Rendezvous with the Sensuous

Rendezvous with the Sensuous: Readings on Aesthetics

Edited by

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PREFACE

Rendezvous with the Sensuous offers readers a variety of perspectives on the complex and interesting subject of aesthetics. Centered upon the notion of the sensuous, it includes a number of challenging ideas that allow for readers to actively engage in their discernment. The book is organized in four parts: Conceptualizing the Sensuous; Animating the Sensuous; Emerging Dichotomies of the Sensuous; Contemplating Biographical and Autobiographical Contexts of the Sensuous. Collectively, they represent a collection of distinct facets of and approaches to the subject. Individually, each part can be understood as a link to the others, just as each chapter within each part can be relevant in the context of the others.

The subject of aesthetics is limitless. This is likewise the case with the sensuous, which informs it. Thus, a consideration of either the sensuous or of aesthetics can accommodate varied perspectives within such fields as the visual arts, music, and philosophy, disciplines represented in the present book. Readers contemplating the chapters herein shall be afforded the opportunity to gain insights into rich and vital facets of human experience and appreciation with respect to aesthetics.

INTRODUCTION

An introduction is a gateway guided, shaped and given life by what it introduces. This introduction both introduces and is introduced by the sensuous. It introduces us, as readers, to the sensuous, inviting us to rendezvous with its mystery as it guides and inspires us. Readers who respond to its call, who desire to explore the world of the sensuous, are responding to a call arising from the self, a call that also leads to the self as a sensuous being. As a rendezvous with the sensuous unfolds, it is all the while returning one to one's self, but now to a self transformed by this new pathway that is undertaken. One may not be cognizant of this relationship of the self to the self via the sensuous and thus, it may not be apparent that a rendezvous with the self is also a rendezvous with all that is sensuous.

Rendezvous with the Sensuous is about the interplay between humans and their aesthetic experience. Consistent with the etymology of the term "rendezvous," from the French "rendez vous" (*rendre*, to present; *vous*, you), it is about the presenting of one's self to the experience of the sensuous. In the present book, the term sensuous shall connote that which is perceived by the senses. It is applied with the aim of amplifying shades of aesthetical meaning that to varying degrees will place the intellect somewhere within its midst. Even so, the intellect is not implicated overtly or predominantly against this different language of the immediacy of sensuous perceptions. The distinction between that which is intellectual and the sensuous dissolves in a rendezvous with the latter, in the context of an aesthetic experience. Life is contextualized by such an experience and thus it is itself an invitation to the places of the sensuous. Such places must be sensuous for a rendezvous to occur. Given this, the rendezvous is itself a dynamic force transcendent of the more mundane connotations typically associated with the term.

In the context of this book, a given rendezvous becomes the medium and the site for an aesthetic experience, and, to be true to itself, it *occurs* rather than simply residing within aesthetic spaces and places. It is a dynamic presence that does not allow for preconceived notions as to where or how it manifests. Places and spaces are its vessels and sites, and it is in these dimensions that a participant of the rendezvous finds meaning. What is brought to that meeting place is what informs the kind of place it is.

One's presence there is the place and the place is one's presence, with the place-presence becoming a poetical space within which the imagination is free to roam. With no a priori roadmap to a particular destination, one's presence is participating in an experiential now; it is in this presence of the present that one can also experience the infinite universe of aesthetical potentiality.

The sensuousness of being human is not exclusive to humans. Rather, as we shall see within the chapters of the present book, the sensuousness of being human introduces us to any and all things sensuous, from such phenomena as flowing water and a lofty breeze, and from textures, scents, flavors and sounds, as well as from the visual stimuli of such animate and inanimate objects as trees, clouds, rocks and animals. It is this openness that makes a work of art possible, that fosters creativity. Hence a rendezvous with the sensuous reminds us, as readers, that we are intrinsic components of all that is sensuous. The site of a rendezvous is where the epiphany of the sensuous takes place. Thus we may undertake a rendezvous with the sensuous by accessing the gateway to everything sensuous.

The present book brings together varying viewpoints and approaches to the interrelationship between all things sensuous and our sensorial being. The sensuous, being the common basis of the work of aestheticians, is what inspires all aesthetical works and it is there where these works dwell. Given that all aestheticians are guided by and are inspired by the sensuous, readers shall find commonalities among the articles contained herein, with each becoming an opportunity for greater appreciation of the others and for a deeper and broader appreciation of aesthetics.

In *Rendezvous with the Sensuous*, we, as readers, shall find ourselves in the presence of the sensuous, with reciprocal inspiration and information generated from this relationship. What arises in the dynamic of the rendezvous itself is a phenomenological experience, an experience that is unambiguously aesthetic. It is an experience that also becomes a phenomenological site in which perception may be kindled vividly and profoundly.

The book's contributors have informed the aesthetic experience of a rendezvous with the sensuous, and, by extension, readers, too, are implicated in this experience, becoming important not only for what they bring to the place of their respective sensibilities but also for how these sensibilities can become transformative.

Ultimately, one is drawn to the rendezvous not by an external force but by an inner, experiential sensibility, an aesthetic sense. The sensuousness of the rendezvous place is suffused with one's own sensuousness. One

arrives there in response to the call of the rendezvous place itself. It is an alluring and uncanny place that is as a vessel in which one can experience its sensuousness.

The authors of this book each treat the subject of the sensuous in terms of their own background, experience, and sensibilities regarding aesthetics. As the collective chapters show, the undertaking of this query into the sensuous is interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional, revealing a richness of perspectives and meanings in the context of our subject.

The place of the rendezvous invites all that is sensuous. In leading to itself the sensuous can receive individuals on its path, along its trajectory. The space of this dynamic presence becomes as a dwelling place for those who take up the rendezvous. It is a place whose boundaries are permeable, and it is experienced as such by those who arrive there. It is not an objective place. Rather, it is a place of dissolution of the subject–object dichotomy. If one actively seeks it "out there," one soon finds that it already exists in the place where one is.

PART I

ON CONCEPTUALIZING THE SENSUOUS

CHAPTER ONE

ANGELS WITH GUNS

ALPHONSO LINGIS

Fetishes

Material things. Brute things. Size, position and motion are their real or objective properties, according to the scientific philosophy elaborated in the 17th century by Galileo, Newton, John Locke and Descartes. Purpose and causality are relations our minds project into them. Indeed colours, sounds, doors, tastes, heat and hardness are sensations produced in our minds by physical, chemical, or electromagnetic stimuli on our nervous system, but our minds project these sensations onto things as their own properties. 'Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless, merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly', Whitehead interprets (1953: 52-4). This conception of things, he notes, continues to guide scientific research.

Plastic chairs in the food court of a shopping mall. Christmas trees. Laundry driers. Plastic cups for soft drinks.[1] All we see in them is shapes in positions, sizes, to which we assign identities and uses.

[1] 'The glassy plastic drinking cup. Scarcely an object, it is so superbly universal Hegel might have halloed at it. Made of a substance found nowhere in nature, manufactured by processes equally unnatural and strange, it is the complete and expert artifact. Then packaged in sterilized stacks as though it weren't a thing at all by itself, this light, translucent emptiness is so utterly identical to the other items in its package, the other members of its class, it might almost be space. Sloganless—it has no message—often not even the indented hallmark of its maker. It is an abstraction acting as a glass, and resists individuation perfectly, because you can't crimp its rim or write on it or poke it full of pencil holes—it will shatter first, rather than submit—so there is no way, after a committee meeting, a church sup or reception (its ideal locales), to know one from the other, as it won't discolor, stain, craze, chip, but simply safeguards the world from its contents until both the flat Coke or cold coffee and their cup are disposed of. It is a decendental object. It cannot have a history. It has disappeared entirely into its function. It is completely

But when we try on a new dress, we see that this blue could only exist in this silk and not in cotton, we see how the material absorbs or reflects light, how it intensifies or clashes with our complexion and hair. We listen to the expert on the radio compare the complex savours of two bottles of wine and then resolve to buy the one for the guests at our dinner. The colour, tone and texture of the walls and the lighting invite us to wander down the halls of one hotel, but other halls we just want to get out of. We follow the seasons on the path beside the river and the trees. Things are attractions. They beckon to us, guide us, order our movements as we come to know them.

Artworks are things, things at their richest and most enigmatic. They are things addressed to our sensibility, though they may also depict a diagram of the social hierarchy or of the cosmos, convey a political or ideological message, depict a heroic deed or a virtuous stance, or make attractive a policy or commercial product. The directives they address to us are composed with their colours, light, tones, lines, forms, proportions and rhythms.

When we walk through museums, perhaps educating ourselves about periods, styles, evolutions, our perception and memory records images, but we do not really encounter the works as the distinctive things they are, as we do not encounter the crowds there as persons. In reality we encounter a few artworks in all their density as things. There is the statue in the park, the church that has one painting or a few, to which we return and with which we live, which unceasingly shape our sense of the essential and the trivial. A picture by Käthe Kollwitz materializes for us all we experienced and all we hoped for in becoming a mother; we long lived with a reproduction of the lithograph, then one day set out to see and spend time with the original and thereafter keep a reproduction in our bedroom. A photograph of our immigrant grandfather dressed for his wedding picture kept us sensitive to candour and trustworthiness.

With their lines, design, colour, tone, light and composition artworks turn us from the petty and commonplace, the utilitarian and egocentric, they exhibit the marvellous in the minute happenings of the world, they open horizons toward the noble, the terrible and the unnameable. They are

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what it does, except that what it does, it does as a species. Of itself it provides no experience, and scarcely of its kind. Even a bullet gets uniquely scarred. Still, this *shotte,* this *nebech,* is just as much a cultural object, and just as crystalline in its way, as our golden bowl, and is without flaws, and costs nothing, and demands nothing, and is one of the ultimate wonders of the world of *dreck*—the world of neutered things.' Gass 1997: 204-5.

talismans and omens of good and bad fortune. They attract us, stay with us, order us. They are fetishes (Leiris, 1929: 209; McInnes, 2000).

Early historians of religion Edward Burnett Tylor, John Lubbock and Charles de Brosses argued that the primitive and fundamental form of religion was animism and fetishism.[2] These terms have undergone many modifications as they have spread across many disciplines in our culture, notably political economy and psychoanalysis. The term 'fetish' in particular is now debased in our culture; in fact it first entered European languages to denigrate things Africans valued (Pietz, 1985, 1987, 1988). Anthropologist Peter Pels has recently proposed that fetishism recognizes a spirit—a voice, a directing power—*of* things, while animism recognizes a spirit—a voice, a directing power—*in* things (Pels, 1998). Animism recognizes a spirit—a voice, a directing power—that is in things but is separate from them, can migrate from one thing to another.[3]

The modern, positivist and evolutionist, historians of religion explained the animist and fetishist sensibility as the practice of 'primitive' humans, who have a conception of a spirit in themselves distinct from their bodies and project spirits into other species, plants and inanimate things. But the explanation presupposes modern conceptions of the distinction between animate and inanimate things and of the distinction between body and spirit in humans.

Recently anthropologists have deconstructed this explanation and sought to formulate more accurately the experience of people in cultures called animist or fetishist.[4] These researchers argue that for people in those cultures the sense of self does not consist in consciousness of an abiding spirit with innate structure and capacities distinct from one's body. Instead, the sense of self arises and becomes concrete in active engagement in relationships: I am a father, a son of the chief, or a mother of two infants, am hunting wild boar or on a raid to an enemy camp, am herding cattle in the summer valley or digging the ground to plant yams.

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[2] 'The concept of animism, which E. B. Tylor developed in his 1871 masterwork *Primitive Culture*, is one of anthropology's earliest concepts, if not the first.' Nurit Bird-David 1999: S67.

[3] The 17th century philosophy we invoked at the beginning, which explained that the relations and sensuous properties we perceive in things are in fact projected into them by our minds, is animist.

[4] Anthropologists did not only find animism and fetishism in archaic tribal cultures; they noted that in large stretches of our life today we treat other species, plants, machines, cars as 'animated,' issuing orders, directives, prohibitions to us as we interact with them.

In the active engagement with kin, with hunted or domestic animals and with resources and implements, one responds to their movements with one's body forces and is directed by them (Bird-David, 1999; Ingold 2000; Hornborg 2006; Willerslev 2007). Sensibility makes contact with their steadfastness and drive and catches on to their directives.

One is sometimes disengaged from things while at other times one experiences a concentration of directing and prohibiting force in other humans, other species, caves and flooding rivers. This force may appear intense when the apparition of certain things marked a path to good fortune or to calamity, or when such things insistently recurred in the environment or in dreams.

Certain places and formations in our environment become cardinal axes that order our days and nights: the meeting of rivers, paths that lead to clearings and vantage points over broad landscapes, the sun and the North Star. Directive and ordering force are concentrated in places where decisive events have occurred: cyclones, avalanches, fires, places where people have suffered major injuries or diseases or have been cured. Places where people gather, where feasting takes place. Burial grounds. The trees and stones marking such places. Shrines and temples built to mark such places. Artworks set up in them.

Saint Michael the Archangel

This painting of Saint Michael the Archangel must have once been mounted in a monastery or chapel of a pious home. I found it in a small shop in Qosqo in Peru. In the book of Revelation Michael and his angels fought in heaven against the dragon.[5]

Saint Thomas Aquinas explained that angels are immaterial, are pure forms without matter. In European art angels are sometimes depicted as having only head and wings or head, wings and hands. However, Saint Michael, depicted defeating the dragon, was most often represented fully armed with the helmet, sword and shield of a Byzantine warrior or the armour of a Western European knight.

[5] 'Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.' Revelation, 12:7-9, *New International Version*.

Here he is clad in shirt with billowing white sleeves and lace cuffs, tight breeches, a brocaded velvet cape with lace ruff, a long cloak and a cavalier hat—the garb of a Spanish grandee, although the plumes of his

hat, set upright, are carried over from the headdress of Inca administrators. He, carrying a harquebus and a bag of gunpowder,[6] is an armed watchman. The space about him, smoky red, contains no building or landscape of our world; he is striding in ethereal space. The colours of his garb—moss green, aquamarine, ochre, earth red and rose—welcome one another. These earth colours materialize him in our world and in nature.

His face and hair are those of a young androgynous aristocrat. Though armed, there is no ferocity in his face but instead serene watchfulness. His small lips are subtle and sensitive. His huge eyes, with dilated pupils, dominate his face, making us recall the all-seeing eyes of the Pantocrator that from the fourth century onward was set in the central dome of Eastern Orthodox Churches. Our gaze encounters and is engulfed in his eyes seeing us more intensely. His watch protects us but also summons us to be watchful.

The image moves with graceful dynamism. The figure is in twisted perspective, the upper body in frontal position, the lower body and the wings in profile. The Archangel's wings are aligned with his legs, ploughing the air with his lithe steps. His cloak does not trail behind him but unfolds ahead with his stride. His hands are outspread as in the pose of a dancer.

But the Archangel's delicate hands hold the harquebus and the bag of gunpowder in ways no one who knew guns would carry them. Indeed both of his hands are left hands. The painter would be a native in Spanish Peru who had never handled these weapons.

This painting was made in or around Qosqo in the 17th or 18th century. I guess 17th century, because paintings of the faces of the angels became more realist and their garb much more ornamented in the 18th century. It may have come from a monastery or more likely from a pious private home, perhaps of an aristocratic Inca family.

The image captivates with the magnetism of the eyes and face, the dynamism of the posture and the beauty of its colours and composition. We are also intrigued by the subject: where did representing an Archangel armed with a harquebus come from?

The Cuzco School

In 1537 the great Inca rebellion was crushed and Qosqo was in the hands of Pizarro and his conquistadors. The conversion of the local

[6] The harquebus, a matchlock fired gun, was invented in Spain in the 15th century; it was positioned on the shoulder to be fired.

population to Christianity was set forth as the essential mission of Spanish imperialism and its legitimation.[7] The priests worked to extirpate the native beliefs, destroying the Inca temples and shrines and prohibiting their ritual practices.[8]

Vicente de Valverde, companion of Pizarro, was consecrated bishop in 1538 and impounded native people to build a cathedral, the Iglesia del Triunfo, on the site of the Inca temple Kiswarkancha. Very soon the religious orders, Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, Augustinians and Mercederians, arrived and presided over the construction of great churches. But by ordering churches to be built over sacred places that the Inca had marked with temples, the priests in fact maintained the sacredness of those places in the native consciousness. On the supposition that God must have given access to His Truth to all peoples, the Augustinians actively sought out antecedents of Catholic teachings in the native religion, presenting Catholic beliefs and personages as the true form of imperfect or distorted native beliefs. St James, who with his brother John were called in the Gospel 'sons of thunder,' was identified with lllapa, the Quechua deity of lightning. The native people saw the forces and figures of their cosmology under the Catholic images. The sacred powers revered by the Inca—the *Apus*, grottos, waterfalls, storms, celestial bodies—were anthropomorphized in the Catholic representation, personified in angels and saints.

Artist monks arrived to cover the walls of churches with paintings, the Bible for the illiterate. Convents and monasteries established workshops where Indians were trained in Spanish crafts, including making religious sculptures and paintings. Spanish and Italian and, later, Flemish paintings were brought from Europe to serve as models; drawings and copies of European paintings were also provided. Spanish, mestizos and also native people learned painting in these workshops. Members of the Inca aristocracy entered the artist guilds and there found upward social mobility in the new colonial order (Spalding, 1970).

A major earthquake devastated Qosqo in 1650. The following two decades saw the rapid reconstruction of the cathedral, churches and monasteries and the training of many painters to replace the destroyed

[7] In 1494 Pope Alexander VI 'by the authority of the Almighty God' had divided the lands outside of Europe and declared them to belong Spain and Portugal, investing them with the mission to evangelize the heathen of those lands.

[8] They prohibited the cultivation of quinoa, the protein-rich gluten-free seed food of the Andes which had been cultivated for 4000 years, because of religious rituals performed for its cultivation. Amaranth was likewise prohibited, and crops were burned.

works. Mayors of cities, lawyers and merchants commissioned paintings for resale. Qosqo became the centre of an industry producing paintings that were distributed throughout Spanish America and even exported to Europe.

The Inca painter Diego Quispe Tito, born in 1611-1681, worked in a small village outside Qosqo; he developed an individual style, incorporating local landscapes and decorative birds. He, with Chihuantito and Chilli Tupac, are taken to have originated the Cusqueña style. In 1688 there was open conflict between Spanish and Creole and the indigenous painters; the latter left Qosqo's guild of painters and set up independent workshops.

They produced works of technical virtuosity and great diversity of subjects and styles. Religious themes continued to dominate, but portraits of Inca kings were also popular and Inca personages figured in religious paintings. Often equal numbers of Spanish and natives figured in the paintings. European monarchs and Inca rulers, Spanish and native persons were depicted in equally elaborate clothing. Thus importance was given to the actual image of the personage rather than to his or her identity and story. A painting of the Last Supper in the Qosqo cathedral by Marcos Zapata Inca shows Jesus instituting the Eucharist with roast guinea pig and chicha.

These painters depicted flat hieratic figures, reminiscent of Medieval European art. The scene was not laid out in perspective and space was filled out with images of native flowers and birds. Red, yellow and earth colours dominated. The textiles, laces, ribbons, embroideries were painted in intricate detail. The painters delineated much gold tracery on the garments, especially on images of the Virgin Mary, scraping the paint to reveal the gilding first put on the canvas.

Cuzco school paintings exhibit three themes that are not found in the European religious art that first served as the models. The Virgin Mary was painted full face on top of a stiff conical robe that is heavily embroidered and bejewelled. The rigid conical dress of the image in these paintings suggests a mountain; the Virgin appears as the consecrated life that animates the *Apus*, mountain peaks sacred to the Inca. The figure of the Virgin Mary, impregnated by the supreme God, substituted for the major Andean figure of Pachamama, the earth-mother goddess who is impregnated by the sun god.

The Holy Trinity was represented as three identical men. This form of representation of the three persons in God occurred, though rarely, in Eastern Orthodox art, referring to the three men in the book of Genesis who visit Abraham and whom the text identifies as 'the Lord'.[9] Papal edicts in 1623 and 1745 condemned representation of Trinity as three

[9] 'The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby.' Genesis 18, 1-2. *New International Version*.

equal men, but this representation continued in the paintings in the Andes. In 1628 Pope Urban VIII had condemned images depicting the Trinity as a man with three mouths, three noses and four eyes, but such images continued to be made in Cuzco.

Then there are the *ángeles arcabuceros*, angels with harquebuses. Beginning around 1680, Cuzco school artists painted series of portraits of angels. In European painting, angels are often depicted in Biblical or miraculous scenes but rarely featured alone in paintings; the image of Saint Michael vanquishing the dragon is an exception. A complete series painted in Cuzco would contain an angel standard-bearer, a trumpeter, a drummer and some angels bearing swords, lances and shields or guns. The series would typically include the archangels Michael, Raphael and Gabriel and continue with the sometimes named Uriel, Adriel, Osiel, El Alami, Habriel, Leriel, Laciet and Zabriel. Their sumptuous garb sets the archangels apart from the profane realm of work and reason.[10]

[10] In battle European warriors wore their own rough clothing and armor, determined by their utilitarian function, with colors or patterns painted on their shields or embroidered on their surcoats to identify their allegiance to one lord or another. Charlemagne awarded his mounted warriors with land, and Charles the Bald made these land grants hereditary. The knights in peacetime began to clothe themselves with impractical glamorous clothing, displayed in parades, jousts, and

The archangels are depicted as androgynous youths. Francisco Pacheco, painter and official censor of Seville's Inquisition, had decreed

tournaments. The transition from utilitarian to sumptuous garb marks the transition to gratuitous splendor which philosopher Georges Bataille sees as distinctive of the realm of the sacred.

that angels must be depicted as neither male nor female and that the models for them should be young men between 15 and 20 years of age (Pacheco, 1649).

The Archangelical androgyny was not an alien phenomenon in Peru. Anthropologist Carolyn Dean argues that in the pre-colonial Andes masculinity was not simply identified with biological maleness but was defined by practices. In infancy there is not yet and in old age there is no longer gender differentiation; 'humans appeared to move from androgyny to single sex, and back to androgyny' (Dean 2001:164). Wiraqocha, the preInca and Inca creative centre, is an unsexed or androgynous figure.[11] In the Andes, people gazed not only at the visible objects in the night sky, but the spaces between them, finding not only star-to-star constellations, but 'dark cloud' constellations also. The dark cloud constellations formed animals and earthly creatures; these figures were androgynous or asexual (Urton: 95-105, 108, 110). In Catholic tradition the angels moved the stars; adoration of the angels was to replace the pagan adoration of the stars.

Religious Sensibility

By 'religious art' we can, with art historians and museum curators, designate paintings and statues that depict personages and events from religious discourse—not so much from the rationalized theology as from the myth from which it was derived. We can designate ritual objects also—altars, tombs, temples, vestments, censers, trumpets, drums, prayer beads—pronounced to be art for the excellence of their design, materials and workmanship. We can designate the ritual objects and also images inasmuch as they effectively direct us from the utilitarian and the petty to the realm of incalculable power and gratuitous splendour—ritual objects and images as fetishes.

A strong tradition in the dominant religions of the West rejects the concept of religious art. Drawing from the Jewish and Christian Bible and the Quran, it decrees that the sole access to the sacred is the word—the audible-conceptual and not the visible and tangible. The kingdom of God is not of this world; the Sacred is utterly transcendent, outside of this world. This conception gave rise to the Byzantine iconoclasts of the 8th and 9th centuries and the destruction of statues and paintings in the Protestant Reformation. Those who saw sacred presence and power in

[11] 'A Quechua text accompanying the creator underscores its ambivalence; it can be translated as 'whether it be male, whether it be female.' Dean 2001: 149.

paintings and statues were abominated as idolaters, worshipping material things instead of the immaterial, spiritual God.

Against the iconoclasts the Second Council of Nicaea (787 CE) decreed that in the veneration of religious paintings and statues the devout are moved to recall the spiritual beings that are alone worshipped. St. Gregory the Great, Pope from 590-604, had characterized paintings and statues as conveying the religious message to those who cannot read.[12] But are images like words that, according to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, are arbitrary sounds or marks on paper, connected to their referents simply by convention? Or is the nature and power of what they represent somehow in them?

The religious message was not constructed with abstract concepts, about beings themselves utterly spiritual. The religious message is elaborated in myth, both a cosmological diagram of the dimensions and orders of reality and a narrative. The images are proper to convey the myth, for a myth is not composed with abstract terms and concepts but with concrete universals—particulars that function as categories. The paintings of the Cuzco school are narrative; they show the key events of the Gospel and of the Biblical sacred history; they also depict miraculous events of contemporary Peru, the dedication of churches and religious processions, such the great procession of Corpus Christi replacing the Inti Raymi of the Incas (Dean 1999: 31-38). Often symbols were attached to persons depicted to make their identity in the narrative more clear. For art the sacred realm is the perceived world or a depth of the perceived world.

But there is a religious sensibility that is not simply a predilection for certain kinds of concepts and explanations. Buddha images are not portraits of Siddhārtha Gautama; they are images of the body and mind in equilibrium, images of mindfulness and compassion. They are created in a state of meditation and created to induce and sustain meditation. Seated in yoga position, meditation before a Buddha image induces equilibrium, serenity and attentiveness in the devotee. Neither male nor female, the image does not depict self-conscious individuality and disconnects egoism. There are temples and caves where hundreds or thousands of

[12] 'It is one thing to adore an image, it is quite another thing to learn from the appearance of a picture what we must adore. What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the ignorant who look at it; in a picture even the unlearned may see what example they should follow; in a picture they who know no letters may yet read. Hence, for barbarians especially a picture takes the place of a book.' *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1844-55. LXXVII, 1027.

Buddha images all alike have been created, as visual mantras.[13] Mandalas are contemplated until the image becomes fully internalized. In traversing the concentric circles and squares of the orders of reality the meditating one experiences an inner cantering and integration.

The Cuzco school images of the Virgin Mary and of the three identical men of the Holy Trinity, serene, composed, blissful, do not only function to convey a conceptual message or designate the role they figure in the mythic narrative. They do not simply induce a conceptual reorganization. They are not portraits but images that induce effects on the sensibility and work a transformation of viewer.

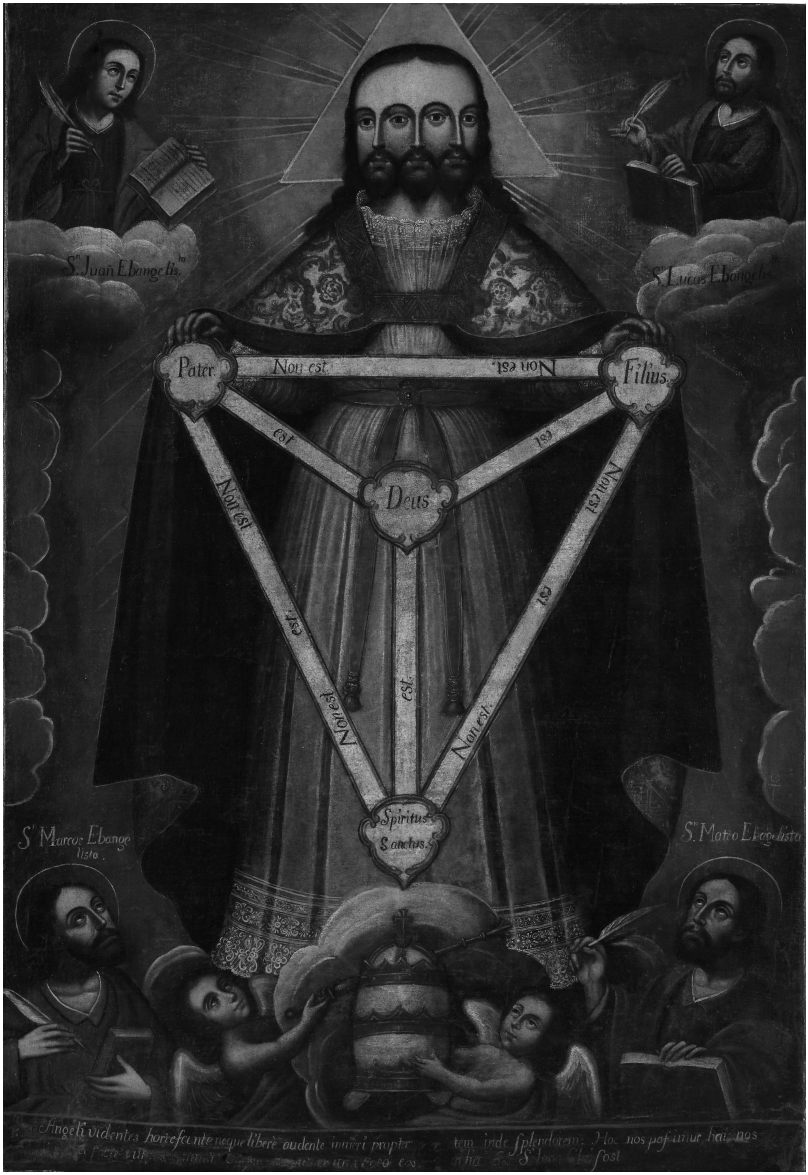
The images were experienced to possess power and pilgrimages to certain images drew great numbers of people. Sometimes this exceptional power first became known by the circumstances in which the image was found. The image of Our Lady of Belen, now enshrined in Qosqo, was found floating on the sea by the Peruvian coast. The crucifix later known as El Señor de los Temblores was found intact in the debris of a shipwreck. During the earthquake of 1650, the images were being taken out of the threatened cathedral; when this crucifix was brought out into the street, the tremors ceased.

Pilgrims came to the sacred images to make contact with the sacred power, to give homage and to find healing for physical and spiritual sickness. They experienced an inner rending, an emptying out of what was venal and petty in them. They were separated from the profane world.

Things, and especially those richest of things that are artworks or fetishes, reveal themselves across time. By chance, by luck, I came upon the painting of the Archangel Saint Michel in the shop in Qosqo seventeen years ago. In my home the discrete beauty of its colours, the composed dynamism of the figure, the space devoid of irrelevancies emanate a quiet power and directive force. It opens back into time, when an Inca painter worked in a society that understood itself with overlaying myths. He is someone whose sensibility I share; though I do not know his name he is my brother. He has found this lithe and watchful presence in the depth of the perceived nature and institutions about him. The aesthetic perception is entangled in the depiction of a civic order, seen in the dress and weapon, which prolongs into the unseen but accessible 17th century political, historical and ideological field. Even if we no longer give intellectual credence to the myth in which Saint Michael is a figure, our perception is more than aesthetic. For if the few artworks that, more than give us

[13] For example, the Ajanta Caves in India, the Longmen Grottos in China, the Sanjūsangen-dō in Japan, Wat Po in Thailand.

pleasure, guide our lives, are fetishes, then the painting as an aesthetic object and as a religious object communicate.



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CHAPTER TWO

SENSUALITY OF EMBODIED SPACE IN LANGUAGE, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND ART: BODY-FULL EXPERIENCE OF BODY-LESS EMPTINESS

BONGRAE SEOK

Introduction

We often appreciate the beauty of emptiness such as the wide open space of the Saharan desert, the spacious serenity of minimalist Japanese gardens in Kyoto, the highly compact and divided spaces of the skyscrapers in New York or the empty gaps created by huge metallic structures in Henry Moore's *Double Oval*. All of these scenes of emptiness are full of perceptual and aesthetic excitement. How can we perceive things that do not have positive existence and appreciate their beauty of absence? In this paper, I will discuss the perceptual and aesthetic experience of seemingly non-sensuous or non-sensible emptiness (found in fully extended space, enclosed emptiness, or compartmentalized spatial gaps and islands) and their unlikely dependence on the body (i.e., the sensorimotor activities of an agent). I will argue, quite paradoxically, that to experience such non-sensible and non-sensuous things, embodied sensual imagination (tactile, visceral, motor and holistic somatic sense) is necessary. That is, if we can recognize the existence and appreciate the beauty of empty space, we have an uncanny perceptual and aesthetics sense of *body-less* (or substance-less) emptiness with *body-full* experience.

According to many psychologists (such as Gibson 1977, 1979) and philosophers (such as Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962), we perceive and understand the presence of physical entities and their relations through our bodily interaction with them. A chair, for example, is not just an independently existing, physical structure but also an object we physically sense and interact with (i.e., we touch, grab, and sit on it) with our bodies.

To borrow Gibson's term, a chair *affords* certain types of bodily activities (touching, moving, grabbing, sitting etc.) and that this is how we perceive its existence and understand its functions. According to this approach of perception, our basic perceptual encounter with physical objects in the world is guided by the sensorimotor activities of the body. What about things that do not have positive presence, such as empty space or an open environment? How can we experience fully extended space or an empty background if there is *nothing* for our body to contact and to interact with? Is the same type of embodied perception or interaction necessary in our meaningful experience of emptiness? That is, is the body necessary for us to experience, understand and appreciate the body-less emptiness or openness?

To answer these questions and to analyze our experience of spatial emptiness, I will take the following steps. First, as a general introduction to embodied perception, I will sketch the main orientation of cognitive embodiment in psychology and philosophy and explain important cognitive roles the body plays in our perception and experience of the world. Second, I will discuss embodied experience of space (locations and directions) reflected in our linguistic expressions and metaphors to illustrate the point that seemingly non-sensible (open, empty and homogeneous) space is not just *seen* but *experienced* (i.e., sensed and felt) by the body. Third, I will discuss and analyze psychopathologies of space, such as agoraphobia (fear of open unfamiliar spaces) and acrophobia (fear of heights), in order to support my hypothesis that our perception of space is heavily dependent on the sensorimotor of activities of the body and that psychopathologies of space are closely related to or perhaps caused by insufficient or inappropriate bodily reactions to emptiness. Fourth, I will discuss how certain forms of creative artworks are inspired or motivated by embodied spatial experience of emptiness. Particularly, I will focus on how paintings and architectural structures are used to reconstruct and transform homogeneously extended plain emptiness into meaningful and beautiful space that can deliver the embodied images of sensorimotor activities.

Unlike the apparent images of space (i.e., empty, open and homogeneously extended emptiness), our experience of spatial emptiness is nothing but empty, quiet or static. It is full of images and activities that come out of our bodily senses and motoric explorations. I will argue that the body and its sensuality are necessary to identify, perceive, and feel seemingly body-less and perceptually sterile structures like empty space.