideas and concepts.

All art originates in the human mind, in our reactions to the world rather than in the visible world itself, and it is precisely because all art is “conceptual” that all representations are recognizable by their style. 522)

This even representational art, the only kind that Gombrich addresses in his study, is an expression of the interiority of the artist. Susan Rosenberg (a contemporary expressionist artist) captures this idea wonderfully: “Painting for me is about taking the outside in, churning it through my inside and spilling it back out” (gallery wall, University of New Mexico Art Museum).

Assuming this underlying similarity between religious knowing and art, it is not surprising that in the history of art, so much of art deals with religious themes. Thus in principle, art should be one of the principal avenues to the spiritual and indeed it was throughout western and eastern medieval art. The fact that so often it is not may say more about the secular spirit of the age than about the nature of art.

And like religion, one should not expect the kind of precise, systematic knowledge with respect to art that one finds in the sciences. As Kierkegaard notes, the kind of knowing involved in art and religion is subjectivity, and this kind of knowing cannot be reduced to a system, or in more contemporary language, to quantitative analysis.

AN OBJECTION

In an article entitled, “On the Cognitive Triviality of Art” (1992), Jerome Stolnitz argues that there is cognitive content, that is, truth claims, in art but these claims are trivial and not generated by art. For example, Adrian Poole writes that Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus* (*Oedipus the King* or *Oedipus Tyrant*, written ca. 429 BC by Sophocles) teaches us about “the gaps between being and doing and understanding” (cited in Stolnitz 195). And Harriet Beecher Stowe’s descriptions of slavery (1853) is a powerful portrayal of the oppressive nature of slavery. Stolnitz says about these examples of cognitive content in literature that “the truths elicited from them are generally tangential, inchoate, [and] vague” (Stolnitz 198). Further, they are never truths discovered by art. None of the truths expressed by art are peculiar to art (Stolnitz 198). Art simply borrows truths from everyday life, or from history or the social sciences, and re-expresses them within the surroundings of fictional characters and settings. Art, then, does not generate truths; it is parasitic for truth claims on other areas of human inquiry.

I agree with Stolnitz as far as his discussion goes. But what he fails to address are the interior truths of interpersonal relationships. These may not always be reducible to literal statements, as the nineteenth century idealists argued, but there is a kind of cognition going on here. And this, I suggest, following Kierkegaard, is the character of much religious knowing.

Arthur Danto in his idiosyncratic reading of the history of western art also suggests that art, at least most recent art, deals with interiority, albeit the interiority here is a bit different than Kierkegaardian interiority. Danto claims that western art from the 1960s onward has been characterized by intense self-reflection about its own nature; indeed art has become so self-reflective that it has almost negated itself as art and become philosophy (Danto 28-35). I don’t think one needs to make this radical claim; nonetheless his statement does seem to capture something important about the art of the past few decades, and, I have suggested, about the art of all ages.

CONCLUSION

It is unfortunate that in Kierkegaard’s discussions of art, he does not connect art with his epistemology. He does regard living for the immediate and for beauty as the first stage in the process of moving toward a religious life. And this first stage is taken into (*Aufhebung*) the ethical and religious stages. In this respect, Kierkegaard follows Hegel. But what the something higher is differs dramatically for Hegel and Kierkegaard. For Hegel it is a complete

system of knowledge as fulfilled in Absolute Spirit. For Kierkegaard it is a religious way of life. But for both, art appears to have only an instrumental role in the life of humankind. Kierkegaard's analysis of subjectivity and its importance put him on the edge of elevating art to a new level—a way of gaining insight into the spiritual. Unfortunately, he does not appear to have ever fully seen this value of art.

NOTES

1. All references to Kierkegaard's works are to the Bretall anthology unless otherwise indicated.

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RELIGION IN A WORLD WITHOUT GOD

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I am not very fond of the term *profession* despite the fact that I have apparently belonged to one for thirty five years. My dislike for *profession*, its parent *profess*, and the rest of her offspring, *professor* and especially, *professional*, has its roots in my distaste for the sort of “know-it-all,” hierarchical, and even elitist taint that I sense in these words. These terms suggest that one belongs to a club and that club is careful about who it admits and what language and behavior is permitted to its members. There have been times when I have been called *unprofessional*, accused of breaking codes and violating standards of a profession I was lucky to be a member of, and, if I wasn’t careful and obedient, from which I might just be expelled. On those occasions I have felt that what was really going on was that someone, usually another more exalted member of the profession, didn’t like what I was saying or simply the fact that I was saying it at all, for there are clearly things one mustn’t say as a *professional*. I have found that the epithet *unprofessional* is often used when the person to whom the distasteful (to him) words are being directed hasn’t thought of anything truly convincing to say in rebuttal and so invokes that trusty *ad hominem* term. Attacking someone as unprofessional is often a cover for a lack of an argument, a shield against being called out in a most embarrassing way, just as christening someone as *innocent* or *naïve* is a tactic of the guilty to mask a dubious moral or ethical position that has been tastelessly referenced.

I must admit to an almost obsessional need to say immediately the very thing someone says I must not say. It’s a bad habit I suppose, for a professional. It has likely retarded my progress in the academy. Indeed those of you out there today listening to this might be thinking right now that I am being, yes, unprofessional, for what does this mostly personal and seemingly off-topic claptrap have to do with the paper that I am supposed to be giving at, yes, this professional conference, to a gathering of fellow and sister professionals, a paper about religion of all things. I’ll get to that in a minute, but I do need to say now that the very best paper I ever heard was when I was a graduate student at the University of Chicago and Maynard Mack the distinguished 18th century literary scholar and critic gave a talk on Alexander Pope and began his address with a detailed and graphic description of Pope’s hunched back and then proceeded to relate the whole of Pope’s canon to that single physical deformity in the most illuminating and astonishing manner. I don’t pretend to Maynard Mack’s skill or learning, but there is something to be said for beginning some distance away, perhaps a great distance, from the heart of the matter, for that allows for a perspective unavailable when you start and end in the middle of things.

To be truly and staunchly professional is to be inhuman—it is to deny one’s own fallibility and uncertainty, and one’s connection to other humans. To the great unwashed and unprofessional masses. That’s what’s wrong with it. And that’s why it is a code or a club to which most of us teaching and writing and researching in a college or university want desperately to subscribe. For being human, fully human, as a teacher in a classroom is dangerous and exhausting, filled with sticky and humiliating traps, not to mention possible illegalities. Interesting that the word *humiliating* has *humility* as its root, an unprofessional attribute surely, but certainly a religious and perhaps even a civil or social one, a virtue in most places, at least we say it is, even if it is not one in the academy.

Much better to be cool and removed, always in possession of a self never revealed, constantly on topic, holding tightly to the thread of an iron-clad argument, confident, in control, certain of all beginnings and sure of all ends. The opposite of *professional*, at least as I am constructing matters here, is *confessional*. Instead of holding on, to confess is to let go, instead of clinging to certainty, confessing is embracing doubt, instead of telling our students the way things are out there in the light, as confessionals, we tell students how things are in here (point to heart) in the dark. I've made the argument many times that all good writing of any sort, in any situation, is confessional, that good writers always are revealing themselves, however tarted up the rhetoric is, however deeply we as readers must rummage around among the tropes to discover the bare, naked soul. It's there, always there—it's why we write, after all, to expose ourselves.

To be confessional is to be uncertain, that's for sure, and an admission of uncertainty is a kind of penitence, both a plea for and a pre-condition of forgiveness, for not knowing. I've come to realize that uncertainty is what I teach most of all, what I profess most unprofessionally. I plead with students to keep their minds and their hearts open, to admit to the fluidity of meaning, the multiplicity of possibility, to learn to live with ambiguity and ambivalence, to never close the door or the text. This condition of permanent uncertainty but also of complete open-ness is precisely the postmodern condition. For reasons too personal and complex to relate here, it is also my condition, the condition that I am confessing here and that I confess/profess to my students. I want to mingle the binaries of confess/profess precisely because I want to make the argument (that is *I believe*) that to profess, one must confess, that in order to believe anything strongly enough to profess it, one must confess that he or she first believes nothing, in any final, universal, ahistorical, acontextual, inhuman, professional manner. In other words, profession is confession.

Provisional, tentative belief, or to put it another way, a commitment to believe, have faith, in belief itself, requires doubt and an honest uncertainty that allows, at least theoretically, the articulation of all beliefs, that is dedicated to dialogue, to the discovery of truth not as an emanation of a permanent, ahistorical, *a priori* universal structure that “transcends the human sphere,” but sees truth arising from “intersubjective linguistic consensus” (*The Future of Religion*, p. 4), truth as the product of a genuine conversation among folks like you and me and our students. No single, huge, all encompassing Truth with a capital T, but just a zillion little truths, impermanent, local, glimmering for a bit, then disappearing as we wait for others to appear. Of course, to profess this circumstance as one's own circumstance is to kill off God, or rather, to nudge Him out of the picture, for God is, of course, the first and best example of a final, universal, permanent, ahistorical, *a priori* structure that dictates what the for-everyone-and-for-all-time truth is from some objective place that “transcends the human sphere” (see the Introduction, pp. 1-18, in *The Future of Religion*).

This sort of argument is nothing new. Nietzsche announced the death of God more than 100 years ago. He also said that God's followers killed God, not Nietzsche, who only had the bad taste to announce His death. True believers killed God in their mad search for Truth, and it is important to recall the logic of Nietzsche's claim. The murder of God came about as the logical end of metaphysics, the science of the search, establishment, and proof of a final, universal permanent, ahistorical, *a priori* structure that dictates truth. That process begins with the invention or, if you prefer, the acknowledgement of an unfathomable divine entity, a magnificent and unapproachable Other, and ends with the maturation of the high rational

positivism of science and technology that still serves today as the default ground of reality for most humans, whether they still go to church or not. That is, the death of God is brought about by the same human compulsion—for certainty and professionalism—that invented, or found him, in the first place. As a crucial side note, in the same manner and by the same logic that God is killed as the alpha and omega, so is science and technology. If God is dead, so then are all of his offspring.

The record of this human searching, beginning with the divine and ending with science and technology and throughout dedicated to *meta*-physics, to the *super*-natural, that is a physics and a nature higher and deeper than anything merely human, though it is now grounded in the physical world supposedly apparent around us all, can be characterized as an inevitable *secularization*. Put another way, the killing of God is not the result of perversion; rather it is what God Himself by virtue of his nature and appearance in the first place (and also by virtue of all of the subsequent appearances and natures of all His various descendents: rationalism, the Enlightenment, Marxism, Freudian psychology, etc. etc.) ordained. Where we have arrived with God dead, is where we should have, must have arrived, and the path to our destination here, now, in this place, is a necessarily secular one.

So the death of God is a kind of divine suicide. Oddly enough, Jessie the lead character in Marsha Norman's suicide play *Night Mother*, a play I often use in class, surprises herself when she says exactly the same thing to her mother, "Jesus was a suicide if you ask me." Jesus, of course, occupies the central position in the Christian mythos. Jesus is the crux. He is the incarnation of the divine, and this act of God taking on the flesh and living and dying here on earth with the rest of us, this lowering and humiliation of God, his "renunciation of his divine transcendence," and his handing over of his power to us, is a key formulation of the philosopher to whose work and ideas this paper is almost wholly indebted, Gianni Vattimo, the Italian Hermeneutic philosopher at the University of Turin and member of the European Parliament.

Vattimo calls the incarnation kenotic. Kenosis is the Greek word for emptiness or emptying, and in Vattimo's application of it, kenosis signifies the emptying of God's divinity in the act of the Son of God taking on the flesh. To further adumbrate his thesis, Vattimo borrows a scheme from the 12th century Cistercian abbot and mystic, Joachim de Fiore, that divides the world into three ages based on the Holy Trinity (*After Christianity*, pp. 25-39). The first age is that of the Father and the Law, in which humans are slaves or servants in awe and fear of the divine; the second age is that of the Son, the age of grace, faith, and forgiveness in which humans are characterized as children; the third age, which Vattimo asserts is comparable to the postmodern world of the end of metaphysics, is the age of the Spirit, of freedom, of charity (or love) where humans are friends of God because they are friends of themselves in a local, specific, dialogic community, in a particular history, where the sacred has been secularized, brought down to earth, through *kenosis*. For Vattimo, the third age, our age, the postmodern age, is one in which "the truth of Christianity is the dissolution of the metaphysical concept of truth itself" (*The Future of Religion*, p. 14).

The arc of this thinking leads Vattimo to announce that the postmodern age, the third age of dialogue and love and tolerance, of local and specific histories, not grand, meta-narratives enclosing us all within their immutable and universal laws, is the age of interpretation: "the world is plainly nothing more than the conflict of interpretations" (*Beyond Interpretation*, p. 28). In the *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche entitles a key chapter "and the 'true world' that

becomes a fable,” and thus Vattimo, following Nietzsche, argues that the true (or metaphysical) world “gives way to a play of interpretations that is presented philosophically, in its turn, as no more than an interpretation” (*Beyond Interpretation*, p. 7).

A dynamic and fluid world thus realized is, of course, particularly disposed to art of all sorts, to painting and poetry, to music, drama, film and dance because these forms are highly metaphoric, their value and usefulness is owing to their patently representative character, to what they suggest and image beyond themselves. Art is the ideal source for the truth that arises from the interpretive gesture. Nietzsche’s “true world that became a fable” has, then, a double meaning, not only that the world that metaphysics would fix with its unassailable truth is a mirage, but the world we now inhabit in postmodernity is indeed a fable and the heart of the fable can be approached only through interpretation. Art then is an important source of truth for us today and must take its rightful place next to science and technology, not as an imprecise and essentially useless form of knowledge, but as a particularly striking and serendipitous repository of interpretive truth. As well, science and technology and all forms of rationality must now be seen as a species of art, not hard and fast, but soft and malleable, redescriptions, as Rorty and the pragmatic philosophers would have it, shifting paradigms that move with history.

Being, in the sense of ontology, in this now fabled world is not “strong,” but “weak.” Being is not a stable, objective, eternal structure that purports to match propositions with objects, but is event or occurrence, “horizon and light,” the horizon that is the particular history we find ourselves thrown in, and the light that makes that history and our experience visible but which itself is not visible. Vattimo argues that the weakening of being, tied inevitably to the secularization of the sacred, to the incarnation or kenosis, the weakening of God, is partner to the weakening of thought, “*il pensiero debole*.” This weakening of thought which is the inevitable outcome of the Judeo/Christian history of the west into which we are thrown is interpretation, the search for truth among equals in dialogue and without an ahistorical, objective and extra-human authority to which to appeal for final disposition. Thus the ruling precept for the age of interpretation is love and tolerance not law and power.

Yet, giving ourselves over to the fluid and dynamic play of interpretation is not to surrender to relativism and the risk of authoritarianism that comes with it, for the object of dialogue is consensus and that will mean that some interpretations will be deemed better than others. Moreover, fidelity to the practice of interpretation means also to accept the efficacy of pragmatism, which is in its own way a turning away from strong structures: Rorty in dialogue with Vattimo says this about pragmatic philosophers: “postmetaphysical thinkers just want to make finite little changes.... Instead of saying that their ideas reflect something grand or stem from something profound, they put forward their ideas as suggestions that might be of use for certain particular purposes” (*The Future of Religion*, p. 60). Vattimo echoes this ethic: “it does not matter what things are in themselves, it is more important what they mean to us and what we do with them” (*The Future of Religion*, p. 57).

Gianni Vattimo is a syncretic thinker; he manages to weave together in a single and coherent multicolored strand a number of seemingly opposing sets of ideas or principles: Christianity, secularization, modernity, postmodernity, nihilism, religion, science and technology. In doing this he begins and ends with his own history, his own horizon. Yet his history is similar to mine, his time is my time, the problems and contradictions he seeks to overcome are the same that confront and confuse me. His answers are not fixed nor certain, but tentative and even

fragile. More than anything else, it is this fragility, this delicacy of thought, humble and yet stubbornly committed to its “weakness,” that is most compelling to me, most convincing, for it goes straight to my heart and my need, and it leaves room for my own unprofessional, unsure and awkward internalizing of its logic and truth.

In speaking of postmodernity and its relation to modernity, the age in which we are still half alive, Vattimo borrows the concept of *verwindung* from Martin Heidegger which may be defined as a twisting or distortion not as an overcoming (*ubervindung*). That means that we haven't completely left modernity and its reliance on metaphysics. We cannot overcome metaphysics in any complete and final sense because we have only the language, the concepts of metaphysics to accomplish such an overcoming and thus we drag the “objective past” into the fluid and unstable future, as we try to invent a philosophy and a language to describe what is yet indescribable. We can immediately recognize the arguments of Derrida in the acknowledgement of this dilemma and his similar efforts to twist the language of western philosophy against itself, trying to name the unnamable. Richard Rorty, in his essay “Anticlericalism and Atheism,” says this about Vattimo, “For Vattimo ... is no internal dynamic, no inherent teleology to human history; there is no great drama to be unfolded, but only the hope that love may prevail” (*The Future of Religion*, p. 35). This is our nihilistic vocation, the task to which we are called. In this condition, the way-station of postmodernism, we are left with incompleteness and open-ness, of things half-glimpsed in the twilight, neither dark as the night or light as the day. In such a world of uncertainty and doubt, law and power beckon seductively, yet falsely. For it is only to one another and to love to which we must turn if we are to find our way, and we must hope, with Rorty and Vattimo that love will prevail. That is religion and gospel enough for me.

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“HAD THEY REALLY FORGOTTEN GOD?” MINIMALISM AS IMMANENT TRANSCENDENCE

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The summer 1967 issue of *Artforum* was a watershed publication initiating a new chapter in art theory. This issue included numerous essays that shaped the discourse of art during the last third of the 20th century. Among the significant contributions was Michael Fried's essay, "Art and Objecthood" which was immediately followed by Robert Morris's "Notes on Sculpture, Part 3." Notably, Fried's article quoted liberally from the first two parts of Morris's essay. Positioning "*literalist*" art, Fried's term for Minimalism, as the opposite of modernism, he established a tautology whereby "*literalist*" sculpture reduces art to mere objecthood which promotes a "new genre of theater." Fried famously opined "theater is now the negation of art."¹ Since Fried insisted that modern art's value derives from instantaneity and Morris's objects require duration, I endeavor to show that these opposed metaphors of time compliment one another rather than cancel each other out. Fried concluded his essay with the tautology: "Presentness is grace"; in reply, Morris began: "Seeing an object in real space may not be a very immediate experience." This paper seeks to locate territory shared by these positions.

Fried's concept of theater derived from Morris's emphasis on "the kinesthetic demands placed upon the body" of the viewer.² Fried argued against Morris's claim that: "The object is but one of the terms in the newer esthetic...because one's awareness of oneself existing in the same space as the work is stronger than in previous work.... One is more aware than before that he himself is establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various position"³ Fried takes this quote from "Notes on Sculpture, Part 2" as evidence that "*literalist* art" replaced the concepts of quality and value with *duration*. For Fried, "*literalist* art" confronts the beholder's body in a theatrical situation: the art work becomes merely a prop on a stage (the gallery) used by actors (the viewer) and, as a result, destroys the autonomy of art. Fried sought to preserve modern art's promotion of essence in which the work's objecthood is "neutralized" and "negated,"⁴ whereby Morris sought ways to hypostatize the sculpture as object by endorsing the fabrication of "the simpler forms that create strong gestalt sensations."⁵

If the viewer's experience alone "is what matters," then the artwork becomes increasingly superfluous. As a result, Fried insisted Morris's theatrical sculpture was at war "not simply with modernist painting...but with art as such."⁶ If art is to survive this assault, Fried contended, it must "defeat theater."⁷ Opposing the endlessness, or indefinite *duration*, of the objecthood of "*literalist* art", Fried insisted that modern art is characterized by "a kind of *instantaneousness*" in which "*at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest*."⁸ To establish this reading, Fried created a dichotomy between "presence" and "presentness."

"Presence"—a term very much in vogue during the Sixties—was often used by the Minimalists as a goal. The "presence" of the object would be perpetually discerned and strongly impact one's perception of space—the sheer physicality of such objects impose themselves in space so forcefully that spectators need not look at them to sense them. In

contrast, Fried offered a dialectical opposition by insisting on art's capacity for "presentness": a sudden, fleeting flash of grace, a transcendent experience transporting viewers to a mystical plane of existence where essences trump objects. The opposition between "presence" and "presentness" is the hinge upon which Fried's argument turns.

"Presentness," for Fried is a synonym for immediacy. And, the immediate or instantaneity, is critical to understanding his reading of modern art. To define his position, Fried suggested "presentness" is "perpetual creation of itself." "Presentness" which is tautologically linked with "grace" is a manifestation of transcendence, and must be re-enacted perpetually: "It is this continuous *presentness*, amounting, as it were, to the perpetual creation of itself ... a single infinitely brief instant would be long enough to see everything, to experience the work in all its depth and fullness, to be forever convinced by it."⁹ Achieving a fusion of immediate sensation with infinite duration became the aesthetic Holy Grail Fried urged all artist's to seek. He championed works like Jules Olitski's *Bunga 45* as embodying this transcendental grace, in which part to whole relationships produce an arresting aesthetic response.

In 1998, Fried published a collection of his essays under the title *Art and Objecthood*, and took the opportunity to re-visit and clarify the position he staked out in 1967. Still celebrating instantaneity by acknowledging the viewer's nagging doubt, Fried characterized its defeat as a by-product of modernist art alone: "My point...was that at every moment the *claim* on the viewer of the modernist painting or sculpture is renewed totally...conviction—grace—must be secured again and again, as though continuously, by the work itself but also, in the act of experience, by the viewer, by us."¹⁰ For Fried, modern art constantly asks the viewer to recognize the sublime power of transcendence, whereas "literalist" art only asks for the recognition that it is there, a "presence" in one's space, but no more than an obstacle, merely an object to be negotiated.

Fried's account of art during the 1960s posited a structuralist set of binaries—art work and objecthood; modernity and theatricality; "presentness" and "presence"; instantaneity and duration. Art, for Fried, exists independently from the viewer, thereby "*literalist* art" can neither be understood nor accepted as art because it requires the viewer's situation in a *specific* time and place. He claimed: "[I]t is by virtue of their presentness and instantaneousness that modernist painting and sculpture defeat theater."¹¹ Convinced that modern art survives the "*literalist*" assault, Fried did not foresee the eclipse of modern art's self-critical purity by the ironic theatricality of postmodernity.

Over the following decades, Fried's argument served Morris as a touchstone to rail against. Several of Morris's essays challenge the position Fried staked out. For instance, in "The Present Tense of Space," published by *Art in America* in 1978, Morris appropriated Fried's terminology, re-reflecting it with his own phenomenological concerns. Contesting Fried's conception of the fleeting insight of transcendental "presentness," Morris valorized the continued unfolding in time that art with "presence" necessitates. Morris dismissed Fried's conception of an image-oriented modern art and turned to an art predicated upon the duration of somatic experience: "for my model of 'presentness' is the intimate inseparability of the experience of physical space and that of the ongoing immediate present."¹² Where Fried discerned a divide between "presence" and "presentness," Morris offered a dialectical conversion of these polarities.¹³ Dialectical conversion, ironically a phrase coined by Clement Greenberg, demonstrates the urge to unity within a set of dichotomies. The viability of any

binary structure harmonizes because of the terms' dialectical opposition. That is, the opposed terms need each other to clarify their defining features. As a result, the oppositions harmonize instead of ossify—realism informs abstraction, classicism establishes modernism, flatness shapes depth, “presence” produces “presentness”. Dialectical conversion posits stylistic differences as opposite ends of a continuum, not as separate categories. As opposed to modern art's capacity to only produce a transcendental epiphany, Morris labored to reveal art's simultaneous capacity for immanence. In doing so, he produced a dialectical conversion that elucidated an immanent transcendence whereby the art object simultaneously elicits a strong, immediate gestalt and acknowledges the viewer's experience of the object in space as a process of time unfolding

In his essay “Size Matters,” Morris proclaimed: “In retrospect the only fault I find with Fried's essay is that it did not extend the concept of theatricality far enough.”¹⁴ “Size Matters” reads as a direct response to Fried's revisiting of the argument by continuing to emphasize a dialectical convergence of semiotics with phenomenology: “every art object arrives first as a sign. Only signs can deliver aesthetic experience.”¹⁵ Transcendence was a controlling idea in “Size Matters.” Using the term on nineteen occasions throughout the essay, Morris took this occasion to rebut Fried: “Minimal art was the attempt to recuperate transcendent Puritan values by re-encoding them via an iconoclasm of austere formal spatial purity.”¹⁶ Where Fried sought grace through a constant recuperation of the viewer's perception of the work's “presentness,” Morris acknowledged the significance of apprehending the art work as it existed in the conflation of perceiving both space and time. Curiously, in Fried's introduction to his book and Morris's recent essays, they both cite the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the theology of Jonathan Edwards as formative influences on their theories of art.

Fried's call for art to reject a literalist position and embrace “presentness” and instantaneousness derived from his desire to connect Wittgenstein's understanding of the relationship between conventions and essences. For Fried, “radical abstraction” defeats theater by “a primordial involvement with modes of being in the world” and claimed Wittgenstein's later philosophy also “found it necessary to defeat theater.”¹⁷ Fried quoted Wittgenstein: “It is as if this expressed the essence of form.—I say, however: if you talk about *essence*—, you are merely noting a convention....to the *depth* that we see in the essence there corresponds the *deep* need for the convention.¹⁸ Yet, this conflation of essence (immediate understanding) and convention (social context) denies the supposed transcendental aspirations of modern art. If “presentness is grace,” it is an experience that is culturally bound by participating in a specific social system (what Wittgenstein called a “form of life”) with its own language-game which postpones the immediacy of “presentness.”

Contradicting Fried's position, Wittgenstein suggested: “There are, for example, styles of painting which do not convey anything to me in this immediate way, but do to other people. I think custom and upbringing have a hand in this.”¹⁹ Fried's borrowing of Wittgenstein's conception of essences complicates and retards the “grace” he believes modern art elicits. That is, for Wittgenstein, the ocularcentric experience of modern painting takes recourse in the immanence of language: “The point here is not that our sense-impressions can lie, but that we understand their language. (And this language like any other is founded on convention.)”²⁰ Given the need to “read” the sense-impression to interpret it, transcendence is deferred, but in Fried's conception it is not denied.

Dialectical conversion is at play in this rhetoric. Indeed, theater is a necessary component of the conditions that enable “presentness.” To experience the “presentness” of modernist sculpture requires understanding the cultural context in which it occurs. To always already be bound by cultural conventions situates the immediacy of “presentness” within the duration of “presence.” This is much like the interaction between art work and spectator that Morris has in mind. While Fried’s reading of Wittgenstein emphasizes essences, Morris’s reading of Wittgenstein emphasizes social conventions: “Wittgenstein’s point is more about meaning than induction when he calls attention to how one’s present mental state in no way determines what one ought to do in the future. The only guide we ever have here is that of custom.”²¹ “Presence” and “presentness” must be discerned within the chronological constraints of aesthetic judgment. Theater, therefore, allows for a dialectical conversion with “presentness” and “grace.” Fried’s tautology “[p]resentness is grace” is undermined by his own need to separate an artwork’s “quality” from the “possibility of doubt.”²² To conflate both positions: Grace may not be a very immediate experience.

Fried claimed his concept of presentness is not to be interpreted literally, but rather as a quality of modernist painting and sculpture (namely, seriousness) it asserts itself at every moment. He took refuge in theological rhetoric to articulate the experience of modern art: “[C]onviction—grace—must be secured again and again, as though continuously, by the work itself but also, in the act of experiencing, by the viewer.”²³ Further, this religious attitude is a Puritan version of Calvinist orthodoxy. The essay begins with an epigram taken from Jonathan Edwards’s diary: “it is certain with me that the world exists anew every moment; that the existence of things every moment ceases and is every moment renewed.”²⁴ Intending this as a “gloss on the concept of presentness,” Fried cast modern art as a religion with an evangelical mission—the need to convert the *literalists*.

In “Size Matters,” Morris usurped Jonathan Edwards from Fried’s rhetoric, claiming him as a progenitor of Minimalism: “The more severe minimal sculptors ... were following Edwards.... Edwards identified God himself with empty space, and in words embarrassingly close to the big attitude worn by every minimalist”; like Fried, Morris too quotes Edwards: “I have already said as much as that space is god.”²⁵ He continues: “Minimal art...swam within and not against the historical current of that tripartite American tradition of the Puritanical, the transcendental and the pragmatic...allowing space itself to reaffirm that forgotten or repressed transcendent guarantee claimed for it by the greatest of the Puritans, Jonathan Edwards.”²⁶

Yet, this amounts to pernicious revisionism when compared to previous statements made by Morris regarding transcendence. Previously, Morris dismissed transcendence as undesirable. Until the publication of “Size Matters”, Morris had steadfastly repressed any urge to spirituality, transcendence, the sublime or Romanticism. This contradiction enabled Morris to renew his commitment to negating Fried’s defense of late modernism.

Suspicious of the power of the transcendental sublime, Morris does not acknowledge the immediacy of the unmediated image; rather, his first line of defense is the impersonal discourse of critical theory:

At thirty I had my alienation, my Skilsaw, and my plywood. I was out to rip out the metaphors, especially those that had to do with “up” as well as every other whiff of transcendence. When I sliced into the plywood with my Skilsaw, I could hear, beneath the ear-damaging whine, a stark and refreshing

“no” reverberate off the four walls; no to transcendence and spiritual values, heroic scale, anguished decisions.²⁷

This diatribe, from his 1989 essay “Three Folds in the Fabric,” contradicts his later claim that Minimalism was indebted to Edwards’ Puritanism. Perhaps this is an ironic ruse to negate Fried’s reading of “literalist art” by overlaying the claims made for modern art onto Minimalism.

Morris simultaneously wanted to present his work of the 1960s as a positive response to *and* a negation of the artists and critics associated with high modernism, especially the abstract expressionists. On the one hand, Morris claimed: “Minimal art was only trying to answer Pollock’s challenge and to capitalize on what lay latent and undeveloped in his work—that is, to expand the holism and purity into communal practice. If Pollock had been the prophet, minimalism was the church.”²⁸ On the other hand, five years earlier, Morris explicitly distanced himself from Minimalism’s indebtedness to modernist purity: “Barnett Newman and his acres of the sublime has been pointed out as a forerunner of Minimalism. Not for me any *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*. Transcendent trash.”²⁹

In “Size Matters” Morris suggested that the apogee for abstract art in America occurred during the 1960s with Minimalism whose ideological defenses were inherently secular. But, he asked, “had they really forgotten God?” and offers a dialectical conversion between a celestial God the Father and his son on earth, Jesus Christ, just as “literalist art” fuses spirit and soma. For Fried, modern art offers escape from the limitations of daily life; it transcends the spectator’s body and situation since “we are all literalists most or all of our lives.” For Morris, Minimalism enables a Wittgensteinian investigation that reveals the hidden logic of the grammar of experience. Morris’s emphasis on the spectator’s kinesthetic engagement with sculpture elicits the divide between what is seen, what is assumed, and what is revealed by walking around it. The spectator, in Fried’s analysis, need not interpret the meaning of a work of art, since the work’s formal properties are coterminous with its meaning. The spectator, in Morris’s analysis, must physically interact with the work of art, since its meaning resides in the interpretation of changing aspects that either affirm or deny the initial gestalt of the object. For Wittgenstein, the ability to see one thing as another suggests that interpretation and seeing occur simultaneously (“so we interpret it, and see it as we *interpret* it”). But they are not the same activity: “To interpret is to think, to do something; seeing is a state.”³⁰ Here reside key differences between Morris’s and Fried’s reading of Wittgenstein—Morris stressed interpretive thinking; Fried emphasized the state of seeing. But seeing and interpreting need not be mutually exclusive activities as some art objects suggest the possibility of immanent transcendence.

NOTES

1. Fried “Art and Objecthood,” 153.
2. Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture, Part 2,” *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (Cambridge: MIT P, 1993) 14.
3. Morris “Notes on Sculpture, Part 2,” 15.
4. Fried “An Introduction to My Art Criticism,” *Art and Objecthood* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1998) 41-42.
5. Morris “Notes on Sculpture, Part 1,” 6.
6. Fried *Art and Objecthood*, 163. The militaristic terminology is not coincidental: “a sense of inner combat motivated the overtly theological cast of my essay’s rhetorical frame” (Fried *Art*

- and Objecthood*, 46). The atonal tone indicates Fried's need to articulate a rhetorical strategy that dismisses anything that contests *his* reading of formalist modernism, one that distinguishes itself from Greenberg's. Indeed, this essay is also at war with Greenberg's concepts of "purity" and "flatness" which leads to the endgame of "literalist art." Fried writes: "Greenberg had no truer followers than the literalists. For if, as Greenberg held, the 'testing' of modernism led to the discovery that the irreducible essence of pictorial art was nothing other than the literal properties of the support, that is, flatness and the delimiting of flatness, it's easy to see how a cohort of artists might come to feel that that discovery did not go far enough, in particular that it stopped short of recognizing that what had mattered all along was not those particular properties but rather literalness as such" (Fried *Art and Objecthood*, 36). Although in *Art and Objecthood* Fried describes war-like conditions in the art world, this war, I contend, is premised upon interpretations of the rules of the art game. And, contrary to Wittgenstein's own assertions, Fried cannot accept that the rules as he conceives them are capable of reinterpretation, or can be discarded altogether. He insists that his reading of modern art is in mortal combat with the literalists, and Greenberg whose theory enabled this "theatre" to masquerade as high art. While Greenberg dismissed the Minimalists concept of "presence" as a commodity, novelty and, therefore, kitsch (see his essay "Recentness of Sculpture"), Fried recognized the relationship between Minimalism and Greenberg's articulation of post-painterly abstraction.
7. Fried "Art and Objecthood," 167.
 8. Fried "Art and Objecthood," 167. The italics are Fried's.
 9. Fried "Art and Objecthood," 167.
 10. Fried *Art and Objecthood*, 47.
 11. Fried, "Art and Objecthood," 167.
 12. Morris "The Present Tense of Space," 177.
 13. "Dialectical conversion" is Clement Greenberg's term which is clarified by Donald Kuspit: "[D]ialectical conversion demonstrates the urge to unity within a situation of dichotomies (such as those Wölfflin posits), but with a sense that the unity revives the vitality of the terms of the contradiction, which seemed set in their ways. That is, conversion shows the continued viability of the terms of the dialectic, but now by reason of their connection or harmony rather than disjunction or opposition. The opposition of the terms is not allowed to harden, but made the potential for a harmony." Kuspit, *Clement Greenberg* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1979) 24.
 14. Robert Morris, "Size Matters" *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Spring 2000): 481, n. 8.
 15. Morris "Size Matters," 3.
 16. Morris "Size Matters," 6-7.
 17. Fried "An Introduction to My Art Criticism," 30-31.
 18. Fried "An Introduction to My Art Criticism," 31. Quoting from Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, G. E. M. Amscombe, trans. (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1956) 23e (pt. 1, par. 74).
 19. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, 201.
 20. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, #355.
 21. Robert Morris, "Professional Rules," *Critical Inquiry* 23 (Winter 1997) 300.
 22. Fried "Art and Objecthood," 47.
 23. Fried "An Introduction to My Art Criticism," 47.
 24. Fried *Art and Objecthood*, 148.
 25. Morris "Size Matters," 5.
 26. Morris "Size Matters," 481.
 27. Robert Morris, "Three Folds in the Fabric and Four Autobiographical Asides (or Interruptions)," *Continuous Project Altered Daily*, 263-265.
 28. Morris "Size Matters," 478
 29. Christopher Cherix, "Questions for Robert Morris," *Notes on Print: With and After Robert Morris* (Genève: Cabinet des estampes du Musée et d'histoire, 1995) 9.
 30. Wittgenstein *Philosophical Investigations*, 212.

EMBRACING THE GODDESS

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It is time we seek out, discover and ultimately embrace the Goddess who speaks to and lies dormant within us. Magical, cultic and myth-driven rituals and practices have guided and instructed us since we began on this earth. How can we continue to separate the spiritual from the educational process or the artists' studios, much less from our daily lives, when it is the core of our creation and the very means to our survival? It is our abandonment of myths that has hindered our interpretation of life's challenges and the very reason many of us are searching for alternatives to create more fulfilling lives and to ultimately reach inner peace. "The remythologizing of consciousness through art and ritual is one way that our culture can regain a sense of enchantment."¹

Today we are confused and distracted by the media, science and each other. Therefore, we continue to disconnect, separate and commodify our own instincts from their natural roots—the soul and the heart. It is no wonder that we are so fearful to reconnect to the spiritual. We are a culture whose members have become confused even about their bodies; the body's power, its capability for pleasure and therefore, its sacredness. We continue to vilify and market women, hunt, mutilate and eat animals, and neglect Nature. By doing so, we ignore and shut out the Goddess, the Mother, who has always woven us together and who desires to be awakened within us.²

Neolithic art reflects all the natural cycles of sex, birth, death, the rhythms of the seasons, the sun and the moon. Contemporary scholars are realizing that prehistoric reference to a woman's sexual power is that it was natural and spiritual; not just the ability to birth another human. For men and women to attain spiritual healing, the female body must be redefined as the goddess-worshipping societies saw it; as a sacred symbol of life, eroticism and power.

The Venus de Willendorf, the Minoan Snake Goddess, the Celtic Epona, and Athena, all share ancient histories as empowered female icons of goddess archetypes or the universal female. They serve as markers in reference to more matrilineal societies. Today, some artists are consciously including attempts to reconnect to Nature, the Female, and therefore, to themselves. These female artists are trying to reach out to the "goddess" within and speak to the feminine attributes and instincts that both genders carry but often oppress, abuse or even destroy in today's societies.

An artist who is clearly in touch with the goddess within her is Audrey Flack. Her photorealistic paintings; *vanitas*, from the 70's, depicted objects associated with the female such as cosmetics, jewelry, fruit, flowers, mirrors, candles and time pieces. Her 48" x 60" "Marilyn: Golden Girl" painting, 1978, was presented like an altar to the American goddess of female sexuality and a modern effigy of worship, Monroe. Flack said, "Artists revive old myths and generate new ones. Because their primary sources are spiritual,

nonmaterial, they can have clearer vision. By the use of myths, artists put society in touch with the universal basic questions and feelings we all have about life.”³

Flack’s daughter Hannah became another modern human goddess effigy in 1982 with Flack’s massive 82” x 60” painting, “Hannah: Who She Is.” The young woman is presented staring outwards toward the viewer; serene and wise. She is surrounded by stars, light and a celestial background. Joe Pintauro’s poem, titled “Who She Is,” is written in longhand under the bust:

She is stars in the sunrise
Lightning on a sunny day
Rain on the ocean
She is flown, so very far above us now
Over our politics of love
Over the limits of consciousness.⁴

Flack was searching for “an eternally living goddess” and painted her in 1983.⁵ “Isis” is a 60” x 60” canvas. Flack again surrounds the portrait with script, this time taken from the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

That which exists
Shall never cease to be
That which was not
Shall never come into being.

From non existence
Nothing comes
There is always preexistence
There is always continuity of existence.⁶

Flack wanted to recreate the medieval spiritual relationship with icons which was contemplative and devotional.

I want the viewer’s mind to get absorbed in the reverie of the painting and, through the act of looking, calm and heal itself. I would like people to be able to sit in the gallery. I would like to have candles. I would like that whole process of the viewer’s relationship with the painting to take place.⁷

Flack continued her representations of female deities and bringing them into today’s world by moving to sculpture in the 1980’s. She said, “I started posing the female model, and all of them seemed to be heroic, special individuals who just naturally enacted and embodied mythology in modern times and across the ages. These women are real yet idealized, creative, the ‘goddess in everywoman’ in some ways.”⁸ She wanted her sculptures to depict women as “Tribal, yet universal, ancient, yet timeless.”⁹ As a modern shaman (an artist) herself, Flack gave birth to these guardians, creators and poets of their communities and their cultures. Flack’s sculpture “Receiver of the Sun (Sun Goddess),” 1989-90, personifies her prophetess series. This figure wears only a belt with motifs of stars, skulls and sunbursts. Her pubic area is decorated with snakes. Like imagery from the Native Americans, she holds a bracelet in one open hand and feathers are attached to her opposite arm palms facing upwards. Her stance

with legs apart is traditionally more masculine. Her head is slightly raised, her eyes closed as she is in an ecstatic state absorbing the regenerative power from the sun. She is not an anachronism. She is a healer who transcends time and space.

Anna Mendieta, like Flack, made a conscious effort to address the female body and make it powerful and divine. She was a 12 year old Cuban refugee when she came to America. As an artist, she turned her conflict of identity, caused by displacement, into expressions of loss and absence through her earth body art. From 1972-1985 she created her mystical and primordial “Silueta Series.”¹⁰ Using her body or her shape to press and form its life-sized image into the mud, soil, leaves, water, grass, flowers, stone, tree trunks and paper, she addressed female identity with a conviction that although Nature is nurturing, it is also a humbling force that deserves respect. Mendieta said, “The body is perhaps the primary metaphor for a society’s perception of itself. The individual and spoken language are what make up the social body. The physical body is a kind of boundary between biology and society, between drives and discourse” (qtd. in Viso, 35)¹¹

Her performances on location within nature, created a dialogue with our ancestral past. She documented her time based work with photography, video and film. Mendieta said of her work, “My art is grounded on the primordial accumulations, the unconscious urges that animate the world, not in an attempt to redeem the past, but rather in confrontation with the void, the orphanhood, the unbaptized earth of the beginning, the time that from within the earth looks upon us” (qtd. in Viso, 32)¹² The use of her own naked body merged into the landscape refers to cross-cultural iconography of femininity and fertility.

Like Frida Kahlo, Mendieta specifically used the “Arbol de la Vida,” the “Tree of Life” imagery to illustrate the cycles of life and the regenerative powers of Nature and humanity. In her documentary slide dated 1979, her untitled (“Tree of Life”) work shows Mendieta covered in mud lying amid the exposed roots of a tree at a creek bed. She is lying face up, arms at her side as if she is part of the tree’s root structure and its nourishment; the female from which all life springs. Mendieta’s discourse with primitive art and cultures, myths, and magic specifically addresses a way to empower women:

I have been carrying on a dialogue between the landscape and the female body (based on my own silhouette). I believe this to be a direct result of my having been torn away from my homeland during my adolescence. I am overwhelmed by the feeling of having been cast from the womb (nature). My art is the way I reestablish the bonds that tie me to the universe (qtd. in Viso, 47).¹³

Mendieta wrote in several artist’s statements,

My art is grounded on the belief in one universal energy which runs through everything: from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant, from plant to galaxy (qtd in Viso, 35).¹⁴

Judy Chicago’s masterpiece, “The Dinner Party” premiered in San Francisco in 1979. She has also completed three other major collaborations; “Birth Project,” 1985, “Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light,” 1993, and “Resolutions, A Stitch in Time,” 2000,” Chicago and a team of over 400 artists worked on “The Dinner Party” from 1974-1979. The work has been

seen world wide by over one million people. It was not until 2004, when trustee Elizabeth Sackler purchased and donated the work to the Brooklyn Museum of Art, that “The Dinner Party” found a permanent home. Chicago said, “The Dinner Party grew out of my realizations about women’s obscured history.”¹⁵

“The Dinner Party’s” shape is the primordial symbol for womanhood, the triangle. Its floor lists 999 names of women in history and legend. There are thirteen place settings on each side of the triangular table. (There were thirteen males present in “The Last Supper” and that is the number of witches in a coven.) Each subject of the thirty nine women’s place settings has a runner with her name embroidered in the style appropriate to the woman’s place in time. Each plate has painted and sculpted motifs based on female genitalia. “The Primordial Goddess” begins Chicago’s table. She is meant to represent the female creative energy symbolizing the first feminine being from whom all life emerged. Chicago proceeds with “The Fertile Goddess,” “The Snake Goddess,” “St. Bridget,” “Elizabeth R,” “Sojourner Truth,” and “Georgia O’Keeffe,” with the remainder of the thirty-nine interlaced stylistically and historically.

In 1979 the work was met with excited and emotional reviews by both genders. Twenty eight years later women’s genitals are still usually considered to be obscene thanks to pornographic images in books, magazines and DVDs. (The Greek word for “pornography” means “depictions of prostitutes.”) The focus is on vaginas, phalluses and sexual intercourse often linked to violence, contempt, and female degradation rather than the female body being associated with love or Nature, not to mention to a sacred deity. “Penthouse” has “shown nude women hanging on trees from hooks like pieces of dead meat.”¹⁶ A cover for “Hustler” has used [. . .] a naked woman, upside down, with only her legs and lower torso remaining intact, the rest coming out as hamburger from a meat grinder.”¹⁷

In “The Pornography of Meat” author and activist Carol Adams writes, “Advertisements are never only about the product they are promoting. They are about how our culture is structured, what we believe about ourselves and others. Advertisements appeal to *someone* to buy *something*. In this, they offer a window into the myths by which our world is structured—who are the someones in our culture, and who become the somethings?”¹⁸

Judy Chicago purposely chose the dinner plate to use as her visual analogy to women. She said.

It seemed as though the female counterpart of this religious meal would have to be a dinner party, a title that seemed entirely appropriate to the way in which women’s achievement-along with the endless meals they had prepared throughout history-had been consumed.¹⁹

Chicago remarked “At some point I decided that I would like the plate images to physically rise up as a symbol of women’s struggle for freedom from containment.”²⁰

Carol Adams also observes that the plate and women have a definite connection in regards to consumption and containment. In her *The Sexual Politics of Meat* she makes connections through food between the oppression of women and the non-human animals, i.e., woman represented and marketed as meat. Adams’ “absent referent” refers to the thought process

that separates the meat eater from the end product or the space that exists between the animal's life and your dinner plate.

[. . .] I realized that the absent referent was what enabled the interweaving of the oppression of women *and* animals. Behind every meal is an absence: the death of the animal whose place the meat takes. The “absent referent” is that which separates the meat eater from the animals and the animal from the end product. The function of the absent referent is to keep our “meat” separated from any idea that she or he was once an animal, [. . .] to keep *something* from being seen as *someone*. Once the existence of an animal who was killed to become that “meat,” meat becomes unanchored by its original referent (the animal), becoming instead a free-floating image, used often to reflect women's status as well as animals'. Animals are the absent referent in the act of meat eating; they also become the absent referent in images of women butchered, fragmented, or consumable.²¹

Factory farm animals are not merely contained but processed, disassembled, packed, and dressed. Factory food production connects women and animals in how society sees them and markets them. The majority of animals we eat are female and mothers. Female animals are impregnated forcefully while under physical restraint called a “rape rack” and held in “iron maidens” for the birthing process. Over 7 *billion* animals are cloistered in slaughterhouses annually and are therefore denied their connectedness to Nature and therefore, their beingness.

Another example of the connectedness between animals and women is reported by The National Council on Violent Crime in America. Fifty women are victimized every hour by intimate partners and one child every 35 seconds is abused or neglected. “The Link” is what human service professionals call the animal abuse connection to family violence as it is often present at the same time. In a New Jersey study, pet abuse was present in 88% of the homes where there was child abuse. Abuse is a way to control, threaten and manipulate. In 57% of households where mental and physical abuse takes place, the companion animal is injured or killed when the victim tries to leave. It is the concern for the animal's welfare that prevents or delays 50% of the victims from escaping ongoing abuse as women often leave shelters out of concern for their pet.²²

In an attempt to reconnect, Emily Christie established a facility in Atlanta named Ahimsa, which is the Sanskrit word for non-violence. Its mission is to ensure that no one should have to choose between their own safety and the safety of their companion animal. However, many women and companion animals never reestablish a real home again, much less their spirituality.

It is interesting to note that Anna Mendieta was victimized by her husband, Carl Andre. In 1985 her life ended at age 37 after an argument in which he allegedly pushed her out of the 34th floor of their Greenwich Village apartment window.²³ He was acquitted.

Suzi Gablik in *The Reenchantment of Art*, observed; “In the modern world, no life is sacred, because we do not recognize it as such. [. . .] Modern individuals do not see the earth as a source of spiritual renewal [. . .].”²⁴ Her words reminded me of my time doing animal rescues in Texas in the 80's. After arriving too late after a dog had been killed by a car, I turned to one of the children whose family had the dog. I said I was sorry about the loss. The child said,

“Oh, he was old. He was four.” The child found it to be a positive that the dog hadn’t been hit earlier and that he was replaceable anyway. This message had been given to the child by others—a reinforcement of the impermanence of a life and the fact this dog was unnecessarily killed, an insignificant consequence.

During the summer when I was completing this paper, I met a goddess who was on a journey that for many was not unfamiliar. I noticed a woman and her companion animal at a fast food parking lot. It was a particularly hot Los Angeles day and as is my habit, I stopped to see if I could at least offer the dog some water. The woman was bundled up seated on the curb with the Corgi mix resting beside her. She had a shopping cart made enormous by mostly fabric and hanging bags containing some food and various collectibles. I asked her name and her companion animal’s name and asked if she or the dog needed water. She had water and said that her name was Jeannie and the Corgi’s name was Brownie. This disguised goddess was covered in grime—her face, her hands, her feet—every inch of her exposed form.

The dog looked healthy and devoted. I have noticed over the years when I stop to inquire about a homeless human’s companion animal, the animal is usually stoic, looking straight ahead, business as usual; as proud as the human in need. I always wonder who were they before? Partner, lover, mother, caregiver? Beloved family companion animal, shelter rescue, stray on the street? They were one. They were stripped down. They make many of us uncomfortable. We do not know how to process them. Are they dangerous? They are ignored. They become invisible. No doubt, societal attitudes contributed to the disconnectedness of this woman and dog. Despite society disconnecting from this goddess, she remains connected to nature as Brownie’s caregiver and nurturer.

I gave her a dog bowl as I keep extra animal things in my car in case there is a need. She accepted the bowl. I asked her if she needed anything. She said no. I gave her money for food which she agreed to take. I left to go home to get some socks, towels, fruit and dog food. She had bought food and was eating by the time I got back. She seemed to only notice the socks. “Now, that’s what I need,” she said but never making eye contact and stuffing them into one of the plastic bags hanging off the cart. I asked if I could take her and Brownie anywhere. I knew I could get them to the destination minus the cart which I told her. She said she was trying to get to Bell, a nearby community, a few miles away. I knew that was possible. I asked where in Bell. She said she would have to get to the airport first. My heart sank. When I repeated where she needed to go in an attempt to get her there minus an airplane, she finally answered in a low, soft voice, again without eye contact, in words that reflected Anna Mendietta’s plight through her art and that which personified the struggle of the modern goddess today in her struggle to reconnect to Nature and therefore, to Herself, “I’m just trying to get home.”

This paper is dedicated to my two friends; fellow artists and animal rights activists Linda McCartney and Gretchen Wyler, both who spent their lives reconnecting to Nature and therefore lived their lives as true modern day goddesses.

NOTES

1. Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 48.
2. Riane Eisler, *Sacred Pleasure: Sex, Myth, and the Politics of the Body* (1995; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco-HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1996) 76.

3. Audrey Flack, *Art & Soul: Notes on Creating* (1986; New York: E. P. Dutton; New York: Arkana-Penguin Books USA Inc., 1991) 99.
4. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. and curator, *Breaking the Rules—Audrey Flack: A Retrospective 1950-1990* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Incorporated, 1992) 92.
5. Gouma-Peterson 95.
6. Ibid.
7. Gouma-Peterson 100.
8. Gouma-Peterson 104.
9. Gouma-Peterson 106.
10. Olga M. Viso, *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body* (Washington, D.C.: Hirschorn Museum and Sculpture Garden-Smithsonian Institution; Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2004) 22.
11. From *The Artist's Body, Themes and Movements* (London: Phaidon, 2000) as quoted in James M. Bradburne, ed. *Blood, Art, Power, Politics and Pathology* (Munich: Prestel, 2001) 205.
12. Ana Mendieta, Project Proposal for Bard College, 1984, Ana Mendieta Papers.
13. Ana Mendieta, unpublished statement quoted in *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective*, exh. Cat. (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), 10.
14. Ana Mendieta, Artist's Statement, 1983, Ana Mendieta Papers.
15. Judy Chicago, *Beyond the Flower: The Autobiography of a Feminist Artist* (New York: Viking Penguin Books-Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996) 182.
16. Eisler 18.
17. Ibid.
18. Carol J. Adams, *The Pornography of Meat* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2003) 14.
19. Edward Lucie-Smith, *Judy Chicago: An American Vision* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications-BPI Communications, Inc., 2000) 62.
20. Lucie-Smith 72.
21. Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (1990; New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 2000) 14-15.
22. Emily Christie, "When Cruelty Begins at Home: Understanding and Addressing the Connection Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse," *Animal Action Report-A Publication of the National Anti-Vivisection Society* Winter 2007: 1-2.
23. Viso 25.
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BALANCING THE ROLES OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE BICAMERAL IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Lance Ford Jones
Claudia Cumbie-Jones

HALLUCINATION AND CONSCIOUSNESS

A hallucination is briefly defined as a sensory perception in the absence of external stimulation, or in the absence of a logical or rational explanation. Usually psychological texts refer to them as false sensory impressions, or incorrect interpretations of the facts, or of being experienced as if they were perceptions. Quite often hallucinations are associated with mental disorders, damaged or dysfunctional personalities, or superstition, marginalized to the insane and to cultural others. But hallucinations are not rare, or even unusual, and are not necessarily pathological. Studies have shown that “preschool children may experience hallucinations as part of their normal development” and that “children experiencing phobic hallucinations were uniformly bright and independent” (Schreier & Libow, 1986). Dreaming is considered by some to be a common example of a hallucinatory experience, surrounded at the onset of sleep in some people by hypnogogic hallucinations and waking up with hypnopomic hallucinations (American Psychiatric Association, 1987; Kaplan & Sadock, 1985). Various estimates place between one-eighth and two-thirds of the normal population as having had hallucinations while awake (Coleman, Butcher, & Carson, 1984; Parish, 1914; Posey & Losch, 1983).

Hallucinations can be triggered reliably by repeatable stimuli. Physical injuries to the brain, chemical imbalances, exhaustion, sleep deprivation, social isolation and rejection, and severe reactive depression, as well as other causes, often result in hallucinations. When most people hear the word hallucination they probably think of “seeing things,” apparitions, visions, visual illusions; this bias reflects a basic dominance of the visual sense in our culture. In fact auditory hallucinations occur more frequently than visual hallucinations.

Psychiatric literature while often mentioning the predominance of auditory hallucinations spends most of its analysis dealing with visual hallucinations. Auditory hallucinations typically occur as voices which impart information, judge behavior, criticize or applaud, state facts, or in many cases command the hearer to action. Visual hallucinations leave themselves open to interpretation and are often metaphorical. One recent study has shown a strong consistency of semantic content in hallucinated voices of schizophrenic patients at least as persistent as the semantic content sampled in the conversations of a normal control group (Hoffman et al., 1994).

JULIAN JAYNES AND THE BICAMERAL MIND

In 1976, Julian Jaynes, professor of psychology at Princeton University, published “The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind”. Jaynes set forth a theory that consciousness is a relatively recently learned process originating perhaps only 3200 to 4000 years ago. Jaynes’ method was to work backwards in time through ancient works of literature and ancient artifacts for evidence of psychology. The closer to the late second

millennium B.C. the less evidence there was for the presence of any sense of self conscious behavior. Quite often by comparisons with earlier translations or copies of the works it appeared that later transcribers/ translators added any notion of conscious behavior to the characters. What Jaynes found in these early texts was a constant dialogue between the characters and their gods. Gods who acted more like constant companions, who passed information, judgments, and commands to the minds of men to guide and protect them, and to maintain a social order. The nature of these gods' manifestations was usually as a voice.

The function of these voices seems remarkably similar to that of current day auditory hallucinations. Jaynes doesn't believe that these hallucinations are misunderstandings or misperceptions, but are real, with real points of origin in the unused parts of the right brain which correspond to the speech centers of the left brain, and that for many millennia this bicameral voice, the admonitory voice of the gods, was all there was to the human mind. In the late second millennium B.C. the bicameral mind broke down, partly as a result of the development of writing (the consciousnessless stories until then were carried orally) partly as a result of cataclysm, both geophysically and societally, and partly due to the increased complexity that these cataclysms incurred, and consciousness began to develop.

Before the breakdown, men spoke directly with their gods. Prayer as we know it was unknown. Around 1230 B.C. in Assyria a stone carving unlike anything before it appears. In the relief the king is shown kneeling before an empty throne. Never before was a king shown in this submissive posture and always before the throne was occupied by the advisory god of the king. The king's god had abandoned him. The bicameral mind had broken down. Writings from the same period reflect the upheaval the absence of the controlling voices of society caused.

One who has no god, as he walks along the street,
Headache envelops him like a garment

and

My god has forsaken me and disappeared.
My goddess has failed me and keeps at a distance.
The good angel who walked beside me has departed.

Other writings begin to take the tone of the pleading prayer:

May the gods who have thrown me off give help,
May the goddess who has abandoned me show mercy.

Prayers took on the form that has persisted from ancient Mesopotamia to the modern day. Prayers begin with emphatic praise of the god and end with personal petition.

JUDITH WEISSMAN'S INSPIRED POETRY

Jaynes also explores how the bicameral mind continues to make itself heard up to the present day, affecting writing, especially poetry, and music. Judith Weissman, in her 1993 book *Of Two Minds, Poets Who Hear Voices*, begins with Homer, and proceeds to the near present looking at poets like Milton, Blake, Coleridge, Yeats, and others, and shows patterns and

consistencies in the inspiring voices that they claimed inspired their verse. Weissman argues that this similarity in the tone and message of the voices can best be explained by evolutionary history as described by Jaynes' theory of the bicameral mind. She traces the history of inspired poetry from Plato who complained that it impeded human progress because it was inspired, heard with the bodily ear, and not conceived of in the mind, through to Derrida's "Of Grammatology" a work devoted to attacking the oral tradition of inspired poetry. According to Jaynes, verse originated in the bicameral age and was retained through and after the breakdown of the bicameral mind to the present. Jaynes and Weissman believe that through analyzing the content of literature and poetry aided by other historical evidence, we can glean knowledge about the psychology of the culture in which it was written and the psychology of the author who wrote it. Writers who write about inspired writing are often inspired to do so. This pattern is evidenced in consistencies in semantic content, the constantly authoritative nature and urgency of the voice, and the consistently patriarchal nature of the inspired message.

After reading "Of Two Minds", we began to see evidence of the theory in films and it occurred to us that this area of study could be extended beyond literature to cinema. At first it might seem that film would more readily lend itself to the representation of visual hallucinations, but we've found numerous instances of voices, messages, and inspiration by many different filmmakers.

ALPHAVILLE: THE BICAMERAL STATE

One of the problems that many readers of Jaynes have had is in imagining a society, as it must have existed for thousands of years, without consciousness. This is largely due to a belief that consciousness is constant, all pervasive and necessary for almost all activities. In fact Jaynes argues strongly in his first chapter that,

Consciousness is a much smaller part of our mental life than we are conscious of, because we cannot be conscious of what we are not conscious of. How simple that is to say; how difficult to appreciate! It is like asking a flashlight in a dark room to search around for something that does not have any light shining upon it. The flashlight, since there is light in whatever direction it turns, would have to conclude that there is light everywhere. And so consciousness can seem to pervade all mentality when actually it does not.

It is difficult for conscious beings to imagine a functioning society of automatons, selfless, and unquestioning under the control of what appeared to each of them as an omnipresent voice, constantly there when confronted with trouble or questions, endlessly repeating the basic laws, useful information, handing down judgments, and issuing immediate commands. Our conscious minds find this hard to swallow because it diminishes the importance of consciousness and at the same time shows the limits of consciousness.

This type of society is exactly what Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* presents us with. Alphaville is society without consciousness. The people go through the motions without any need for encouragement from, or interaction with other people. The common greeting is the perfect example. "I'm very well, thank you so very much." The greeting is a rule to be followed to maintain social order. There is no need to wait for a response because it has nothing to do with involvement between conscious beings. Similar to the way newspeak limits expression in

Orwell's *1984*, in "Alphaville" the Alpha 60 computer limits the vocabulary in order to limit experience. The more limited the experiences the more limited the possibilities, and the more accurately the Alpha 60 can predict and thus control the reality in Alphaville. The available vocabulary is printed in the Bible which is in fact a dictionary. Alpha 60 periodically revises and further restricts the vocabulary in order to better control. The seductress third class who settles Lemmy into his hotel room checks to make sure two things are in place, the Bible and the tranquilizers. Any questioning or disturbing conscious thought that floats to the surface of the mind can simply be sent back to the deep with a pill. When Lemmy asked if Professor Von Braun is responsible the answer is: "He just obeys logical orders." In the bicameral society even the leaders (especially the leaders) obey their voices.

What has replaced consciousness in Alphaville are simple rules, handed down from the Alpha 60 computer as commands delivered vocally. The voice is everywhere and everyone hears it as it informs, controls, and passes general information and bicameral philosophy. Alpha 60, full of contradictions itself, believes (wishfully?) that the suffering conscious mind can be handled by the same rules that control the well and obedient bicameral automatons. Alpha 60 then denies that the conscious exist. Jaynes' research indicates that bicameral societies were unable to coexist with the conscious, either as members of the society, or as neighbors. Alpha 60 says:

The meaning of words and of expressions is no longer grasped. An isolated word, or a detail of a design can be understood. But the meaning of the whole escapes. The acts of men carried over from past centuries will gradually destroy them logically. I, Alpha 60, am merely the logical means of this destruction.

Lemmy Caution is a threat to Alpha 60 because he is conscious and therefore questioning and therefore unpredictable. When he is interrogated by the computer the following exchange takes place:

Alpha 60: "Do you know what illuminates the night?"

Caution: "Poetry"

Alpha 60: "What is your religion?"

Caution: "I believe in the inspirations of Conscience"

The word that Caution comes back to over and over is conscience, a word closely tied to the idea of consciousness. If one is merely an automaton obeying rules imparted by the voice of god one has no need of conscience because one is never really responsible for one's actions. As soon as the admonitory voice is lost and the conscious human begins to act of its own volition the conscience becomes the new control mechanism.

It is the way that we answer to ourselves. Note that the inspiration for Caution's illuminating poetry is not the resurgent bicameral mind, the inspiring voice that penned the poetry Weissman analyses, but the "inspiration of conscience"—of consciousness. Later we learn that Alpha 60 has sequestered all poets and uses them from time to time.

Caution asks a resident of Alphaville to read from a book. She reads, then stops, looks up and says: “These are words I don’t understand. Conscience...” They look it up in the “Bible” but it’s not there. Lemmy laments: “So no one here knows the meaning of the word conscience anymore.”

In his final interrogation by Alpha 60 the computer tells him “You are a menace to the security of Alphaville.” and he responds, “I refuse to become what you call normal.” Caution proceeds to pose a riddle the solution to which causes Alpha 60 to self-destruct. We see the people of Alphaville reeling and running into walls. They have lost their guide and do not know how to proceed. Their god has abandoned them and they have no conscious mind of their own to compensate. The opening lines of the film are played out: “Sometimes reality is too complex for oral communication...” Complexity brought about the downfall of the bicameral societies because the limited set of rules and the slow pace of evolutionary change made it impossible for the bicameral mind to keep up with reality. Godard’s city of *Alphaville* suffered the same fate.

THE EXTERMINATING ANGEL: THE GODS DEPART

The situation experienced by the characters in Luis Buñuel’s *The Exterminating Angel* is similar to this period of adjustment; the time after the departure of the controlling voices in which the rudimentary conscious mind must adapt and grow. Historically it was a time of upheaval and chaos. In Alphaville the people lost their balance and stability. In *The Exterminating Angel* the characters lose their direction and momentum.

Buñuel perhaps more than any other director seems to work mainly through inspiration. “He likes, whether he is working or dreaming, to give himself over to the images which simply come to him and take him by surprise.”

—*The Buñuel Mystery*, Jean-Claude Carriere

At the start of the film Buñuel posts a notice that spells this out incontrovertibly:

If the film you are about to see seems puzzling or even disturbing, it is so because frequently so is life itself. The author declares he did not wish to present any symbols, at least not consciously. The best explanation of the film is that, from the standpoint of pure reason, there is no explanation.

Buñuel has divorced himself from responsibility for his creation as neatly as any poet transcribing the dictated verse of inspiration. He does not say that there is no symbolism in the work, only that it did not come from his conscious mind. He doesn’t say that the film has no meaning, only that it has no meaning from the standpoint of pure reason. The first part indicates some source for the creation of these symbols other than the conscious mind. The second indicates another possible destination; a way of analyzing the film at a level other than the conscious one. Perhaps these communiqués from the bicameral mind are best interpreted by the bicameral mind.

Everything suggests that Buñuel, in one way or another, has an exceptionally easy access to (and knows the importance of) hypnogogic mental strata which most of us are too busy, materialistic, or incautious to investigate.

—*The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, Raymond Durnat

Buñuel seems to turn the hierarchy upside down by turning the gods into servants. But in fact the role that the gods played in a bicameral society was not far from the role of a servant. The gods ran the world in the sense that they kept everything on track and moving along. So just as at some point in the past the bicameral voices departed our company so too the servants, one by one, without rational explanation, left the household just before the party.

The Aristocratic partygoers seem to be a perfect model of the conscious mind. The conscious mind, the part of ourselves that thinks about ourselves (and itself), seems to float above our bodies, above the mundane tasks of work and survival, thinking philosophically, appreciating art, and daydreaming, making “small-talk”. If consciousness didn’t have the underlying bicameral mind to deal with the myriad decisions and endless menial tasks it would never be able to explore these esoteric regions. This is what happens at the dinner party. At some point the dinner guests begin to forget what to do or at least how to do it. The guests say that they should leave but then don’t. They say that they should do many things but never carry through with any of them. They have lost whatever it was that connected their perceptions and thoughts to actions. There are no gods to tell them how to proceed and no servants to clear the tables or get their coats so they don’t leave the party and eventually find themselves unable even to leave the room they are in. Some of them die from the strain and some of them cope better than others but all are rendered ineffectual by the loss of their admonitory voices. The rest of the film explores the group dynamics of such a situation. They try opiate drugs, black magic, one goes off his medication, and all of them suffer from exhaustion, sleep deprivation, rejection, and depression, all known as causative agents for hallucination, but neither the servants nor the gods come back.

The final solution occurs to them when one of the guests realize that, several days later, they have come back to the exact positions within the room that they were in when it all began and by replaying the events, from that point forward, this time with a different outcome they manage to break free from their apathy. Their problem is only temporarily solved however. The next time they find themselves faced with a need for action they are trapped again. When she realizes that there might be a way out the guest who solved the problem says: “...at this moment, we all find ourselves, persons and furniture, in the exact positions and places of that first night. Or is it another hallucination? Please tell me.”

The creative handling of film images is such that, among all means of human expression its way of functioning is most reminiscent of the work of the mind during sleep. A film is like an involuntary imitation of a dream...The cinema seems to have been invented to express the life of the subconscious, the roots of which penetrate poetry so deeply.

—*Poetry and Cinema*, Luis Buñuel

TWIN PEAKS: LISTENING TO THE BICAMERAL

In many of his works, but especially in his film and television series “Twin Peaks” American director David Lynch seems to embrace the notion of hallucination as a real and perhaps even positive occurrence. The sheer number of hallucinations, visions, visitations, heard and channeled voices, and other hallucinatory phenomena that occur are almost overwhelming. But certain patterns are easily discerned. The hallucinations are never trivialized or made to seem illusory. Only characters that we already know to be “wrong-headed” (i.e. highly conscious, rational thinkers, who seem somewhat out of place in Twin Peaks) really doubt the validity or importance of them. The protagonists and their allies take the hallucinated messages very seriously. Quite often the hallucinated messages are important in helping the hero of the story to overcome an impasse. Sometimes they direct attention to important but overlooked facts. Occasionally they warn of danger, or predict future events. Always, whether the hallucinations are benevolent or terrifying they consistently point to the truth. The giant who appears to Agent Cooper says, “The things I tell you will not be wrong.”

The characters who appear in these visions and speak are often associated as the double of another “normal” character, as if there were a voice within the person separate from the character’s conscious mind trying to be heard. The most striking case is the character of Mr. Gerard, the one-armed shoe salesman and former companion of Killer Bob. Gerard is medicated with a drug called Haloperidol. The main use of Haloperidol is to stop hallucinations in the schizophrenic. The giant told Agent Cooper in his vision “without chemicals he points” and Agent Cooper interprets this to mean that if he wants Gerard to help him, to point to the truth, he will have to deprive him of his medication and allow him to hallucinate. When Gerard does hallucinate it takes the form of an internal voice, a doubling character named Mike that speaks through Gerard’s mouth. The internal voice speaks in verse. Mike says that he took off his left arm (the side of his body controlled by the right side of the brain, the seat of the bicameral voice) when he decided to leave Bob and suppress his inner voice.

They come along, these ideas, and they hook themselves together, and the unifying thing is the euphoria they give you... If they’re all stringing themselves happily together and they’re forming a story that’s carrying you forward, ... You just have to trust yourself...If it stays abstract, if it’s in an area where it feels truthful, and it hooks in the right way, and it thrills you as it moves to the next idea, and it seems to move and make some sort of intuitive sense, that is a real good guideline. There’s a certain kind of logic and truth and right workings that you have to trust.

—David Lynch

Again the bicameral mind excuses the conscious mind from answering to its conscience. Note how he gives over credit for the creative process to the ideas themselves. “They come along, these ideas, and they hook themselves together... .” At the same time he absolves himself of responsibility. He says that we must trust ourselves, indicating that Lynch feels comfortable integrating the inspired voice, which he obviously sees as separate from his conscious process, into himself.

In another interview with George Hickenlooper the following exchange took place:

H: Once you were asked how you conceived of an idea, and you replied that you didn't think it but you felt it. Could you explain what you meant?

L: ...I think there's instinct, and then there's intellectual thinking, and then there's a combination of the two which they call intuition, where you use two different things, thinking and feeling, at the same time. I think a lot of things are intuitively felt and that's just the way ideas seem to come about. You're thinking and you're feeling and all of a sudden the next thing comes along.

Is it any wonder that a director who seems to have so successfully integrated his bicameral inspiring voice and his thinking intellectual conscious mind would create stories and characters where instructive visions and commanding voices play such an integral, and more importantly, beneficial role.

TRANSCENDENTAL STYLE OR BICAMERAL INSPIRATION

In "Transcendental Style in Film", Paul Schrader looks at the works of three filmmakers, Yasujiro Ozu, Robert Bresson, and Carl Theodor Dreyer, to see how each has developed a common style, across cultural differences, with which to show the transcendent, or Holy, in film. Published four years before Jaynes' "The Origin of Consciousness" Schrader's work could be seen as describing the same phenomena from a different perspective. The evidence Schrader brings forth, his method of analysis and the conclusions reached could all be explored equally as supporting Jaynes' concept of a common voice.

Rather than attempting to explain the similarity of expression in cinema, when dealing with the transcendental, as the result of a mystical, spiritual or supernatural origin it seems that it could more simply be explained as the result of a common evolutionary history, and similar neurophysiology. We experience the transcendental, or inspirational, or intuitional, in the same way internally, and so when we try to express it we use that common experience as the basis for our expression. It is interesting to note that among the films discussed by Schrader, two versions of the life of Joan of Arc (by Bresson and Dreyer) are analyzed. Joan of Arc, perhaps one of the most famous voice-hearers, heard voices that commanded her to battle and eventually lead to her martyrdom.

And in Dreyer's "Ordet" ("The Word") the character John believes he is hearing the voice of God and that God speaks through him. John wanders from scene to scene like an automaton speaking simple concrete statements in a commanding voice, which the other members of his family, tied up in their conscious concerns of life and love and birth and death, do not want to hear. The family is convinced that John is mad. John correctly predicts the death of the newborn child and of the mother. And states matter-of-factly that he can bring Inger back to life but no one listens or believes. Dreyer, however, makes it clear that it is John who is right and real. Just as the Giant in Twin Peaks says, "The things I tell you will not be wrong" Johns says to his father "If you had believed in me this would not have happened." Finally when one of the little children believes in John he is empowered to work his miracle: He commands Inger to rise from her coffin and she does.

Schrader concludes his analysis of Dreyer by stating "Dreyer does not want stasis; he seems to prefer perpetual disparity, the body and soul alive, and always in tension."

ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF BICAMERAL CINEMA

In the film “Network” (1976), directed by Sidney Lumet and written by Paddy Chayefsky, network news anchor Howard Beale, played by Peter Finch, under intense personal stress, suffering from low ratings, and having been fired from his job, suffers a nervous breakdown. Howard relates his experience: “Last night I was awakened from a fitful sleep shortly after two o’clock in the morning by a shrill, sibilant, faceless voice. I couldn’t make it out at first, in the dark bedroom. I said ‘I’m sorry, you will have to talk a little louder.’”

The voice commands him “‘I want you to tell the people the truth. Not easy, because they don’t wanna know the truth.’ And I said ‘You’re kidding? What the hell should I know about the truth?’ But the voice said to me ‘Don’t worry about the truth. I will put the words in your mouth.’”

Howard believes that god is talking to him. The voice clears that up. “And I said ‘What is this? The burning bush? I’m not Moses.’ And the voice said ‘I’m not God. What has that got to do with it?’ ... And I said ‘Why me?’ And the voice said ‘Because you’re on television, dummy’... So I thought about it for a moment. And then I said ‘OK.’”

Mr. Jensen, the owner of the network, while enjoying Howard’s power over his audience, wants to control his message, and so attempts to control Howard. Jensen encounters Howard Beale in a darkened room. Jensen is dramatically lighted in a manner recalling Howard’s hallucination scene. And he usurps the language and tone of the voice.

JENSEN - ... you have meddled with the primal forces of nature, and you will atone! Am I getting through to you, Mr. Beale? ... We no longer live in a world of nations and ideologies, Mr. Beale. The world is a college of corporations, inexorably determined by the immutable by-laws of business. The world is a business, Mr. Beale! It has been since man crawled out of the slime, and our children, Mr. Beale, will live to see that perfect world in which there is no war and famine, oppression and brutality -- one vast and ecumenical holding company, for whom all men will work to serve a common profit, in which all men will hold a share of stock, all necessities provided, all anxieties tranquilized, all boredom amused. And I have chosen you to preach this evangel, Mr. Beale.

HOWARD - (humble whisper) Why me?

JENSEN - Because you’re on television, dummy.

Howard is won over by the performance and obeys the voice of authority.

In the television series “M*A*S*H”, there is an episode from Season 10 called “Follies of the Living, Concerns of the Dead”. In this episode, written and directed by Alan Alda, which aired in January 1982, Jamie Farr as Corporal Klinger suffers from a fever that causes him to hallucinate. The fever enables him to communicate with the spirit of a dead soldier, Private Weston, who is convinced he is not dead. Only Klinger can hear the voice of Weston. Klinger’s hallucinations are an annoyance to the other characters but in the storyline are given the weight of reality. The episode title plays out as the conscious characters are

consumed by trivia and Private Weston attempts to cope with his fate. Klinger, usually the comic relief carries the dramatic storyline. Weston attempts to communicate with several people in the camp, but the conscious cannot hear him. As he wanders through the camp, however, he is able to hear the inner thoughts of all the people around him.

In Wim Wender's film *Wings of Desire* (1987) we see the story from the viewpoint of the angels of the city of Berlin. The angels can hear the inner conscious thoughts and concerns of the people that they watch over and occasionally intercede to give comfort and solace. The film gives us an excellent example of the supplanting of the inner voice by the voices of technology. Despair consumes characters absorbed in the blasting stereo, the droning television, and in one intensely emotional scene a suicidal young man sitting on the edge of a roof wearing walkman headphones. Otto Sander as Cassiel, one of the angels, caresses him in a rare instance of direct contact but the despondent youth cannot hear him and jumps to his death.

Memento (1999), is a film written and directed by Christopher Nolan based on a story by Jonathan Nolan.

Guy Pearce as Leonard, like the patient John G. in Oliver Sacks' clinical essay "The Lost Mariner", has lost his long-term memory, in Leonard's case, as a result of a blow to the head. Leonard having lost his memory has lost his inner voice. Leonard discusses another character in the same situation. Leonard says: "Sammy Jenkis wrote himself endless notes. But he'd get mixed up. I've got a more graceful solution to the memory problem. I'm disciplined and organized. I use habit and routine to make my life possible. Sammy had no drive. No reason to make it work." Note how the loss of the voice causes Sammy to lose his momentum like Buñuel's dinner guests. Leonard's solution is to externalize the voice by tattooing his admonitions on his body. His memory is accreted on the surface. Many of the tattoos are reversed so that when Leonard sees his reflection in the mirror he "hears" their admonitions:

"JOHN G. RAPED AND MURDERED MY WIFE"

"HE IS A LIAR. DON'T TRUST HIM"

"FIND HIM AND KILL HIM"

The tattoos state facts, pass judgments, and command Leonard to action.

CONCLUSION

To briefly wrap this up we wanted to mention a few texts that informed our research. Of course Jaynes, Weissman and Schrader which we have already mentioned but also a recent spate of books that expand and update many of Jaynes' ideas. Tor Norretrander's *The User Illusion, Cutting Consciousness Down to Size*, from 1998. And two books published this year, Daniel Smiths' *Muses, Madmen and Prophets, Rethinking the History, Science, and Meaning of Auditory Hallucination*. And a collection of essays edited by Marcel Kuijstan, *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness, Julian Jaynes' Bicameral Mind Theory Revisited*. I should point out that Marcel Kuijstan runs the Julian Jaynes Society which can be found at JulianJaynes.org And lastly one of the most enjoyable works we found in this process, from Frederick Feirstein's *Expansive Poetry, Essays on the New Narrative & The New Formalism*, an

essay by Frederick Turner and Ernst Pöppel entitled “The Neural Lyre: Poetic Meter, The Brain, and Time.”

ARTISTS AND PHENOMENOLOGY

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Do you think I know what I am doing?
That for one breath or half-breath I belong to myself?
As much as a pen knows what it's writing,
or the ball can guess where it's going next.¹

–Rumi

Artists are natural practitioners of phenomenology. I include in that broad, generic term artist, those who paint and sculpt, dance and write poems, compose symphonies and shoot video. And phenomenologists, because we intrinsically do what Edmund Husserl suggested: we bring our attention to the thing itself.²

While I am aware that there are as many creative processes as there are creative people, I believe that there are some gross generalizations that can be made about engaging in the making of art. Whether we work from nature, from a felt sense, a concept, a historical influence or from a dream, as artists it is incumbent upon us to turn to the source of our work. We focus on the dream image, the orchid before us, the sound of the torrential rain on the clay roof, the meaning of justice. With all of our attention and care, we look at the source of our inspiration and we wait. We wait for it to reveal itself. We wait to see, to hear what it will tell us about itself. If we are wise, we don't try to mold it precipitously into some preconceived shape or outline; we let it take the shape of its choosing. And we can only do this if we are willing to take the time to let it be, as it is, in our presence. This is our practice.

This attention alone won't make us great artists. But without it we should only be executing our craft. Without attention, care, and patience, we would only find ourselves squeezing a preconceived peg into its corresponding hole, not making art. When I set about to draw a tomato, if I don't bring my attention to the object, but instead rely on a habit, a visual code that I have used to shorthand this object, I miss entirely the experience of the tomato itself. I miss what it might offer me, what it might, unexpectedly reveal. I reduce it to a sign or a symbol, a re-presentation of its attributes: round, red, with a prickly green stem. If I approach the tomato with the attitude, "I know this thing. I have seen it a hundred times before," then I not only run the risk of not seeing this particular tomato as it discloses itself, but I also am closing myself off to the experience of that very moment. I am choosing the easy, handy, habitual "mental image," which, by being codified, keeps me from seeing the plump, scarlet fruit before me.

Those of us who struggle to make "art," struggle to be open to what appears before us. Contrary to the postmodern rejection of the claim that anything is "immediately given in experience,"³ the artist can even turn her attention to what is being mediated, to the sign itself, and find in that given experience the source of her art.

In bringing my attention then, to the practice of art-making, I have stumbled upon some ideas that reside somewhere in the intersection between art and philosophy. These two have

often been pitted against one another as, since Plato's time, the philosopher has been defined in opposition to the poet.⁴ To Plato, the poet was by definition the antithesis of the philosopher. Plato attempts to give us an accurate, i.e., clear, discrete, known, picture of a philosopher by outlining what it is that a philosopher does—makes an argument—as opposed to what a poet does—allows a space for the sense of wonder.

When we inhabit this space in-between poet and philosopher, we blur these discrete borders. This is the space out of which the philosophical concept of Aletheia emerges and in which we can see the practice of an artist is intrinsically as an Aletheic one.

In order to get the ancient Greek concept of Aletheia, we need to take a moment to appreciate to what it is an alternative. Over the centuries many Western thinkers have come to understand the nature of “Truth” based on the “truth as correspondence theory.” Sort of like the X-Files. The truth is out there. How we get to this truth is by deducing, by analyzing, by quantifying. When we find something “true” we are also given, by default, a false that tags along, accompanying a long string of dualisms: outside or inside, thinking or sensing, finding or making, reality or appearance, objective or subjective.

In fact, as soon as we turn our attention to our attention, we immediately become aware of what appears to be an intrinsic split. We momentarily cease being in the activity, we remove ourselves and we observe. This occurs whether we are looking at looking, at thinking, at language, at painting, at the way we dance the lindy-hop. The split between our observing selves and our doing selves, between what we see and how we say it, comes along with a fondness for clear boundaries which harden and constrict experience; a fondness for what we see as black and white. Black and white has come to stand for truth: it was all there in black and white, we say, and generally we prefer this to the fuzzy lack of clarity inherent in shades of grey. So what we really mean when we say black and white is black or white. Black or white flattens, removes all subtlety and gradation, all dimensionality. Black or white gives us the sharp edges and clarity that are so revered. Black or white erases the blurriness, the indistinctness that gives us pause.

John Dewey gets to what I suspect is at the core of this bifurcation. “Oppositions, he says, of mind and body, soul and matter, spirit and flesh all have their origin, fundamentally, in fear of what life may bring forth.”⁵ We are afraid. We are afraid of appearing ignorant. We are afraid of being out of control. We are afraid of not knowing, of being wrong, of being different, of not belonging. To assuage these fears we grab at the handiest way of making sense of the chaos around us. We cling to notions of black and white. Confronted by a crazy, mixed up world, there is strong motivation for creating order, for making meaning. We buy into the notion, challenged and then reaffirmed over the centuries, that sense, our sensations, what we see, what we hear and particularly what we feel, opposes rational thought, and therefore is not to be trusted. To staunch the flow of our fears, we grasp at the eithers and ors. As soon as we are convinced that we know what “this” is, what it will look like, feel like, sound like, we no longer need to be open to the experience of the “this.” But as artists, if we were to approach our paintings, our short stories, our choreography, already knowing in advance what the finished work would be, what would the point of making art be after all?

So we have this black or white, these dualisms, which map to the notion of “truth as correspondence” on the one hand, and the concept of Aletheia on the other. Even the ways we arrive at these two kinds of truths have totally different qualities. In order to understand

truth as correspondence, we rely on propositions for example, those of Aristotle's: to say that that which is, is, and that which is not, is not, is true!" To arrive at the meaning of Aletheia, however, we need to know a story.

A-Letheia is an ancient Greek word that literally means "not Lethe." Lethe is one of the rivers that flows through Hades, the underworld of Greek myth. Whenever souls arrived in Hades, they were made to drink from the river Lethe, or Oblivion, in order that they forget they had ever walked on earth. A-letheia, then, embodies a not-forgetting, or coming out of hidden-ness. Paul Crowther defines it as "the wondrous apprehension of thinghood..."⁶ And Martin Heidegger wrote extensively about Aletheia in his essay "The Origin of the Work of Art."

I wanted to give you a taste of the aletheic way Heidegger uses language to describe aletheia:

That which is, is that which arises and opens itself, which, as what presences, comes upon man as the one who presences, i.e., comes upon the one who himself opens himself to what presences in that he apprehends it. Rather, man is the one who is looked upon by that which is: he is the one who is—in company with itself—gathered toward presencing, by that which opens itself. To be beheld by what is, to be included and maintained within its openness and in that way to be borne along by it, to be driven about by its oppositions and marked by its discord—that is the essence of man in the great age of the Greeks.⁷

Now of course this is translated from the German, but still...If we bring our attention to Heidegger's words we notice that we are stopped in our tracks, by their apparent circling back on themselves, by their circuitousness ... Heidegger exemplifies in how he uses language, what he wants us to do with our experience: to let go of our habitual way of approaching it, stop and let it presence. He wants us to let ourselves inhabit the space between, to experience the strife or discord between oppositions like making and finding, inside and out, and to allow this oscillation, this movement to occur and not be forced to choose between our eithers or ors, our blacks or our whites.

While the Greek concept of Aletheia has been a touchstone in thinking about how works of art reveal themselves to us, my personal experience arose while sketching a tomato and at the same time stepping back to examine myself as I did so. I became aware of a process, a numinous movement which I'd describe something like this:

Removing the tomato from its plastic wrap, there are no words. Just it. Just me. Just "tomato-ness." Impulse bubbles up and locates itself in my hands. I "see" the tomato, as I set about to draw. But I don't ask why. I don't ask, to know the tomato? To be with it? To understand? To capture, preserve or hold the moment of apprehension? To re-present this feeling of wonder? Of awe? To communicate my experience? I don't ask these questions, but they are there, and the answer to each is "Yes."

When I begin to sketch, I see what I always see, what I assume everyone sees. I see red, I see round, I see a tiny green stem remnant. Tomato. I think, that I already know this tomato. The point of my pencil finds the paper, and arbitrarily chooses a place to begin. On one occasion, I might start with an outline, the product of my imagination, as if I could mark the

spot where tomato stops and air begins. On another occasion I begin where the tomato bottom rests on the cutting board, or where the wizened leaf attaches to its stem. Some days I sketch in bold strokes a general shape. I look again, more carefully this time, and I see that it is not really round after all. Flat where its bottom casts a shadow along the cutting board, the top of the fruit has ridges, valleys and hills. The longer, the closer I look, the more I see. Color shifts from red to red orange to light yellow to greenish-brown to deep crimson.

Light crosses the tomato's sleek skin. Greenish black shadows mirror dried stem leaves and roll across the fruit's surface. The tomato is a world and I travel its terrain. Marks find the paper and joy finds me: the delight in sensing "tomato." What I see deepens over time, as if, now, secure in the knowledge of my interest, the tomato decides it is safe to show me more. The more I see, the more my comprehension changes; with this new understanding I begin to see anew. My sensing/knowing grows, layer upon layer.

In his essay, "The Experience of Art," Paul Crowther suggests that "Aletheia" "hinges ultimately on a sense of wonder at the unique existence of specific things, and at their potential or hidden aspects which the artist has revealed. The philosopher can describe it but only the artwork reveals it."⁸ The dance, the poem, the ceramic jug points to that sense of wonder. But it is in the aletheic practice of the artist that the wonder is experienced and oppositional boundaries are erased in the making. By bringing her attention to the object of her inquiry, tomato, an impulse, a gesture, an emotion, or a historical trend, the artist reinvigorates a tired and habitual mode of seeing and thinking, and moves instead towards a kind of looking that connects instead of separates, flickers instead of fixes.

Heidegger suggests that when we are able to let go of thinking that we always already know in advance what we will experience, that we may have the opportunity of "being beheld by what is, being included and maintained, within its openness."⁹ Instead of needing to choose one of a pair of oppositions, we move back and forth between the opposing poles. In this movement, we are looking at the tomato, and being beheld by it; when we bring our attention to this present moment, we are see-ing the object of our attention, we see ourselves see-ing, we are inhabit-ing the space between, and we are becom-ing aware of its "pres-encing..." with an emphasis on the ing, an on-going, ever-changing impermanence. This is also the nature of the Buddhist practice of vipassana, translated as "seeing clearly," seeing things as they are: whether it is the arc our arm draws as it moves through the air, the idea as it blossoms and grows, the story as it unfolds. When we bring to our work this patience and attention, we are rewarded with the numinous experience of aletheia.

Disrupting and undoing foundational dualisms, the artist blurs the borders between, even as she is aware of them: she makes as she finds, she approaches the object subjectively, she brings her insides out for all to see. For the artist, appearance is reality.

NOTES

1. Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne
2. Levin, David Michael, *The Philosopher's Gaze: Modernity in the Shadows of Enlightenment*, University of California Press, 1999, p. 21.
3. Cahoon, Lawrence, Ed., *From Modernism to Postmodernism*, Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p.10
4. Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and Social Hope*. London: Penguin Books, 1999.p. 370
5. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Perigee Books, 1934), 22., Emphasis added.

6. Crowther, Paul. "Experience of Art: Some Problems and Possibilities of Hermeneutical Analysis." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 43, no. 3 (1983): 356.
7. Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture," in *The Question Concerning Technology* (Perennial, 1982), 131.
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SPIRITED DEBATES WITH ARTISTS

Silya Kiese

**The Art Students League of New York and
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Is the seed of authentic art a quest of the spirited mind?

This presentation invites you to take part in a let's say a "Chariot Ride" that guides in salient ways the senses of the intellect and the divine potential of the creative spirit.

There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day when we see beyond the usual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall our vision by some sort of *spirited sign* it was in this hope that the arts were invented.

Signposts on the way to greater knowledge and spiritual wisdom.¹

Art making is not to look for it, thus to discover the real sense, or significance of something.

Spirituality As A Prototypal Substance, Which Determines The Creative Mind To Create.

The Artist's Determination And The Origin Of Imagination And The Spiritual. The Human Spirited Mind's Unknown Ephemeral Geometry.

My recent spirited debate with the knowledgeable owner of a contemporary gallery² in Santa Fe, New Mexico revealed an enlightened *signpost* related to art history and the artistic effort to spiritualize nature, conceived through the exercise of human intuitive faculties, and the human *collective unconscious*.

When I visited his gallery in the autumn of 2007, the current exhibition entitled "Ancient and Contemporary Art" inspired my imagination. The show presented diverse miniature sculptural stone objects³. The form and visual harmonic proportion of these objects were shaped from platonic solids, and demonstrated exceptional craftsmanship.

Thus the facial features were created in a manner, let's say, with a simple sketch drawn onto the surface of the stone, applying dots for the human paired eyes and a thin line for the features of the mouth and lips, referring to a historical period in times long past.

These ancient sculptures were combined with colorful large-scale textiles projected from the surrounding gallery walls. These colored wall-hangings appeared like contemporary expressionistic paintings, and my mind started to imagine that they constitute a quality of painterly likeness, and are identical to Rothko's⁴ *Paintings in Abstractions*.

When I mentioned my venturesome observation to the owner of the gallery, he initiated a dynamic spirited debate. He said,

They are textiles, and yes they appear like contemporary works of art, however these textiles were buried underneath the earth and were found in the geological area where these ancient people lived.

He then continued the debate and said,

Yes, this found treasure of ancient textiles could've been envisioned by the painter Rothko, working with the universal *collective unconscious* when he created his formidable painterly Abstractions in the Modern Age.

He then concluded by saying, "These ancients might've pursued their creation of textile works in the same *collective unconscious* manner." Then he added,

How about these colored line textiles and Rothko's vibrant color field paintings are a mysterious map to the discovery of the 'DNA in nature' during pre-historic times; And the artist is in correspondence with our human collective memory, or the *collective unconscious*, while in the process of creating a work of art?

EXAMPLE OF SPIRITED SIGNPOSTS:

The Origin of Human Imagination and The Spiritual. The Artist's Myth-Function and The Human Creative Code Related To The Spirited Alchemy Of Metaphysics.

This presentation will proceed with an introduction to explore another spiritual debate that engages my artistic curiosity with natural phenomena when I created a series of large scale sculptures in the early 1990's.

The Sculptural Series⁵ entitled *DNA in Nature* has been inspired by my interest and research in the *DNA in nature* and the visual *signposts* revealed by the spiritual aura of the Pacific Northwest's panoramic environment, and its exceptional beauty of magical sculpted mountains and ocean sites. I developed this series in my sculpture studio in Seattle and teaching "Sculpture and Process" at the Evergreen State College and Seattle Pacific University.

The Sculptural Series DNA in Nature is composed of sixteen small and large scale sculptures and made from natural earth materials metal, stone, wood and coiled fiber materials. The paradigmatic spatial form of each sculpture is assembled from concepts of platonic solids, and conceived from nature, imagination and mental images related to divine geometric objects, space and natural light. Light, as an ephemeral sculptural material, has always been an important element in my artistic practice; and natural light, the source of illumination, such as the sun, is an essential source for the shape of spatiality in sculpture, and is dominant throughout the series, evoking a *spiritual aura* in each object of the Sculptural Series.

The sculpture entitled "Double Helix"⁶ presented in this image is a combine of four Tetrahedrons and assembled with a curved liked fiber form, reminiscent of the DNA Double helix form in nature. The spatial forms of this sculpture are filled with the characteristics of natural light, and ignite an aura of the Spiritual.

The sculpted stone geometrics show the essential surface of the stone structure present in nature, juxtaposed of geological and possible celestial patterns of DNA phenomena and ignites Archeozoic *echoes* of primitive forms:

Double Helix poem⁷

To spell the complete message of life this occurs only in nature
Once the Ancients worshiped the Double Helix as a symbol of the
Interaction of opposites which resulted in the creation-
But before she created DNA Nature reproduced itself
And continues to reproduce itself.

The Sculptural Series⁸—*DNA in Nature* is clearly a reference to contemporary genres of sculptural assemblage and *Objektkunst* of the 21st century, signified by combining natural and utilitarian object, (Duchampian⁹ object *trouves*).

The concept for the sculptural series originally began with a word, and evolved into a poem. Thus the manifest of the careful sculptural arrangement, and the selection of platonic solids, and natural surface structure for each individual sculpture caused a particular illuminative aura, constituting that the human creative process is guided by the *collective unconscious*, provided that the development of visual concepts and ideas are inspired by artistic vision and conceived from dream images.

For example: the concept for the Sculptural Series combined the *DNA in Nature* and evolved from the artist's imagery based on geology related to pre-historic earth and possible patterns in the cosmic universe; describing that the artist is at that moment in correspondence with the human "collective unconscious", while in the process of creating a work of art.

I'll continue this presentation with an introduction of a spirited magic voice Barbara McClintock¹⁰ whose insightfulness with the artist's process of creation is complimentary to the above mentioned spirited examples and debates, and is exemplary providing an illuminate window to my art-practice and teaching philosophy:

SEEING entails a form of subjectivity, an act of imagination, a way of looking that is necessary in part determined by some part of private perspective. Its results are never simple facts, aimable to objective judgements, but facts or pictures, or visual concepts that are dependent on the internal vision that generate them.

When I returned to the East-coast to teach "Sculpture and Process" at the famed Art Students League of New York, a number of these sculptures from the series were transported to my studio in Stamford, CT. Since then a group of these sculptures have been revised with new vision. Revising my sculptural progressions has been a life-long productivity of my artistic practice, and a deeply revealing journey in making art. For example the large-scale sculpture *Double Helix* has been revised with *Light-Art*, and the coiled fiber-synthesis of the *Double Helix* form has now become a spiral shaped light-construct¹¹ filled with artificial light. Revising the sculpture has re-kindled a new spiritual aura, illuminating DNA possibilities through the Imagined and the art of sculpture.

The exploration of *Kinetics*, *Light Art*, including *Sound Art* has been a major part of my academic study¹², and has been considerably influenced by the diversity and inter-Disciplinary *Time-Arts* Department and legendary light artist Steve Waldeck¹³. The diversity of SAIC's¹⁴ interdisciplinary *Time Arts* department provides a considerable advantage to the discovery of art disciplines, combined with artistic excellence.

Creating and working with the potential future and spiritual media of Light Art again has been a highly inspirational, and an innovative challenge. I'll continue this presentation with a literary composition of my contemporary sculptures, "An Essay on DNA" by Robert Palmquist¹⁵:

The Sculptural Series composed of rock shaped into idealized geometric forms arranged in idealized patterns within a framework of fiber, metal and wood is entitled *DNA in Nature*. One of these patterned collections of forms and materials is called the *Double Helix*. It is described by Kiese in terms such as platonic solids (e.g. triangular prisms, etc.), cosmic, and the collective unconscious identified by Carl Jung¹⁶, which begs the question—How can an abstract pattern of non-organic materials represent the basis of life? Is there a commonality between these concepts? Can there be common thread between four concepts that are operative at different scales and involve different materials? There can be and the thread is simultaneously simple and complex. The common thread is the atom; the complexity is the history common to all atoms and to arrangements of atoms. In art this simplicity and complexity stand side-by-side in a single creation and force us to span scales of time and space that we would rather neglect. For to synthesize one must connect and to connect is to share the glory and splendor of nature with who? *An Essay on DNA* continues: Nature for one and the Creator—the Artist—through who knows what subconscious drive was within the artist during the moments of creation?

And so Kiese's Sculptural Series *DNA in Nature* recounts with a few well-chosen materials the *cosmi —planetar—organic—story*. Pattern is emphasized by the idealized shapes of its components, the mineral patterns of its rock, the spiral of its fiber-rope, the shadows of the light falling upon it. Yes the story of the thread is not over, *it continues in the creative spirit*. If only we would read and heed it.

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1. Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit*, J.B. Lippincott Company.
2. Siegal Gallery, Santa Fe, NM.
3. Pre-Columbian sculpture.
4. Mark Rothko 1903-70, Russian born American painter, Abstract Expressionism, studied with Max Weber, The Art Students League of New York.
5. Sculptural Series—DNA in Nature, reviews, 1993-2007: *Sculpture Magazine*, "Contemporary Sculpture," Matthew Kangas, *Reflex Magazine*, Silya Kiese at Seattle Pacific University, Tom McTaggart, *Journal News*, "Classical Images Expressed In High-Tech, Contemporary Materials," Melissa Polites Myers, *New York Times*, Hopper House Art Center, NY, SUNY Rockland Community College, "Eight Visions: A Sculpture Exhibition," office of the President, Cliff L. Wood, *LINEA*, *Journal of The Art Students League of New York*, sculpture: 'DNA Of The Soul' theirs.

6. 07-93, “Double Helix” sculpture, *DNA Sculpture Series*, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Betty Rymer Gallery, The Art Students League of New York, Phillis Hariman Mason Gallery, SHA park & Stamford Theatre works, CT, Silvermine Art Gallery, CT, Salander O’Reilly Gallery, NYC, SUNY Rockland Community College, NY, ASL Vytlačil campus, Sculpture Park on the Hudson, NY, University of California, Berkeley, CA, Hopper House Art Center, NY, Mahlum & Nordfors McKinley Gorden Architects, Seattle, WA, Waterleaf Architects, Seattle, WA, Galleri Astley, Seattle, WA & Astley Sculpture Park, Uttersberg, Sweden, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany, Seattle Pacific University, WA, Rutgers University, NJ.
7. 2007-93 Kiese, “Double Helix poem,” The Art Students League of New York, Sculpture and Process Program, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany, lecture-show, Seattle Pacific University, WA, DNA Sculpture Series show.
8. 2007-93 Kiese, Lectures and Studio Art Programs, The Art Students League of New York, Rutgers University, NJ, Evergreen State College, WA.
9. Marcel Duchamp 1887-1968 French-born Avant-garde, concept & idea artist.
10. Barbara McClintock, spiritual innovative American scientist, her unfolding vision cultivated over three decades.
11. LED and laser light.
12. Kinetics, Light-and Sound Art.
13. Steve Waldeck, founder and Professor, Time Arts Department, School of The Art Institute of Chicago.
14. School of The Art Institute of Chicago.
15. Robert Palmquist, Ph.D, geologist and educator, email: meandering@comcast.net
16. Carl Gustav Jung, 1875-1961, swiss psychologist..

MODERN LAYERS

Elissa Tatigikis Iberti
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The paintings of Milton Resnick provide a point of departure for this presentation, which focuses on the use of layering both in the process of painting, and in the pixels of photographic content that are structured in the *layers palette* typically found in a program such as *Adobe Photoshop*.

The formal painting techniques of glazing and scumbling, with the latter more relevant to Resnick's thickly painted surfaces, link the physical element of paint, and its celebration in his work, to the digital concept of layers. Resnick's personal journey through the creative process celebrates paint as substance and subject. A densely *pixilated* composition that contains layers of photographic imagery must be worked through in much the same way one builds the surface of a painting. Both the painted surface and the digital surface are built by the artist as a solution to the creative process, accumulating paint in the former and pixels of color in the latter.

Resnick's tactile, abstract surfaces differ from the output of a digital file to paper, however it is in the density or accumulation of the layered, photographic content where the weight may be considered similar. Although in an art historical context Resnick is related to the Abstract Expressionists, his method for accumulating paint relates to *Modern Layers*. The subject of layers and layering is an example of an inescapable cycle that relates back to the earth. This cycle accumulates over time and is reflected in the present.

INTRODUCTION

Recently I completed a catalogue essay on the work of the painter Milton Resnick, for the first selected [retrospective](#) since the artist's death in 2004, at the Anthony Giordano Gallery at Dowling College in Oakdale, NY, that opens on October 22, 2006. This selected retrospective exhibition consists of eleven paintings, each representing a decade in the prolific life of Milton Resnick (Rachmiel Resnick) (1917- 2004). Three of the paintings exhibited have never before been shown and these works: "Untitled 1948", "Untitled 1972," and "Ochre 1986" were selected to represent the decades of the 1940s, '70s and '80s respectively. The other works in the show serve to mark the remaining decades; some have not been widely shown and now hang alongside the large-scale paintings of more notoriety, completing this survey that spans a fifty-two year period. Milton Resnick's work can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Resnick's inclusion as one of the artists of his time to remain listed with present day contemporary artists is evident with his inclusion in both Henry M. Sayre's survey text, *A World of Art*, and the video series, *A World of Art: Works in Progress*, created for the Annenberg/CPB Project for distance education curriculum, placing Resnick alongside Lorna Simpson, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Bill Viola, Hung Liu, Beverly Buchanan, June Wayne, Judy Baca, Goat Island, and Mierle Ukeles revealing that Resnick is suspended in time "In" the picture, in contrast to the timely and richly informative book, by Geoffrey Dorfman, *Out*

of the Picture : Milton Resnick and the New York School, a chronicle of Resnick's life and work, published in 2002. With this said, it is hard to ignore the recurring examples from Resnick's work, statements and life that allowed him to remain "Modern," providing perhaps a lexicon to a generation of artists who perhaps have no vocabulary for abstraction.

If Milton Resnick were a *Jeopardy* category, disguised behind the heading *Modern Layers* one of his first references to popular culture might be as an artist who made a tremendous contribution to the history of postwar American painting, specifically the development of the first generation of the New York School and Abstract Expressionism. Through his work, various interviews and teaching, his link to popular culture came through his generosity to expose us to abstraction and the power of paint, despite a life on the periphery of the art world. This generosity that I mention takes the form of Resnick consenting to being photographed at work, painting a picture.

The time-lapse photographs from a 1957 interview by Lawrence Campbell, writing an article for *ARTnews* entitled, *Resnick Paints a Picture* were the inspiration and the obvious visuals for this talk and the bridge to connect Resnick to the layers in the accumulation of digital imagery or digitally "collaged" imagery. Again from the vantage point of popular culture, and despite Resnick's absence from the famed 1951 LIFE Magazine photograph of the original Abstract Expressionists or the "15 Irascibles", his legacy may be as the originator of the reality show format—as seen on the pages of *ARTnews* accompanying Campbell's article.

It is also here that we can examine the layering capacity of a program such as *Adobe Photoshop* used to create this time-lapse overlay of Resnick's, *Winged Horse* (1957). Here Resnick acts as a demo or user interface on how to make a painting: providing us with a unique performance, along with an end product. He is also a metaphor or protagonist if we are to make the scene active and view his quest as in the art of gaming. For the purist the missing tactile drag of the brush through the paint is the reality of the representational image.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

I discovered the work of Milton Resnick as one discovers the photograph of a long-lost relative. Instead of a photograph of an individual, our introduction came with a photographic detail on the cover of the April 1978 *Artforum*, completely filled with the richly painted surface of "Untitled" (detail) 1975. Those strokes that were revealed in that detail spoke of paint and nothing else. A view of a green-tinted impasto surface, that up close revealed a dynamic range of warm-tinged paint, swirled, stroked and integrated into the knitted visceral matrix or the field, a holistic view of paint, co-mingled to produce a frenzied, yet delicately, *scumbled* surface. A surface that allows glimpses of areas that Resnick referred to as a painting acting "... in many different directions at once, so strongly that it will shatter itself and open up a small crack, which will suck the world in."¹

Geoffrey and David Dorfman's article, "Milton Resnick and the Search for the Whole"—the article behind the *Artforum* cover highlighted Resnick's work and bestowed upon it the accolades it richly deserved as the quintessential product of postwar American non-objective painting and in describing his work as "... holistic painting in its "most empowered form." [The work possessing] "... ambiguity, which has the quality of a meditation—that which dwells in the Open yet retains a secure glimpse of its own origins."²

Resnick's use of the traditional techniques of glazing and scumbling of paint can provide another link to advancing paint away from the traditional panel painting, more toward a field or a monitor. The use of layering contributes to the flatness of the surface where reality and abstraction are one: abstraction and flatness being characteristics of the *Modern*. The pixel is paint in an altered state, with a mission, perhaps akin to the Impressionist dot or as Stephen Westfall writes in his catalogue essay for Resnick's survey of paintings (1957-60) from the Howard and Barbara Wise Collection shown at the Robert Miller Gallery in 1988, that what Resnick gives the viewer in

[e]ach gesture ... intuitively calibrated [as a] response to the previous mark and a question posed to the mark which follows. You think of C[é]zanne, and in doing so you realize that between C[é]zanne and the paint-as-paint practitioners for whom Resnick is a sort of avatar, a great idea lay dormant; that within the action of building up and filling out, within the fractured skin of oil and pigment, there lies an unprecedentedly concrete record of the "state" of a creator extending himself through the chosen medium, a record of pursuit."³

Resnick [himself added] ... Cézanne, who claimed that when he painted, he advanced everything forward at the same time, so that the emotion would not escape. Resnick says if that is so, then you can see that the surface is formed by the artist—it does not exist *a priori*...[the picture] is a lock, and its purpose is to fix this other world so that nothing can escape and nothing can be added to it.⁴

This comment about "advancing everything forward at the same time" also speaks to the digital workspace utilizing layers.

In a response to references made about his work as being "impressionistic," the artist issued this well-known statement in 1962:

I am not the follower of Monet, I am not an admirer of [d]e Kooning. I am not an action painter. I am not an Abstract Expressionist. I am not any younger than anybody or older....⁵

In time, Resnick, included in the *Monet and Modernism* exhibition in Munich in 2001 and accompanying catalogue, acknowledges his

... earliest influence was Cézanne. Years later in the early 1960s, I saw the *Waterlilies* at MoMA. I was surprised how much closer I had come to Monet.⁶

Thinking about Resnick's work as a metaphor for the power of the layer in digital imagery also has much to do with the concept of abstraction and the power of approaching the medium from the vantage point as did Duchamp when he exhausted

Cubism after painting, 'Nude Descending the Staircase', he was at the time moving out of, away from, that particular school of painting; it implied a technology, an aesthetic, a certain problem-set and certain materials, with

which he had grown bored. ... Moving past the vehicle of paint and toward a new technology in his *readymades* and his *rotoreliefs*, made for a kind of optical massage, to transform perception to another place.⁷

For Resnick it was his final succumbing to figuration after a lifetime of abstraction and the “life of Paint that also factored into his need to “upgrade.” For the artist the metaphor for the *Modern* or in this case the technology can be a personal decision to change, to technically improve or alter a course.

In 1992, Donald Kuspit described Resnick’s new figurative work at the Robert Miller Gallery as “... pictorial aphorisms” [offering again to me] “—fragments of wisdom about life and art.”⁸ Those new works allowed the figure to emerge, elusive and dramatic, and combine with the abstract to transcend in harmony. Combining once warring factions, the figure and the ground now co-existed and serve as a foundation for the *X Space 2000* and the *Monument Series* 1997. The work was about patience and transcendence, patience on the artist’s part, transcendence on the part of the paint.

Norbert Pfaffenbichler writing in the catalogue essay for an exhibition entitled, *Abstraction NOW*, states:

the theme of all abstract art is relations, between individual elements within the image’s surface (color and form), between the individual surfaces and between the surfaces and space in which they exist, in other words the viewer/user.⁹

The similarities in the traditional approach to paint and that of the digital image are the blurring of boundaries...and the development of a language. The densely painted fields of paint translate into densely layered digital compositions.

Milton Resnick’s goal was to make paint active, for him to be the “straw in the wind”, allowing the power of the medium to wash over him and the surface. Resnick’s renewal and link to the *Modern* has the ambiguity of the present and the link to the past. It has the feeling of being something more than itself and yet something intensely personal. His work has the universality of the spirit without institutional permission. His work provides the language and the translation at the same time. His possibilities translate to “play” or the construction of work, all in the name of art. It builds on what was started, according to Pfaffenbichler, “at the beginning of the last century abstract art brought an abrupt expansion of the conceivable.”¹⁰ Resnick pushed painting to the limit as it answered back; he refused a label and the prize, and is now made *Modern* again.

NOTES

1. Linda Cathcart, *Milton Resnick: Paintings 1945-1985* (Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1985)7.
2. Geoffrey Dorfman and David Dorfman, “Milton Resnick and The Search for The Whole,” *Artforum* April 1978: 45.
3. Stephen Westfall, *Milton Resnick Paintings 1957-60 From the Collection of Howard and Barbara Wise* (New York: Robert Miller Gallery, 1988) [unpaginated] [4].
4. Cathcart 14.

5. Cathcart 83.
6. Ann Gibson, "Things in the World: Color in the Work of U.S. Painters During and After the Monet Revival." *Monet and Modernism*, Karin Sagner-Cuchting, ed. (Munich; Prestel, 2001) 127.
7. Geoffrey Sirc, "What is Composition...? After Duchamp (Notes Toward a General Teleintertext)." *Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies*, Gail E. Hawisher, Cynthia L. Selfe, Eds. (Logan: Utah State University Press 1999) 178, 179.
8. Donald Kuspit, "Milton Resnick: Robert Miller Gallery, *Artforum* December 1992:89.
9. Norbert Pfaffenbichler, "From Panel Painting to Computer Processing (Notes on the Phenomenon of Abstraction in Contemporary Art)" *Abstraction NOW*. Manfred Nehrer, Peter Bogner, Eds. (Wien: Künstlerhaus Exhibition Catalogue, Austrian Society of Fine Arts, 2003) 59.
10. Pfaffenbichler 61.

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SEEING WHAT IS MISSING: ART, ARTISTS, AND 11 SEPTEMBER

Maureen Korp
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My paper is excerpted from a much longer essay which will be published in January by Routledge in *Religion, Violence and Terror*, eds. Bryan Rennie and Philip Tite. The chapter I contributed to *Religion, Violence and Terror* is entitled “Seeing What is Missing: Art, Artists, and 11 September.”

A few months after September 11, I began asking artists, “What did you do to get through that first hard week?” The answers I heard began to fall into patterns or clusters—silence, nature, ritual, cause, and loss. Then, the patterns reformed into religious categories—prediction and prophecy, description and witness, silence and light—the very elements of art *and* of religion.

Initially, there were the Rituals

Vernacular shrines and memorials, prayer services, fund-raising concerts...etc. In Wakefield, Québec, the parishioners of the Wakefield United Church used the last blooms from their summer gardens in a memorial ritual designed and led by Wakefield artist c.j. fleury at the request of the church’s minister, Giselle Gilfillan. The parishioners created a flower petal mandala. It was the centerpiece of the church’s memorial ceremony for the September 11 dead.

Thinking back to her own role that evening, c.j. fleury commented, “The way the minister folded the mandala activity into the larger ... it was really an honour art was being used so beautifully.” The artist herself is not a member of the Wakefield church.

Secondly, the Truthful Witness

Many who were murdered September 11 died by chance. They might have been somewhere else. Art, however, alters chance because art establishes connections through time. The work of two artists in my sample are examples of a “truthful witness.”

In Naz Ikramullah’s collages, the compositions, at first glance, appear to be romantic views, souvenirs, of the ancient marketplaces, mosques, and walled cities of her South Asian heritage. A second look usually reveals something more perilous—for example, a figure with machine gun, hiding in a doorway. Look even closer, there may be ghosts in the compositions. For more than 15 years, Ikramullah has been depicting scenes of violence underscored by religion in her lithographs and collages. In *City under Siege*, 1996, for example, the ghost that rises from the ruins of the ancient city is a young woman—her hair wild, arms spread wide, disoriented. She is blindfolded. The city has been bombed to rubble....

Naz Ikramullah, born in England and educated in Canada and England, is an observant Sunni Muslim of Southeast Asian heritage. In response to the specific contextual events of September 11, the artist created *Lost Dreams*, 2002. It is a vertically organized collage (h.24” x 36”). The colors are mostly secondaries—soft greens, oranges, and violets.

Ikramullah's composition combines the winter streets of Karachi with those of Kandahar, and winter scenes of Canada with imagery of the *mujahidin*. The linchpin of the composition is an area shaped like an inverted *Tau* cross. Here Ikramullah inserts a scene drawn from a photograph of what she calls an "Arab cemetery." Rising from the cemetery scene is a spare outline in white against black. It is the figure of a *mujahidin*. In the lower left-hand corner, the viewer may see a second figure. This one is of a small woman who wears a blue dress with modest *décolleté*. Her hair is short, uncovered, and she appears to be watching the viewer. Her head is bent in sorrow. The woman appears "westernized." In the entirety of the composition, however, the woman in the corner is eclipsed by the composition's central imagery of the *mujahidin* in winter.

The second artist is Marie-France Nitski, born in France, schooled in South America and Canada. She, too, "sees" uncommonly well in the dark, around corners, and into boggy, hidden places. For years, in the tradition of the European CoBrA artists, Nitski's paintings have told the stories of folkloric animals and beings who inhabit mythic worlds. They are also creatures the artist sees in her dreams and in the woods around her house in Quebec.

Nitski's visual field became crowded with refugees and displaced creatures in the aftermath of September 11—dogs and fish, ravens, turtles, little girls and lost angels, red and blue.

Animal Encounters, 2002 is large (h.80" x 60") and painted on panels of sheet metal and wood. Nitski's colors are bold—red, yellow, blue enamels and oils. The composition, in theory hieratic, is frantic. In the centre, a wild-eyed, naked little girl is standing. She has run and run and is now stopped, her arms flung out, fingers hyper-extended in fear, her lips drawn back into a grimace. A fish, a dog (with angel wings), a snake, all try to comfort her. The little girl cannot be calmed. Inchoate fear has rendered her dumb. She runs, terrorized, as terrorized as that little girl who ran naked into the roadway—My Lai 4, Vietnam, 1968.

We were never, any of us, more entrapped, more fearful, than when we were children. Tens of thousands of people did escape the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Their pathway out, we know from what they have written, were passages of fear so intense the only comparison might be the night terrors of childhood.

Third pattern, Prediction and Prophecy: when the art predates the event

Artist Audrey Churgin was born in New York City, resettling in Canada in 1970. *In Sight Recovered*, 1998, is a large triptych. The dimensions of each panel are h.60" x 36". The medium is pastel: the colors the artist uses are black, white, and a multitude of grays. In each of the three panels, two children are visible. They stand together and apart, a boy, a girl, one older, one younger. Both very young. There is a doorway, it opens, the children do not go through it. The hallway extends, the dark deepens. In this work, the artist reminds us: all of our fears are grounded by those we knew as children when we were afraid of the dark.

When Churgin finished the triptych in 1998, she put it away, unframed. Nearly four years later, she pulled it from storage and had it framed. *In Sight Recovered*, 1998 had never been shown before. The artist had held it back, knowing all the time that it was "powerful, one of my best," as she wrote.¹ Now, Churgin wanted others to see it because she knew, in the wall-sized imagery of *In Sight Recovered*, she had made a truthful image of what it must have been

like inside the towers for those who were there. How is it possible for an artist to know something before it happens, to know such things?

Not often, but sometimes, an artist's work, at least in hindsight, appears to have been predictive of events that occurred later. Artists are artists, in part, because they are sensitive to their *milieux*. Some, not many, have both talent and insight. Their antennae are uncommonly sensitive. They "read" their surroundings as text to be decoded for hidden meaning. If *In Sight Recovered* appears prophetic, it is because two factors came into play here: the artist's talent, the artist's insight, and the circumstances of chance.

Think Different: Power and Decline of the New Economy (Manhattan in March 2000), a series of six photographs by artist Hans Mettler, is predictive by talent and insight and by intention. Mettler shot his photographs early in March 2000 in and around Wall Street. He combined the Wall Street photographs with images of succulents, cacti and other garishly colored plants he subsequently photographed in the collections of the Montreal Botanical Gardens.

Hans Mettler completed work on the *Think Different* series late in 2000. In January 2001, the series was exhibited at the Ursula Wiedenkeller Gallery in Zurich, Switzerland.

Each of the Mettler's photo-collaged images reads as a visual jeremiad. The street photographs are of billboards, posters, traffic signs—all exhorting the viewer harshly to "think different." The first image of the series declares—by billboard and traffic sign—"Internet Expressway. Think different. ONE WAY." In the bottom half of the photograph, is a congestion of coleus leaves, "protesting," the artist says.²

The second image from the series identifies a corner of Sixth Avenue, also known as "Avenue of the Americas." Billboard fragments announce: "A new century, dream" and ask, "Will you be if it happens..." the rest of the query lost in the corner's turn. The right half of the image is crowded with prickly pear cactus, its fruit droplets, bloodied, the cacti colored watery blue and green.

The billboard centered in the third image asks "FIND OUT HOW MUCH OXYGEN YOUR BLOOD CAN HOLD." On the right side of the building with that billboard we see tall refinery towers, flaming, burning off noxious gases. The bottom half of the image is of vegetation, thickly planted. It is an aquarium, one rotting with algae and seaweed.

The viewer's already high tension level now jumps sharply with the fourth of the series. A billboard shows businessmen, in suits, proceeding solemnly through a wasteland. Their ties are aflame. Smoke is everywhere. The billboard text reads "www.smashstatusquo.com" Cacti with long, long needles are advancing from below upon the scene.

In the fifth image, Mettler photographs the subway entrance for the "Chambers Street Station World Trade Center." Above, a blue billboard with a weirdly armored figure reads, "Hey, you don't have to run out." Tumbling pall-mall, however, out of the underground are soft, furry, grey and yellow maggots. They are not maggots. They are succulents, curved like feeding maggots.

In the sixth and final image, "ABSOLUTE CARTING," a black dump truck carries debris away. Large, red-veined leaves pile up.

In three of the images in the *Think Different* series, the sky is visible; the sky is an intense blue, not a cloud in it. That is the sky we remember we saw on 11 September 2001.

Artist Hans Mettler was for many years a journalist working in print, radio and television media in Europe before turning to art professionally and relocating to Canada in 1995. He holds a PhD. in European Studies and Ecology. The artist's trip to New York in 2000 should have been an ordinary visit because the artist had been there before. What had changed? Mettler can say only, "I had the feeling 'this is going to stop, this is going to end.'"³ "I did that series—*Think Different*—one year before and it's still disturbing my mind."⁴

Last, the fourth category: Liminality, Silence and Memory

Religious silence is a discipline. It is not inchoate. Like the mystic, the artist bargains for truth, for insight, for vision. The Buddhist speaks of "becoming mindful," of finding your "Buddha Mind," as Shunryu Suzuki describes.⁵

From Japan, Canadian artist Robin Campbell wrote me soon after September 11 to describe something she had seen, something seemingly like an apocalyptic vision:

The image of the people hurling themselves from the burning building has stayed with me...Michaelangelo's figures falling anguished into hell and at the opposite extreme [I see] the Buddha diving serenely off the cliff to feed the starving tigers below. Considering a juxtaposition of images ... all pretty raw.⁶

Three installations followed. In each one Robin Campbell, working with Nina Handjeva-Weller, deepened her understanding of that her liminal vision. The first installation to use the teachings of this imagery was one she constructed with artist Nina Handjeva-Weller in Kyoto, Japan, one month after September 11. Their installation included images of four meditating Buddhas. In front of each Buddha was a Mandala, formed of a circular pattern, made by multiplying the published imagery of September 11. The design's specific motifs are ones taken from Shingon Buddhism.

One year later, the two artists transformed those same Mandalas into halos for a second set of five Bodhisattvas. This installation was exhibited in a Buddhist temple—Honen-In, Kyoto. Each of the five Bodhisattvas is accompanied by offerings and a wooden altar to the earth. Each Bodhisattva holds a small image of the planet earth in her hands. The whole installation is entitled *Prayers for Earth*, 2002.

In 2003, the monks of Honen-In invited the artists back to work again at their temple. *Paradise Realms for Other Species* is the two artists' largest installation to date. It incorporates sculpture, painting, and ceramics. The Bodhisattvas' halos are now altar screens and fans, symbols of silence and motion. The imagery of people falling from the towers on September 11 is now fully subsumed in the compassionate gestures of the Jizo Bosatsu. This Bodhisattva's compassion extends to all beings—"but especially to children and small animals," Robin Campbell writes.⁷

Miraku Bosatsu is a Bodhisattva of vision, paired to Kokuzo Bosatsu, the Bodhisattva of practical wisdom. All three Bodhisattvas are, as Campbell writes further: "...personifications

of the qualities necessary to bring peace to this world, to realize paradise here.”⁸ Thus, in this work, we have exemplars of *compassion, vision, and practical wisdom*.

Robin Campbell’s practice of Buddhism began as an artist in Montreal. The more she worked in her studio, the more the artist learned from silence. In silence, time stretches, then compresses, then is nothing. In silence our hearing, sight, all our senses become more acute. In silence the material is sometimes suffused with light, and transfigured, if not transformed.

A year after September 11, Canadian artist Barry Strasbourg-Thompson selected work from two series of paintings on silence—half created before September 11, half following. The paintings were large, often painted on wood with the wood grain visible. The surfaces of the paintings were usually divided into proportions consistent with the Pythagorean measures of the golden section. The paintings suggested something else could be seen if one were quiet enough and waited patiently enough. What else might be seen. In Strasbourg-Thompson’s vision, the qualities sought in silence are the same ones Campbell discerns: *compassion, vision, and practical wisdom*. Barry Strasbourg-Thompson’s exhibition was entitled *On Silence*. It opened in Ottawa, September 11, 2002. There were more than 20 paintings and sculpture—all of it disciplined, spare work, some of it fearful, despairing. And then, as promised, balance can be and was obtained, in silence.

One must be silent to remember and to see, to really see. One must be silent.

IN CONCLUSION

In their response to the events of September 11, have any in my small sample of artists found something other artists in other times and places have not also known? Unlikely. American sculptor Louise Nevelson once said of her art, and of being an artist:

I think it’s [art] as important as any religion.... You’re given a gift to fulfill. You didn’t bargain for happiness; you bargained for something else. You bargained for revelation. You bargained for a closer concept of reality. And you bargained for your own sanity, I think, half the time. You’re really right down with the elements.⁹

Those elements are light and silence. In this there is no difference to be located. They are necessarily paired in art and religions.

NOTES

1. Audrey Churgin, personal communication (e-mail) to author, January 9, 2002.
2. Hans Mettler, classroom lecture, Carleton University, Ottawa, November 19, 2003.
3. Hans Mettler, personal communication (interview notes) to author, Ottawa, August 20, 2003.
4. Hans Mettler, personal communication (telephone), Ottawa, August 13, 2003.
5. Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* (New York: Weatherhill, 1970).
6. Robin Campbell, personal communication (e-mail) to author, September 28, 2001.
7. Robin Campbell, artist’s note, 2003.
8. Robin Campbell, e-mail to author, February 28, 2004.
9. Louise Nevelson, quoted by Tal Streeter, in “Six Sculptors in America,” unpublished MFA thesis, University of Kansas, 1961, pp. 32-33.

YVES KLEIN'S EX-VOTO TO ST. RITA OF CASCIA

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Nearly twenty years after Yves Klein's premature death in 1962, just nine days after his 34th birthday, and concurrent with planning of major retrospectives of the artist's work in the U. S. and Paris, repairs necessitated by an earthquake to the sanctuary of St. Rita of Cascia, in the Umbria region of Italy, brought to light an offering Klein gifted to the chapel in February 1961. Pierre Restany, critic and theorist of Nouveau Réalisme and longstanding advocate of Klein's visionary practice, authenticated the object in the presence of art dealer, Guido Le Noci (who first exhibited Klein's blue period monochromes in 1957); Rosario Scrimieri, architect of the repair project; church representatives; and Armando Marocco, the artist whose request for gold leaf for the restoration work prompted the retrieval of the ex-voto.¹ From the front and the rear, Klein's signatures ("Y.K.", "Yves Klein" or "Yves le Monochrome") are visible.

Klein's devotion to St. Rita of Cascia and his three or more pilgrimages to her sanctuary have been considered evidence of the artist's provincial piety instilled in him as a child; he was dedicated to the saint by his maternal relatives in Nice. St. Rita of Cascia is a patron saint of Nice, and in the "old city" section of this second capital of France, a church in her honor still stands, now called St. John or St. Giaume, in the Niçois dialect. In this diverse area, the following of St. Rita of Cascia is a testimony to Nice's distinct culture within the Hexagon.

Klein's *Ex-Voto* was left anonymously at the sanctuary as were previous offerings of a prayer for protection in advance of his April 1958 exhibition *Le Vide*², and his gift of a blue monochrome painting in the fall of 1959. This second pilgrimage was made to thank the saint for her assistance in obtaining Klein's first major commission, the installation of large scale blue monochromes and blue monochrome sponge relief paintings in the lobby of the Gelsenkirchen Theater in Germany. It was between this second and third pilgrimage—his first major commission and his first retrospective—that Klein developed his signature trilogy of colors—IKB, mono-gold, and mono-rose—after having earlier abandoned the use of varied color monochromes in 1956; this was followed in 1957 by the launch of his "Blue Period." During the intervening years, his work expanded with legendary exhibitions such as *Le Vide* in 1958, the performance of the *Anthropometries* in 1960, and the publication of *Dimanche*, which he submitted as a theater project at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in November - December, 1960. In this exhibition, he also installed an *Anthropometry* titled *Shroud of the Nouveaux Réalistes* suspended across the room behind *Here Lies Space*, a horizontal mixed media mono-gold affixed with a circular sponge impregnated with IKB and a spray of artificial pink roses. The work incorporates the color trilogy that would become thematically central to his future work, and the work integrates the sponge, roses, and gold associated with Klein's patron saint.

During the course of this highly productive year, Klein was also planning in detail his first retrospective to open in January 1961 at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany (January 14-February 26, 1961). This museum was originally designed by Mies van der Rohe as a private residence; it was completed in 1928, the year of Klein's birth.³ The exhibition

titled *Monochrome und Feuer* included fifty-four works that represented the range of his conceptual and visual production—monochrome paintings in IKB, Mono-pink and mono-gold, obelisks in the trilogy of colors, sponge reliefs, sponge sculpture, Anthropometries, pink and blue rain installations, the photograph of Klein as the “painter of space,” trays of blue pigment, *Here Lies Space* (1960) and drawings and plans for his “Architecture of Air” projects. In addition, he installed a version of his 1958 exhibition *Le Vide* in small enclosed space, which was the centerpiece of the exhibition installation. Outside, he built gas-fed pillars of fire—one at the entrance and a second in the rear of the building next to a horizontal *Wall of Fire*.⁴ His planning of this installation was described just over a month earlier in *Dimanche* under the title, “Les Cinq Salles.”⁵ *Dimanche* also includes a photograph of the artist seated next to a fire fountain at dusk—the same time of day that Klein had planned the *vernissage* of the Krefeld retrospective. He coordinated the time of the opening with the ignition of gas-fed fire fountains and the wall of flames in the rear garden. It was fire, this “living element,” that contained within it Klein’s trilogy of colors that emblemized the exhibition, and provided a beginning and an end to the installation centered on the empty space of *The Void*. As a result of Klein’s year-long preparation and assiduous attention to the installation of his works, critic Jean-Marc Poinsoot has identified this exhibition as establishing an early precedent for *in situ* exhibitions that emerged decades later.⁶

For the exhibition catalogue, the artist decided on a limited edition hand-made transparent case holding three loose sheets of paper in the colors IKB, mono-pink, and mono-gold, his biography titled, “Origines de la carrière picturale,”⁷ and an introduction by museum director Paul Wember. The relationship between Wember and Klein was important to their successful collaboration on this project. Like Klein, Wember had a strong interest in religion and spirituality, and this commonality enabled Klein to design both the exhibition and the accompanying catalogue as a celebration of the expanded color trilogy and its spiritual associations.

Pierre Restany early on connected Klein’s *Ex-Voto* to religious mysteries and equally to specific works that the artist listed in the accompanying prayer. This paper does not challenge his claim, rather I want to suggest that this *ex-voto* may constitute a third component (albeit private and devotional) of his exhibition at Krefeld. I argue that the trilogy of colors that provided the visual basis of the exhibition was conceived as expansive. From the immaterial core of the exhibition, to the fire flames and *Wall of Fire*, to the *Ex-Voto* cloistered in the saint’s sanctuary—the forms and experiences of these components are three important aspects of the single exhibition. Paul Wember, director of the Krefeld Museum, discussed the relationship between the trilogy of colors that underlie the exhibition and the Trinity in the preface of the Krefeld catalogue⁸ and the artist had left a copy of the prayer included in the *Ex-Voto* with Wember in advance of his pilgrimage.⁹

Klein’s *Ex-Voto* is comprised of an outer plastic box (16x12x2 in) divided into three parts: the upper section holds three compartments of color pigments—gold, ultra-marine blue and rose—the visual theme of the exhibition. On the verso, he fitted the base of the IKB compartment with a dedication to St. Rita and he signed it “Yves Klein” and “Yves le Monochrome.” The central horizontal compartment contains a pleated sheet of paper with Klein’s handwritten prayer. The artist appeals to God, Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary that he may “live in my works and that they may become ever more beautiful ...” and that “I may discover always continually and regularly new things in art more beautiful every time even though alas I am not worthy to be a tool to build and create Great Beauty.”¹⁰ Klein then

lists the full range of his monochrome variations, and he concludes by offering thanks for the “powerful, decisive, and wonderful help” St. Rita has also provided in his career.

The lower horizontal zone contains gold bars that resulted from his sale of Zones of Immaterial Pictorial sensibility. Restany identified the gold as the proceeds from four sales of immaterial space that took place between November 18 and December 8, 1959.¹¹ The ritual involved the transfer of zones of pure space in exchange for pure gold (999.9%). There were two possible methods of exchange. In the complete transfer, the receipt given the owner would be burned and the gold returned to nature, that is, Klein released the gold into the Seine River. The second option allowed the owner to keep the receipt for the Zone of Immaterial Space, and the gold was held in escrow by the artist. All transactions were carefully recorded and photographed; and the protocols of the events were orchestrated to maximize the solemn nature of the ritual.

Klein’s aimed to underscore a mystical basis in his monochromes and its lexicon of forms. He crafted his materials in such a way as to entrance his public with his oeuvre’s visual integralism and opulence. The *Ex-Voto* is an excellent example of this synthesis. Klein was clear on his artistic predecessors including his kinship with the works of Giotto, which he had seen at the monastery of St. Francis in Assisi, a stop on his April 1958 pilgrimage to the sanctuary of St. Rita of Cascia. In correspondence with his dealer Iris Clert, Klein wrote that he emulated Giotto for the artist’s frescos at Assisi are “unified blue monochromes.”¹² Alain Buisine has noted that Klein’s oeuvre needs to be situated in belief systems that include “popular piety and the belief in miracles, the ex-voto, ultramarine blue, the proximity of Franciscan spirituality, and of its painters in the basilica of Assisi...”¹³

The trilogy of colors in the *Ex-Voto* have been related to the Catholic dogma of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit),¹⁴ and the colors are also associated with Advent, a time of preparation, and the Incarnation, the mystery of the human birth of the divine through the intercession of Mary, which resulted from the word made flesh. The Incarnation is also associated with the concept of emptying of the self through fasting and supplication to prepare for transubstantiation. Easter is the cyclical fulfillment of the Incarnation wherein re-birth through resurrection is the promise of a body/spirit resolution.

The *Ex-Voto* also incorporates references to St. Rita, and her role as saint of the impossible, patroness of reconciliation, and exemplar of humility. The narrative of St. Rita’s life is visually rich and dramatic. According to a Catholic hagiographic account, Rita was a dutiful and devout woman whose patience and humility allowed her to withstand spousal abuse and humiliation. Violence characterized her home life resulting in the murder of her husband by those in their community and the premature death of her sons who sought revenge for this criminal act.¹⁵ Rita was committed to reconciliation throughout, and her aspirations were answered in visions that led her to join the cloister of Cascia. Her experiences became more extreme physically and spiritually. For example, her intense visualization of the Passion of Christ resulted in the puncture of her forehead with a spike from the Crown of Thorns. On St. Rita’s death, the infested forehead wound released a swarm of white bees, a symbol and protected insect still associated with her shrine.

Another key miracle occurred while St. Rita undertook a pilgrimage that resonates in Klein’s work; St. Rita found a gold coin en route to a religious celebration in Rome. She cast the gold into a river outside the city, and she was rewarded with safe travel on her physical and

spiritual pursuits. She is also associated with roses, which bloomed in mid-winter to allow her to experience the miraculous beauty of nature as she neared death. St. Rita's body remains nearly physically intact within a transparent glass and gold coffin surrounded by roses at the altar of the sanctuary at Cascia, where she has been in state since the 15th century.

Unlike the highly orchestrated exhibitions that Klein undertook since the beginning of his "Blue Period," his pilgrimages to this shrine were private appeals that occurred either before or after major exhibitions. What distinguishes Klein's *Ex-Voto* is the format, which is constructed to resemble a miniature altar or reliquary. The upper register is in triptych format associated with the Proto-Renaissance works of Giotto, and others who worked in that tradition through the 15th century. At the center, the horizontal compartment containing the carefully folded prayer above the lower box filled with the blue pigment and ingots of gold. These materials constitute the physical matter of his identity as an artist. In contrast to the ostentation of church altars and reliquaries, where the emphasis is on the exterior as symbolic of a rich interior, Klein's *Ex-Voto* exposes the interior wealth visible through the transparent plastic box.

However, as Camille Morineau has recently pointed out, it is hard to reduce Klein's work to spiritual pursuits because he developed and situated his work within the context of artistic discourse.¹⁶ And, Jean-Marc Poinot rightly claims that the planning and precision evident in Klein's exhibitions and the staging of his work is an aesthetic experience in itself. It is for these reasons that I suggest that the *Ex-Voto* maybe the finishing component of the *Monochrome und Feuer* retrospective. Klein's major works were initiated through actions and Krefeld was no exceptions. The exhibition was inaugurated with a transfer of immaterial space within the small room that constituted *The Void*. The two remnants of the exhibition are the catalogue, comprised of a plexi-glass box with monochrome sheets of paper in the tricolor theme, and the *Ex-Voto* in which the physical matter of his work is encased. Klein masterfully inter-related artistic and spiritual codes,¹⁷ which enabled him to continually expand the experiences that occurred in his exhibitions, and simultaneously, to enact his religious devotion through recognizable spiritual symbolism.

The *Ex -Voto* exemplifies Klein's aspirations for the reintegration of the spiritual in art and it is his display of faith in avant-garde practice. Through a re-integration of artistic views increasingly split apart, Klein sought to demonstrate fresh visual and discursive possibilities. He reintroduced concepts of rituals and *fêtes* that enabled his work to veer away from a simple repetition of earlier avant-garde monochrome precedents. He re-introduced the monochrome as a means to counter social materialism and progress, while at the same time, using the building blocks of matter and technology to reframe futuristic utopian scenarios.

Klein's oeuvre has been criticized as conceptually insufficient because of its reliance on the work's visual essence and sensitivity of the spectator.¹⁸ However, Klein's insistence on gauging the success of his work by polling his public attests to his attempts to reach an audience that he considered increasingly conformist and overly materialistic. In fact, it points to Klein's recognition of the monochrome paradigm as significant, expansive and historically flexible. Klein's work has been described as a "disavowal" of the historical legacy of modernism because he attempts to generate meaning within a context (place or system) rather than permit the very materiality—its tactility—to *be* its meaning.¹⁹ Klein recognized the need to distinguish his work from the precedents of early Soviet avant-garde artists, to whom he has been compared, despite their common aim to transform society and to release

art from the boundaries associated with modernist painting, in particular. But, Klein's interest in the reception of his work was geared toward assessing the impact on individuals and their communication with the individual works he displayed (despite their often repetitive format). He did want to reinstate the contemplative and his audience was not a collective, in the modern political sense. So, Klein's work is a disavowal of *this* modernist agenda and its collective ideal. Rather, like the communal experiences of Giotto's chapels, individual responses vary based on a complex of reasons that encompass both physical and non-rational motivations. Klein's wife recalled that he was dismayed at the secular and material trend sweeping Europe. "He wanted to counter those materialistic urges with a consciousness about the immaterial fullness of life."²⁰

With the monochrome, Klein took account of the abstract and the figurative as evident in the *Anthropometries* and portraits of artists Arman and Martial Raysse, for example. He claimed, "While still continuing to paint monochromes, almost automatically I attained the immaterial, which told me that I was indeed a Westerner, an upstanding Christian who rightly believes in the 'resurrection of the body, the resurrection of the flesh.'"²¹ Klein was demonstrating new perceptions of reality through experiences of space, matter, nature, and ritual that were found in a variety of belief systems and practices wherein an integral approach to life as mystery and experience was foundational.

Klein's Sorbonne lecture, held in June 1959²² began with the declaration that he wanted to break with the past and move beyond the "problematic" of art and into life. His description of a new "immaterial reality" would be free from history, personality and psychological confusion, qualities he described as "counter-space." Klein's fixation on his own disappearance, his aspiration to return to the "Eden of legend" and his devotion to faith and discipline, were strategies that expose his anxiety when confronted with the new realities of a postwar world. He sensed a secular emptiness buried beneath a world of increasing object proliferation, best exemplified in Arman's exhibition, *Le Plein*, the counterpoint to his own exhibition, *Le Vide*. His trilogy of colors is most vivid in the *Fire Fountain* and *Wall of Flames*, which is an elemental reminder of human origins, survival, the unknown, and belief. Klein's *Ex-Voto* is an encapsulation of words and matter that constitute his research on the integration of the physical and the unknown fully laid out at Krefeld.

The trilogy of colors is also evident in Klein's unfinished formal wedding portrait of 1962, and the reference to St. Rita clearly shown on the wedding invitation displaying the insignias of the white bee and the rose. Symbolic representation gave support to Klein's belief in the immaterial and its omnipresence. The significance of gold as material and symbol resonated with the artist from his early days apprenticing as a framer with Robert Savage in London. He writes in the *Monochrome Adventure*, "Gold, that was something. Those leaves that literally flew with the slightest breath of air..."²³ The meeting of breath, spirit, and matter underlies his coherent vision and it manifests in the components of the Krefeld retrospective. It was the gold leaf in the *Ex-Voto* that resurrected the work from its long cloister in the shrine with of St. Rita of Cascia. Klein's *Ex-Voto*, the consolidation of presentation and aspiration, is an evocative private—and now public—*précis* of Klein's first retrospective held during his brief career.

NOTES

1. During the restoration of the chapel under the direction of Architect Rosario Scrimieri, the artist Armando Marocco was commissioned to execute painted glass windows. The painter recognized the ex-voto as a work by Yves Klein. Marocco contacted art dealer Guido Le Noci in Milan, who first exhibited Klein's work of *L'Époque Bleue* at Galerie Apollinaire in 1957; Le Noci then contacted his long-time friend and colleague Pierre Restany who curated the 1957 Klein exhibition in Milan. On May 19, 1980, Le Noci and Restany arrived at the monastery of Cascia on June 18, 1980 to authenticate the ex-voto as a work of the artist Klein. Restany published this work and the details of its finding in *Yves Klein e la mistica di Santa Rita da Cascia* in 1981.
2. "I think this exhibition of the Void is quite dangerous ... I must go see St. Rita." See Alain Buisine, "Blue, Gold, Pink: The Colors of the Icon," *Yves Klein: Long Live the Immaterial* (Nice: MAMAC, 2000), p. 21.
3. Kent Kleinman and Leslie Van Duzer, *Meis van der Rohe The Krefeld Villas* (NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005). For details of Klein's installation, see the chapter titled "Klein's kleine Kammer."
4. Klein made detailed drawings of the installation for *Monochrome und Feuer* in advance of the exhibition in 1960. He also made a collage of the Fire Fountains in 1960. These are in the collection of the Krefeld Museum and a private collection.
5. Ingrid Pfeiffer, "Yves Klein: Stations in Germany," *Yves Klein*, exh. cat., edited by Olivier Berggreun, Max Hollein and Ingrid Pfeiffer (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag and Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, 2004), p. 80. Nan Rosenthal earlier suggested this in her essay, "Assisted Levitation" published in *Yves Klein* (Houston: Institute for the Arts, Rice University, 1982), 115.
6. Jean-Marc Poinot, "Two Exhibitions of Yves Klein," *Yves Klein: Long Live the Immaterial*, exh. cat. By Gilbert Perlein and Bruno Cora (Nice: Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain and Prato: Museo Pecci, 2000), p. 49.
7. Poinot, p. 48.
8. Pierre Restany, *Yves Klein: Fire at the Heart of the Void* (NY: Journal of Contemporary Art Editions, 1992), p. 153, n. 36.
9. Restany, "Yves Klein: The Ex-Voto for Saint Rita of Cascia," (Houston, 1982), p. 255. The full text of the prayer included in the Ex-Voto is found on p. 156.
10. Ibid.
11. Pierre Restany identifies the buyers as: Peppino Palazzoli (November 18, 1959), Jacques Kugel (December 7, 1959), Paride Accetti (December 7, 1959), and Alain Lemée (December 8, 1959). See Restany (Houston, 1982), p. 255.
12. Yves Klein, "Sur le Monochromie," *Yves Klein* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983), p. 193.
13. Buisine (Nice, 2000), p. 22.
14. Restany (NY, 1992), p. 153, n. 36.
15. There are numerous books on the life of St. Rita of Cascia. Episodic references to her life in this paper are from *St. Rita of Cascia: Saint of the Impossible (Wife, Mother, Widow, Nun)* by Fr. Joseph Sicardo, O.S.A. (Rockford, Ill: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1990). Originally published by D. B. Hansen, *Life of Sister St. Rita of Cascia* (Chicago: D. B. Hansen & Sons), 1916.
16. Camille Morineau, "Le bleu, l'or, et le rose: comment appropriation rime avec sublimation," *Yves Klein: corps, couleur, immaterial* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006), p. 159.
17. McEvilley (Houston, 1982) Part Two of this essay demonstrates the range of his sources, p. 41-83.
18. Benjamin Buchloh, "The Primary Colors the Second Time Around," *October* 37 (Summer 1986) p. 43.
19. Ibid., p. 51.
20. Rotraut Klein, "Interview with Rotraut Klein," interview by Hannah Weitemeier, *Yves Klein: Le Dépassement de la Problématique de l'Art* (Cologne: Galerie Gmurzynaka, October 29-January 28, 1995), 42, 47.
21. Yves Klein, "Truth becomes reality," *Zero*, vol. 3, Düsseldorf, July 1961.
22. Yves Klein, *Conférence de la Sorbonne*, 3 Juin 1959, (Paris: Galerie Montaigne, c.1996).

23 Yves Klein, "Selections from 'The Monochrome Adventure'" (Houston, 19820, p. 222.