WRITINGS FROM THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS 06

Imaging the Spiritual Quest

Explorations in Art, Religion and Spirituality

FRANK BRÜMMEL & GRANT WHITE, EDS.

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Published by
The Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts Helsinki

Editors
Frank Brümmel, Grant White

Graphic Design
Marjo Malin

Printed by
Grano Oy, Vaasa, 2018

ISBN 978-952-7131-47-3
ISBN 978-952-7131-48-0 pdf
ISSN 2242-0142

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Acknowledgements

The origins of this volume lie in the lectures and talks given in Frank Brümmel's spring 2014 course on Art and Religion at the University of the Arts Helsinki, as well in a May 2014 excursion to the Valamo Monastery in the Russian Federation. In addition to the authors of the essays collected here, the editors wish to acknowledge the following individuals who contributed to the making of this book: Michaela Bränn, Research Coordinator at the University of the Arts Helsinki, without whose kind assistance throughout the entire process this volume would not have been possible; Turku-based graphic designer Marjo Malin, for providing it with a look and feel both distinctive and recognizable as a publication in this series; Helsinki artist Sakari Tervo, for supplying original illustrations accompanying each essay of this volume; Tomi Snellman, who translated the original Finnish versions of the essays by Päivikki Kallio, Liisa Lindgren, Elina Merenmies (contributing translator), and Juha-Heikki Tihinen. Our heartfelt thanks to all.

Frank Brümmel
Grant White

Introduction

GRANT WHITE

There has perhaps never been a more important time for artists to engage the worlds of religion and (which, for all its critics, still remains a useful term) spirituality. As many observers have noted, predictions of the decline and death of religion in the face of secularism have not come true. Instead, today our world is crazed with the fault lines of the confrontation between modernity and those worlds given voice and form by religion and spirituality. The sociopolitical events of the past twenty years have made it clear that religion continues to motivate, and to be employed as justification for, the behavior of people seeking to change the world whether through violent or nonviolent means. In addition, the past fifty years have witnessed the rise of sustained interest in that which somehow transcends or lies deeply within the world and human experience, but which, it is argued, can and even ought to be experienced outside the bounds of organized religion. "New Age" religion, "New Age" spirituality, interest in the interplay between health and wellbeing and practices such as meditation: all these seek to address the need modern people feel for a "something more" than the goods offered by a consumerist, technocratic world. Such practices, and the movements and communities promoting them, directly address the members of secular western and northern European societies, people

for whom the adage "I'm spiritual but not religious" describes their relationship to religion and "the spiritual." Thus, as sociologists have observed, while the place of organized religion in such societies has been on the decline for decades, a constellation of practices, beliefs, and communities has arisen in its place. Certainly, we can also say that other factors have also driven this interest in the transcendent and deeply immanent: anxiety about the pace of technological development, the uncertainty and stress many workers experience in this age of neoliberal economic systems, the ability to create digital cocoons within which to escape the social and economic pressures of the age, and the rise of neo-Fascist, xenophobic, and populist political movements as responses to the geopolitical crises generated by the wars of the past thirty years. For some, such concerns even have come to be enunciated in the categories of eschatology: the technological "Singularity" predicted by the futurist Ray Kurzweil is one example. In this view, the development of artificial intelligence will reach a point in which it will take over the human race, bringing about a new era for humanity. Proponents of this view are not uniformly sanguine about the meaning of such a new era for human beings.

For artists, this landscape is rich with possibility. As established religions lose their grip on the public imagination, artists scrounge among the monuments to organized religion's former place in society (both in exoteric and esoteric forms), looking for symbols and actions which might continue to have meaning for people today, even as they come to be

embedded in contexts very different from their original contexts of use. Artists have explored the ideas of esoteric and mystical traditions of both East and West, using them to help interpret the artist's own experience of the modern world. The use of Kabbalistic themes and symbols by the German artist Anselm Kiefer is merely one example one can cite of this phenomenon in the world of art. In one sense, this is not a modern phenomenon: as is well known, the tenets of Theosophy and other occult systems of thought influenced the participants in a range of artistic movements from Symbolism to Abstract Art, Surrealism and Dada.

At the same time, one can argue that the condition of modernity/postmodernity/late capitalism (each descriptor has its proponents and detractors) creates a situation for artists different from that of their predecessors in the twentieth century. At the very least, postmodernity's famous lack of a center implies that artists today must work within a cultural landscape in which the traditional religious signposts either no longer exist, or have lost their power to signify, apart for those belonging to a small (and shrinking) number of adherents. In such an environment (and one in which general knowledge of the content of traditional religious systems is low), artists arguably have a wider range of possibilities for their own stances towards, and uses of, ideas and imagery of traditional religions: from outright rejection and distancing at one end, to embrace of a traditional religious faith, often one not associated in the public imagination with Europe or North America, such as Islam or Buddhism, at the other.

For other artists, the encounter between art and the spiritual takes place by means of the construction of a personal system of meaning, in which art both expresses and forms part of the artist's personal system of belief and practice. Such individual, personal myth-making and construction of a symbolic world occurs in interaction with the symbols and actions of both traditional religions and of more recent religious and spiritual movements. In doing so, such artists are following the path trod by many people today. Put off by traditional religion, sometimes even alienated from the traditions of their childhood, these artists freely adopt practices and beliefs from a variety of traditions. As scholars of religion have noted, such a practice addresses the continuing felt need to make space for the transcendent and deeply interior in daily life, while rejecting the restrictions adhered to by traditional religious communities such as churches, temples, and synagogues.

"I'm spiritual but not religious." This affirmation crystallizes the situation of many today with respect to matters that go beyond what the narrative of science can offer. In occupying this space, artists today who utilize the materials of modern and ancient religious traditions, as well as the more recent beliefs and practices of modern occult teachers and communities, make clear that in an age of declining adherence to historical religious traditions, they still acknowledge the place of human longing for a "more" that satisfies the whole person.

Thus not only is this an age in which knowledge of religion and the contemporary phenomenon of spirituality are of signal importance for artists, it is also an age which cries out for

informed conversation around the ways in which art, religion, and spiritual engage each other in today's world. This volume of essays is intended as a contribution to that conversation from this part of the world and, it is hoped, it will also serve as a catalyst for new conversations today and in the future around art, religion, and spirituality. This is a diverse collection of essays representing a variety of approaches to the question of the relationships between art, religion, and spirituality, and represents a range of voices active in the conversation today. The subjects of the nine essays collected here range, for example from specialized studies of Finnish church architecture and funerary art, to the use of images in both Orthodox and Catholic sacred spaces, to philosophical reflections on the possibility of viewing art as a "practice of life." Represented here are voices of both artists and scholars working in the area of art, religion, and spirituality today. While this collection represents scholars and artists from Finland, its subjects are not limited to Finnish themes alone. Instead, our hope is that the specificity and breadth of this collection will serve both to give the reader a taste of the immense range of possibilities in this area, and encourage others to contribute to the ongoing artistic and scholarly conversation around this topic which we believe deserves more attention than ever in these times.

Breathing, Connecting: Art as a Practice of Life

RIIKKA STEWEN

Contemporary art has distanced itself from the art object.[1] In her book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object*, Lucy Lippard describes this process of separation as it happened in the form of various events and performances in the 1960s.[2] In 1969, curators Marcia Tucker and James Monte wrote in the Whitney Museum exhibition catalogue *Anti-Illusion* that the very concept of the art experience had been transformed. Marcia Tucker claimed that Lynda Benglis's paintings, for example, "no longer lend themselves to an analysis of objecthood […] but to a gestural analysis of the art activity per se" and James Monte proposed that "the act of conceiving and placing the pieces take precedence over the object quality of works". He continued, "taken singly or in combination, the procedural factors alone seriously call into question how art should be seen, what should be done with it and

1 Of course, I have no intention to claim that what follows applies to all contemporary art: artists continue to produce objects too. However, I hope to be able to show that expectations regarding art as well as how it is embedded in the social structure have undergone a major change, nothing short of a revolution.

2 *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, originally published in 1973.

finally, what is an art experience".[3] Robert Morris – who participated in *Anti-Illusion* – wrote in *Artforum* in 1970: "I believe there are 'forms' to be found within the activity of making as much as within the end products. There are forms of behavior aimed at testing the limits of possibilities involved in that particular interaction between one's actions and the materials of the environment."[4]

The 1960s witnessed a radical revolution in what was conceived as art: art became a form of behavior. This was a paradigmatic shift in which art changed registers and became a social practice, a kind of overarching system of meaning holding together actions and practices and endowing them with significance in a post-religious – perhaps even post-secular – world. Jean-Luc Nancy has in fact suggested that Christianity, which with the other religions of the book had given shape to Europe and the Western world, had contained the seeds of its own self-deconstruction already at its inception, whereas according to Jacques Derrida it is perfectly possible to imagine that Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim theologians would say the very same thing about their religions.[5]

3 *Anti-Illusion: Procedures, Materials*, Whitney Museum, 1969.

4 Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making, *Artforum* 8/1970, 62–66.

5 See Jean-Luc Nancy, *La Déclosion, Déconstruction du christianisme I*, Editions Galilée, Paris, 2005, and *L'Adoration, Déconstruction du christianisme II, Editions Galilée, Paris, 2010, translated into English as Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy), Fordham University Press, New York, 2008, and *Adoration: The Deconstruction of Christianity II*, (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy), Fordham University Press, New York, 2013. For Derrida, see "Epoché and Faith: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Derrida and Religion: Other Testaments*, ed. by Yvonne Sherwood & Kevin Hart, Routledge, New York & London, 2005, 27–50, particularly p. 33.

This revolutionary shift involves a change in the interrelations between what is considered art, ethics, sociology, and religion. Here I take religion to mean a social bond, a power of cohesion acting through a shared set of beliefs and behaviors.

In his recent book *The Faith of the Faithless* (2012), Simon Critchley asks: in a world where there is no faith, how can one avoid lapsing into cynicism or nihilism? What is there to take the place of ethics, politics, or religion – understanding religion in its sociological meaning of *re-ligo*, tying or holding together? Critchley believes that the traditions of mysticism and anarchism are worth revisiting as they constitute reservoirs of criticality that are capable of opposing homogenizing political forces.

In a similar vein, contemporary art began to question developments within modernity and the concomitant impoverishment of experience. The depletion of experience in general – analyzed by Walter Benjamin as the loss of aura – has led to a shift in expectations regarding the task of art: art is now required to provide meaning to life-as-experience.[6] After the self-deconstruction of Christianity in the West, art has become the privileged site of experience, which in turn has led to a heightened sensitivity toward processes related to the making and experiencing of art.

6 John Dewey's *Art as Experience*, first published in 1934, was a handbook for the 1960s generation of artists in America.

As regards the process of making art, Marcel Duchamp is often quoted as having said that "one must make a gesture in the world" – *il faut faire un geste dans le monde*. More recently, critic and art theorist Nicolas Bourriaud has revived Duchamp's maxim in his book *Formes de vie*, proposing that art should be understood as a practice of inventing ways to exist in the contemporary world, not as a process of making objects. Bourriaud also compares the contemporary artist's role to that of the medieval saint whose life was seen as exemplary, worth imitating by others, claiming that the modern artist must invent "a succession of postures and gestures which allow her to produce" and that practices which "minimise the importance of 'products', exalt the gesture, the fortuitousness and disintegration of energies, joyous waste of productive forces, have found shelter in the domain of art".[7]

How can we explain this change? When did it happen, what kind of historical causes or genealogies should we be looking for? One obvious answer would be to see it as a reaction against the apogee of formalism in high Modernism with its single-minded emphasis on the art object – which had in fact become so impoverished of meaning that it no longer referred to nothing except itself, as in Clement Greenberg's conception of painting as essentially a canvas stretched on

7 "L'artiste moderne doit lui-même inventer la succession de postures et de gestes qui lui permettront de produire", and, a few pages later, "on voit se réfugier dans le champ artistique des pratiques, qui /…/minimisent l'importance des 'produits', exaltent le geste, la gratuité et la dilapidation des énergies, le joyeux gâchis des forces productives", Nicolas Bourriaud, *Formes de vie: l'art moderne et l'invention de soi*, 2009 (2003), 13, 15.

a frame. Another possible answer is that the revolutionary change was a counter-reaction to the tautological, minimalist conception of the work of art, to the Frank Stella-style "what you see is what you get" assertion that there is nothing beyond the "pure" visuality of the art object. This type of wholesale abandonment of every form of metaphor and transcendence reached its apex in Ad Reinhardt's monochromatic black paintings and in his writings. However, Reinhardt's move can also be seen as a more general continuation of the tradition of the ineffable and of negative theology.[8]

If indeed the question is how one is to act in the absence of any Symbolic Law or transcendental guarantor of meaning, as Julia Kristeva has suggested in *Révolution du langage poétique*,[9] we can see artists adopting different attitudes in response to the loss of transcendental meaning formerly provided by religion.[10] Reinhardt's was one solution, other artists have preferred to leave the question more open. Maaria Wirkkala's *As If* – a glass staircase, reminiscent of Jacob's mystical ladder connecting heaven and earth, leading perhaps nowhere in particular – is one way to keep asking the question, or to

8 William Franke, *On What Cannot Be Said: Apophatic Discourses in Philosophy, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, Volume 2: Modern and Contemporary Transformations*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2007, 46–47.

9 *Révolution du langage poétique: L'avantgarde à la fin du XIXème siècle de Lautréamont à Mallarmé*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1974.

10 Jean-Paul Sartre called 19th-century Symbolist poets "God's orphans"; in a way, the same may be said to apply to all artists in a post-secular world.

choose to believe as Pascal and Kierkegaard did: to (continue to) behave as if there were meaning and transcendence.[11]

Other solutions bearing mention here are the acts of consecration that are often required to install contemporary works of art: the pouring of milk in Wolfgang Laib's *Milk Stone*, the lighting of a candle in Nam June Paik's *One Candle*, even the mere of act of turning on a projector each morning at a museum or an exhibition.[12] The theoretician and art writer Boris Groys has also discussed the possibility of restoring the aura: he believes that every installation can be interpreted as an act of re-auratization wherein the artist first withdraws the space of the installation from public use and then consecrates it with her work.

A similar movement of return to a form of (minimal) transcendence has been analyzed in French contemporary philosophy by Dominique Janicaud in particular.[13] The return of religion or traditions of mysticism and transcendence has also been

11 *As If* was shown in TRA – Edge of Becoming at Palazzo Fortuny in Venice in 2011; see also the exhibition catalogue, edited by Axel Vervoordt and published by Vervoordt Foundation in association with MER, Ghent, distributed by SKIRA. On Maaria Wirkkala and the apophatic tradition, see my "Translations of the Ineffable: Maaria Wirkkala's Impossible Possible," in *Theologies, Synopsis 2*, ed. by Anna Kafetsi, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, 2002, 180–188.

12 Ari Tanhuanpää, Finnish art conservator and theorist, has recently proposed that it is precisely through such acts of caring that works of art are brought into existence, see his *Huoli kuvista: Merkitys, mieli, materiaalisuus*, Jyväskylä Studies in the Humanities 315, University of Jyväskylä, 2017, 136–138; 170–173.

13 Dominique Janicaud, *La phénoménologie dans tous ses états: Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française suivi de La phénoménologie éclatée*, Gallimard, 2009.

interpreted as a form of *henology*, based on the Neoplatonist (Plotinian) idea of the ineffable One, *to hen*, emanations of which permeate all existence in various degrees.[14] Plotinus' continuation of Plato's thinking was revisited by early romantic philosophers and artists, and revived again by 19th-century fin-de-siècle. It continued in the work of the French 19th-century artist/philosopher Félix Ravaisson and his disciple Henri Bergson, as well as the existentialist generation of artists and thinkers.[15] Jacques Derrida, sometimes described as a Plotinian, said in a conversation with Yvonne Sherwood that he prays all the time, and that praying is an activity both idiomatic and original, child-like, in that it addresses a completely unknown entity in a non-reciprocal, heteronomic situation.[16] Might the present movements of posthumanism, speculative realism, and object-oriented ontology also attest to a desire to reach beyond the human?

In contemporary art, Craig Owens has suggested that this had to do with the return of the repressed: the temporality – metaphoricity – of that which was suppressed in Modernist medium-specificity has returned to haunt the art object,

14 Adam Knowles, "Toward a Critique of Walten: Heidegger, Derrida, and Henological Difference," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Volume 27, Number 3, 2013, (New Series), 265–276.

15 It continues in fact to the 20th century through Bergson and the existentialist Albert Camus; fragments of Plotinian henology were transmitted through Camus's work to Richard Serra in his college studies, for example – but these routes of influence are far too many to enumerate here.

16 For Derrida, the beginnings of autonomy are also the beginnings of laicisation, see "Epoché and Faith," 30–31.

pointing up the multiple connections of the "purely visual" work with its outside contexts.[17] The French philosopher and art historian George Didi-Huberman has suggested something similar – that it was the temporality of the work of art that had been repressed by the ideologies of Modernism and Minimalism at their apex, and that the temporality now resurfaced in the form of the dialectical image, hovering between presence and absence, pointing to the ultimate double temporality of the work's significance in such works as Tony Morris's *Cube*.[18] Both Owens and Didi-Huberman reference Walter Benjamin's analysis of aura and the dialectical image as intimations of otherness, temporality, or transcendence.[19]

I would like to open up a genealogical perspective, however, and propose a slightly different interpretation: that art metamorphosed into a behavioral code much resembling religion, and that this took place in a process that began as far back as the end of the 19th century.

Living a social life had become a burning question in the late 19th century in parallel with the declining importance of religion – Kierkegaard had doubted the death of God, but Nietzsche announced it confidently. Paris was the cosmopolitan centre of modernity and modern art, a hub where artists

17 Craig Owens, *The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism, I–II*, October, Vol 12 (Spring 1980), 67–86, and October, Vol 13 (Summer 1980), 58–80.

18 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde*, Editions du Minuit, Paris, 1992.

19 See also the wonderfully rich text by Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin's Aura," in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol 34 (Winter 2008), 336–376.

came to study and engage in discussions about the future role of art in a world where social cohesion would no longer be based on religion.[20] There was a heated debate about the relationship between art and religion; the depth of the crisis was exemplified by the case of Ivan Aguéli. Aguéli, a Protestant Swedish painter who converted to Islam (via anarchism) and became a Sufi teacher in Cairo, claimed that he was looking for a language that would reveal the nature of reality, while his younger Finnish colleague Werner von Hausen persisted in the conviction that what Aguéli was truly searching was religion.[21] For a while, it seemed that art, language, and religion were completely interchangeable, both as concepts and as practices.

In the late 19th century, emergent artistic and sociological questions were inherently transversal, or, rather, the boundaries had not yet been constituted: artists, writers, and scientists did not follow set demarcation lines in their activities. The boundary between art and religion was particularly fluid:

20 In France questions of art and religion were almost endlessly discussed, which was partly due to secularization: the demise of religion was expected to lead to social changes and upheavals – Durkheim's early work in fact dealt with the problem of religion. On these debates, see Richard Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France 1889–1900*, Yale University Press, 2005; on discussions on art and religion, see Salme Sarajas-Korte, *Suomen varhaissymbolismi ja sen lähteet*, Otava, Helsinki, 1966, 92–98; see also my "Beda Stjernschantz värld: Paris 1891–1892" in *Beda Stjernschantz 1867–1910 – Ristikkoportin takana / Bakom gallergrinden*, ed. Itha O'Neill, SKS, Helsinki, 2014, 108–125.

21 For Aguéli and von Hausen, see Axel Gauffin, *Människan, mystikern, målaren*, 1940, 168–170. Moderna Museet showed Aguéli's work in a major exhibition in 2016, and Aguéli's letters can be found online at the Aguéli portal: http://www.agueliportalen.se

the poet-philosopher Jean-Marie Guyau, whose thinking influenced both Nietzsche and Émile Durkheim, believed that art could replace religion as a cohesive social force.[22] Serge Diaghilev, still a future impresario at the time, expressly likened art to a cult in his writings, and the philosopher-critic Walter Pater saw an affinity between the 19th century and the attitudes toward art and religion in the Quattrocento.[23]

Art was already turning into a form of social behavior at the end of the 19th century, yet we have failed to see that, mainly because of modernist art history writing, which has emphasized either form – understood as a property of the object – or the social, political and historical contexts of the work. Today, as philosophers such as Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault have rediscovered philosophy as ethics and as a practice of life, it has perhaps become possible to see that art, too, is a form of practice: a form of practicing or performing life. (Whether it is also exemplary, as Bourriaud suggested, is perhaps something that needs to be decided individually in each case.)

Perhaps not coincidentally, Allan Kaprow gave one of his essays the title *Performing Life* and proposed in another text that "ordinary life performed as art/not art can charge the

22 Jean-Marie Guyau, *L'art au point de vue sociologique, (2. éd.)*, Alcan, Paris, 1889.

23 Serge Diaghilev, *Invecklade spörsmål, Ateneum I* (1898):5, Helsinki, 339–368; Walter Pater, *The Renaissance, Studies in Art and Poetry*, MacMillan, New York, 1907 (1873), particularly the chapter on Pico della Mirandola, 31–51.

everyday with metaphoric power."[24] In this alternative, non-formalist genealogical perspective on contemporary art, the object had perhaps become redundant already when the early romanticists wanted to make life synonymous with art and vice versa;[25] the art object is superfluous, what matters is the style of life, or the connectivity of action. As a primary example of an ordinary everyday activity, Kaprow described the act of brushing one's teeth, but perhaps more importantly he also thought of an event, a piece, that focused on a different, life-sustaining activity that shared by all living things: breathing. Kaprow writes about his piece *Breathing*, which is not really meant to be performed as art but as life:

"Today, in 1979, I'm paying attention to breathing. I've held my breath for years – held it for dear life. And I might have suffocated if (in spite of myself) I hadn't had to let go of it periodically. Was it mine, after all? […] These are thoughts about consciousness of breathing. Such consciousness of what we do and feel each day, its relation to others' experience and to nature around us, becomes in a real way the performance of living."[26]

24 "Art Which Can't Be Art" was a text recollecting the invention of happenings, published in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, see note xxvi.

25 See, for example, Herbert Grabes, *Making Strange: Beauty, Sublimity, and the (Post)Modern 'Third Aesthetic'*, translated by Marc Colavincenzo, Editions Rodopi B. V., Amsterdam – New York, NY, 2008, 82–84.

26 "Performing Life" (1979) in *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1993, 196. See also Judith Rodenbeck, *Radical Prototypes: Allan Kaprow and the Invention of Happenings*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011.

Reading Kaprow, his words "was [my breathing] mine, after all?" continue to resonate in my mind and I cannot help thinking how Marsilio Ficino, the Quattrocento philosopher-theologian re-discovered by Walter Pater in the 19th century, in following the Plotinian model found that breathing, *pneuma*, was what connected everything in the universe, or how Guyau in the 1880s believed that instead of religion, the idea of universal connectedness would become a new basis for cohesion and replace religion in its former shape. I find myself wondering whether the affinity between Guyau's concept of sympathetic vibration and the 1960s hippies' belief in universal harmony is entirely accidental, and thinking that perhaps now, in this moment in time when it is more vital than ever before that we understand the interdependence and mutual belongingness of all things, what we most need is art as a way of life that is attentive to connectedness and togetherness.

The Full House and the Empty: On Two Sacral Spaces

JYRKI SIUKONEN

1.

"Tammerfors has many fine buildings, but the most remarkable of them all is the Church of St. John, *Johanneskyrkan*, near the railway station," wrote the Scottish MP and travel writer Alexander MacCallum Scott (1874–1928) in his book *Suomi, the Land of the Finns* in 1926. MacCallum Scott praised the church both for its structure and for its interior. He regarded it not merely as a building, but also as a work of art, an expression of creative joy. At the same time, however, he also noted a certain uncomfortable feeling. The 'Gothic building' had what he called a 'freakish element' in it.[1] Rather than pointing to the original finesse of medieval architecture, MacCallum Scott seemingly meant the imaginary buildings of Gothic horror.

MacCallum Scott was no ignorant traveller. He had passed through Finland first during the era of Russian domination in the early 1900s and had written a book on his impressions.[2] On his return, in the 1920s, he took a closer look at the history of the newly independent nation and had a keen eye for

1 Alexander MacCallum Scott, *Suomi, The Land of the Finns* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1926), 61–62.

2 Alexander MacCallum Scott, *Through Finland to St. Petersburg* (London: Grant Richards, 1908).

its contemporary buildings. In MacCallum Scott's view, the Church of St. John (1907) was the best example of Finland's bold and unique architectural style, and he acknowledged his admiration for its designer Lars Sonck (1870–1956).

In his comments on the church, MacCallum Scott underlined the aboriginal impression created by the extensive use of hard and rugged granite. Inside, he admitted, the stained glass and the frescoes were daring and original: "The interior is startling and produces violent reactions of pagan delight or of shocked horror, according to the temperament of the beholder."[3] To further strengthen his description of the building, MacCallum Scott also quoted the reaction of another visitor: "I turned my back on that fearsome church, and fled to the pure light of the world outside."[4]

The description serves here as a fresh and welcome outsider view on the building often considered the most iconic in Tampere. The Church of St. John or *Tampere Cathedral* (the official name since 1923) stands out as one of the most representative examples of Finnish *Jugendstil*, the ponderous northern version of Art Nouveau. However, following the lead in *Suomi, the Land of the Finns*, one might reflect that Lars Sonck and the artists, influenced by the *Arts and Crafts* movement and its medievalist affinities, did indeed create a 'Gothic building.' Such an approach has remained alien to Finnish art history writing.

3 Scott, *Suomi*, 63.

4 Ibid., 64.

In the Finnish context *Jugendstil* is rendered as National Romanticism. As part of the country's political quest and newly proclaimed national identity, Finnish National Romantic art – introduced in an exceptional pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 – has a certain weight. However, the Finnishness has proved more difficult to identify. As Paula Kivinen points out, in architecture the national element remained unarticulated. It was largely confined to familiar building materials and to plant and animal motifs derived from the local topography.[5] The artistic influences of Finnish *Jugendstil* were, by and large, international. The characteristic use of granite in Tampere Cathedral, for example, had an obvious link with contemporary Scottish architecture in Aberdeen.[6]

What made Tampere Cathedral an exceptional and 'freakish' church, however, was not the granite exterior but the design of the interior. The two commissioned artists, Magnus Enckell (1870–1925) and Hugo Simberg (1873–1917) were given a free hand in the painting project. Neither of them was interested in the theme of the Crucifixion. Enckell chose to paint a panoramic altarpiece depicting the bodily resurrection. It was, and still is, a complex and theologically difficult topic in modern Christian imagery. If anything, the very idea of decomposed bodies rising from the grave lends support to strong Gothic allusions. Only a few of the 'living dead' in Enckell's fresco appear invigorated by the fact that they need

5 Paula Kivinen, *Tampereen tuomiokirkko* (Helsinki: WSOY, 1986), 11.

6 John Boulton Smith, *The Golden Age of Finnish Art. Art Nouveau and the National Spirit* (Helsinki: Otava, 1985), 124–125.

no longer rot underground. The rest look torpid and sombre as they plod on dull-eyed towards the Last Judgement.

In its contemporary reception, Enckell's grim eschatological contribution was found biblical enough and acceptable. Instead, Simberg's paintings, which cover most of the walls and roof caused a stir. First and foremost there was the issue of male nudity (also apparent in Enckell's altarpiece). Some members of the officially appointed inspection committee found the images of twelve naked boys unpalatable, even if their number seemed to match that of the Apostles. The debate soon spread to the newspapers. Yet the real anathema, according to the critics, was Simberg's bold decision to crown the nave of the church with the image of a winged serpent holding an apple in its mouth.[7] The clergy were adamant: "The snake in the ceiling of the church is disgusting and without doubt need to be removed, for a Lutheran church can not be symbolically under the sign of a snake."[8]

In 2017 the image is still there, as if forming the letter S for Simberg – or for Satan, depending on the view. The controversy about the paintings died out long ago. Some of the other 'freakish' frescoes – especially *The Wounded Angel* – are now among the best-loved of Finnish artworks. The popularity of Gothic fiction has also brought new fans to the skeleton monks of Simberg's *Garden of Death*. The whole church stands out as an exceptional amalgamation of art and architecture and has

7 See Figure 1, page 174.

8 *Tampereen Tuomiokirkko* (Tampere-seura, Tampere: 1946), 25.

been celebrated as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, although the architect and the artists all worked individually. By trusting the vision of the artists and allowing them to follow their whims, Lars Sonck showed that the architect need not be the sole creator.

2.

It is common knowledge that with Modernism the role of the architect changed. He (it was almost always he) stepped to the forefront and saw himself as an artist engineer. The new professional ethos together with the idea of seeing buildings as 'machines' left little room for the arts and crafts mentality. Buildings were now designed devoid of ornamentation and the exuberant decorations of the Art Nouveau and *Jugendstil* were deemed stuffy and reactionary. The architect's vision was all; there was to be no aesthetic compromise. This historical shift also characterises the development of church architecture in Tampere.

In 1959 Reima Pietilä (1923–1993) won the competition to design a church for the centre of the rapidly growing district of Kaleva. With *Kaleva Church* (1966) Pietilä distanced himself from the use of the right angle and moved towards what is known as organic architecture.[9] In line with the ideals of the brutalism of the 1950s, however, all exterior walls were meant to be made of bare concrete. The idea did not enjoy the unqualified approval of commissioners and Pietilä was compelled to compromise with a tile cladding. In order to remain

9 See Figure 2, page 174.

within budget, he also agreed to downsize the building. As for the rest of it, the individual architectural vision prevailed. Pietilä made full use of his beloved concrete on the walls of the interior and allowed interfering artistic views no quarter. There are no artworks in the vast space of Kaleva Church except for a single sculptural wood relief drawn by the architect himself. The result stands in stark contrast to the collaborative effort of Tampere Cathedral.

Local residents have often perceived Kaleva Church as a bizarre grain silo but for a foreign visitor it may have broader associations. For the Turkish architect Hüseyin Yanar, it recalls a forest; "Entering the church, one feels as if one were standing in a clearing surrounded by tall trees." He can also sense that "the church rises on the hill like a crown," and "in the darkness of the night it is like an enormous lamp."[10] Finally, its architecture seems to open Yanar's mind to almost anything: "The church nave takes the thoughts back to the Middle Ages, the Baroque and even to ancient cult stones and dolmens."[11]

Resembling the impressions of MacCallum Scott of the Tampere Cathedral, Yanar also takes the reader back to the Middle Ages in describing the modernistic Kaleva Church. Other commentators have shared a similar sentiment. It is not uncommon to read that "its nave has genuine medieval monumentality"[12] and the space "is committed to the cathedral

10 Hüseyin Yanar, *Muotokuvia. Luonnoksia suomalaisesta arkkitehtuurista ja taiteesta* (Helsinki: Parvs, 2011), 95.

11 Ibid., 98–99.

12 Malcolm Quantrill, Reima Pietilä (Helsinki: Otava, 1987), 33.

heritage" or even has "the echo of the burning assurance of medieval cathedrals."[13] This holds true when we look at the unusual height of the space. For the most part, however, Pietilä's 'medievalism' rises in opposition to the richly textured world of old cathedrals. He shows the church in all its Protestant starkness. The sculptural qualities of architecture predominate and the building becomes a celebration of its own hollowness. The architect has as it were purged the church of all medieval imagery, like a band of puritan iconoclasts.

To sum up, the reviews of the two foreign visitors to the northern churches of Tampere re-contextualise the ways in which church architecture may be seen. Instead of concepts such as *Jugendstil* or brutalism, MacCallum Scott and Yanar reiterate other important elements of European art history and architecture. Such were medievalism and the Middle Ages, two terms that had strong links to the emerging paradigms of modern architecture since the popularity of neo-Gothic style in the early 1800s. On the one hand these concepts were in the eye of the beholder and their art historical arsenal, on the other there was perhaps an affinity between the two contrasting buildings. Did Pietilä's work openly acknowledge the 'freakish element' of Gothicism, although Kaleva Church now operated in the new context of modernistic iconoclasm and solitary architectural mission?

13 Jari Jetsonen and Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen, *Sacral Space. Modern Finnish Churches* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto), 66.

In a Space between Spirituality and Religion: Art and Artists in These Times

GRANT WHITE

For M, L, E, and A

When writing an essay, it helps to know the audience for whom one writes. In the case of this essay, this has not been an easy task. My own work of teaching, research and writing straddles two very different worlds: that of art education in Finland and that of Eastern Orthodox theological education in the United States. In the world of art and art education, subjects having to do with religion, meditation, contemplation, spirituality, occupy what seems to me a marginal, controverted place. In the world of theological education I inhabit, the subject of "spirituality" (usually taken as a code word for secular rejection of religion and religious institutions) is more likely than not to be greeted with suspicion, if not hostility. In addition, I personally identify as an Eastern Orthodox Christian: an adherent of an ancient tradition of Christianity which itself wrestles with modernity. Last but not least, I am also a photographer who dares to understand himself as an artist. Thus there are several spaces I inhabit; in each of them I occupy a place on the margins. Rather than attempt to satisfy all possible audiences (and thereby satisfy none of them), I have resolved to write simply for myself, as an exercise in clarifying

my own views. If this exercise should speak to you and your own questions and experience with the subject of art and spirituality, I would welcome your company, questions, observations, and wisdom.

Decline of religion, rise of spirituality

Philosophers and sociologists have pointed out just how wrong the positivists were about the decline of religion in the age of modernity. Religion has not disappeared, even from the secularized societies of western Europe and North America about which the philosopher Charles Taylor has so incisively written in his 2006 book *A Secular Age* and elsewhere. What has happened, however, is that adherence to Christian churches has steadily declined in the past twenty years while interest in at least some of the things churches and synagogues have been understood (at least, in the past) to be about continues to increase. By that I mean symbols of transcendence, depth, relationship, wholeness, healing, and mindful relationship to and with the environment. Participation in the old, seemingly overly-familiar churches, synagogues, and temples which so profoundly shaped the histories and cultures of Europe, North and South America have been replaced by a turn to traditions ranging from Buddhism (not limited to Zen), Vedanta, and neo-paganism to western esoteric traditions. However, that turn itself is profoundly individual and private. People pick and choose the practices, beliefs, and attitudes which best address their own perceived needs, irrespective of the broader historical, social, philosophical and religious contexts

in which those practices, beliefs, and attitudes are embedded. Further, as researchers have noted, this process of selection and construction itself has to be seen against the broader background of late-capitalist consumerism and its atomizing individualism. Freed from the constraints of necessary adherence to one specific tradition, the spiritual riches of the world are open for us to utilize as best we see fit.

The hackneyed phrase "I'm spiritual but not religious," while shopworn, still retains some descriptive power, especially when it comes to artists. I believe such a position articulates a life lived in Taylor's "immanent frame" in which the transcendent has been pushed away from the horizon of our everyday experience. Such a shift in worldview is due, notes Taylor, to the "disenchantment of the world" discussed by Weber. The rise of science (or, more precisely, the narrative of science) made an earlier worldview obsolete. Taylor argues that the hegemony of the scientific worldview has meant that we now live in a world in which one or another narrative of the transcendent no longer determines how we view, understand, and react to what happens to us in our lives. We have science, whose explanatory power obviates the need for a belief in supernatural powers affecting our lives for good and ill. We live as "buffered selves," to use Taylor's phrase.

Liminal spaces: from where to where?

It seems to me that another way to view the immanent frame is as a liminal space: an in-between, transitional space between one state and another. The idea of liminality, first artic-

ulated by the Belgian anthropologist Arnold van Gennep and later elaborated by the English anthropologist Victor Turner, refers to a the middle state in rites of passage, ritual transitions from one state or status in life to another. In such a state, the participant in the rite assumes a status that is marked by becoming: having moved from the old status, she is not yet incorporated into her new status. As van Gennep and Turner note, such a status is dangerous as well as one of potential and creativity.

Taylor notes that we can live in the immanent frame with either a "closed" or "open" spin. That is, we can live in the world in ways that are either open or closed to the possibility of the transcendent. Art provides one possibility for living in openness to the transcendent.[1] I believe that the interest in spirituality on the part of artists is itself an expression of living with an open spin. The use of ritual, symbol, meditative and prayer practices, and sacred spaces in contemporary art represents an attempt to negotiate the liminal space that is the immanent frame.

Saying this, however, still leaves open the question of the next point in the transition from the liminal state. For those who see the immanent frame as closed, there is no transition: the frame is not liminal. Or perhaps if it is, it represents a state of transition from our humanity to a post-human world marked either by the apocalypticism of the Singularity, or by

1 I use "transcendent" here to denote what might stand beyond the immanent frame, regardless of whether that "beyond" is viewed in terms of transcendence, depth, or relatedness.

the prospect of eternal life for our minds, infinitely uploadable to ever more durable containers. However, for an open immanent frame the possibilities are far broader, and in my view firmly grounded in the body, the natural environment, and the societies we create and live in. Of course, there are apocalyptic possibilities for an open frame as well: a religiously motivated apocalyptic group could seize the means to wreak havoc on the world through use of biological or nuclear weapons (examples abound, such as Aum Shin Rikyo), or there could be a rapture of a faithful remnant of believers in one or another UFO cult. In this last example, however, the lines between a closed and open spin are admittedly more blurry.

My hope, however, is for a transition from the immanent frame to a world marked by very different values and driven by very different motivations than is the case in our present world. For that to happen, and for art to have a role in that transition, implies that the question of art and spirituality cannot be considered apart from the question of ethics. Granted the concern over didacticism that raising the question of ethics and art can evoke, it seems to me that any discussion of art and spirituality will eventually have to confront the issue of ethics. I base this claim on the existence of the traditions of ethics in the great world religious traditions as well as the growing body of ethical reflection in spiritual movements that have emerged since the nineteenth century. If we claim that our art has something to do with our spirituality, then our art will have something to do with our ethics. To make that implicit relationship explicit doesn't necessarily mean creating didactic

art; but it does mean that artists be able to reflect critically and cogently on the ethical dimensions of the spirituality or spiritualities they embrace.

Critical first-person perspectives

In the past twenty years a trend has emerged in the field of comparative religion: to include the critical, self-conscious voices of practitioners in the study of religious traditions and practices. This effort to broaden the scholarly conversation challenges what Louis Komjathy has called the "taboo of subjectivity." The American scholar Jeffrey Kripal, whose 1998 book *Kali's Child* analyzed the life and teaching of the 19th-century Hindu saint Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, is a pioneer in this effort. In particular, Kripal's 2001 book *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) includes his own mystical experience. Kripal's subsequent books have focused on such diverse subjects as the history of Esalen and the migration of the paranormal from traditional religious institutions into contemporary comic books and comic book culture. More recently, in his 2015 book *Contemplative Literature* Komjathy has argued (citing other scholars in the field of contemplative studies) for the inclusion of critical first-person practitioner narratives in the study of contemplation, as a counterbalance to what he calls "the implied hegemony of secular materialism and scientific reductionism."[2] Komjathy is

2 Louis Komjathy, *Contemplative Literature: A Comparative Sourcebook on Meditation and Contemplative Prayer* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015), p. 11.

at pains to underline his opposition to all forms of proselytism in academia, as well as his concern not to privilege the voices of adherents; his aim, rather, is to inhibit what he calls "the objectifying of the other."[3]

In the context of these and other efforts to include critical first-person narratives in the study of religion, I hope for a similar shift to begin to take place within the worlds of art and art education. The implicit "taboo of subjectivity" when discussing the religious or spiritual dimensions of art and the making of art deprives artists and the larger art world of a potentially significant source of information necessary for as full an experience of art as possible. At least in some places in the world of art education, self-identification as spiritual (however one defines that term) is problematic. Sometimes it seems that one of the places where the transcendent has been especially forcefully pushed out of the immanent frame is the space of art education. There is no space for artists to give voice to their own relationship to the spiritual (however one wishes to define that term) without fear of ridicule, censure, or judgment.

Finding a vocabulary for experience

One challenge lies in locating an adequate vocabulary for narrating one's own relationship to the spiritual. When no tradition is normative any longer, from where do artists acquire a spiritual vocabulary? East Asian religious traditions and es-

3 Ibid.

oteric traditions certainly fill that need for some. For others, no sources for such a vocabulary are at hand. Yet others become practitioners Buddhist meditation or yoga. Some embrace a classical spiritual tradition: for example, the American photographer and Zen Buddhist roshi John Daido Loori (1931–2009). No matter the source of our vocabulary, there is still the matter of understanding. Setting aside the question of the ineffability of spiritual experience, we are still left with the more prosaic matter of being able to construct narratives of our experience understandable by others on those occasions when we wish to say something, no matter how approximate and inadequate it may be. Does adherence to an established spiritual tradition make such communication easier, because a referent held in common by a community (images, texts, gestures) already exists? If one constructs a spirituality from a variety of sources, how is it then possible to communicate that experience to a wider group of people than oneself? Of course, one can argue that accounting for one's photography in terms of the idea found in St. Maximus the Confessor (d. 662) of the contemplation of the *logoi* of all created things communicates just as little today as an account based upon an eclectic (but for the individual artist personally significant, coherent, and meaningful) range of spiritual sources.

An artist has to be exposed to traditions of spirituality in their historical, social, literary, and of course artistic dimensions in order not only to acquire foundational knowledge, but also to acquire a critical understanding of the contexts of ideas and

practices. Such an exposure can be had in a variety of ways, but it seems to me that education in art schools needs to include a basic course in comparative religion at the very least. Such a course would introduce art students to critical methodologies necessary for use of spiritual traditions that avoids appropriation and unintentional use of symbols (artistic, verbal, musical, architectural) ripped from their contexts of origin.

Openness to search, openness to traditions

The two worlds I sketched at the beginning of this essay each have their own tasks before them if the ongoing conversation between art and spirituality is to proceed and develop. Institutions of theological education, at least in the United States, are interested in art. For example, the Sacred Arts Initiative at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (where I teach) seeks to explore art, music, and architecture from the perspective of what they have to say about spiritual life in the 21st century. The theological perspective of the work of the Initiative is Eastern Orthodox, and draws upon the theological, liturgical, musical, and iconographic traditions of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. To date, the Initiative has focused on the music of the Estonian composer Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), but its mission is broader, including a mandate to support "a wider public interest in spirituality and the arts."[4]

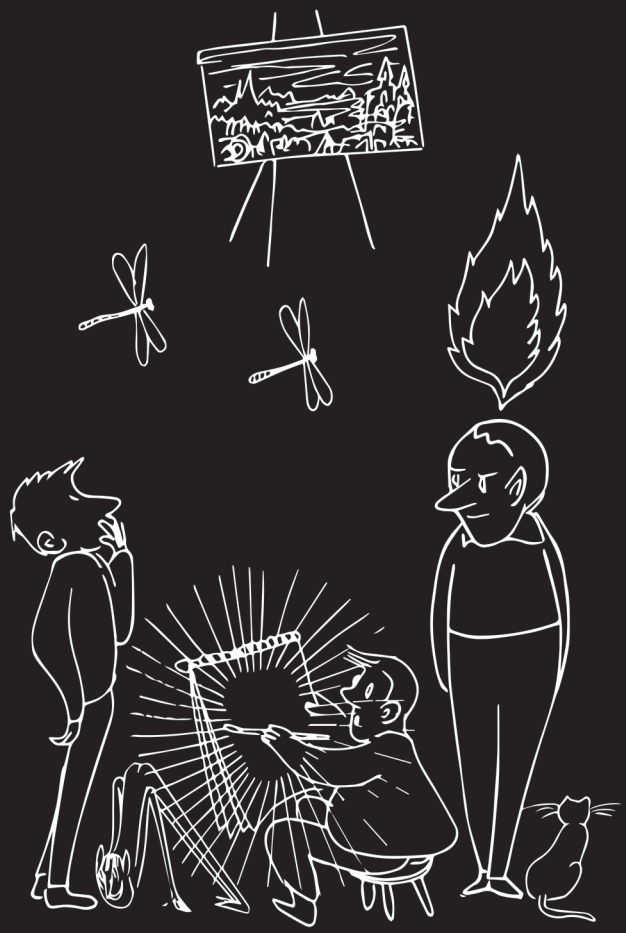
4 St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Crestwood, New York), Sacred Arts Initiative. "Mission/Vision." http://www.sacredartsinitiative.com/missionvision/. Accessed 5.11.2017.

Viewed from the perspective of the interest in spirituality expressed by artists today, such a mandate raises the question of the possibility of programs like that at St. Vladimir's to being open to artists outside the Orthodox Christian tradition who might have an interest in that tradition but not necessarily a formal association with it. Might there be openness to engaging a broader range of artists who engage other spiritual traditions, as a way of embracing the broader phenomenon of spiritual search that so marks the lives of people today? I believe one can make a theological case that such broadening is not only possible, but necessary.

For the world of artists and their education (or formation, if you prefer), I believe that there needs to be in the education of artists an openness to the voices of critical first-person narratives when it comes to encounter with traditions of spirituality. Because the spiritual "default mode" is the highly individualized construction of spiritual meaning that so marks , contemporary spirituality in Europe and North America, it is important for art students to encounter spiritual traditions as well in their instantiations as whole historical traditions embraced by identifiable communities through time. Doing so (both in the form of the study of history of spiritual traditions and in the form of hearing the voices of critical practitioners of such traditions today) would allow artists to gain new perspectives on the materials of spirituality, their contexts, and their ongoing development over time, and allow artists to gain new perspectives into the ways in which such traditions inform, shape, and challenge their own art.

A fruitful place to be

The liminal space occupied by artists in the immanent frame is a potentially creative place to be. Art has fundamentally to do with the challenges of life in modernity lived in awareness of the distant intimations of something beyond the immediate horizon of our experience. That place of dangerous ambiguity filled with potential has much to offer to people today who experience marginalization and uncertainty as economic, political and social forces wear away at the financial, social, and spiritual foundations of people's lives. That engagement will be most fruitful, both for artists and for the communities in which they make their art, when they critically explore the space between religion and spirituality today.



Mutual Reflections of Art and Religion

JUHA-HEIKKI TIHINEN

The relationship between art and religion has inspired both theologians and artists for thousands of years. Three world religions that emerged in the Near East – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – all had an extremely circumspect view of images, because in all of them God was the first image-maker, a creator who should also be the only image-maker.[1] This is why images and visual art are so highly charged in the context of religion and religious practice: because images are endowed with a religious and metaphysical power. The power of the image, akin to the power of sanctity, places the human individual in the face of Otherness with such intensity that the experience is potentially shattering and transformative of one's worldview.

The Genres of Mysticism

In the 1890s, Finnish artist Magnus Enckell (1870–1925) wrote some entries in his sketchbook that are difficult to interpret and classify. They are perfect examples of how diffi-

1 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Genesis 1:26 (KJV).

cult it can be to discern religious thoughts from artistic ones. In Enckell's case, as in others, the source of the confusion may lie in the blending of different dimensions and ambiguity as to whether the writer's primary intention is to convey an artistic or a religious/mystical idea. Upon repeatedly reading Enckell's remarks, one soon finds oneself accepting that the realms of mysticism and art are mixed in the text on purpose. One justification for this view has to do with problems in art-talk. Unless we deliberately limit our verbalisations of art to formalism or mere description, we soon find ourselves grappling with issues of interpretation, which makes us not unlike the priest or some other religious authority whose job is to explicate and interpret the meaning of holy texts or the will of God.

Enckell's notes or prose poem, whatever we wish to call the text, begins as follows: "A ruin. Inside, floating, a miasma of forgotten, pagan feelings and thoughts, empty dreams perhaps and sad thoughts for he who comes from outside, from sunlight, but for him whose home it is, for him it remains something akin to those days when people gathered in a temple to worship god."[2]

There are a few things in the quotation that are characteristic of both the religious and the artistic experience. Both are often regarded as internal events that are problematic in conveying to others in a straightforward manner. We often have

2 Juha-Heikki Tihinen, *Halun häilyvät rajat – Magnus Enckellin teosten maskuliinisuuksien ja feminiinisyyksien representaatioista ja itsen luomisesta* (Helsinki: Taidehistorian seura, 2008), 110.

a sense that we can either believe or not believe. Enckell's words convey admirably the multisensory aspect of many religious and artistic experiences and also their ability to communicate complex sensations that seem to embody much greater meaning than one might expect by only considering the parts or by relying on rational analysis. Many religious and artistic experiences also involve profound disruptions of time and place that may lead to a perception of oneself being part of some greater whole or to lose touch with one's immediate surroundings. A ruin is a place where the past is simultaneously present and absent yet can be accessed in fantasy. Ruins are therefore also easily associated with experiential phenomena that are simultaneously present yet absent.[3] Similarly in religious experiences, the divine is invisible yet for believers always present as well. Works of art can also embody a fusion of the visible and the invisible, because artworks are, besides being objects in their own right, allusions to something in art history or some other conceptual system.

Enckell wrote his text in the 1890s, a period when he spent a lot of time in Paris and where he came into contact with modernist interpretations of art as well as of religion. At the time, a new kind of dynamic had emerged between religious mysticism and visual arts, one that made the possibility of abstraction in visual art attractive to a growing number of people. Inner visions had a venerable tradition in the realm of religious experience, but their artistic potential began to

3 See: Alex Potts, *The Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

gain momentum with Romanticism in the late 18th century. Some of the ideas that emerged at this time were taken up by symbolists at the end of the next century.[4] They took a keen interest in new ideas about art and religion, both of which they saw as inherently personal, both in terms of expression and experience. At the same time, new forms of mysticism came into prominence in religion that hinted at the possibility of merging the past with the present and the future and science with religion, thereby enabling the discovery of an individualistic belief system that could nevertheless be universal. The same things were also sought in art, where mysticism or other devices such as automatic writing were harnessed to inspire researchers and artists, as well as the general public.[5]

Pilgrimage as Method

The main method in the Art & Religion study course was pilgrimage. Students travelled to various places to study matters on site. The course also included lectures both before and during the pilgrimage. The French writer Marcel Proust (1871–1922) went on pilgrimage to places that the English artist John Ruskin (1819–1900) had admired; in Proust's view, the soul of

4 See: Salme Sarajas-Korte, *Vid symbolismens källor: Den tidiga symbolismen I Finland 1890–1895*, Översättningen av Erik Kruskopf (Jakobstad: Jakobstads Tryckeri och Tidnings AB, Jakobstad, 1981).

5 Juha-Heikki Tihinen, "Identiteettien lähteillä: Magnus Enckellin luonnoskirjan tarkastelua," in: Susanna Aaltonen, Susanna Aaltonen and Hanne Selkokari, eds., *Identiteettejä – Identiter. Renja Suominen-Kokkosen juhlakirja* (Helsinki: Taidehistorian seura, 2013).

the writer lived on in the places he had described, even when his body had already passed on.[6] Ruskin was one of the artists Proust held in high regard and whose works he also translated. Pilgrims typically travel to the graves of religious figures or places where relics are kept. The outward appearance of the piece of bone, inner wall of a temple or other relic is less important than the fantasy about the original form, appearance or long-dead person to which people come to pay their respects centuries or even millennia after the event. Pilgrimage bears a close resemblance to the desire of art believers to be in the presence of the original and who thus travel to visit international exhibitions, faraway museums and other places to view individual masterpieces. Sometimes the religious and the artistic destination of pilgrimage can be the same, such as Rome, the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas or the Valamo Monastery in Russia. The motivation of an artistic pilgrimage is often the desire for a site-specific experience or the experience of being in a place of great importance. Such a personal experience is today embodied in "selfies," just as in earlier days pilgrims would adorn themselves with a scallop shell, the emblem of St. James, on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

The history of pilgrimages is so impressive that even hardcore atheists such as film director Luis Buñuel (1900–1983) have drawn from it. In *The Milky Way* (1968), Buñuel delved into the history of heresy, an apposite subject for someone

6 Marcel Proust, *On Reading Ruskin*, edited by Phillip J. Wolfe, and William Burford, translated by Jean Autret, Phillip J. Wolfe and William Burford (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989).

who attended a Jesuit school in his youth. The film follows two pilgrims on their journey to visit the tomb of apostle James in Santiago de Compostela. According to Danish writer and film director Christian Braad Thomsen, Buñuel's scorn has lost some of its edge in *The Milky Way*,[7] but perhaps that is just a device through which the scorn ultimately makes a more brutal impact, compared to an openly atheistic solution. Religion, Roman Catholicism in particular, occupies a prominent place throughout Buñuel's output. The director seems to be using central figures or situations of Christianity as if they were readymades that enable him to make simultaneous reference to cinematic reality and to religious content, such as the story of someone like St. Simeon Stylites.

The act of pilgrimage is necessary, because without it the context and overall sense of the three-dimensional space, building or place would remain unattained. The original site may also have undergone changes that we do not know of but which nevertheless have a powerful effect on the experience. Sometimes the destination can be layered. In San Clemente al Laterano in Rome, for example, the visitor experiences two churches built atop one another, the crypt of the older church having once served as a Mithraic temple. Descending from one church to the next, the pilgrim moves back in time and from one religion to another.

7 Christian Braad-Thomsen, Christian, *Leppymättömät. Elokuvataiteen kohtaloita ja kerrontamuotoja*, translated by Arvi Tamminen (Helsinki: Like Kustannus, 1989).

The classic pilgrimage destination shared by three religions is of course Jerusalem, where certain sites are associates with different religious interpretations.

One of the most accomplished art tourists of the 20th century was Marcel Proust, who defied his neurasthenia and would even travel to view individual paintings. His method was quite contrary to the view of German writer Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), for whom the aura and singularity of the original work of art is destroyed by photographs and other reproductions. In Proust's world of modern romanticism, original artworks are highly significant, and one can establish a new kind of relationship with them by travelling to view the original. In his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin writes how paintings and other works of art that were formerly experienced individually will lose their singularity with the proliferation of their reproductions, and how this will have a profound impact on the experience of art.[8] On the other hand, it would seem that the manufacture of reproductions can also kindle a desire to see the original, or at least an attempt to see it, as is the case with many famous works of art. The original may have also disappeared, been lost or partially destroyed, in which case old reproductions are the only way to approach the original.

8 Walter Benjamin, "Taideteos mekaanisen uusinnettavuuden aikakaudella," in *Messiaanisen sirpaleita*, edited by Markku Koski, Keijo Rahkonen and Esa Sironen, translated by Raija Sironen Benjamin (Helsinki: Kansan sivistystyön liitto and Tutkijaliitto, Helsinki 1989), 149–151.

There are interesting points in common between a pilgrimage and a visit to an art exhibition: both are distinguished by the wish to enter the presence of the object and linger there for a short or a long time. It is difficult to say how important the authenticity of the object is, because in both cases the act of travelling itself, as well one's personal approach, is highly significant.

Religion and Art?

What is the relationship between religion and art? It used to be quite common for churches or other religious communities to commission works of art. On the other hand, the special status of fine art has its historical roots in the processes of enlightenment and secularisation in the 18TH century, when the notion of free art emerged – art that might be a kind of non-dogmatic belief system, a religion without divinity. A third possibility is to see the practices of art and religion as ritualistic, as worldviews with their own theoretical formulations, both characterised by an interest in something invisible and ineffable. Religion and art can also both be seen as systems that address a reality that differs from the prevalent, visible reality, both of which also involve issues of identity.

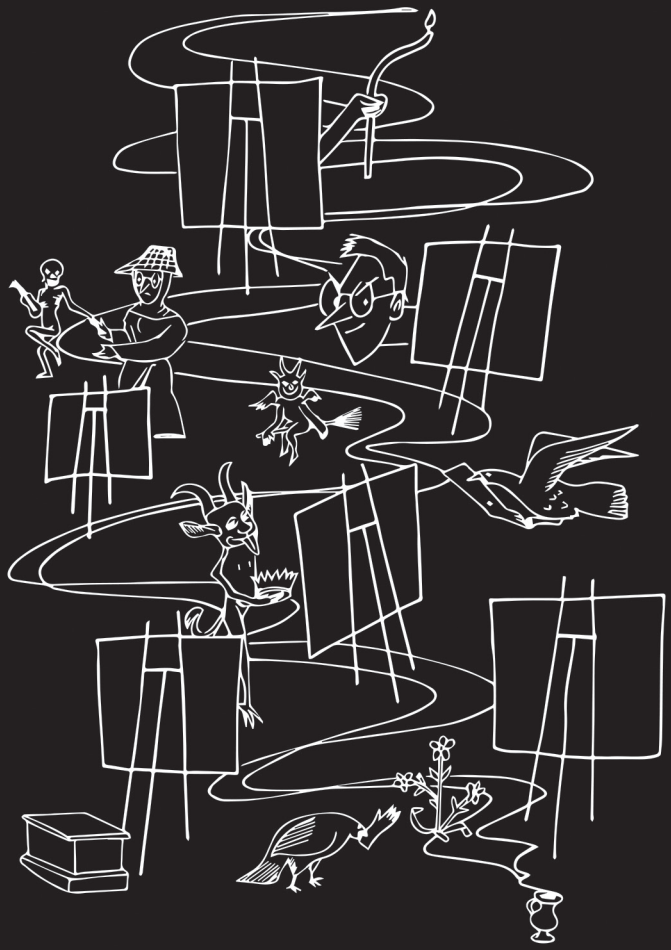
A key characteristic of religious and artistic experience would seem to be that both are personal and fundamentally incommunicable. The latter quality is to say that someone who has not had the experience is always an outsider. This idea can be approached by using the distinction, devised by French writer Georges Bataille (1897–1962), between homogeneity

and heterogeneity, the first of which refers to the "purely" rational, the latter to the "unproductive expenditure" that is typical of both art and religion. The importance of the heterogeneous in both is beyond logical explanation; its significance can only be appreciated through personal experience.[9]

Religious and artistic thinking can at times be competing projects in which both realms of thought seek to vanquish the other. The two can, however, also be aligned, in which case the difference between religious and artistic appreciation produces a double exposure in which the matter or event at hand is shown in a more complex light. Then again, there are works in which it is difficult to determine the stronger component, art or religion. Examples include the films of Andrei Tarkovsky (1932–1986) or the paintings of El Greco (1541–1614). These and many other works that walk the line between art and religion seem to express something more than some purely artistic or religious idea, if such a thing exists.

[*Translated from the Finnish by Tomi Snellman*]

9 E.g., Georges Bataille, "Fasismin psykologinen rakenne," in *Noidan oppipoika – kirjoituksia 1920- luvulta 1950-luvulle*, translated by Tiina Arppe (Helsinki: Gaudeamus), 95–105.



Use of Images in Eastern and Western Church Art

JOHAN BASTUBACKA

Introduction – Basic concepts and research questions[1]

The subject of the use of images in Eastern and Western church art covers huge geographical and cultural contexts – not to mention a time span of nearly 2000 years. It may therefore seem a brazen idea to try to characterize all the various realizations, usages, innovations, and traditional elements that have developed over time. Several works on the history of art have endeavored to account for various aspects of them.[2]

Nevertheless, focusing specifically on the comparative aspects of emerging visuality in Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism and therewith on the rise and consequences of 16th-century Reformation, we can sketch out certain differences, tensions, and similarities that have been and continue to be of special, distinguishing significance. In fact, without an understanding of the most elementary of these distinctions and parallels, it is virtually impossible to get a grasp on the

1 See Figure 3, The Chapel of Calvary in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem, according to tradition the place of the crucifixion, page 174.

2 I refer here specifically to the scholarly work by Hans Belting, especially his study *Likeness and Presence* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

essential features of each tradition, sacred space, and pertinent form of religious practice. For this, we need to employ the concept of visual culture.[3]

These aspects of the phenomenon are, moreover, closely interrelated: in order to depict and understand the differences, one must be able to recognize the implicit and explicit elements that frame the observed otherness and serve as its ground for departure. When we understand disparity we also understand conjoining elements. Accordingly, my principal research questions in this article focus on two fundamental issues: 1) what are the major differences between pictorial religious traditions in Eastern and Western Christianity as they relate to sacred space, and 2) how do these differences feature specifically in the use of images: their place and function in cult?[4]

Historical background

In this undertaking, a key question concerns the fundamental relationship between image and monotheistic religion. This is an age-old issue that is of major consequence in view of the restriction, negation, and endorsement of religious images. Conceptual oppositions (such as image versus holy text or

3 On the concept, David Morgan writes: "Rather than a discrete field of or discipline, the study of visual culture is the investigation of the constructive operations of visuality in any scholarly study of representation, art historical or otherwise." David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze. Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), 27. See also 28–34.

4 By *engagement* in cult I refer to the classical idea, as Harris puts it, of "the intimate connection ... between ritual and art." Jane Ellen Harrison, *Ancient Art and Ritual* (London, New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1951), 9.

image versus the idea of a superessential and transcendent God) may be regarded as elements of deep structure that are capable of maintaining cognitive tensions which have featured in a multitude of quarrels, resolutions, and practical historical solutions.[5] These, in turn, are discernible in the contemporary religious landscape. Freedberg summarizes and points out certain interesting aspects of these discourses:

> *"In order to grasp the divinity, man must figure it, and the only appropriate figure he knows is that of man himself, or a glorified image of him: enthroned, anointed, and crowned. All this, at any rate, for Greek and Judeo-Christian culture, where man is the highest being and is himself the image of God. But at the same time, to acknowledge the similitude of man and divinity is to be filled with apprehension and fear."*[6]

Certain historical phenomena need to be addressed here briefly.

It is crucial to point out that in Judaism, in late antiquity, the use of imagery in synagogues was apparently much more prevalent and rich than presumed before certain archeological findings made in the 20th century.[7] After all, the Decalogue

5 On the monotheistic image question, see the presentation in David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 54–81.

6 Ibid., 60.

7 See: Steven Fine, *Art, History and the Historiography of Judaism in Roman*

contains a prohibition against making statues of God, or idols.[8] Extant images in Christian catacombs from the late Roman era bear witness to a growing and rich use of pictographs and elaborate visual decorations featuring several Biblical themes and motifs.[9] Moreover, excavations at Dura-Europos in Eastern Syria demonstrate rich use of biblical imagery in the baptistery of a modest house church dating back to the mid and late third century.[10] However, it is also necessary to point out iconoclastic or anti-image tendencies in early Christianity. These tendencies reached their culmination in the early medieval era concurrently with the emergence of Islam.[11]

Antiquity (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2014), 161–180; and Kalimi, Isaac Kalimi, *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: a Historical Journey* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 124–127.

8 Exodus 20: 4–6, KJV: 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
The term פֶּסֶל (in English translated as "graven image") can be interpreted as prohibiting specifically three-dimensional "statues".

9 See: William Tronzo, *The Via Latina Catacomb: Imitation and Discontinuity in Fourth-Century Roman Painting* (University Park [Pa.]: Published for the College Art Association of America by the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 51–70.

10 Michael Peppard, *The World's Oldest Church* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), esp. 30–45.

11 On Iconoclasm, see Murray, Peter Murray and Linda Murray, *A Dictionary of Christian Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 255. See also Leslie Brubaker's critical scrutiny in Brubaker, Leslie. *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012).

Evidently some parts of the 8th and 9th centuries in Byzantium involved disagreements concerning the meaning and use of religious images, later epitomized as the era of Iconoclasm. The Western part of Christendom remained largely outside of this conflict. In the end, the Byzantine pro-image party, the iconodules, prevailed at the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, and again after an anti-icon party interlude in 843. They advocated a permissible and rich yet restrained, ascetic use of images in worship.[12]

Ever since that time, this tension – images as prohibited, restricted and affirmed – has been a fundamental aspect of Christian worship in all its forms, not least in the era of Reformation from the 16th century onwards. In the history of Christendom, the Reformation has later been regarded as the second prominent era involving icon debate and of iconoclasm, the effects of which are visible in contemporary religious visuality.[13]

Methodology and sources

In view of the above account, several choices need to be made to limit the focus of this article. Firstly, I am specifically interested in imagery in Christian sacred spaces, including their dimensions and techniques. Paraphernalia and clothing (even if decorated with artistic imagery) are not included

12 Brubaker 2012, esp. 15–62, 107–124.

13 Sergiusz Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: the Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), esp. 43–98.

here. Secondly, I am interested in the use of images. By the term "use" I specifically refer to the ways in which images are made to act, but also to engage people in various actions and practices. Thirdly, I focus exclusively on certain Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant phenomena. The viewpoint is specifically European in a narrow sense, the only exception being the Holy Land.

In order to understand the use of religious images in Christianity, we need to acknowledge certain historical occurrences. Historical considerations help us perceive the movement between negation and affirmation and, more specifically, recognize the cognitive and emotional anxiety at the core of the iconoclastic issue that for its part has influenced practices and artistic innovation.[14] However, this is not a place to give an art-historical presentation of stylistic developments.

In liturgical theology, the "law of prayer" and "law of faith" (*lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, respectively) – faith and liturgical praxis – have traditionally been regarded as an interconnected conceptual pair, with the two elements reciprocally affecting each other.[15] In the realm of imagery and image-bound or image-related liturgical practices, it is viable to regard lingual and verbal expressions of faith and expressions that visualize

14 For example, consider Freedberg's remark: "The anxiety about images continued throughout the Middle Ages, stimulated and enhanced by thinkers and authorities who ranged from Saint Bernard to Saint Thomas Aquinas." Freedberg, 387.

15 Benjamin Gordon-Taylor and Juliette Day, eds., *Liturgy: The Study of Liturgy and Worship: an Alcuin Guide* (London: SPCK, 2013), 26.

faith as interconnected or mutually bonded spheres of activity and of interpretation.[16] Image practices were also used as one argument in the conclusion of the iconoclastic debate[17]: *lex orandi* was conceptually and practically bound with *lex credendi*. Moreover, in many forms of Christian worship word and image are joined or fused together, seemingly influencing one another in many ways.

Throughout history, the word of the Bible has been used both to repudiate and to acknowledge the use of images in cult,[18] essentially making word and image appear together within same hermeneutical horizon as interconnected elements. This close connection between the word and the image is by no means extraordinary, as in the final analysis seeing, perceiving, interpretation and language are not detached from or opposites of one other but rather coexistent and conjoined functions of the human body and mind.

16 For example, as Bridget Nichols notes, "It is now recognized that shape and structure are as influential as word and image in creating the habit of prayer . . ." Bridget Nichols, "Prayer," in Gordon-Taylor, and Day, 51. See also Michalski 2013, 169–180, on images and the Eucharist.

17 See, e.g., Brubaker 2012, 61, and the dogmatic decree of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, edited by Henry A. Percival, Second Series Vol. 14: *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1957), 549–550.

18 For example, at the time of 16th-century Reformation. See the Lutheran perspective in Michalski 1993, 22–31.

These methodological considerations point clearly towards phenomenological and hermeneutical horizons.[19] Research questions concerning major differences in traditions and usage of images necessarily involve questions about the meaning and understanding of these features and phenomena. I shall address these questions in this article concisely.

My primary source material consists of several religious works of art located in places of worship and currently also in museums, and I use them to point out certain common features and places of worship. In the past few decades, I have visited and studied a great number of church buildings and temples in various parts of Europe. The photographs that I took in these sacred spaces and the mental images I carry in my mind are with me as I write this text.

19 I follow here in the footsteps of Gadamer, who states: "Imitation and representation are not merely a repetition, a copy, but knowledge of essence. Because they are not merely repetition, but a 'bringing forth', they imply a spectator as well. They contain in themselves an essential relation to everyone for whom the representation exists." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Sheed & Ward, 1989), 114–115. Gadamer goes on to say: "In being played the play speaks to the spectator through its presentation; and it does so in such a way that, despite the distance between it and himself, the spectator still belong to play. – This is seen most clearly in one type of representation, a religious rite. Here the relation to the community is obvious." Ibid., 116.

Images as Elements of Cult and Structure in the Sacred Space[20]

Transforming space

One of the most prevalent uses of images in any sacred space may be regarded as both self-evident and also fundamental: images transform space, make it appear distinct from the mainstream of everyday spaces and secular environments; images convert non-sacred into sacredness *visually*. This applies also to spaces where pictorial presentations are scarce, with only a visual symbol of the religion being permitted, for example. The effect can be achieved equally with just a few carefully selected images or with abundant visual materials.[21]

A place of worship acquires its new identity as a sacred space not only in and through inauguration rituals, but also visually through the use of signs and imagery. A building becomes a building with special purposes: its space is used for worship and for encounters not only with other adherents of the cult, but also with its perceived transcendence. A space is turned visually into an identifiably religious one through the

20 See Figure 4, The stone of anointment with iconography in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem, page 174.

21 For example, see Spiro Kostof's discussion of Protestantism in architecture in his *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 538–540; cf. the Byzantine ideas presented by Helen G. Saradi in her essay "Space in Byzantine Thought," in Slobodan Ćurčić, Evangelina Hadjitryphonos, Kathleen E. McVey, and Helen G. Saradi, eds., *Architecture as Icon. Perception and Representation of Architecture in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, New Jersey/New Haven: Princeton University Art Museum, distributed by Yale University Press, 2010), 98–105.

use of certain traditional markers that render the transformation perceptible and understandable. Traditions may be modified and contradicted, but visual novelties require traditional starting points to be presented.[22]

In the Protestant tradition, the new identity of a sacred space is commonly established with a few highly select visual elements, whereas in Catholic or Eastern Orthodox traditions it is generally achieved through the use of an abundance of images in co-existent visual orders. One significant exception is to be found in certain Calvinist places of worship and in Quakerism, in both of which the place of worship is characterized by a relative or even total absence of visual markers as opposed to other Christian and even non-Christian traditions.[23] In other words: there is an observable scale-like variety from multitude to restriction and negation within Christianity.

Religious imagery appears to be crucially significant even when sacred spaces are de-sacralized or vandalized. Attacks on religious imagery and symbols can be interpreted as violent efforts to transform both the use and the meaning of the space. In 16th-century Reformation, iconoclastic actions became a common practice among certain religious movements. A large number of Catholic sacred spaces were visually turned

22 As Allan Doig notes, "The liturgy and its context (architectural and socio-political) shape one another . . . Changes outside both liturgy and architecture can also bring about profound changes in them both . . . "Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture from the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate 2008), xxi.

23 Thomas D. Hamm, *The Quakers in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 64–72.

into Protestant churches or even secular spaces also through the destruction or removal of religious imagery.[24]

Indicators and shapers of identity[25]

A sacred space in Christianity is connected to a worshipping community.[26] As a medium, space has a communal function; it connects people and shapes and locates identities by virtue of its characteristics, which make it identifiable as a place of worship – specifically through the use of traditional imagery.

Images function commonly as indicators, as "labels", of the identity of a space. Denominations, confessions, and theological currents become manifest in images – just as guilds and other non-ecclesiastical associations and organizations. A space of worship becomes identifiable as one by virtue of visual cues, and it is those same cues that worshippers identify with and affirm, and employ as visual elements of their self-identification. Thus, images play a dual role both as markers and shapers of identity. One can recognize several Christian visual subcultures that serve as significant elements in the home-making of the worshipper.[27]

24 For example, see: Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art : Iconoclasm and Vandalism Since the French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 306–308.

25 See Figure 5, Bertel Thorvaldsen's statue of Christ "Come unto me", "Kommen til Mig", behind the altar of the Lutheran Cathedral of Copenhagen, page 175.

26 Doig, xxii.

27 See, for example, how Brendan Cassidy describes the role of imagery in terms of identity in the medieval context. Brendan Cassidy, "Images of Saints and Political Identity in Late Medieval Italy," in: Emily Jane Anderson,

Motifs and stylistic features, plain and restricted or abundant use of images, the negation or affirmation of imagery in general, all these qualities become personal and personalized as belonging to the life world of the worshipper. Simultaneously, the identity-expressing and shaping function also affects the images that are involved in this hermeneutic meaning-making process: the way a particular image is understood, and sometimes the image itself, is shaped by how it is used.[28]

In Orthodox Christianity, for example, an icon that is perceived as miracle-working acquires special significance and gains the status of a visual object that has the potentiality to express and shape identities. It becomes attached to place, culture, people, and their life experiences, which in turn become closely interconnected through the visuality of the image. As a corollary, the miracle-working icon may be covered with a silver riza and votive gifts, adorned with jewelry and flowers.[29]

Juri Lotman described the special potential of works of art to function in various relationships. He wrote how, in terms

Sandra Cardarelli, and John Richards, eds., *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 3.

28 Especially in terms of votive-images and images in votive use. See Belting 1994, 82–88, where he discusses "cult images and votive images." See also the definition in Murray and Murray, 615.

29 It is surprisingly difficult to find literature commenting on this very common Orthodox notion. For one historical example, see Michalski 1993, 156, 163. See also: "Moleben to St. Nicholas: Request for a supplication service (moleben) in front of the miracle-working icon of Saint Nicholas, the wonder-worker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia," (http://www.orthodox.or.th/index.php?content=St.Nicholas_icon&lang=en, accessed 27.2.2017).

of "[...] growing structural complexity, a text displays the properties of an intellectual device: it not only conveys the information put into it from without but also transforms messages and develops new ones."[30] Images convey and mediate memory; they seem to carry not only the information that was once encoded in them, but also information that is generated *in relation* to them so that new interpretations emerge. People engage or are engaged in discourses with images, since images are also a means of communication; images incorporate sign-characteristics that communicate nonverbally through basic functions of perception. The eye is drawn to the image, and the act of seeing already involves the bodily process of meaning-making.[31] Interiors with abundant imagery can have an immersive effect on the spectators, who are awed by the visual effect of the space and – usually for a moment – mentally "merge" into it.

Defining and using space: indications of functions[32]

In places of worship images not only express, shape, and communicate identity building in general, they also function as indicators and pointers of the functions of a space. In a Catholic pilgrim basilica, the confessional is not only decorated but

30 Yuri M. Lotman, "The Semiotics of Culture and the Concept of a Text," *Soviet Psychology* 26:3 (1987–1988, https://doi.org/10.2753/RPO1061-0405260352), 55.

31 For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Kroppens fenomenologi* (Göteborg: Daidalos, 1999), 117–120.

32 See Figure 6, Iconostasis and analogion in the Orthodox church of Saints Peter and Paul in Tornio, Finland, page 175.

also indicated by images that communicate its sacramental and pastoral function.[33] In Orthodox churches, the analogion is placed at the center of the nave not only to denote one of the visual focal points of the space but also to indicate a place of prayer and reverence, and to point out the initial place of the worshipper's ritual action when entering the nave.[34] In a Protestant setting, such as a Lutheran church, visual material usually highlights the sole ritual center of the space: the choir and its altar, where the "real presence" of Christ, according to Lutheran doctrine, takes place in the Eucharist.[35]

The diversity of ritual functions in sacred spaces is generally quite remarkable, especially in traditions in which ritualization is agreeably incorporated in liturgical life. Ritual functions frequently take place in relationship with imagery.

Baptisteries, confessionals, relics, places for commemorating the deceased, places used for adoration and prayer (e.g., in front of the consecrated Host[36]), ways of the Cross[37],

33 For example, in the Lateran pilgrim basilica in Rome.

34 In terms of the Slavonic tradition in particular.

35 Jari Jolkkonen, "Jumalanpalvelus," in: Pekka Kärkkäinen, toim., *Johdatus Lutherin teologiaan* (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2002)., 231.

36 In several Catholic church buildings, for example, Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome.

37 A common feature in Catholic church interiors today, one that became prominent from the 18th century onwards. See: George Cyprian Alston, "Way of the Cross," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912). http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15569a.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017). For the scripture involved, see: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Scriptural Stations Of The Cross," Catholic Online (http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/stations-of-the-cross/scriptural-stations-of-the-cross.cfm, accessed 1.3.2017).

specific places of pilgrimage (e.g. the location of the Nativity in Bethlehem or Calvary on Jerusalem), crypts, etc., are commonly indicated with imagery. Conduct of worship is guided by images that function in several roles: as guiding visual elements denoting places and functions, as visualization of mental images that are intimately interlinked with spirituality, as ritual practices, and as their meaning.[38]

In the final analysis, regardless of its limits and interpretation in different traditions, the practice of using images in sacred spaces not only denotes places and functions of ritual, it may also in itself be seen as a significant ritual function.[39] Visualization involves the faculties of visual imagination and memory; it is a process of making mental images appear as objects in external reality, and it also creates new visual memories.[40] This materialization of mental images – or efforts to restrict and negate the process – has a fundamental formative effect on sacred spaces and defines their characteristics.

38 For example, *the stone of anointing* in the church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem.

39 The carving of a wooden statue of a saint or the painting of an icon have been and are still regarded as religious actions.

40 On the concept of visual memory, see Karolina Golinowska,"The Art of Memory Politics: Visual Learning – Visual Resisting," in: András Benedek and János Kristóf Nyíri, eds., *Beyond Words: Pictures, Parables, Paradoxes* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Peter Lang, 2015), esp. 55–57.

Hierarchy, structure, movement, and visual spirituality[41]

One noteworthy aspect of religious imagery involves the structural organization of the space; it is the placement and function of images. Not every part of a sacred space is equal in terms of its use, value, or purpose. This spatio-social organization of the interior of sacred spaces can be categorized in terms of the "hierarchy" of the space.[42] Although the hierarchy is not equally apparent in every context, it can be regarded as an aspect of a spatio-social interpretation of the production of a sacred space and its meaning. The hierarchy of a sacred space comprises not only the composition of architectural volumes or the placement of images but also the functions of the place. Architecture, people, ritual actions, and imagery all merge together.

This means that the hierarchy of a sacred space is endowed with both mental-social and material-structural characteristics. It is something that is both imagined and materialized in space.[43]

41 See Figure 7, Confessional in Parma Cathedral, Parma, Italy, with its imagery, page 175.

42 The concept also became necessary in my doctoral dissertation. See: Juha Malmisalo, *In Pursuit of the Genuine Christian Image: Erland Forsberg as a Lutheran Producer of Icons in the Fields of Culture and Religion* (doctoral dissertation, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Theology, Department of Practical Theology, 2005, e-thesis), 26–27.

43 On the concept of imagination in classical and medieval thought, see: Ritva Palmén, *Richard of St. Victor's Theory of Imagination* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 13–49. On its modern, political application, see: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 2006), 5–7.

In practice, the place and use of images in a sacred space serve both as indicators of a hierarchy and as factors that create and maintain that hierarchy, as reflected by the unequal meanings of the different parts of the configuration. A prominent altarpiece both highlights and points out the ritual and mental focus of the space, while also re- and co-creating the effect.[44] It is quite common that the religiously (and sometimes also artistically) most significant religious images are placed at a central location within the space[45], whereas images of lesser value are often found close to entrances and at the rearmost end of the interior, out of constant sight. The placement of images can therefore also reflect their potential value and significance.

Spatial hierarchy is a fundamental factor affecting the ways in which the gaze is directed, guided, and restricted in the space.[46] It creates visual structures that lead and focus the gaze and make seeing seem a collective action within the ritual frame. In the Eastern Christian tradition, this function is commonly carried out by the iconostasis, which can be regarded as the most significant Eastern invention for restricting and focusing the gaze in worship.[47]

44 As in the Lutheran Cathedral of Copenhagen, where the famous statue of Christ by Thorvaldsen dominates and visually shapes the space.

45 Examples include the miracle-working icon of the Mother of God of Konevitsa in New Valamo cloister church, or the famous Salus Populi Romani in Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome.

46 See Figure 8, The icon "Salus Populi Romani" above the altar in a side chapel in the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, page 175.

47 The iconostasis is a medieval and early modern development of a structural partition that separated the choir or chancel from the nave. It has become common in most Eastern Orthodox Church buildings. See:

The iconostasis blocks the altar (choir) from the gaze that is – simultaneously and paradoxically – directed towards it. The opening of the Royal Door thus creates an effective contrast, a visual high point in the ritual. Seeing is contrasted with non-seeing and concealing with revealing, establishing a duality that, as a fundamental feature of ritual, reflects theological deep structures: ideas concerning places of revelation and transcendence in doctrine. Images play a fundamental role in this liturgical-theological enactment.[48]

The lower tiers of an iconostasis contains icons of Christ, the Mother of God, the archangels, and local saints ; in the upper ranks are icons depicting the Eucharist, the Deisis (intercession), feasts of the ecclesiastical year, sometimes also prophets and patriarchs. All these surround and frame the Royal Door, on which is usually depicted the Annunciation together with the four New Testament Gospel writers (Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). The Annunciation literally opens up the space so that to Holy Table becomes visible.[49]

As the Divine Liturgy is commonly understood as both an image and a re-enactment of the history of salvation, as participation in and an icon of heavenly worship, it is clear that the concept of icon ("image") in itself is highly significant in the

Andrew Shipman, "Iconostasis," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 7 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07626a.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017). See also Belting, 225–249.

48 On the idea of a fully developed iconostasis, see: Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons* (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999), 59–69.

49 Ibid., 65–68.

Eastern context.[50] Within the structure of the iconostasis, images both reveal and conceal. They are a boundary between the seen and the unseen, a dividing structural element in the hierarchy of the space.

In Western practice, the spatial organization is remarkably different as is the placement of images. Even when structural elements are similar or have a comparable function, their realization is different. While in the East the chancel railing became covered with icons and finally developed into a wall-like structure, in medieval West and also later, the screen or rood cross has largely remained an open partition.[51] Almost without exception, it has been considered essential in the West for worshippers to have direct visual contact with liturgical acts taking place on the high altar.[52] This development has practical as well as deeply theological roots.

50 On basic Orthodox understanding and functions of icons, see, for example, Constantine Cavarnos, *Orthodox Iconography: Four Essays* (Belmont, Mass.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1977), 22–35.

51 See, for example, the interior structure in San Clemente, Rome, and the templon screen in Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome. The partition could also be a wooden structure: *rood screen* or *pulpitum* or both. Rood Crucifixes became common in the 13TH and 14TH centuries. See: George Cyprian Alston, "Rood," in: *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13181a.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017).

52 The solemn Elevation of the Host in the Mass formed a visual high point ever since the Middle Ages. See: Herbert Thurston, "The Elevation," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05380b.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017).

In western Catholic worship, images are placed usually above, around, or at the back of the altar structure. Western openness has its opposite in Eastern concealment. While a retable or a reredos can be a magnificent composition of images, it does not hide the altar visually.[53] The same applies to most choir structures: they can be prominent fence-like partitions, draperies can be used with the altar table, but they do not develop into all-closed wall structures. Images in this case are used to frame and focus the gaze on the most significant ritual action in medieval and later Catholic Eucharistic worship: the high point of the Mass, when the host is consecrated and elevated to be worshipped also by the faithful.[54]

Visual openness was (and is) essential, because worship of the consecrated host is a ritual action in which seeing plays a vital role. As a natural extension of this constitutive practical-theological idea, monstrances and separate chapels for the worship of the Body of Christ were created.[55] In the East, no similar form of visual worship evolved. There the Eucharist was (and is) given to the faithful in the form of wine and bread mixed with warm water and offered with a spoon from the chalice. Prostration is performed at the moment of consecration, but without clear visual contact with the Lamb, the consecrated elements.[56]

53 This is commonly the case in European medieval carved wood or painted altar screens.

54 On the history of this liturgical action, see Thurston, "Elevation."

55 On different chapels, see: George Cyprian Alston, "Chapel," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03574b.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017).

Another particularly Western idea is the division of the nave conceptually into two parts that reflect salvation history: the Old and New Covenants, the Southern and Northern halves of the nave. This formative idea has also affected the placement of images.[57]

Moreover, the placement of images of the saints is spatially highly structured in both Eastern and Western traditions, particularly by pointing out dedications.[58] In the West this took commonly the form of side altars, specific ritual focal points. Imagery played a crucial role in connection with the side altars, revealing and expressing the purpose and dedication of the altar, and also connecting it with feasts and occasions of the ecclesiastical year. These images also shaped the structure of the space fundamentally and functioned as visual means or aids in worship.[59]

56 See, for example, Father Andrew, "A Practical Guide To The Worship Of The Orthodox Church," *Orthodox England* (http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/pdf/practical.pdf, accessed 1.3.2017), esp. 30.

57 On the idea of "the Gospel side" in the chancel, see: Maurice Hassett, "History of the Christian Altar," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01362a.htm, 1 Mar. 2017). See also Schulte, Augustin Joseph Schulte, "Altar Side," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01356e.htm, accessed 1 Mar. 2017).

58 It has been and still is very common to point out dedications to saints or sacred themes with imagery. Morrisroe, Patrick Morrisroe, "Dedication," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04673a.htm, accessed1 Mar. 2017).

59 On the concept of the altar and side altar, see Hassett, "History."

This spatial structurization has also happened in Orthodox and Catholic worship, pertaining to images and altars in the West and to icons and icon cases, *kiots*,[60] of St Mary, the Theotokos, in the East. Her images commonly designate and constitute places of devotion and prayer in the sacred space. The ancient custom of dividing the church nave in two parts with men on the South and women on the North side probably goes back to the time before Christianity.[61] However, women usually stood or sat in the nave on the side of the Virgin, whereas the men's side was or is characterized by images of Christ, St. John the Apostle, or St. John the Baptist – most often in a Crucifixion scene.[62] It is obvious that Marian imagery often had its effect on, or found its place in terms of, this division.

Images demand movement. They invite the worshipper to engage in the act of seeing and they seem to transfer and organize people within the space by inviting certain gestures and patterns of movement. In the Orthodox context, people arriving to the sacred space usually begin by venerating the image on the analogion – which expresses the theme of the feast or the occasion – and then continue to the icons of Christ

60 A *kiot* is a cabin-like case used as a receptacle for an icon. See: David Abramtsov, David, "'The Kiota' from 'The Orthodox Companion.'," Orthodoxnet.com, (http://www.orthodoxnet.com/wisdom/hi003.html, accessed 1.3.2017).

61 There is scarcely any literature on this, yet the same spatial orientation can be seen in the traditions of contemporary Judaism, for example.

62 This habit is still apparent in Eastern Orthodoxy, and also in Western wedding ceremonies where the bride and the groom have their assigned sides.

and the Mother of God, possibly also continuing to other icons, relics, or the table for commemorating the deceased. Images are touched: kissing in particular is commonly used to express veneration and devotion. Later movement towards the ambon takes place in connection with the Eucharist and the veneration of the Cross.[63]

In Catholicism, movement is initially towards the altar or the image of the Virgin, and then towards the Eucharist celebrated on the high altar. Touching also takes place in certain instances of ritual interaction with images.[64] The general pattern of movement in both Eastern and Western churches is thus from West to East, from darkness towards light, from death towards salvation. The cardinal points are incorporated into theological interpretation.[65] A specifically Western practice that incorporates movement and spirituality with images is when worshippers follow the way of the cross in the sacred space – or outdoors.[66]

Furthermore, images too are moved, carried around in churches (circumambulation), out of churches, and between churches.[67] Processions with images are commonplace in both

63 Observations by the present writer.

64 Most notably in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, with the sculpture of St. Peter.

65 In a huge number of medieval Western and Eastern church buildings the altar is aligned towards the East. Interesting exceptions are several late antique basilicas in Rome. They point towards the West.

66 On this custom, see the literature cited in note 33.

67 E.g., the famous processions in Constantinople. See: Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), esp. 43–52, 169–173.

traditions. They expand the concept of the sacred space, emphasizing the material-haptic function of images. Visual spirituality becomes material spirituality.

Acting, channeling feeling, and molding perception[68]

As a medium, images are capable of performing functions. People use religious images as if they were counterparts in conversations or actors in rituals. Images seem to gain human characteristics socially by being adorned, clothed, and accommodated in different ways. Certain images are considered as moving in themselves and capable of performing actions – miracles.[69] Images were and are loved, they produce or rouse feelings, and feelings are projected on them.[70]

Even when the use of images is critically opposed in certain branches of Protestant Christianity, their emotional impact is a factor that needs to be taken into account. While the attraction of images can be resisted, there are also Protestant pictures that seem to epitomize the importance of sentiment.[71] Cases in point include the huge circulation of images of Christ, such as "Kommen til mig" by Bertel Thorvaldsen in the 19th century, or

68 See Figure 9, The Chapel of the Martyr St. Demetrius within the Basilica of St. Demetrius, Thessaloniki, Greece, page 176.

69 E.g., Belting 1994, 61, 362.

70 Jeffrey Chipps Smith invokes the concept of a "sacred theater" to describe the effect and setting of 17th-century counter-reformation German church interiors. See: *Sensuous Worship. Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 170–171.

71 David Morgan, *Visual Piety: a History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998), 78–96.

"Head of Christ" by Warner Sallman, which became enormously popular in the early 20th century and after World War II.[72] These two originally Protestant images of Christ epitomize a mild, consoling, loving and motherly emotional aspect, whereby they can also be regarded as feminine or feminized images of Christ.[73]

Images touch us emotionally. By virtue of the emotional concepts encoded in them (birth and motherhood, suffering and death, perils and glory), religious images call for personal interpretation, projection, and personalization of interpretation. Religious images become vehicles for evoking, encountering, and also focusing and channeling one's feelings.[74]

Images are thus used to produce affection, but also to frighten and even to shock their viewers. The arousal of negative feelings can serve as an effective way to control people and exercise power through the use of images. Depicting the horrors of Hell and the eternal damnation of the sinful on the interior west wall of a church allowed the institution to wield an emotional form of power. In a parallel manner, the affective emotional lure of pictorial loving-kindness can also be interpreted as a subtle form of power-usage in which emotional needs are bonded to the images of the institution and its

72 Ibid., 152–181.

73 On the social construction of the "masculinity of Christ" in religious imagery, see Morgan 1998, 97–123.

74 For example, Ibid., 111–123.

purposes.[75] Another view, both contrasting and complementary, can be found in the occasional rebellious or stubbornly independent use of images by the people, a phenomenon that institutional Christianity simply had to accept or incorporate. Religious images can also be delightful and even funny due to their naïve or folk-art characteristics.[76]

Images are also used to mold perception and to typify people. Their visual characteristics act as lenses through which interpretation is subtly introduced into the perception. Religious images produce, maintain, and express actant characteristics, gender and sex roles, and models for labeling people in terms of subject and object, sender and receiver, opponent and helper, and in terms of moral assessments regarding good and evil, even aesthetically by presenting ideals of beauty and ugliness.[77]

To a remarkable degree, ecclesiastical art in sacred spaces is expressive of the human body, human perception, and human feeling. In this regard the heritage of classical antiquity is evident.[78] A brief look in Orthodox or Catholic church interiors

75 See, for example, the ideas in Belting, 311: "They [images in Roman civic life] embodied institutions competing for status and power but they were also called upon by the opposite side, the Roman people, and held out authority for those who lacked it."

76 For an Italian example, see: Amy Willis, "Elderly woman destroys 19th-century fresco with DIY restoration," *The Telegraph,* online edition, 22 August 2012 (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/9491391/Elderly-woman-destroys-19th-century-fresco-with-DIY-restoration.html, accessed 1.3.2017).

77 Algirdas Greimas's basic ideas on the mythic actant model seem functional even in this pictorial setting. Algirdas Julien Greimas, *Sémantique structurale. Recherche de méthode* (Paris: Larousse, 1996), 180.

78 The idealized human body characterized the artistic heritage of antiquity.

usually reveals dozens if not hundreds of human figures and torsos depicted in various media and techniques. This effect is usually not as pronounced in Protestant environments, and in certain modernist church interiors abstract or semi-abstract imagery may altogether cancel out this "human figure effect". In light of the pivotal importance of the Christian doctrinal idea of incarnation, it is understandable that the absence of any human figures in a sacred space can also arouse anxiousness and raise questions.[79]

Characteristics of Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant image traditions[80]

As we have seen, the major differences between Eastern and Western pictorial religious traditions in Christian sacred spaces are in the placement of the images and their functions. Different uses are deeply rooted in the basic understandings on what images should be like, what, where and how they mean. Different practices and interpretations reflect deep conceptual ideas and relationships.

In the Orthodox tradition, basically only two-dimensional pictorial presentations are used. There are occasional reliefs,

See, for example, Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art* (London: McMillan, 1982), 110–121.

79 Incarnation, the "coming-into-flesh" of the Logos. See: John Macquarrie, "Inkarnaatio," in: Alister E. McGrath, ed., *Modernin teologian ensyklopedia*, translated by Satu Norja and Kia Sammalkorpi-Soini (Helsinki: Kirjapaja), 2000, 257–261.

80 See Figure 10, Reformed Church in Hungary worship space, Hajdudorog, Hungary, page 176.

but they are not fully three-dimensional statues. In late antiquity and in medieval painting, sophisticated systems of reverse perspective, Byzantine perspective, were adopted. Often the vanishing point (or several vanishing points) was not established within the picture but in the spectator's realm; this construction has been interpreted as making the otherworldly present in the "here".[81]

A mathematical, schematic idea of beauty was introduced in ecclesiastical art in order to express theological ideas and spirituality[82] – that is, reaching through matter and the senses beyond the earthly, to express ascesis and revelation, purification of the senses, and heavenly peace and harmony. The icon was and is fundamentally an image (by virtue) of the incarnation of the Logos, the invisible becoming visible. Images are seen as "holy icons" that function as meeting points between the earthly and the heavenly realms. Beauty became significant as a theological concept, embracing both the "good" and the "beautiful" (καλός).[83] But an icon is also an image of the Church, of doctrine and prayer, created by anonymous painters.[84] Even though a thorough Westernization of this tradition took place from the 16th to 20th centuries, a counter movement has revived Byzantine models and ideals in Neo-Byzantine painting.[85]

81 See, for example, Ouspensky's presentation on Orthodox icons in Ouspensky 1999, 25–49. Cf. Cavarnos 1977, 36–48.

82 Ouspensky 1999, 49; Cavarnos 1977, 36: "*The mode of presentation must be spiritual*, that is, such as to make it *anagogic*, pointing to a reality beyond the physical [...] denoted by the term spiritual."

83 On the Platonic idea of beauty, see: Serafim Seppälä. *Kauneus: Jumalan kieli* (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2010), 30–31.

84 For a typical description on the anonymity of the painter, see *Russian Icon Painting*: "Icons are made by icon painters, who consider themselves to be believers first and foremost and artists second. The icon painter never considers his work to be his personal, individual artistic achievement, and thus he does not sign his work." "Russian Icon Painting, (http://www.lsa.umich.edu/slavic/dept/webbasedlanguage/Russian/Culture/RussianIconPainting.htm, accessed 1.3.2017).

In the Catholic tradition and the Western Christian tradition in general, fully plastic sculpture and paintings came to epitomize image practices particularly in the Gothic and late medieval periods and later also in the modern era.[86] The High Gothic also featured the elaborate utilization of light in stained glass pieces.[87] The emergence of the Renaissance in the 14th century led to the creation of religious art in which skillful play with linear perspective and foreshortening, light and shadow, and a "natural" geometrical method for rendering perspective combined with beauty for the senses and delight in illusion and detail. Images were designed to evoke emotions. This placed the skill of the individual, the artist, into the focus. In the realm of religious imagery, the joy of likeness, the effect of trompe l'oeil, the richness of creation, and the creative ingenuity and imagination of the individual became prevalent and valued. The Transcendent was now encountered in and

85 On the Neo-Byzantine icon revival, see: Kari Kotkavaara, *Progeny of the Icon: Émigré Russian Revivalism and the Vicissitudes of the Eastern Orthodox Sacred Image* (doctoral dissertation, Åbo Akademi, 1999). For a brief Greek view on the topic, see Cavarnos 1977, 21.

86 See Figure 11, Pilgrims at Saint Peter's touch the Statue of Saint Peter with its worn bronze feet, page 176.

87 See Doig, 169–177.

through the splendor of the creation; the revelation took place in the illusory reality of the painting or sculpture. Likeness was equated with presence and authenticity.[88]

The starting points in both traditions are essentially the same: basic doctrinal perceptions, the ideas of transcendence and revelation, incarnation and salvation, these form the conceptual matrix that is expressed in various ways in actual artworks. The doctrinal foundations of Catholicism and Orthodoxy are – insofar as the image question is concerned – essentially shared. Images are used in cult, different techniques in producing them are permitted, they are not to be worshipped but venerated, and veneration is channeled through the medium towards the "original image", the source of the pictorial presentation. Only God is to be worshipped.[89]

These doctrinal and also practical ideas of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (787 C.E.) laid the foundation for the development of liturgical and practical solutions for images in cult. Moreover, images and relics are commonly displayed in both traditions and also displayed together, because both are seen as potential channels of divine grace.[90] It is therefore interesting to see how Catholic and Orthodox practical solutions and interpretations have appeared in history.[91]

88 For example, Renaissance religious art in Italy. Honour & Fleming, esp. 332–335.

89 The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Vol. 14), 549–550.

90 Anderson, Cardarelli, and Richards, xxi.

91 Certain differences of opinion and interpretation became apparent very early in history. Concerning the Frankish reaction to the end result of the Second Council of Nicea, see Brubaker, 62–63.

Behind these differences lie certain deep theological structures, fundamental perceptions of the East and the West. Eastern Christian theology developed into a fundamentally ascetic direction due to a Christian Neo-Platonist synthesis forged primarily by the Cappadocian Fathers and later redefined in Palamite theology in the 14th century. Notions of God as totally transcendent yet simultaneously paradoxically approachable in his "uncreated energies" tend to lead to ascetic, meditative, and carefully selective image practices. Icons are fundamentally significant as images of the Incarnation; although they are objects for prayer, they are not at the core, or the object, or even tool of the Jesus-prayer, the prayer of the heart. We should also note that in Eastern hesychasm, which is a mystical theology, mental visualization play no part at all. Images are something that is left behind when one approaches the immaterial in and through matter.[92]

This perspective evolved differently in medieval Catholic mystical theology, where imagination, imitation, and visual imagery are abundantly used in meditation – even if the Apophatic tradition has also been significant in the West. One culmination of this Western utilization of mental imagery is in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* from the 16th century.[93] In them, visualization and mental imagery became fundamental tools for shaping the mind of the believer. This affirmative application of the faculty of imagination for spirituality, coupled with

92 On Hesychasm, see: Jaroslav Pelikan, "Preface," in: John Meyendorff, trans. and ed., Gregory Palamas: The Triads (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 1–5.

93 See Smith, 8.

a theological emphasis on the person of the suffering Savior, the humane aspect of the "Emmanuel", God with us, and the personal emphasis on the encounter with Divinity, all these made an impact also on the production and use of images.

Images and their uses reflect fundamental theological predispositions and by doing so they probably also reiterate and shape them.

In both the Eastern and the Western traditions, including several forms of Protestantism, images are regarded useful in education, as a "Bible of the poor",[94] or, in Lutheran terms, the "visible Word".[95] Luther described the purpose of images in churches by stating that images were "[...] zum Ansehen, zum Zeugnis, zum Gedächtnis, zum Zeichen […]".[96] They had to do with perceiving, witnessing, and commemoration, and they also functioned as signs. As a result, pedagogical and psychological aspects and interpretations concerning images became significant in later Lutheran interpretations. In Calvinism, the solution was the radical eradication of all images in churches – a solution that removed religious images from public cult into the domestic sphere.[97]

Later Protestant commentators have navigated in the conceptual space of interpretations opened up by these ideas

94 Latin: *Biblia Pauperum*. See Murray & Murray, 60–61.

95 A term used by Finnish Lutherans. See: Risto Cantell, Risto Maija Paavilainen, and Eero Raatikainen. *Näkyvä sana*. ([Helsinki]: Kirjaneliö, 1993).

96 Martin Luther, „Wider die himmlischen Profeten, von den Bildern und Sakrament" (1525), *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 18. Band (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1908), 80.

97 On the Calvinist Reformation and images, see Michalski 1993, 43–74.

presented by Lutherans and the Reformed. A clear theological point of departure within the Orthodox and the Catholic tradition is found when images are no longer understood as mere means of commemoration, but also as means of communication with the Divine in meditation and prayer.[98] Moreover, in the Protestant realm, the haptic and material spirituality associated with images – touching, kissing, incense, and lights – has traditionally been perceived as idolatrous. Significantly, the motifs in Protestant imagery reflect fundamental Protestant ideas such as *sola scriptura* and *sola fide*. Images are expected to represent biblical figures and stories, and to highlight Christ as the only mediator between God and humankind.[99]

In the end, Christians share certain ideas and practices, but they also differ in their use of images. But who is using whom? From one perspective, it is quite obvious that people and institutions use images and create visual cultures for the purposes of community building, the exercise of power, education, imagination, spirituality, and devotional practices.

This perception can, however, be turned upside down, and we can look at images as actants that seem to have the power to engage, involve, and move people. Gadamer once remarked: "All playing is being played." [100] Do people understand

98 For example, see Malmisalo, 46–52 on the Scandinavian Lutheran utilization of Neo-Byzantine religious imagery.

99 The theological principles of the Reformation are generally known as the Five Solae: *sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *solus Christus*, and *Soli Deo Gloria*.

100 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 106.

what images do with them? The fundamental question of agency concerning images is a complex matrix, since in the realm of religious beliefs, also divine agencies and transcendent powers can be seen as functioning in and through images – specifically in the framework of Orthodox and Catholic image traditions.

Images are quite obviously made to serve as elements of cult, objects of visualization, education, imagination, meditation, material contact (haptics), movement, and feeling. They are used to mark boundaries, and to create and express beauty and harmony, to mediate or act as boundaries between this world and the otherworldly. Simultaneously, they are also imagined to engage, involve, or lure people into different emotive, cognitive, and corporeal activities that are in many cases essential for religious worship.[101] Images serve as votive offerings and, in certain cases, other images, votive offerings, are offered to them.[102] In their connection with altars and holy tables, images are used to visualize, represent, highlight, and echo the sacramental Eucharistic Sacrifice in both the Catholic and the Orthodox realm.[103] Images are integral to certain aspects of ritual and they are also used as elements of ritual.

101 I use the expression "in several instances" deliberately, because there are significant religious objections to be taken into account: denial of and opposition to images in the framework of religious thinking and cult.

102 For instance, in the Greek realm it is a common custom to donate small silver figurines to icons.

103 For instance, the "Mercy Seat" in medieval Catholicism above the high altar or as the altarpiece, or the annunciation motif in Orthodox temples as related to the Holy Table.

Images console and encourage, they guide, elucidate, proclaim, and reveal, warn, frighten, and protect. The agency of images is remarkably multifaceted and so are the visual cultures they create.

In the end, it is apparent, that use and interpretation are essentially intertwined. Using actually incorporates aspects of interpreting, and human interpretation both shapes practices and reflects deep doctrinal and conceptual structures.

Funerary Memorials and Cultures of Death in Finland

LIISA LINDGREN

In the days before urbanisation and concerns about public health began pushing cemeteries outside of town limits in the late 18th century, the dead were buried in the churchyard or inside the church in the medieval fashion. The oldest Christian funerary memorials in Finland date back to the 12th and 13th centuries. The 15th-century cenotaph of Bishop Henry in the church in Nousiainen is quite unique even in the Nordic context. Ledger stones set in the church floor became more common in the late medieval period, and from the late 18th century onwards they were also used in burial chambers in the churchyard. The most impressive funerary memorials of the baroque period in Finland are the sandstone monument to Henrik Fleming and Ebba Bååt, designed by Dutch sculptor and architect Aris Claeszon in 1632 in the church in Mynämäki, and the memorial designed by German Petter Schultz for Åke Totti and Christina Brahe, made of black and white marble from 1678, located in the Turku Cathedral. Memorial plaques and coats of arms were used to commemorate powerful families in many churches.

Burials in churches were abolished by degrees across Finland during the Swedish reign. The injunction instituted in the plague year 1773 remained in force in the area of so-called

Old Finland, where the ecclesiastical laws of Sweden still applied even after the area was annexed to Russia in the Treaty of Uusikaupunki. It was not until 1822 under the Russian reign that the ancient burial custom was abolished by imperial decree. Churchyards and new cemeteries established outside of towns became burial sites for all classes of society. Owing to risk of contagion, cemeteries could not be located in the immediate vicinity of residential areas. The use of churchyards situated in the centre of the village or town for burials was discontinued almost without exception, although many have since been taken back in use.

The most impressive funerary memorial from the end of Swedish rule is not located in a cemetery, however: the monument to Augustin Ehrensvärd lies in a courtyard at Susisaari island in the Suomenlinna fortress. By decree of King Gustav III, the field marshal, who died at the Saari manor at Mynämäki in 1772, was buried in the grounds of the fortress he had built, although this did not take place until over ten years after Ehrensvärd's death. The monument was sketched by the king himself, and the final design was drawn by the marshal's son, Carl August Ehrensvärd. The sculptural decorations with trophies were made by Johan Tobias Sergel, the leading neoclassical sculptor in Sweden. In 1800 King Gustav IV Adolf demanded that the memorial be finished, but the monument was not unveiled until 1807. The following year the fortress was surrendered to the Russians.

Old cemeteries that were originally founded outside of towns in the 18th century exist in Kokkola, Loviisa, Oulu,

Vaasa and Porvoo. They also include the Messukylä Cemetery in Tampere and the Kamppi Cemetery, known today as the Old Church Park, in Helsinki. The most impressive examples of old cemeteries in Old Finland are in Hietakylä, Hamina and in Viipuri, which was greatly damaged in the Second World War.

Cast Iron Crosses

Burial plots in churches and churchyards had an unequal status in earlier times. The oldest and grandest memorials in churchyards were usually situated near the church on its east or south side. But in new cemeteries as well, the resting place reflected the social position and standing of the deceased. In areas reserved for the gentry, an interment fee, known as 'ground money', was paid, the sum contingent upon the status of the location. The most valuable area was known as 'first ground', and the fee for a plot was higher than in second or third ground areas. People who were destitute were buried in a mass grave or 'poor ground'. The location of the grave could bear an uncanny similarity to the dead person's status in life.

In the course of the 19th century, private graves became more common, and personalised memorials as well. As the upper and middle classes stopped using traditional wooden crosses, which had only a short life span, memorials became increasingly permanent. New customs reflected the growing wealth of society at large but also influences from international contacts. Compared with St. Petersburg and major cities in the Nordic countries – not to mention Central and

Southern Europe – cemeteries in Finland were nevertheless rather modest.

Cemeteries in affluent coastal towns developed rapidly to reflect the example of cemeteries in the neighbouring countries and in central Europe. Cemeteries in North America followed more or less the same pattern. One of the key inspirations for the design of cemeteries was Père-Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, consecrated in 1804, a parklike area known for exemplary hygiene. With regard to memorial art, the finest cemeteries in Finland, dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries, are the cemetery in Turku and the Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki.

Some cast-iron grave markers can still be found in old cemeteries. The oldest of them are flat iron plaques from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries that were used as covers for burial chambers in the churchyard. The establishment of the Fiskars foundry and engineering workshop in 1837 marked a breakthrough in the production of cast-iron funerary memorials. Their production soon spread all over the country, and tomb decorations became important secondary products for many foundries and workshops. The number-one producer was Åbo Jern Manufaktur Bolag, founded in 1857.

The popularity of cast-iron grave markers reached its pinnacle in the 1850s and 1860s. Although stone surpassed cast iron in popularity toward the end of the century, production continued in some places until the end of the 1930s. Customers selected markers from illustrated catalogues published by the producers. Along with crosses, other popular

designs included bowls in the neoclassical or neo-Gothic style, urns, vertical Gothic plaques, obelisk-like bases and, more rarely, truncated columns or memorials resembling the stump of an oak tree. The models and decorative motifs of different manufacturers were quite similar. Many motifs were borrowed from Swedish and German manufacturers.

Motifs from neoclassical sculpture, such as mourners and the Genius of Death – especially from the works of Italian Antonio Canova and Dane Bertel Thorvaldsen – were used in bisque medallions and cast iron crosses. At the Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki, there is a memorial for an uhlan officer, cavalry captain C. M. Ridderstorm, who was wounded in the Balkans during the Greek War of Independence and died in 1838. The memorial is adorned with a Roman helmet with laurel leaves and a sword and shield with a family coat of arms, modelled after a design by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, a prominent neo-classical architect.

The Growing Capital and Master Stonemasons

From the 1820s onwards, the growing neoclassical city of Helsinki offered work for craftsmen and small stone-carving companies. Perhaps the most famous stone-carving company in the latter half of the 19th century was that of Henrik Johan Stigell. Stigell had studied in St. Petersburg and founded the company in 1855. The company set up shop in the 1860s on Lapinlahdenkatu Street, an area with many small industrial companies and workshops. The company's main products, grave markers made of black granite, were sold in the 1870s

and 1880s through agents all over Finland and in St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Tartu and Sweden. The funerary memorials of H. J. Stigell won a bronze medal at the 1878 World Exhibition in Paris. A granite monument displayed at the 1889 Paris World Exhibition was sold to America. The quality of dozens of old stone grave markers at the Hietaniemi Cemetery is assured by the master craftsman's name.

In artisan families, children usually continued in the trade of their father. Master stonemason Stigell educated his stepson to be a stonecutter, but, being more interested in fine art, Robert Stigell took up further studies in sculpture at Accademia di San Luca in Rome in the 1870s. The tight finances of his student years were relieved in part by commissions for marble decorations, urns and medallions for grave memorials that he received from his father. Robert's work shows the influence of prestigious Danish neo-classicist Bertel Thorvaldsen. There are numerous relief portraits and sculptures by Robert Stigell at the Hietaniemi Cemetery. Having worked first in Rome and then in Paris, where he was praised for his sculpture *The Shipwrecked* in the 1900 World Exhibition, Stigell returned to Helsinki, where he managed his stepfather's business alongside his artistic practice.

The number of Finnish stone workshops had grown by the 1890s. Although the Stigell workshop eventually wound down, many of the professionals who had learned their craft there continued in the business. One of them was Vihtori Heinänen, who founded a stoneworks in Hämeenlinna and collaborated

with Emil Wikström in the making of sculptures for the burial monument of the Serlachius family, designed by Wikström in the cemetery in Mänttä. As with Robert Stigell, Heinänen's son Urho also became a sculptor.

The directors and shareholders of new stone businesses established around the turn of the century, such as *Ab Granit* founded in Hanko in 1886, were trained engineers, architects, construction engineers and well-heeled investors, unlike in the older firms that were run by older-generation craftsman-entrepreneurs. *Finska Stenindustri Ab*, founded in 1900, remains operational at Vehmaa to this day. The importance of stone businesses in the production of artistically significant grave memorials declined at the turn of the century, when the design and production of memorials became entrusted increasingly to sculptors.

National Pantheon and the Cult of Great Men

Flourishing in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, the cult of great men that worshiped artists and writers was part of the new bourgeois public space. While regulating the customs and rituals of the community, the cult was also an important part of everyday life. The memory of great men was upheld with monuments and with visits to their graves and the places where they had lived and worked. A child of the Enlightenment, the cult placed great emphasis on progress and national achievements. As the conception of death was pressed into the service of public life, graveyards and memorials of great men also became instruments of patriotic education.

New parklike cemeteries were ideal settings for the cult and also for small national pantheons in Finland. These became new places of memory for the community. For artists they provided challenges, for the people ideals to look up to, and for travellers a representative national front. In Finland the cult of great men was developed and maintained by academic circles. After the university was moved to Helsinki, the Hietaniemi Cemetery became a kind of pantheon for the nation, with most of the cultural and political luminaries of the time lying buried in its old part. After the First World War, the forms of collective remembrance were transformed in Europe and pantheons gradually became a thing of the past.

When Finland's national poet J. L. Runeberg died in 1877, his grave became a place of worship for the cult that surrounded him. The quiet and secluded site, situated at the highest point in Näsinmäki Cemetery in Porvoo, had for a long time been reserved as a resting place fit for the king of poetry. In keeping with the design principles of 18th-century English landscape gardens, visitors get a chance to wander to the poet's grave. The path leading to the rocky hill prompts a respectful approach to the burial mound from the right direction, preparing visitors to honour the poet's memory. A garden bench was placed on the terrace near the monument, where visitors could rest and contemplate the great man and his immortal reputation.

Runeberg's memorial is simple and unembellished. A puritan, ascetic classicism that carefully avoided any emphasis

on religious imagery was conducive of a sense of high dignity befitting a national figure. Eschewing all ornamentation, the cubical grave marker of statesman J. V. Snellman (d. 1881) in the Hietaniemi Cemetery is absolute in its asceticism. Designed by architect Sebastian Gripenberg and made by master stonemason H. J. Stigell in Helsinki, the cubical stone may be modest, yet the impression it makes is all the heavier.

Toward the end of the 19th century, portraits of the deceased were increasingly replaced by mourners and praying or blessing angels in the funeral monuments of affluent middle class. The angel on Zachris Topelius's memorial *Toward Light* is perhaps the most famous of all funerary sculptures created by sculptor Walter Runeberg. It was unveiled in Hietaniemi in 1905. The figure holding a palm branch is often interpreted as a Topelian guardian angel. In Paris, where Walter Runeberg worked in the last decades of the 19th century, the iconography of funerary sculpture was not very different from that of other personal memorials. The palm branch is a symbol of victory and peace whose use had passed from ancient Greeks and Romans to Christianity. In many statues of great men of the age, however, it is also a symbol of eternal fame, often held by Fama, the bare-bosomed personification of such. Runeberg's model for the angel was different, however: the goddess of victory in the ancient world, Greek Nike and Roman Victoria. Victoria-Nike had easily melded into Christian imagery and had gradually turned into an angel.

The Artist Cult's Places of Memory

The Finnish Art Society was founded in 1846. With much of its membership consisting of influential university people, civil servants and affluent merchants, it contributed significantly to the construction of the cult of artists and great men. Basic art education provided by the Art Society gradually created the preconditions for Finnish sculpture. The first sculpture teacher in the society's school, C. E. Sjöstrand, was a pioneer in the field of funerary monuments. From the 1860s onward, domestic demand was also satisfied by Walter Runeberg, and from the next decade onward by Robert Stigell and Johannes Takanen.

The stone memorial erected on the tomb of the Art Society's chairman, artist Magnus von Wright (d. 1869), was funded with a collection conducted around Finland by the society's members. Designed by architect A. H. Dalström, the monument was produced by master stonemason H. J. Stigell. The small marble relief created by Walter Runeberg for the memorial depicts a palette with brushes and a dove with an olive branch, the symbol of hope for a new life derived from the biblical story of the flood. According to Fredrik Cygnaeus, who spoke at the unveiling ceremony in 1872, the Finnish people had fulfilled its obligation by erecting the funerary monument to von Wright. The memory of the great champion of national unity was an obligation for both the present and the future. The grave marker was a reminder that even in Finland, art had been cherished.

The Finnish Art Society also commemorated its prominent donors. One particularly prestigious monument was commissioned from Walter Runeberg for the grave of Victor Hoving (d. 1876) at the Non-Catholic Cemetery (*Cimitero Acattolico*) in Rome. The monument to the great donor from Viipuri is adorned with a refined marble relief, *Angel of Peace*, in which a young naked genius holds aloft a palm frond, the emblem of the ancient goddess of victory. According to a writer in *Helsingfors Dagblad*, the elegantly beautiful and dignified work demonstrated that 'this is precisely what art at the resting places of the dead should be'.

Another monument erected at the Non-Catholic Cemetery (*Cimitero Acattolico*) in Rome was for sculptor Johannes Takanen (d. 1885). It was funded by artist friends who had organised raffles and commemorative parties. The relief portrait of the deceased by Danish sculptor Jörgen Larsen disappeared during the First World War and was replaced in 1927 with a medallion by Emil Wikström. Takanen's monument became a pilgrimage destination for many Finns travelling to Rome.

The makers of artist memorials were selected following a set of established principles. A teacher was commemorated by his or her pupil, a pioneer by a follower. Dozens of other artist memorials have been made following this principle: the portrait for the memorial to Robert Stigell erected at Hietaniemi Cemetery in 1908 was sculpted by Viktor Jansson. Similarly, the relief portrait for the monument of Carl Eneas Sjöstrand, unveiled in Hietaniemi in 1911, was sculpted by Sjöstrand's pupil and follower Viktor Malmberg. The memorial of Emil Wikström (d. 1948) in Hietaniemi is adorned by a relief portrait by Eemil Halonen. A kind of principle equality

often existed between the sculptor and the dead person: the maker of the memorial was of equal stature as the subject of commemoration.

Cities of the Dead

In the 1880s, Emil Nervander (1840–1914), commonly considered the father of Finnish art history, wrote two visually modest booklets on cemeteries in Helsinki and Turku, entitled *I de dödas stad* and *På Skansen*. They are valuable accounts of 19th-century cemetery culture and the attitudes of a century in which remembrance occupied an important place. A writer, cultural scholar and art historian, Nervander was politically a Fennoman who wrote to dozens of newspapers in his native language, Swedish.

With their emphasis on moral and aesthetic values, Nervander's writings can be described as the sentiments of a cultured patriot. Never one to beat around the bush, he would castigate parishes for neglecting cemeteries or criticise trenchantly the pomposity of old memorials. Grandiloquence was a common rhetoric element at the turn of century: 'At a gesture by God Almighty, the gate to eternity was opened and Gabriel Ahlman stepped into life eternal on 5 October 1799, having discharged his duty for 62 years.' The eulogy on the reverse side of the memorial erected in the Messukylä Cemetery continues with equal grandiosity: 'The dear shadow of a lost friend. Your fate is too envious to mourn. You can only be missed.'

Nervander's guide to cemeteries in Helsinki, *I de dödas stad, en vägledning för vandraren på Helsingfors' lutherska begrafningsplatser*, was published in 1883. The Old Cemetery, which with its extension is today known as the Hietaniemi Cemetery, was consecrated in autumn 1829. The extension, necessitated by the rapid growth of the capital, was taken into use in autumn 1864, although in the early days mostly poor were buried there. It took some time for the bias of the upper classes to be dispelled.

As late as the turn of the 1870s, large parts of the old section of the Hietaniemi Cemetery were still an empty sand field with just a few birch or rowan trees growing here and there, but just ten years later there were well-kept graves in the cemetery, expensive memorials and 'orangery plants' kept in greenhouses during the wintertime. Lilacs flowered there in the summer, and visitors were sheltered by arborvitaes, maples, lime trees and elms.

Nervander lavished attention on the few artworks in the cemetery, and it is him we thank for knowing who the designers of many memorials were. Although Nervander did not forget the poor, his main focus was nevertheless on the last resting places of the cultural and social elite, as well as the customs of commemoration. These included impressive funeral processions, funeral hymns, poems and eulogies delivered or performed by figures whose stature matched that of the deceased.

Memento Mori

The burgeoning of the urban middle class led to new ways of cherishing the memory of the departed. Ceremonies at family graves reaffirmed blood ties and underlined the family as

the fundamental unit of society. Funerary monuments were seen as extensions of the family's wealth, and Swedish-speaking gentry in particular emphasised its status with impressive grave statuary. The monument was often adorned by a portrait of the head of the family. The graveyard became a place not only of memory but also of visibility and display: distinguishing oneself was a vital part of the 19th-century culture of death.

For the bourgeoisie engaged in asserting its position, graveyard culture offered a means for social distinction when demonstrations of love and respect toward the departed called for wealth. Cemeteries became places for the display of political, economic and cultural power, rather than of hope for or some conception of afterlife, quite regardless of angels on the monuments. From the Christian viewpoint, of course, it is quite unnecessary to eulogise earthly life. Cemetery culture was an integral part of gentrification and secularisation of society and culture.

According to Michel Vovelle, a historian of culture and mentalities, the monopoly of death held by the Catholic Church ended with the French Revolution. There were many reasons for this development, including declining mortality rates, advances in medicine, the commercialisation of death that led to the development of burial services in the 19th century, and the shift in the focus of death-related philosophical discourse that placed it beyond the control of the church.

Philippe Ariès, a scholar of Western death-related conceptions and collective customs, has pointed out how the locus of

ideas about death moved from the death bed to the cemetery in the 18th century. According to Ariès, the transformation of the cult of the dead and of the commemoration of past generations into popular religion in the 19th century was linked especially to positivism. Vovelle too has stressed the impact of positivism on the development of the culture of commemoration. For the leaders of the political movement of positivism, firm bonds between generations and among family members, honouring of the past and cultivation of the memory of the dead with special days and occasions of commemoration – all these represented factors that strengthened society.

Emil Nervander's views were quite close to those of French positivists. For him the graveyard was a holy place, the sanctity of which was based on the fact that graveyards were vital to the continuity of the community: 'Every nation that loves its history and believes in its future will also hold dear and holy the graves of their forefathers.' In his book *I de dödas stad*, Nervander wrote that the community consists of an unbroken chain of the living and the dead: 'Whatever they are now, we will in time become as them. Whatever we are, they in time were also. An eternal chain connects we who are living to those who are dead. And like gigantic, lavishly ornamented links in that chain, the memory of the noble souls who have passed away shines from the past to the present.'

Death Aestheticised

The First World War changed not only ideas about death but also the customs of remembrance. The ideas of the German

reform movement, its emphasis on the natural greenery of cemeteries and the egalitarian simplicity of memorials were adopted in Finland via Sweden and Denmark. By the 20th century, however, cemeteries that had once been banished from cities by the Enlightenment had been reintegrated by the spread of urban settlement, and they now became green areas defended by modernists.

In its search for vitality, modernism relegated the 19th-century culture of remembrance to history and rejected 20th century grave art as decadent. Angels were now seen as embodiments of a sumptuous past that nevertheless was morally frail. One example of the kind of sentimentality frowned upon by modernists is the memorial to Aurora Karamzin, the largest marble sculpture in the Hietaniemi Cemetery, carved by Ville Vallgren in 1905. However, with its fashionable hairdo and sensuously clinging costume, the elongated urban angel is startlingly modern and secular.

Funerary sculpture in the post-Civil War era was characterised by new classicistic trends. The values of modern, reductive classicism that aspired to a clear form of language and restrained emotional expression were strength, clarity, harmony and permanence. These aspirations came across clearly in public art, particularly in war memorials and their naked male heroes.

The demands of the new aesthetic led to a long-lasting popularity of granite reliefs in funerary memorials. They also favoured inscriptions as decorative elements that lend structure to the overall composition. The new ideals were

embodied as their most refined in memorials designed by Gunnar Finne. The influences of his modern classicism can be traced back to Mesopotamian and Egyptian reliefs. The 1920s marked the introduction of new types of memorials in Finnish cemeteries in which the visual art element blended into the architecturally articulated whole.

Sculpture in the round did not disappear, of course, but its imagery was transformed. Apart from changes in the cultural atmosphere, this development was also influenced by new trends in spiritual aspirations, of which theosophy in particular offered an alternative to Lutheranism for the fashionable cultured class. One of the factors that contributed to the popularity of theosophy was ethical individualism, which had broad influence in the realms of art and culture, as well as in academia in the early half of the 20th century. The Religious Freedom Act entered into force in Finland in 1923.

It is common for new religious groups to develop their spiritual identity by reforming ideas of death. The Theosophists' belief in reincarnation nurtured a new kind of imagery in funerary art that was on one hand based on Catholic purgatorial motifs and on the other hand a neoclassical motif of an angel escorting the soul to heaven. In theosophical funerary art, death is aestheticised and depicted as liberation, while melancholia is sublimated into an aspiration for higher ideals.

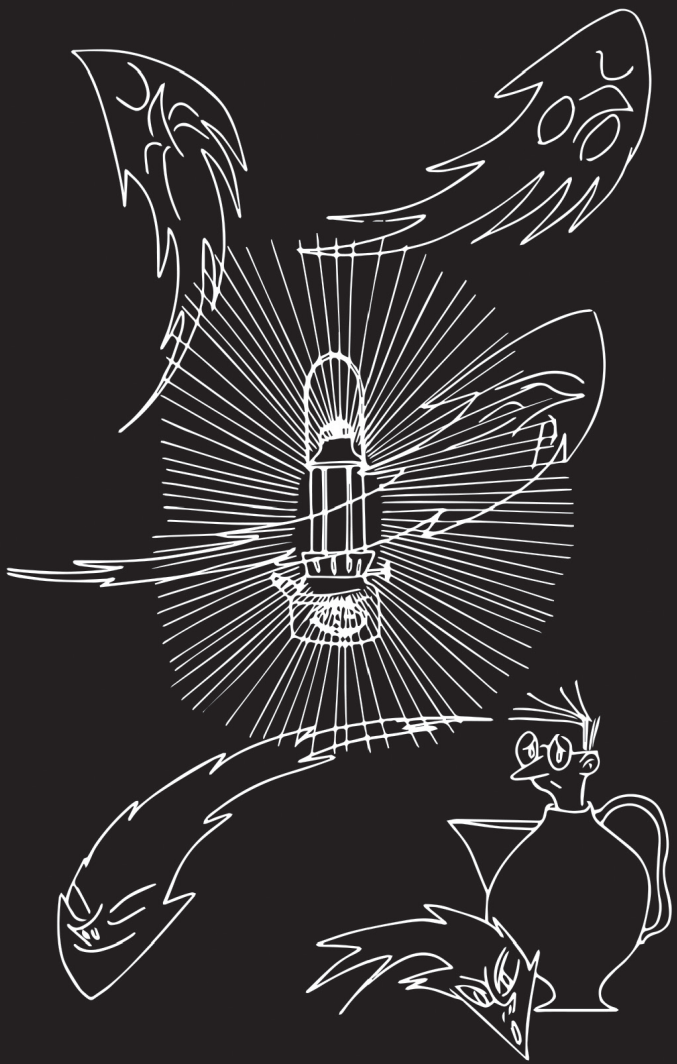
Theosophy as a fashionable worldview propelled Eemil Halonen into popularity as a maker of memorials. The higher spiritual self that Halonen depicted through his sculptures introduced a new kind of nudity to cemeteries. Nudity in public

art had been a subject of much controversy in Finland in the early years of the 20th century. Idealised masculine nudity was perceived as elevating, whereas female nudity, regarded as carnal, elicited conflicting emotions. In Halonen's works, the youth and maidens confront death – or the hereafter – sometimes naked, sometimes wearing only light drapery. Gestures of supplication, salutation and vocation were standard elements of Halonen's vocabulary. Familiarity with the rules of classical rhetorical gestures was a self-evident part of academic education of sculptors of Halonen's generation and of the cultural education of their clients.

New visual themes spread rapidly and enriched the art of funerary sculpture by inspiring images of a more general spiritual aspiration that pushed the boundaries of convention. However, conventions also bent in the other direction: from the 1930s onwards, funerary sculptures became increasingly like garden sculpture, and the sight of a plump naked child became increasingly common, which had very little to do with either angels or wandering souls.

This essay is based on the writer's study of 19th- and 20th-century funerary sculpture and the culture of memories, published in 2009. Lindgren, Liisa 2009. Memoria. Hautakuvanveisto ja muistojen kulttuuri ('Memoria. Funerary Sculpture and the Culture of Death'). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki.

[*Translated from the Finnish by Tomi Snellman*]



Stowaway

PÄIVIKKI KALLIO

The most worn volumes on the bookshelf in my studio are *Rembrandt: All the Etchings Reproduced in True Size* and *The Doré Illustrations for Dante's Divine Comedy*. They serve as reminders of my early years as a printmaker.

Rembrandt and Doré are both masters of depicting light, working in the medium of etched or engraved black lines.

Directed Light

Rembrandt and Grant Application

In the early stages of my art studies, I was familiar with black-and-white prints, but I hadn't thought about the meanings embedded within the medium and its techniques. As a medium of artistic expression, the use of black and white leads the artist directly towards light, the very thing that underlies much of the compositions in Rembrandt's works, paintings included.

When I took down the book on Rembrandt's etchings for this essay, it opened up by itself to where I had placed a piece of paper as a bookmark.[1]

Judging by the wear on the book and the stains of ferric chloride, I must have opened it often and also when working. While creating a drama of light, Rembrandt's etchings also

1 See Figure 12, Päivikki Kallio, sketch 1981, page 176; and Figure 13, Päivikki Kallio, *Hileet*, 1981, page 177.

pose a question about the source of the light: Where is it coming from? Light always has a specific source in his works; it is either included in the picture, such as a candle or a lantern, or it clearly comes from outside the frame and/or from above; it always has a direction. Lighting in Rembrandt's art is an active agent.

Paradoxically, light in general and supernatural light in particular are depicted with black lines; however, the black lines are in fact more like a code that tells us to interpret the white as directed light; the lines govern the way we see. The mesh of etched lines is a kind of formula that floats on the surface of light, articulating it and showing us its direction.

When I was making my piece *Hileet* (1981) I wasn't thinking about religious matters. Rembrandt's *Crucifixion of Christ* was for me simply a superb example of the technique of etching and how lines can be used to depict light. I saw formal parallels with the sumptuous disco lights of the early 1980s, where the light was not natural but created by spotlights, and my tentative forays into post-modernist thinking led to those too-well-hidden pastiches, which to my disappointment went unnoticed.

Through Rembrandt, however, my memory dug up Gustav Doré.

Easter and Doré's Bible Illustrations

Art education in the 1970s was based very much on the tradition of modernism, the ordering of the surface of the image; light was tonal differences and colour temperatures. Through

intaglio and the black line – that is, Rembrandt – I remembered Gustav Doré, a great childhood influence. Rembrandt, as it were, took me back to the original source.

The Bible illustrated by Gustav Doré is cited by many artists as an early influence in their career. It was a powerful influence for me too as a child and in my teens: the pictures seemed somehow more real than the dim reproductions in art books. Doré's images in print are of course nearly identical to the original engravings. In my mind, the fascinating and dramatic pictures became associated particularly with Good Friday, when I whiled away my time with them. Good Friday in my childhood was still a day when you did not go out of the house and did not meet people outside the family. Nor did we have television at that time, so Doré's pictures are bound for me with a vague, undefined longing to be somewhere else.

The analytic lines in Doré's engravings are an attempt to capture something intangible by showing us recognisable figures in directed light. Light has a clear direction in early religious images, and printing techniques were particularly suited to depict it. Because the fundamental element in all graphic prints is based on the alternation of two elements – ink is lifted onto the paper from some parts of the plate and not from others – it is essentially black-and-white, whether the ink itself is black or some other colour.

Spiritual experiences seem to manifest on a continuum between black and white. A line drawn in black places the viewer on a knife's edge: on one side is light, which in some

revivalist movements is equated with our longing for heaven, while on the other, a black universe of metaphysical horror lies awaiting.

Doré's pictures communicate a sense of melancholia, and for me the return to the primal source through printed art opened a door to deliberate melancholic expression. Later on I tended to especially associate melancholia with the printed image; there is for me a kind of fissure between the printing plate and the printed image, a hiatus that is present in all prints. Melancholia arises from that difference and distance.

Directed light – the line – seems typical to Christian imagery. When the direction of the line disappears, we begin to approach the idea of sanctity as it appears in Oriental philosophy, an all-pervading light. Because the line is also a symbol of writing, its connection with religions that are based on a book – the word – is obvious.

Looking at Rudolf Koivu's illustrations for Topelius's fairytale *The Birch and the Star*, I cannot help thinking about that stowaway, light. An apposite caption would be the words of the old hymn:

Oh, when will the morning star ascend,
light up this beggar poor?
Oh, when will the nightly journey end?
It is still dark, obscure.
Towards the skies I all the time
lift up my longing eyes.

Though I don't see the light sublime,
I know it never dies.[2]

My mother used to sing such songs from the Zion hymnal on drawn-out Sunday afternoons, accompanying herself on the piano. In my teenage years I escaped her singing by joining a cinema club that screened black-and-white classics. In her book *Moving Pictures* (Harvard University Press, 1991), Anne Hollander suggests that the way light was depicted in North European renaissance paintings, and especially their black-and-white reproductions, presaged and also influenced cinematic art. As far back as the 15th century, Flemish artists used to paint in chiaroscuro, giving light a distinct source and direction. Reproductions of those paintings used, already by virtue of the demands of the printing process, directed light, thereby reducing paintings into light events. Sergei Eisenstein is known to have admired the black-and-white works of engraver Jacques Callot. In spite of the importance of montage, Eisenstein's films *October* and *Potemkin* rely, as does black-and-white cinema in general, on directed light, which obviously bypasses the rational defences of the human mind. I wonder whether my mother's hymn singing and my attraction to cinema stem from the same place in the mind...

2 See Figure 14, Gustave Doré, *The Poets Emerge from Hell*, page 177; Figure 15, Sakari Topelius, *The Birch and the Star*. 1949 Edition, illustrations by Rudolf Koivu, page 177; and Figure 16, Original edition, Eisenstein, October 1927, page 177.

From Images of Light to a Beam of Light

Working in the networks of lines, I found myself at a dead-end in the late 1980s. I felt that image as such was oppressive, and I became increasingly preoccupied by the internal process of printmaking, the dialogue between plate and print. In particular I wondered which one is the real work of art, or whether perhaps the two are parts of a single whole. I found the answer by chance when lighting designer Sirje Ruohtula shined a beam of light on polished nickel-plated surface of an intaglio plate. An elongated reflection of the plate appeared on the wall – the etched areas showed up as dark while the light was reflected from the shiny areas. That proved to me that the print alone cannot be the work of art. I also thought I might be able to avoid the feeling of melancholia generated by the intrinsic gap in printing by showing both halves simultaneously. However, the directed beam of light smuggled the tradition of supernatural light found in the work of Rembrandt, Doré and other artists into my own work. The difference was that the light was now real.

My installation *Valse triste, Käsi, joka kehtoa keinuttaa* (1996) is a combination of horror and resurrection – in the spirit of Stephen King. Etched on human-sized copper plates, figures rise up in immaterial reflections when beams of light strike the surface of the plates. The figures in the reflection create an eerie dance on the "screen" reminiscent of the Mexican cult of death and medieval paintings of the dance macabre. I was using beams of light to recreate Doré's visions, but in this piece I did it consciously.

On the other hand, the print alone is proof of an encounter; there exists, somewhere, another being that has left its imprint here. This reminds me of the religious philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. In his view, the Self cannot be born until it meets the Other. The place, the interface of the encounter, is the human face.

"*The otherness expressed by the face cannot become manifest as it is, transparent to consciousness; Levinas talks instead about the trace of the Other. The face points towards the Other's otherness indirectly, like a trace. The otherness of the Other is always in the past. In this sense, the face reveals or says nothing to consciousness, instead rendering powerless the consciousness directed toward it." Top* (Marika Tuohimaa, 'Emmanuel Levinas ja vastuu toisesta', 3/2001, *niin&näin*)

In the spirit of Levinas, I am inclined to compare the printing plate, the matrix, to an interface, a surface on which we see in reflection the trace of the Other, even if it is only a traditional print or a reflection created by a spotlight. Levinas's idea also seems to point out an incommensurability and difference between the Self and the Other. If I interpret that difference as being akin to the intrinsic hiatus in prints,[3] the melancholia arising therefrom also smuggles in the tradition of religious art – with a nod to Julia Kristeva, who in her essay

3 This intrinsic hiatus is a concept that I use in my essay 'Välissä ja vyöhykkeellä'. It appears in the volume I have edited, *Siirtämisen ja välittymisen taide*. Publications of the Academy of Fine Arts at University of the Arts Helsinki, autumn 2017.

on Hans Holbein the Younger's *Dead Christ*[4] writes about the severance of the bond between the Father and the Son at the moment of crucifixion.

"Such a caesura, which some have called a 'hiatus,' provides an image, at the same time as a narrative, for many separations that build up the psychic life of individuals." (1987, 132)

Because in this essay I only write about light as a medium of spirituality, I think that directed light separates life from death. Redemption appears in the form of light falling down from above, while earthly death is represented by the black lines that construct the image.

Scattering Light

When I was a student in Tallinn, Estonia, from 1977 to 1979, my main preoccupation was to learn to depict directed light with lines, but I also learned to know the music of Arvo Pärt. It was music that expressed spirituality and boundlessness without any theology or textbook. In my mind, I saw his "Tabula Rasa" from 1977 as whiteness, more like a spatial experience than a literal slate on which we might be able to draw or write.

A similar experience for me is offered by Morton Feldman's composition *Rothko Chapel*, completed in 1971. The piece was inspired by an ecumenical chapel named after the painter Mark Rothko. The chapel is famous for Rothko's paintings that

4 Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, translated by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

are made in different shades of black. Created specifically for the chapel, they dominate its interior. To me Rothko's paintings are frameless; they go on forever. They contain no drama or directed light, although Rothko himself stressed the spiritual dimension of his work.

Feldman shared John Cage's idea of "chance music," as well as his Zen Buddhist views. Although music critics do not like to connect Pärt's music with American minimalism, I personally see these two compositions as symmetrical, even though their starting points are different; black and white both express a limitless spirituality.

Rothko's paintings contain no directed light, a motif that prior to modernism was expressed figuratively in art. Modernism transformed light into the abstract scattered light of Oriental philosophies, in which black and white can both express spirituality equally and separately. Emptiness is a liminality beyond which we cannot go. (Kimmo Pasanen, *Tyhjyys*, p. 11) The void symbolises infinity and transcendence, whereas in Christian imagery the infinite light renders the earthly visible; black and white both presuppose each other.

Kimmo Pasanen (*Tyhjyys*, 2008. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Teos, p. 211) writes about monochromaticism, about paintings devoid of any shapes as a kind of zero state, exemplified by the works of Yves Klein. Klein's blue and red monochromatic paintings, his empty gallery without paintings and the manipulated photograph *Leap into the Void* are all concrete manifestations of emptiness and also of infinity. Klein's idea of trace as monochromatic is perhaps best manifested in his *Anthropometrics*,

works made by pressing a human body covered in blue paint onto a white paper.

Blackness/whiteness is a fundamental element in prints. For an impression to be created, the matrix must contain printing areas and areas without ink. The printed image is based on the use of a code, traditionally a mesh of lines or a screen, today the digital 0 and 1 – that is, something which is and is not. There is always an intrinsic monochromaticism in all printed images. I wonder: are Doré's printed black-and-white lines floating on white paper so very far removed from the aesthetics of emptiness?

For me, depicting emptiness in art is inevitably like the manifestation of light. Emptiness and light both become visible through otherness, through negation, through something that they are not in themselves. Just as in Levinas's philosophy, the Self exists in the Other, through the Other. As an idea, Malevich's black square is immaterial and empty, yet as a painting it is very material. Emptiness for me is an infinite, transcendental, inexplicable, spiritual dimension, a light – a stowaway – that is glimpsed through all printed images precisely because of their monochromatic aspect, regardless of the ideology or theology according to which the lines are arranged.

Epilogue

I have only become aware of the presence of a stowaway in my works gradually over the years. The final realisation came when I was making a commissioned piece. In 2008 I was designing a brochure for the Pop & Jazz Conservatory in Helsinki.

For the background, I devised coloured cones of light, of the kind that are commonly used in performances of popular music. The feedback was not positive, however; the client saw in them New Age religious spirituality. Approaching the assignment primarily from a design perspective, I myself thought I was just creating a framework with no disturbing details. But I had done something similar before. I found between the pages of Doré's book on Dante a photocopy I had made of a blown-up detail in which the mesh of black lines loses its link to the subject being depicted. In the photocopy, light and lines engage in a dialogue inside an infinite space, but might not the spiritual dimension nevertheless be smuggled in as a stowaway? How much of religious imagery has percolated into our everyday lives? The mood at the 2017 Flow Festival echoes the starting points of this essay, Rembrandt and *Hileet*.[5]

[*Translated from the Finnish by Tomi Snellman*]

5 See Figure 17, Päivikki Kallio, Enlarged photo copy, page 178; Figure 18, Päivikki Kallio, Photo from Flow Festival 2017, page 178; and Figure 19, Päivikki Kallio, Photo from Flow Festival 2017, page 178.

On Prayer and Work: Thoughts from a Visit to the Valamo Monastery in Ladoga

ELINA MERENMIES

Everything may seem simpler when we're young. Our bodies are strong and spry, we can learn new things unnoticed, we may stay up late and toil. But as we grow older, age and illness cause our bodies to break down and our spirits to falter. I once remarked, "The devil's cradle is soft and warm", and I was shocked by the truth of what I had just said.

People today have endless possibilities for escapism and for wasting time– places where they can go to relax and banish the world around them. I have noticed in my own unsuccessful struggles with working in art that the most damaging tendency is our nefarious desire for creature comforts. We look for consolation in earthly things, far beyond the level that is necessary to maintain our health and bodily strength.

Laziness and other harmful vices eat away at the heart of our inner selves, biting off a big chunk of our being. Our work begins to suffer oddly under its covert influence, as any form of idling usually comes back to haunt us.

Embarking upon a career as an artist meant a rocky road, one that I would have to walk bravely and without complaint – with open eyes. The only real objective in work like this

is to transform inspiration and thought processes into success. In other words: to do the good thing I set out to do, and not something else that is worse. But what use is it to anyone if one has great ideas and one can't find the gumption to get beyond the distractions and laziness to execute them effectively? Wasted time is the worst. It is a tragedy to give in to your own frailty and, piece by piece, forsake your purpose.

Nightingales and spirituality

Singers say that you can hear if people are spiritually fulfilled by the manner in which they sing. I think it's somewhat the same for painters – and for everything we do, for that matter. Saint Paisios of Mount Athos once spoke with a church singer: "*Father, my singing feels very dense, I think it is because of the way I am pronouncing the words.*" He replied, *"I have seen you both weighed down and light as a feather. When you feel heavy, you sing this way. Everything starts with your inner state. Someone with a weak voice can sing like a nightingale if they are in a good spiritual state. Otherwise, they sing meekly. Someone with a gravelly voice can sound like a grumpy old man if he is not spiritually content.*"[1]

It is perhaps good to mention here that the Orthodox Church does not use musical instruments in its daily services. The human voice is the only music heard. The church choir is

1 Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, *Rukouksesta* (Finnish translation of Γεροντος Παϊσιου Αγιορειτου. Λογοι / Περι προσευχης), translated by Nonna Kristoduli (Keuruu: Lintula Holy Trinity Convent, 2016), 197.

therefore the foundation of the service. There is often even a lack of singers, at least in the countryside, and therefore almost everyone with a singing voice sometimes performs in the choir.

This is the case in the Valamo Monastery in Ladoga, where the choirs have customarily consisted of only men. It also bears saying that the choir's hymns are a vital component of Orthodox worship. If there is no choir, the priest sings every chant himself, from beginning to end.

Tradition has it that the Greek monk Saint Sergius of Valaam travelled to the island of Valamo on Lake Ladoga in Karelia, Russia in the year 992, bringing with him Byzantine tradition, church music, asceticism and the bases of iconic art. The Karelian monk Herman of Valaam followed him shortly after. Some sources say that the Valamo Monastery was founded in the 1100s, and that it first housed mostly Karelian monks. In the 1400s, their Russian brothers joined them. As the First World War began, the monastery was the largest it would ever be, with close to one thousand inhabitants. During the Second World War, Valamo was bombed and the monastery was evacuated. During the Soviet era, there were factories on the island, including in the monastery buildings and churches.

Perhaps the strangest concept to many contemporary Westerners, and Easterners as well, is the idea of continuous prayer. Even a monk or layperson devoting hours to such a useless endeavour, when they could be pursuing something rational, seems absurd. The several-hours-long services of the

Orthodox Church are also the source of much bewilderment and opposition. Granted, there are also forces in the world today that feel that everything that falls under the umbrella of the humanities – as science or art – is a waste of time. All the things that don't produce great and immediate economic benefit are seen as a burden, and the purveyors of such pursuits contribute no redeeming services.

It is hard to speak about prayer as a layperson or even in my capacity as an artist. The Orthodox tradition holds invocation in great esteem. Everything that I have read on the subject confirms that prayer is seen as a ladder of faith leading to God. As you rise up each rung of prayer, you are able to see different sights than people who are closer to the bottom, like me.

Horseflies and the power of prayer

My knowledge is wanting, but in my attempts to orient myself to prayer it has been very useful to volunteer at the women's Monastery of the Holy Trinity at Lintula for women, situated in the municipality of Heinävesi, in Eastern Finland. On my first stay there I was eager to chip in, preferring to tackle dirty and physically demanding jobs like the kind I am used to as an artist. On this day in particular, the nuns assigned me to kitchen duty instead. I tried to peel potatoes and hull strawberries to the best of my ability. But when we sat down for our meal together, I noticed that the berries that I had prepared tasted terrible, and I was ashamed I hadn't been able to pick out the bad ones in the bunch.

The next day I was asked to hull a new batch of strawberries, and with a sigh, I resigned myself to start my work. A nun approached me as I worked under the shadow of a tree and whispered to me quietly, "You could always recite the Jesus Prayer while you work." I obeyed her immediately, and suddenly I knew which bits of the strawberries were bad, after which I removed them easily, and saved the rest for eating. I threw only a few berries out, and at luncheon they tasted wonderfully delicious.

Another good example is from many years later in the same place. I was washing the monastery church's altar rugs by the shore of the Heinävesi waterway, and I couldn't understand why the horseflies kept ferociously biting my calves in the middle of all that sweetness. Finally I gave up and ran away with my legs bleeding. I fetched some insect repellent from my room, sprayed half the bottle on my body and returned reeking of it to the shore, only to notice with horror that an even nastier swarm of bloodthirsty horseflies had gathered. Then I remembered the power of the Jesus prayer, and I began to pray. The flies dispersed. But as soon as I became absorbed in my work and forgot to pray, they would return with a vengeance. I realised that the good horseflies were keeping discipline for me, and I thanked them and God as I went about my work.

The Greek spiritual elder Saint Porphyrios the Kapsokalyvite lived in the monasteries of Mount Athos and spoke beautifully in his book *Wounded by Love* about birds and nature in prayer. He once heard a bird singing in a lonely place and

thought that birds, like angels, praise God with their song. He said, "Prayer is to grow closer to each of God's creatures, and to live in harmony with all other creatures, whether tame or wild."[2]

In the Orthodox Church, I have understood the consequence of shared and private prayer for the first time. I may myself be lukewarm and somewhat lazy in prayer, but when I go to church I may become imbued with a heat from within. I know this is due to the devout prayers of some worshippers around me. My heart melts every time from the light these others emit into the room. We also have a traditional prayer book, with different kinds of prayers for every occasion. The book's ancient prayers, some of which date back to the early church, have opened up a whole new world for me. I've noticed that I get inspired by prayer; I long for it.

Prayer and painting are learning processes

The Church Fathers have said repeatedly that people who humble themselves before the Lord will receive his exaltation. Humility is mentioned time and time again in the Bible as the only path to God. No one can lead another person to be humble, and sometimes a person may even wish to join the church for reasons of pride. I believe that a real affiliation to the church can only take place in a penitent heart.

2 *Rakkauden haavoittama: Vanhus Porfyrios Kausokalivialaisen elämä ja opetukset* (Keuruu: Brotherhood of St. Cosmas of Aetolia, 2010), 467.

Just like painters when they are beginners can't understand the technical secrets of the profession – such as the ability to perceive problems on the painting's surface or in the composition of binding agents – a beginner at prayer cannot understand how things should be done or why some particular prayer should be recited at a certain hour or in a certain situation. The list of things to learn for both painting and prayer is endless. But it doesn't matter, there's no need to be ashamed of this ignorance, because you can always pray (or paint) anyway.

The best and most simple way is to recite the Jesus Prayer, the Our Father, or a hymn you enjoy singing. Archimandrite Aimilianos of the Simonpetra Monastery on Mount Athos has said in his book *The Church at Prayer* that the Jesus Prayer is like the manna from heaven that God let rain down on his people in the desert. Now we just get the manna in different way – remarkably easily, really: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Aemilianos says: "The Jesus Prayer is the fulfillment, here and now, of that which was symbolized and foreshadowed by God's distribution of life-giving bread to the Israelites. They called that bread "manna", which means "What is it?" for as scripture says: "they did not know what it was" (Ex 16.14–15, 31)."[3]

Many saints point out that prayer does not always have to be a set text read from a book. Sometimes it can be just you,

3 Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra, *The Church at Prayer: The Mystical Liturgy of the Heart*, 1st edition. Edited by the Holy Convent of the Annunciation (Indiktos, 2005), 53.

telling God about your worries in your own words. I have noticed that both ways bring joy. Saints Paisios and Porphyrios always said that the more things we carry before God the better. We are at one with God when we pray. Our soul is safe, our mind is calm and we are at peace - come what may.

Eastern hospitality and a life-long dream

I had long dreamed of visiting the Valamo Monastery in Ladoga, Russia. On my journey, I was often reminded of my younger years in historic Bohemia and Moravia in the current Czech Republic. From 1991 to 1992, I studied at the Prague Art Academy's department of monumental painting until I was suddenly ousted. Two weeks later, my professor was fired and I was welcomed back into the programme.

During this era, I played keyboards in an experimental band with some of my French friends. I unwittingly learned many things about the Czech underground scene through this experience. For instance, I learned to stay calm in a speeding car with a thrill-seeker at the wheel, racing through the dark countryside with no headlights on. I reluctantly learned that you could get used to anything if you had to.

All that was indeed their form of hospitality. In Eastern Europe, they have a shared characteristic, a common denominator that I first encountered in the movies of Andrei Tarkovsky and books by Feodor Dostoyevsky and Nikolai Gogol. I am a beginner in my analysis of where this exasperating madness comes from. Even Finland has a bit of it, as some people here also have a "whiff of the East" about

them. Woe upon the person who must deal with it; one does not know whether to laugh or to cry. But I must add that Dostoyevsky was a great paragon for me in my youth. When I was reading his texts I felt like my soul had found what it was looking for.

Before I embarked on my trip to Russian Karelia, I harboured the quaint desire to meet one of what I imagined to be many spiritual elders. Perhaps I would speak with him for a bit in French or English. The reality of course was that the monks were quite few in number, and their language skills very limited.

I didn't believe that my visit of just two days would even result in any such encounter, but when to everyone's surprise one was actually arranged, a car ride to the gates of the farthest Skete of All Saints was instantly arranged for me. As the car flew at a ridiculous velocity, I was reminded of the Easterners' oddball hospitality to strangers, and it made me happy in a strange way to recognise it.

Familiar sights from a place I had never seen

As we drove to our destination, the scenery began to change. In place of the common trees of the Northern area, giant oaks and unusual vistas began to appear, landscapes that I had miraculously seen before – I had painted them in my younger years. Suddenly all my senses seemed to go into overdrive. I knew I could not have visited Ladoga's Valamo Monastery even as a child, so how could this be possible? No one knows.

Reaching the gates of the All Saints' Skete, I found that I was not allowed past them, as rather unusually, according to local custom, women are prohibited from the monastery (except during the monastery's greatest day of celebration, All Saints Day). In any case, in a cottage, I met an elder, who was later revealed to be a very important personage: the only consulting elder in the entire Valamo Monastery, the originally French Hieromonk and Igumen Seraphim. Meeting him was a major unexpected delight.

Quite deep and astonishing things can take place when you are painting, the significance of which can become clear to you 25 years later. In this case, I had pictured a place that was actually an industrial site in the 1990s, but my soul had started to long for it already then, and from thereon. A place where nowadays, women are only allowed to enter once a year, became a central theme of my art. The intermingling of holiness, nature, and Soviet-era industrial area had been my subject of choice all the way back when I began my work as a painter.

All my life's destiny is a strange frolic around Eastern people, the Orthodox Church, continuous prayer and all other uncanny and wonderful things that I have experienced. This is very personal, it is my whole life! I am lucky I made it there, as these things are hardly preordained. On the trip to the Valamo Monastery in Ladoga, I understood that I was in the right place at the right time with my painting. No one knows why things happen the way they do while we create art, I least of all. But this is exactly what makes the process more

interesting sometimes; the fact that it is so deeply embedded in a person's essence.

[*Translated from the Finnish by Elina Merenmies, Anna Rawlings, and Tomi Snellman*]

“Things the Mind Already Knows” and the Sound Observer

J. O. MALLANDER

“A picture does not say more than a thousand words.
It tells about other things.” *Juhana Blomstedt*

I thank the editors for this very welcome initiative to produce a book about spiritual issues in the art scene today. Your efforts to produce a good performance are very praiseworthy. We can be happy that people are still reading books!

Thinking about what to write, I revisited my art library and found three publications that are important for the issues at hand:

Inner and the Outer Space (1966), the catalogue to Pontus Hultén’s pioneering exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm.

The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985, Maurice Tuchman’s and Sixten Ringbom’s heavy and richly-documented historical book covering almost 100 years of modern art movements.

The 2004 volume *Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art* by editors Mary Jane Jacob and Jacquelynn Baas, which traces and updates the current situation.

All three contain a great many essential views presented in the context of major museum exhibitions. They reveal

the scope of visions, as well as shifts in our evolutionary stream.

The present writer is not an expert, nor an art historian, just a student of Art and Life. An inspired amateur who likes the process – particularly when the Art resonates with something in my soul.

The Big Book (*The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985)* is packed with data and views mainly on European mysticism: theosophy, Rosicrucian themes, symbolism, Steiner, Bauhaus, de Stijl, and so on, with Kandinsky figuring as a key artist.

I cannot do justice to all this here. In choosing views to discuss, I was pleased to note how much space was given in the book to Jakob Böhme – the enlightened shoemaker whose influence is discernible in the work of many German philosophers and romantic artists: from John Milton, Isaac Newton, William Blake and Swedenborg to modern poets in Sweden and Finland: Gunnar Ekelöf, Karl Vennberg and Rabbe Enckell. I read Böhme from time to time, and have all his books.

In the context of The Big Book Böhme is discussed in relation to Jean Arp, Kandinsky and Johannes Itten. It was also a surprise to discover the joyful art of František Kupka presented in the light of these themes, and to learn that Kupka knew Buddhism and other Eastern religions.

My focus in this essay is on how interaction between the arts and cultures of the East and the West manifests itself in the art of our time, with a particular emphasis on how the post-

war generation expresses the issues involved in this interaction. This was the first generation that could travel almost anywhere in the world and encounter Asian cultures first-hand. Such journeys are very important in one's formative years.

The new stream began in the 1950s with the existentialists and beatniks, and grew in the 1970s with the yoga and Zen movements, TM meditation, and other such movements. When the mainstream later moved into Tibetan Buddhism, it opened up the scene for all kinds of New Age movements to emerge on the spiritual market. Many contemporary artists, writers and poets, painters and potters, dancers and performers, found inspiration and effective tools for personal growth in these spiritual traditions, now rooted in the West.

The new culture was promoted and cultivated in magazines like Michio Kushi's macrobiotic *East West Journal*; the first *Yoga Journal*; the magazine *Tricycle*, run by a Buddhist team in New York, followed by Shambhala, a forum for Tibetan Buddhist movements. In England there was the journal of the Buddhist Society and Sangharakshita's Western Buddhist movement FWBO/Triratna, which published *The Golden Drum* and *Urthona* dedicating a lot of space to art and literature. After the 1960s there was a steadily growing stream of books on Buddhism, mapping out the vision, the scope and the details and sharpening the views with great precision.

Some of the trends found their way into films. Almost all are now on the Internet. There are and were some well-known Buddhists in the showbiz world, such as Richard Gere, Leonard

Cohen, and Tina Turner, as well as others who are partly associated with Buddhism, such as Annie Lennox, Lou Reed, and the late David Bowie. They, like so many others, came to Buddhism when everything else proved to be illusory, full of misery, and futile.

Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art bears ample witness to this change of focus, values and views, and its implications for our contemporary art scene. It contains a variety of texts by qualified Buddhists such as Jacquelynn Baas, Mark Epstein, Stephen Bachelor, art critics Kay Larson and Arthur D. Canto and practicing visual artists such as Laurie Anderson.

For me, the key essay in the book is Tosi Lee's dense and well-documented study on Buddhist influence in the works of Marcel Duchamp. Based on Man Ray's photo of Rrose Sélavy, Mona Lisa/L.H.O.O.Q. and the Belle Haleine Bottle label, the writer traces the hidden picture to images of the Buddhist bodhisattva Avalokiteswara, also known as Kwannon and Kuan Yin, and as Chenrezig in the Tibetan pantheon. He (or SheHe, containing both) is the Lord of Compassion, looking down on suffering humanity. Lee traces the name Avalokitesvara from the Sanskrit to something like "He who hears the cries of the world" or simply "Sound Observer" and connects this to Duchamp's work.

Duchamp may have encountered it in 1912 in a museum exhibition in Munich, so this view is quite possible, and very interesting. Good news – fake or not!

The art world provides abundant possibilities for spiritual evolution along these lines. Artists are by definition open to new experiences, easily inspired, relatively free to choose their conduct, and eager to experiment with their lives and share their insights.

But I am not naive. Very little in our current world supports Buddhist views. Subtle views and spiritual values do not get much space or attention in the contemporary media. But this is a reason as good as any to do just that: cultivate subtle views, spiritual values in the arts, and contemplative lifestyles.

There are limits here. Teachers from the East often tell you early on that the goal is not in the books, and say nothing more about the issue. Everything essential takes place in the mind; and mindfulness – or meditation – is the highway to insight in spiritual evolution. One has to practice the path in order to experience what it is about. Even a fully enlightened Buddha can only indicate truth and show the way. The teacher can only give you methods for performing the transformative process; what you seek is already within you, but covered in mud. These layers of garbage have to be removed, so that the enlightened mind can emerge and liberate one's life.

This view makes everything taking place in one's life very true, and one's work has to be very authentic. Buddhist art can always be recognized by this note of authenticity.

The best I can do here is to describe a map of where I have moved and discovered art and artists who changed my life and conduct. Their examples are the transformative influences in my evolution.

During my school years I saw much art, mostly in books and magazines. Intuitively I responded to the Impressionists – Renoir to begin with, later Seurat and Monet. I also liked Paul Klee and Franz Marc very much. Modigliani was popular among schoolgirls, and with me too. But Modigliani's friend Soutine was the first artist to wake me up with a shock. In his paintings, Expressionism attained many peaks.

I saw Van Gogh's paintings quite often, illustrating the magazines, and I liked them, but rather vaguely. Some images, like the pathetic *Shoes*, *The Night Cafe*, and the whirling vision of *The Starry Night*, stayed longer in my mind. Many years later I had a dream that revealed to me something of the truth in Van Gogh's whirling sky. Later, I found it was reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision of wheels turning in the heavens. A moving, poignant version of Ezekiel's vision appears in a spiritual song sung by the American pop and gospel group The Charioteers who swing to "the Big Wheel run by Faith, and the Little wheel run by the Grace of God". It goes on: "There is a Star in East and a Star in the West – I wish that Star was in my breast – oooh; Ezekiel saw the wheel rolling." You can find it on YouTube.

One of the first artists to catch my searching mind in the late 1950s was Alberto Giacometti. This was a heavy artist, handling the anguish of post-war Europe and existential Paris. It took me a long time to mature enough to understand everything his vision embodies. But then it was "there" – and

now it is here. And one cannot escape it. This is the sign of a major artist.

Today Giacometti's work stands out as heroic witness to our basic human struggle. In essence, his standing women and walking men have been here since the beginning of our cultural evolution. The Chariot is still moving, in our depths.

The painter's painter of the École de Paris in the 1950s was Nicolas de Stael, who was of Russian aristocratic origin. His intense artistry was in a class of its own, reaching its full maturity in the large strong paintings of his last nine years: *The Concert*, *Les Indres galantes*, *Footballers* and *Boats* are masterpieces, as is *The Blue Studio*.

Another significant artist on the post-war scene, important for the current East–West evolution was, and is, Antoni Tàpies. This extremely versatile and dramatic artist's work touches upon most of the issues in contemporary art – always with a masterly command of the material used and of the process itself. Tàpies is a pioneer in expressing influences from Eastern philosophies and arts, which he studied and incorporated at a very high level. His spiritual achievements are there for all to see. Tàpies is also very articulate in writing about his views. I therefore cherish Barbara Catoir's *Conversations with Antoni Tàpies* in my bookshelf, to be consulted whenever I need inspiration and nourishment. Tàpies' oeuvre has very much nutritional value even today.

Hans Hartung was popular among us slightly snobbish youngsters. To talk about Hartung's elegant paintings, and T.

S. Eliot's poems, was a sign of being "in," cool and hip; above all an expression of teenage anxiety. Even more exciting was the experience of Henri Michaux's drawings executed under the influence of mescaline. They were exhibited at Artek, the top gallery in Helsinki in the 1960s.

The most overwhelming experience in my formative years was the vision of Yves Klein, which I encountered in the exhibition *Inner and Outer Space*. There the prophets were Malevich and Klein, whose extensive sections in the exhibition were accompanied by a few works by 35 artists who explored spatial themes. The "fourth dimension" was at the time *the* hot topic in artistic discourse.

This meeting of many minds opened up a new channel for me – a channel that never closed. I began to follow up the vision, studying Klein as well as other artists such as Josef Albers, Max Bill, Sam Francis, Piero Manzoni, Barnett Newman, Robert Morris, and last but not least, Ad Reinhardt.

I had been intrigued by Malevich's black square – the idea of it – and had seen some Suprematist works, but here the artist became more real. The catalogue included many texts by Malevich in translation (by Troels Andersen); a cherished treasure in my library. Since then we have seen many exhibitions of Malevich's work, and some of his more spiritual contemporaries with a mystical bent have become known to me: Kliun, Matjushin, Čiurlionis and others.

This led me to discover the more mystical (and messianic) streams of Russian culture through Bulgakov, Berdyaev, Solovyov, and Scriabin. Only later, in the 1990s, did I find my

way to Nicholas Roerich's vast vision, beautifully manifested in his paintings on display in the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York. His paintings are awesome in their vision of space and color. It was a significant sign of the times when Mikhail Gorbachev announced:

"Roerich is one of the cultural pillars of Russia."

But it was Yves Klein's art and manifestoes that exerted the deepest and most enduring influence on my views. I wrote an enthusiastic article on his vision for the first issue of our small avant-garde magazine *Iiris* in 1968. It was entitled "The Blue Angel of the New Age," meant to signal a new era in our art world. But the Seventies were turning into something else.

Yves Klein's vision never lost its appeal to me. I still find a wealth of genuine spiritual value, on a high level, in his life and art. Over the years I have purchased almost all major books and catalogues on Klein. They are a great source of inspiration, especially in times when spiritual views and values are confused, obscured, overrun by greedy materialism and perverse views.

Yves Klein was perhaps the first Western artist who in his life and vision was able to unite on a grand scale the best of both East and West, a major achievement. Thus I was very happy when in 1997 the Sara Hildén Art Museum arranged a major exhibition exploring Klein's vision.

At that time I was also quite excited about Klein's friend Jean Tinguely and his dramatic display of "crazy wisdom" through anarchistic machines. They had a hugely liberating effect on us unsuspecting viewers! Tinguely's vision became

rather heavy later on, difficult to digest. But its function is to act as "a magic stronger than death," as Pontus Hultén put it in *Artforum*. Tinguely's machines may have a certain affinity with the powerful protectors in Buddhist art, Yamantaka and Mahākāla. They appear at their worst because their intentions are the best: to protect sublime beings.

However, I don't know if I have any need for shocking art anymore. What I need is to find out what is still meaningful in art, and also what art will endure in these troubled times. A case in point would be the early avant-garde artist Lucio Fontana. In the late 1940s he conjured up, in manifestoes and exhibitions, a fresh, open, elevated and elegantly artistic vision of Universal Space.

Fontana's vision remains fresh, open and elegantly artistic to this day.

Another major artist with a visionary concept of space is Victor Vasarely. A revival of his artistry would be welcome.

The one and only sublime sculptor in the 20th century is Constantin Brâncuși. I shall not spoil his sublime achievements with my clumsy words, but refer the interested reader to two fine books on Brancusi: Sidney Geist's *Brancusi: A Study of the Sculpture* (1983) and Radu Varia's *Brancusi* (2003). I am very happy to have these exquisite works of beauty in my library. It is always a joy to spend a day in Brâncuși's company.

Here I just want to mention the artist's connection to Tibetan Buddhism. Brâncuși did not read very much, but he read the story of Milarepa's life, repeatedly (as did his friend

Braque). I can easily understand why. Milarepa's story is utterly real, dramatic, full of insight, a spiritual classic, told with powerful clarity and richness in detail. It was translated from the Tibetan into Finnish by the first Finnish women, Helena Kuokkanen, to undergo a three-year Tibetan Buddhist retreat. This is an historic event that marks a deep change in our spiritual evolution.

From this let us turn to another European mystical artist, Joseph Beuys. We introduced him as early as 1968 in *Iiris*, and followed up later in an issue dedicated to the Fluxus Movement. I got to know more about Beuys at *Documenta 5* in 1972 where he was a hot name, something of a shaman in the art world. He had done a performance of talking about art to a dead hare; he had lived with a coyote in a New York gallery, and fought the System's bureaucrats when he was professor at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Beuys was a pioneering force in the Fluxus Movement, and also in the Green Party, which he helped to establish. At Documenta, Beuys boxed with his student, managed an open office agitating for *direkte Demokratie,* and initiated a movement to plant a thousand oak trees.

Beuys also had a long top-secret meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama – an event of which reportedly no documents whatsoever exist.

I never met Beuys, though, which pains me. "You should go and see Beuys," Paik told me once. "He communicates with God."

When I later visited Keiji Uematsu in Düsseldorf, it turned out that he knew Beuys, whom he had interviewed

for the catalogue of an exhibition in Japan. On my request he called Beuys, but he had just left for an opening in Milan. Another opportunity never came; six months later Beuys left our world.

But I did have an opportunity to shoot video footage of the works of two major artists, Paik and Beuys, whose large exhibitions were on display concurrently in two Düsseldorf museums close to each another.

In these two extremely creative souls, East and West met on many levels.

Already in the 1960s I had found interesting American art in art magazines. It was easy to like, so I liked Expressionists as well as Minimalists, Pop artists and Color Field painters, happenings and Conceptualists. Spared of the devastating effects of World War II, the New York art world and its denizens seemed more open, at ease, and elevated in their views than their European counterparts. History did not sit heavy on their shoulders. Everything was open to fresh interpretation. The art world had a lot of space in which to reinvent itself. Artists seized this opportunity, creating a lively, fresh scene in the New York of the Sixties.

I was lucky to visit the city in 1966. Many of the values I hold essential in the arts emerged for me from this encounter.

The strongest impact on me was made by the Abstract Expressionists: De Kooning first, followed by Motherwell, Hans Hofmann, Franz Kline and others. I saw their dramatic paintings as acts that signified victories in the struggles for

life, in the jungle of the metropolis – coming out on top of all problems, just like the great jazzmen did. De Kooning's series *Women* brought the tensions between the sexes to a climax, and offered creative resolutions, in big strong paintings of exalted beauty. Motherwell's large dramatic paintings on the Spanish Civil War, and other wars, are huge statements expressed in painterly terms. His later works have many qualities that are in tune with Oriental calligraphy.

Jackson Pollock broke already before the ice for the next generation of art – but he always was too heavy for my taste, and not very elevated spiritually. The hidden saint in New York in 1966 was, at least for Carolus Enckell and me, Morris Louis. Louis's beautifully flowering suite of paintings enchanted us both and was a significant step in his evolution from the start.

There were many creative movements in New York, but as the scene expanded it became clear to me that a major dynamism was evolving around "The Bachelors," friends of Marcel Duchamp and John Cage: Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Merce Cunningham, Nam June Paik, Yoko Ono and the Fluxus Movement.

The breakthrough was triggered by Johns Cage's lectures, as presented in his first book *Silence*. The act that dramatized the core insight of the new paradigm was the now legendary composition *4'33"*. In this "piece of music" the composer remains silent; there is no playing of any instrument. The piece opens up to whatever is happening in the surrounding situation; an act experienced in meditation. But Cage's piece

had the effect of a lion's roar in the music world. In Buddhism, the Lion's Roar is the fearless proclamation of the Truth of Dharma.

Similar openings in many new directions took place in New York in the late Fifties and early Sixties. One major actor was Robert Rauschenberg, who emerged on the scene with a series of radical moves and gestures. An example is his early suite of "transfer" drawings that combine popular images to interpret themes from Dante's *Inferno*. This suite was displayed in a gallery in Helsinki in conjunction with the Cunningham dance company's performance at Svenska Teatern (the Swedish Theater in Helsinki) in 1964.

It was around this time that my interest in these movements was aroused. I read as many books and articles on American artists as I could find and began to write about art. My first piece, published in 1968, was entitled "Rauschenberg and the uncensored continuity" in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, the leading Swedish-language newspaper in Finland. In it I presented his art through Andrew Forge's book *Rauschenberg*. It was easy and inspiring to open up to the inventive ways in which Rauschenberg heroically took on the world on many levels at once. His vision was all-embracing.

The key to the vision in Rauschenberg's work was his concept of "acting in the gap between Art and Life". Such gaps are also at the core of Buddhist views and meditation. A gap opens up when the past is over, gone from the mind, and the future has not yet started. Rauschenberg began from scratch, continued to incorporate images from the flow, expanded the

scale, intensified the colors in the flow of his combines over the decades, reaching the zenith in the quarter-mile long extended collage *The ¼ Mile or 2 Furlong Piece* (1981–1998), and in the world tour that followed. His life's work invites comparison with the world of the Sufis, in which the mystic is seen as a weaver.

It is difficult to choose any favorite piece – the spirit is in the overall process. All this is excellently displayed in Mary Lynn Kotz's beautiful 1990 book on Rauschenberg's world, *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*, another treasure in my book collection. Some of Rauschenberg's most elevated works are from the artist's collaborations in Japan, China, and Tibet.

Jasper Johns may well be the most important and influential artist of our time. His oeuvre is extensive and complex, and demands much of the viewer to reveal its secrets. Johns's enigmatic early work held an immediate appeal for me, as it did for the more sophisticated art world. These seemingly simple paintings and drawings of targets, flags, numbers and maps, "Things the mind already knows," seemed to contain some hidden truth, which intrigued people. After the first ten years, Johns's art became more complex and evolved in many directions, often returning to new versions of familiar themes. Thus Johns continued to incorporate new themes into his work, redefining his identity as an artist as his life evolved. It is a rich and impressive life, as the catalogue of his great 1996 MoMA retrospective attests to with overwhelming evidence. Johns's oeuvre is full of psychological insights and inventive artistry,

but its spiritual value is not always obvious in the works, often remaining hidden instead. The artistic process itself generates insight. Johns was "a silversmith forced to work in lead," as someone once characterized his early work.

Here and there are works of haunting beauty: variations of two beer cans, more flags, the *Seasons* suite, the *Usuyuki* prints, some crosshatch paintings, *Dancers on a Plane*, and many more. Johns delivers the works with a touch of Zen, with which he is familiar through the time he spent in Japan serving in the army, and through his long friendship with John Cage. One outstanding example is the painting *Diver,* which can also be seen as an archer aiming at a target that is not in the picture. I personally find his subtle drawings and prints most dense with contemplative values than his paintings.

My life has certainly been enriched, been made more meaningful, through my access to and enjoyment of the art of Jasper Johns over the course of five decades, as well as having had the privilege of meeting him twice at his home in New York. On one wall hung a print by Dürer, *Melencolia*, with a sad Angel deep in thought amidst a set of devices. I could not help seeing the artist reflected therein.

Another extraordinary artist whom I came to know quite well, and who had a liberating effect on how my life found its course, was Nam June Paik. His early work in the 1960s captured my attention immediately and never released its grip. This led me to contact him; I sent Paik my artistic debut, the infamous record *Extended Play* – asking him for some contribution to our newly launched art magazine *Iiris*, for which we

were planning a special issue on Fluxus. Paik responded swiftly and sent a snappy collage with three photos of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a child, saying 1) Stop! 2) War 3) in Greenland!. Other Fluxus artists joined – and we were placed on the Fluxus map.

I continued to write to Paik, receiving witty and funny letters from him in return. When in 1972 Paik came to Sonsbeek for the art festival in Arnhem, I travelled there straight away. Our meeting became a significant event, at least for me. Paik told me about his first meeting with John Cage and shared some news on Fluxus. From then on I purchased all the material I could find on these two, and on Fluxus. Most of Paik's early witty writings appeared in small radical magazines such as *Radical Software* and Willoughby Sharp's Avalanche. By now I have a substantial set of books by John Cage, as well as catalogues of the exhibitions of Nam June Paik, some with his dedications! Needless to say these are cherished treasures of my archives

We exchanged letters sporadically over the years, and I tried to meet with him whenever I could. Paik was already very sought-after and occupied by his work, but I did meet him five or six times, and even had the good fortune to get something on video. When we met for the last time in New York in 1996, Paik had had a stroke, but he nevertheless came to the opening of Jasper Johns's exhibition at MoMA. He arranged for me to have a set of VHS cassettes with all his major works. One contains a recording of a unique event Paik arranged: a video about Cage, with an open-air reconstruction of his *4'33"*.

Talking with Paik I often brought up the subject of Zen; but in a casual way he said that he avoided the issue. Of course, I thought: Zen is not an issue, but an inseparably part of him. It was something he carried with him when he came to the West. Thus it was that I dared to write a piece on this theme for the catalogue of Paik's appearance in the 1993 Venice Biennale. In the text I borrowed the famous Oxherding Pictures of Zen, but substituted a television for the ox, thus illustrating Paik's struggle with the media. I never knew how it resonated with Paik himself, though. He did not say anything.

In retrospect I cannot help but to see Paik, his heroic efforts, his pioneering vision, his ceaseless creativity in all possible circumstances, as the work of a born Bodhisattva.

The same goes for John Cage.

But Paik maintained that he came to the West in order to see what the Americans would do with Oriental heritage.

To conclude this sojourn into the spiritual in art, I must mention two artists who are central to the theme: Ad Reinhardt and Barnett Newman. I am not going to say much about their art, which is rarely on display anyway. Both artists are intelligent and extremely articulate in their writings.

I was intrigued by Ad Reinhardt quite early, and wrote a loose introduction to him for *Iiris* in 1968. It was based on the catalogue of Reinhardt's exhibition at the Jewish Museum in 1966. I had not seen many paintings of Reinhardt's, and still haven't. They are rarely on display in museums. Nevertheless, his extraordinary vision came through in everything that he

said and exhibited. I do not know of any other artist who is as sharp, thorough, and illuminating in articulating the issues involved in the subject of art and its ability for transcendence. Fortunately we have the excellent book *Art as Art*, edited by Barbara Rose, which contains all of Reinhardt's important texts, statements, manifestoes, rules and rantings. Reading them again and again never fails to straighten me up, move me – and (don't ask me why) make me smile.

When you follow Reinhardt through his paintings, you have a blueprint of an artist's (any artist's) transcendental process, stage by stage, up to the dark night of the soul and beyond.

The New York artist *par excellence* was Barnett Newman. It took me a longer time to discover him than Reinhardt: his work was only very seldom shown in Europe, and the only catalogues I had were of two shows in MoMa and Tate. These I shared with Carolus Enckell, and what we saw left deep imprints on us. Newman figured prominently in our discussions and later led to some central texts that were published in the Finnish art magazine *Taide*. When I was in New York in 1991, I visited Newman's widow Annalee in their home. We talked about his art for a while, and she told a few stories of their life together, and showed me notes she kept in a drawer. On the wall hung Newman's *Onement I*, which sealed at lot in these processes and its witnesses. Then she gave me a copy of Newman's *Selected Writings*, which occupies a central place on my nearest shelf, along with books of Jasper Johns's draw-

ings. I would also like to mention the enigmatic Ray Johnson, of Finnish descent, known for being New York's most famous unknown artist. I corresponded with him for many years, and also talked with him before he left the scene in his utterly poetic way. Although much more could be said about any and all of the issues touched upon here, it would be best if this was enough to serve as a map for others to explore – and find ways to make art themselves!

I shall conclude with a fresh source of inspiration: Jeremy Millar's 2010 book *Every Day is a Good Day: The Visual Art of John Cage*, a beautifully designed volume with watercolors, paintings and prints included in a large exhibition that toured Great Britain in 2010. This condensed book touches upon many of the finest ideas and movements in the arts since the early Sixties. This river will continue long into the unknown future.

Thank You for reading.
Round about midnight, 1–2 November 2017
J.O. Mallander

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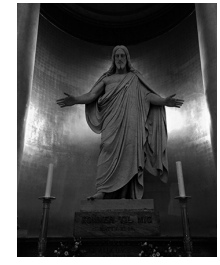

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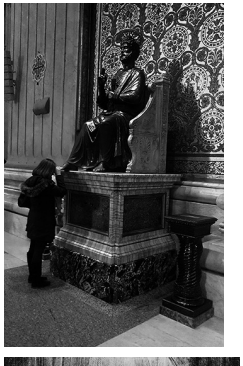

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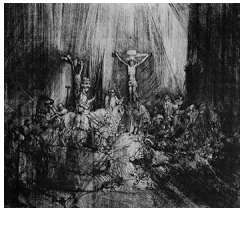

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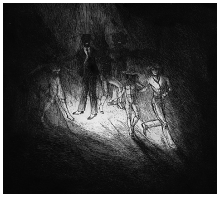

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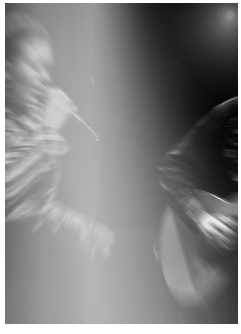

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As an element in human societies, religion forms part of the backdrop against which artists have worked in the past and present. Today, artists work in a world in which the place, role, and authority of religious traditions and institutions have changed, a process that began with the dawn of the modern era. Although the authority and influence of organized religion has declined in Western Europe and North America, interest in spirituality (itself a broad category of practices and beliefs) continues to be on the increase. At the same time, some artists today engage the phenomenon of spirituality in their own work, and scholars continue to explore the relationships between art, religion, and spirituality. This collection of essays by scholars and artists explores the intersections of art, religion, and spirituality in Finland and abroad, both in the past and today.

ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS
UNIARTS HELSINKI

ISBN 978-952-7131-47-3