

# **Creativity, art, mystagogy: logos as and in the end of waiting from the origin, hoping toward the originary**

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Though belatedly and after many years of his passing, I wish to dedicate this essay to the memory of Prof. Dr. D. Enrique Rivera de Ventosa OFM Cap. (1913-2000) whose excellent works but above all his humane example have greatly helped me in understanding what humanity really is all about. In all reality, this essay is a call to humanity. It can be said that in it I have run a full of circle and start a new one in order to reflect all the more on the true meaning of humanity with the greatest artifacts of this humanity: works of art.

‘La beauté n’est que la promesse du bonheur’.

G. Stendhal, *De L’Amour*, chapitre 17

‘Ma civilisation, héritière de Dieu, a fait chacun responsable de tous les hommes, et tous les hommes responsables de chacun. Un individu doit se sacrifier au sauvetage... collectivité, mas il ne s’agit point ici d’une arithmétique imbécile. Il s’agit du respect de l’Homme au travers de l’individu. La grandeur, en effet, de ma civilisation, c’est que cent mineurs s’y doivent de risquer leur vie pour le sauvetage d’un seul miner enseveli.

Ils sauvent l'Homme.'

A.de Saint-Exupéry, *Pilote de Guerre*, XVI, 119.

Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder,

La gracieuse bonne et belle;

Pour les grains biens que sont en elle,

Chacun est prêt de la louer.

Qui se pourroit d'elle lasser?

Toujours sa beauté renouvelle.

Ch. de Orleans, *Dieu! qu'il la fait bon regarder!*

**Abstract:** This essay is an attempt to differentiate and correlate Aesthetics, Art, Artworks and Creativity. With metaphysical reflections against the backdrop of history, we underscore in view of the aforementioned key concepts the transition from waiting and hoping and use the same transition to differentiate existence from life, all within a metaphysical and spiritual framework that informs all the conceptual exposition. The open-ended result calls for more essays, in the name of Humanity, especially aided by works of art, specifically by some contemporary American poems, that seek to go beyond the worlding of artworks by means of the creative response to the vocation of homing by means of art.

**Keywords:** Art, Aesthetics, Artworks, Creativity, Waiting, Hoping, Holy, Sacred, Beauty, Origin, Origination, Originary, Humanity, Culture, Vision, Flesh, Incarnation, Sacrament, Presence, Effective Presence, Logos.

**Resumen:** Este ensayo es un intento de diferenciación y correlación de los siguientes: estética, arte, obras de arte y creatividad. Se subraya en estas reflexiones metafísicas, a la luz de la diferenciación y correlación de los conceptos mencionados, la transición de la espera a la esperanza y desde la misma transición, proponemos una nueva distinción conceptual de la existencia de la vida, dentro de un marco metafísico y espiritual que subyace a toda nuestra exposición. El resultado abierto claramente necesitará más ensayos que podrían ser llevadas a cabo partiendo de obras de arte, específicamente

algunos poemas americanos, con los cuales se intenta ir más allá de la mundanización (worlding) de obras de arte por medio de una respuesta creativa a la vocación de la hogarización (homing) mediante el arte.

**Palabras clave:** Arte, Estética, Obras de Arte, Creatividad, Aguardar, Esperar, Santo, Sagrado, Belleza, Origen, Originación, Originario, Humanidad, Cultura, Visión, Carne, Encarnación, Sacramento, Presencia, Presencia Eficiente, Logos.

Beauty is the highest ideal aspired to by man in this life, given his rational faculties. Rationality is an aspiration to the highest form of transcendence. Within the realm of human history, which develops as the realm of human experience, beauty is the experiential concretization of the Absolute, in its transcendence, in as much as this same Absolute, in its transcendence, is a force of attraction toward itself. But this force is 'exercised' in the realm of human immanence which in its experiential unfolding and narrativity is history. In this view, at first glance, beauty is an idea that transubstantiates<sup>1</sup>, i.e., it becomes real in reality and reality in real in concreteness, in its incarnation (which is 'enfleshment' or becoming a textual experiential weave or flesh and not just bodiliness or being a body in the world) in art works which as corporalities that result from the 'enfleshment' echo its call. And the call of Beauty is the call, the voice of the call of the Absolute in history that reverberates, challenges, gives itself, presents itself, offers itself as a goal or something to be aspired for, given that in itself it attracts, it draws toward itself, it invites toward itself in order to be attained (goal), i.e., effectively experienced or effectively mediated, thus one participates (takes part) in it knowingly and willingly (rationality).

To mediate is to make concrete, to make real in reality, to make reality real by specific, historical in its narrativity and experiential in

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<sup>1</sup> I owe the use of this term to J. Maritain, *Art and Poetry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Editions Poetry, 1946, 48. I make use of this term taking into account the challenges to a substantial notion of reality and of what is real used by Postmodernism, cfr. D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990; H. Foster (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*, London-Sydney: Pluto Press, 1985; J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Likewise the metaphysical reflections of the following have been helpful and suggestive: P. Strawson, *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, London: Methuen, 1959; S. Kripke, *Naming and Necessity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980.

its dynamicity. To mediate is to transubstantiate, to create hypostatical or substantial means (and not just accidents or qualities or adjectives or attributes that cannot stand on their own unless they are related or attached to a substantial reality), what is transcendental in immanent terms. To transubstantiate is to make what is transcendental into immanent incarnationally, concretely, historically. To transubstantiate is to make this transcendental standing on its own in history, not just as a quality attached to another, but as an independent reality that is real in as much as it reality, that is reality in as much as it is real, on its own terms.<sup>2</sup> So much so, an artwork stands as the standard for a given period of history and as such is testimony to man's constant struggle to find meaning (waiting) in his history, ultimately pointing and striving (hoping) to the source of this meaning as the goal at the culmination of this history.

Beauty, in effect, is its own mediation. As an ideal, Beauty is its own transubstantiation in history by means of a process called Art which is the discourse of Creativity and whose concrete products are artworks or artifacts.<sup>3</sup> Beauty and the Absolute are identifiable, since Beauty is the Absolute as a spring of origin that flows to diffuse itself, to make itself participable in its transcendence but in the realm of man's immanent history by means of artifacts or artworks, pointing out to this same source always as a goal.

## 1. PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

Once again we find ourselves confronted with the ancient philosophical issue of Platonic idealism and Aristotelian Realism but with a *theological* (that which flows from the Absolute in as much as it is God or the Supreme Reality in as much as it is Real in itself, the Supreme Real in as much as it is in itself Reality) perspective. Beauty is the Absolute in its mediation that starts as its own point of departure, i.e., its eruption in history which brings about the fabrication by man of artifacts, artworks that bridge man's immanence with the transcendence, making

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<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, I make use of the notions of suppositum excellently explained by J. Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, Garden City: Image Books, 1957, 70-91.

<sup>3</sup> I admit to making use of some of my previous reflections on the relationship between Beauty and Art found in my book, *Experience, Reality and Beauty. From the Aesthetics of Ontology to the Mystagogy of Art in Metaphysics*, Manila: UST Publishing House, 2002.

this transcendence present in immanence as Mystery that becomes concrete as a Sacrament or an effective presence (which is incarnation or being flesh and not just being or body in the world but flesh in the world seeking to make this house of the world into a home for the Spirit) of the Spirit<sup>4</sup> in the artworks or artifacts which in immanent history indicates man's participation with the Transcendent Absolute (creativity) which at the same time opens up an avenue of fuller participation beyond history, in eschatology or in hoping, with this Absolute. Artworks or artifacts are not something of the past<sup>5</sup>, they are the very present of creativity each time they are approached to be appreciated (aesthetics) and be an occasion for meaning. Such an occasion culminates in life, as opposed to experience whose most sublime attainment is the continuity of this creativity in the production of new texts, of new artworks.

Artworks or artifacts are texts, are weaves that make present in an effective manner the Absolute which calls out in terms of Beauty as the source of what is real in reality, i.e., of what is reality in as much as it is real, presenting itself as a transcendental ideal beyond history to which man in history must aspire to in his immanent historicity by a process which we call Spirituality. Spirituality is being flesh, it is being incarnate (or flesh in the world that seeks to make the house a home by making it hospitable to oneself and to others), aspiring to transcendence by responding to the call of transcendence in creativity. Spirituality in its creative dimension is called Art, i.e., the participation in the Absolute in as much as it is the call of Creativity in participation, in taking part toward communion with this same Absolute by means of this sane creative dimension which is an executory act. By participation we do not seek to take everything, to monopolize everything but to take part, to share, to be not just in union but in communion, to live out the gift, the sharing and share without exhausting but always drawing from the Infinite Source.

The voice could only be heard in concreteness, by the flesh, by incarnation which is the opening of the transcendence in history in its integrity or Spirit (the Absolute Spirit) which takes place, which opens

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<sup>4</sup> I have found suggestive indications in A. Wilson, *Spirit and Sacrament. An Invitation to Eucharistic Worship*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> This is a Hegelian thesis, cfr. G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, 11.

up a history in its presence and effectivity in substantiation, in substances, in being flesh or an experiential textual weave and not just fleeting qualities or interpenetration of realms with blurred or even transient substantiality, which are in vogue largely because of Postmodernism. Effectivity is experientiality or mediation of the real in reality, of reality in the real, in terms of substance which is concreteness or individuality that is historical. By effectivity the bipolarism of idealism-realism is overcome into a dynamic and vibrant concreteness, made concrete in the context of history but aspiring to the ideal in its transcendence.

Participation in its fullness is the finality of this opening up. We are referring to an opening up which consists in the experiential unfolding of an avenue of fuller participation breaking into eschatology is what we term as Hope. Artworks or artifacts as avenues of hope provide us with a reading of art, as art is the best reading of art.<sup>6</sup> Such a reading is a reading of the hostile world, which is the totality of crafts made up of tools that reduce everything to tools and instrumentality in order to make it more hospitable, in order to make it a home which at the same time is a reading of man's own transcendental vocation, heard in history as a calling with the force of attraction in the aesthetical, within his immanence, of man's capability of rising above waiting in order to hope. Hospitality seeks to transfigure this totality of tools or conglomeration of instrumentality, made up of bodies, into Creativity which is the releasing of man's rationality into its projection into Spirit from being flesh.

A Body is just there, being there (existence). Flesh is being there for someone, for something, for a purpose (life). It is being there for being a Spirit which is the thereness of the home by being real as reality, reality as real in its plenitude in Creativity, participation in the Absolute by sharing in Beauty, in its call to Beauty by Creativity, which is Rationality which seeks life and not just existence. Rationality is not only the complete mastery of existence in knowing or absolute knowing brought about by Science and its inhumane absoluteness in Technology. Creativity seeks to be the liberation of man's rationality, going beyond the absoluteness of knowledge in Technology by sharing, participating, taking part in the Absolute in Creativity through Art which makes use of Science or Knowing by not absolutizing it in existence or making ex-

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<sup>6</sup> On this regard, I find truly inspiring the insight of G. Steiner, *Real Presences*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989, 17.

istence more comfortable or a mode of domination of others in building a world or house but instead going to the Absolute which is Life, building a home, making the world homely, being hospitable.

Thus, the present metaphysical reflections, which reiteratively encircle the same central thematic points, aim to offer some brush strokes on this thematic, on this movement in order to propose a new linear movement to a renewed (not just new) metaphysical development. These reiterative reflections are bereft of the pretence of exhaustivity but only have the aim of presenting fleeting impressions that only aspire to lead us closer to a fuller expression of this same movement, which is clearly beyond the limits of our present task. These same brushstrokes are the circular, meandering paths of our essay (or attempt to offer metaphysical insights) with the notion of Art as the hinge of the same. From this hinge, our essay or attempt (and not definitive piece of work) develops into circular paths charting linear geographies that only lead to a fuller exploration of the circles that expand constantly in a continuous process of reflection wherein one sees himself reflected in a better light as committed in the same mystagogy of initiation, accompaniment, placement.

## **2. MEDIATION, BRIDGING, INVITATION: TOWARD PARTICIPATION.**

Beauty, mediates (or bridges) itself as a call from the transcendental realm whose response is found in the immanent realm of history, in what is given (nature) and what is made by man out of the given and thus cultivated (culture). Within what is cultivated, artworks are produced. There are in effect the concrete experiential moments of Beauty in which all humanity, given its rationality (usually described from the Aristotelian-Scholastic tradition in terms of faculties or the vital capacity for intellectual and voluntary acts), must aspire to. In this essay, we seek to broaden this notion of rationality, parting from knowledge and volition, into the concrete act of responding within human historical immanence to a transcendental call by means of artifacts, by means of creating or participating in this transcendental call and whose texts within history, the period of waiting, are these said artifacts.

These artworks are mediations, concrete points of contact or encounter in history that bridge man in his immanence with the transcendence of the Absolute. Mediations serve for the purpose of man's participatory act in the Absolute (usually in the form of artifacts). For this

reason, the artifacts have a force of attraction as a goal. This attraction is the manifestation of the force itself and thus becomes concretely experiential to us in its mediation through art and artworks. This force is Beauty. It is not only a force. It is not only a means but is the very goal which fulfills itself. One of the defining characteristics of rationality is self-integration which is pursued by teleology or conscious experiential tendency to a goal, specifically that which transcends the circumstantiality of one's historicity.

The ultimate goal of human rationality consists in fulfilling itself in integrity, which is fullness of individual participation (sharing) or communion (the effectivity of the sharing wherein the individual becomes one and shares) with the Supreme Transcendental goal posited from the standpoint of immanent history: The Absolute. Integrity is being Spirit. The Absolute is Spirit. Man is called to participate in the Absolute by being Human Spirit by means of Creativity, by means of Mediation and its flesh which is art, with its distinct 'fleshes' or moments as flesh called artworks or artifacts. The Absolute is in effect a law of demarcation that marks the difference between what is transcendental or infinite and what is finite and culpable and yet in Beauty, and because of its Beauty or sheer power of attraction toward itself as a goal, it becomes a force to overcome this difference by means of participation which is the mediation (means) to attain Communion.

All of the aforementioned presupposes that the Absolute makes the initiative in history, by calling out to man in his immanence, in his finitude and culpability, to participate in communion with the Absolute in its transcendence. This call, this attraction toward this goal is Beauty. Beauty is the voice toward the goal, the end but it echoes the origin such that this origin, in its attraction, becomes the goal, the originary: the very same origin encountered at the finish line but in a richer or enriched dimension after having gone through the process, which is mediation or making use of means, made up of events, artifacts, interactions with others within history (experience). Beauty makes its voice heard in a privileged manner in artworks (from a cultural perspective) or artifacts (from a reified viewpoint) with their artistic value in the constant search for what is labelled as 'canon'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Cfr. P. Crowther, *Defining Art, Creating the Canon. Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Because Beauty is the call of the Absolute (or is the Absolute itself in as much as it is the Absolute calling), its voice, its provocateur toward a journey of rediscovering the beginning at the end or as the originary, Beauty is, in effect, the revelation of the Absolute in history. Thus it provokes a reaction from man, the rational being, to participate in this revelation which is experiential in nature and consequence, to aspire to his integrity, to his growth as spirit founded on his rationality (spirituality). Man reacts by first describing (phenomenology) Beauty in its mediation and interprets (hermeneutics) it. This reaction is what we term as mediation. Man becomes a spirit by being a mediator for and in Beauty in his own history, thus constituting himself as a participant of Beauty by means of creating, by means of being an artist. And this participation is what we term as artistry or the act of giving the word to the Experience, which is the construction of the spiritual path.

From here, man constructs his spiritual path, his spirituality which discursively is an *experientiology* or discourse or word of the spirit as experiential mediator in the path toward communion with the Absolute, which in the case of artworks may mean or take the following options (either one at a time or all of them at the same time), in general terms, a) participation in terms of appreciation of the beauty in the artworks (audience), b) participation in terms of executing beauty in performative artworks (interpreter) and c) participation in terms of creating beauty by opening new experiential ambiances (creator). Experientiology in effect is giving the word to the experience by the Spirit in the act of mediation, which is the act of creativity, of participating in the Beauty of the Absolute by making others participate in the Beauty of this same Absolute in the artworks or artifacts. Logos or the Word becomes a Narrative if lived in the flesh, by the flesh, incarnationally in history parting from waiting in this same history as flesh, aspiring to be Spirit eschatologically by participating in the Beauty of the Absolute in Creativity through Art which is mediating the logos by giving it flesh in the artworks or artifacts. Technology, the result of the absolutization of science, removes the flesh in the artifacts. Art maintains the flesh in the artifacts. By maintaining the flesh, the Spirit remains and grows, opens up horizons for others to be Creative parting from the artifacts.

All men strive for the Absolute, to be the Absolute, to participate in the Absolute in terms of communion. This is the essence of religion whose dynamicity or experiential realization in history is Spirituality. The

Absolute presents itself as an ideal, as an attractive goal as Beauty which is mediated in the realm of history, as experience made concrete in moments which are constituted by artifacts, realizations, interactions and their presuppositions and results. Beauty is the highest ideal, though truly what constitutes it is questionable in as much as its status as an ultimate value is likewise questionable.<sup>8</sup> It is as questionable as to where Beauty can be found: beyond or transcending history, in the immanence of things, as a property of being, in the perception and judgement of people.

To wit, how are we to understand the experiential mediation of beauty in history are artworks the place, the milieu of beauty or are they just instruments of this same beauty? Beauty as an ideal becomes meaningful or truly important in the quest if it is expressed, discoursed in history by means of a work of art. ‘The proper expression of the elemental meaning is the work of art itself. That meaning lies within the consciousness of the artist but, at first, it is only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified...As the proper expression of the elemental meaning is the work of art itself, so too the proper apprehension and appreciation of the work of art is not any conceptual clarification or judicial weighing of conceptualized evidence. The work of art is an invitation to participate, to try it, to see for oneself.’<sup>9</sup>

### **3. BEAUTY, HIDDENNESS, MANIFESTATION: PLEASURE, BEYOND CONCEPTUALITY, ATTRACTION.**

Beauty is the source of the Absolute in its hiddenness. Beauty is the wellspring of all reality in order to be real, of the real in order to be reality. Beauty is the quality that is more than being, it is revealing what the real is in reality; it is revealing what is reality in as much as it is real. Beauty is the power of creation in as much as creation is harmonizing of elements in order to be experientiable. Experience is the act of mediating, the act of bridging of finding means from mere nothingness to reality. As mediation, experience is revelation. Beauty thus is revelation of the depths of what reality is in as much as it is real, of what the real is in as much as it is reality. In its revelation in history, Beauty is the veil of the Absolute. The Absolute unfolds itself under the veil of order,

<sup>8</sup> R. Scruton, *Beauty*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, 3.

<sup>9</sup> B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, 63-64.

discipline, harmony. In Beauty, the Absolute is experientiable and thus real to man in history. Beauty is the experiential act of history, it is the mediation of the Absolute to be real in realities in man in the dimension of pleasure. History develops by means of conflicts and opens up as transitional points such that the conflicts and tensions are not dead-ends but avenues of experiential realizations

Pleasure is the experience that goes beyond conceptual knowledge and is the force of attraction of the Absolute in its historicity such that Beauty, in the transcendental hiddenness of the Absolute is its source; in the immanent historicity of the Absolute, beauty is its dwelling. As the transcendent source it is origin. As dwelling, it is origination. Origination is the water that fills the pool, the search for meaning in life through creativity in Art among the rock of life. Rocks are not obstacles nor hardships but are reference points, milestones, watersheds, landmarks, highlights to give man direction which may mean or include trials, challenges which are all opportunities to give meaning to history from being just events into something creative, something rational, something meaningful, into life (being and making a gift) instead of just existence (mere givenness). The water that flows is the language that gives meaning in giving and being the gift in being the voice of the calling. Beauty is the language of the Absolute in as much as it is a call to itself, which is origin and process to be the goal.<sup>10</sup> But more than just the fluidity, water, is the very source, the very Beauty of which we have spoken of. Let us read what a great poet writes apropos water:

And no rock  
 If there were rock  
 And also water  
 A spring  
 A pool among the rock  
 If there were the sound of water only  
 Not the cicada  
 And dry grass singing  
 But sound of water over a rock

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<sup>10</sup> I have taken into account the seminal symbolic and linguistic reflection on 'The Meaning of Beauty' of C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, San Diego-New York-London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1989, 139-159.

Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
 Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
 But there is no water<sup>11</sup>

Beauty is the mystagogy of the Absolute in history. Mystagogy, which is the act of initiation, communication and directing of man, who is the subject of experience.<sup>12</sup>

The historical mediation of the Absolute with the veil of Beauty, which is the home of Beauty, is a homing process wherein the origin is rediscovered as the originary in an originating process in the very transubstantiation, in the very production of Art in its artworks, artifacts, which are concrete pathways of hope. By this process, man begins to wait in order to find until he encounters this same Beauty expressed as the True, lived as the Good, revealed as the One, Concretized as a Thing, as Flesh, and found in the Other, in the Other Flesh, in the Other as Flesh. Incarnation is not solitary but is communitary, participatory. It creates a network in the waiting of history which in the fulfillment of hope becomes a Communion. In waiting, man is not just a body that is in the world, but is spirit and hence, made of flesh or the body that desires whose desiring is expressed primarily as waiting but in its incarnatedness and in its spiritual act of mediating, this same flesh constitutes itself as Spirit or that which hopes. The Absolute is a fire for this cold and dark world, for this house. It becomes warm in the waiting and becomes light in the hoping.

Furthermore, when all the waiting becomes an encounter in these coordinates of Beauty, which are mystagogical in character, (True, Good, One, Thing and Other which are the traditional transcendental properties in Metaphysics)<sup>13</sup> then the waiting becomes hope and the home is

<sup>11</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 347-359.

<sup>12</sup> I confess to having St Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate* I, in my mind as I pen these reflections. Cfr. my reflections on mystagogy: *From Wisdom to Mystery through Love. Philosophy as Spiritual Itinerary to the Absolute*, Leuven: Peeters, 2021, 137-159. Also: T. Federici, 'Mistagogia della Chiesa, ricerca spirituale' in: E. Ancilli (ed.), *Mistagogia e Direzione Spirituale*, Roma, Teresianum, Roma 1985, 163-145; M.A. Schrieber, 'Mistagogia, comunicazione e vita spirituale', in: *Ephemerides Carmeliticae* 28 (1977), 3-58; E. Mazza, *Mystagogy*, New York: Pueblo Publishing Inc, 1989.

<sup>13</sup> The exposition of J.W. Koterski has proven helpful on this regard for my reflections, cfr. *An Introduction to Medieval Philosophy. Basic Concepts*, Malden-Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 111-140.

opened up. Waiting is the unveiling of the world. Hope is the revelation of the home, the here and how of freedom to be real in the midst of action, in the midst of others, in the midst of plurality which we encounter in the aforementioned coordinates. And this freedom is a mystery, constant, freedom from self-concern, peaceful, ripe, mature, receptive, assenting. Freedom is a constant breaking of history into eschatology, the breaking of waiting into hoping.

D. Hammarskjöld speaks of this revelation, of this homing as a mystical experience. His words are worth citing here for their poignancy, depth and ardor: ‘The ‘mystical experience’. Always: *here* and *now* – in that freedom which is one with distance in that stillness which is born of silence. But – this is a freedom in the midst of action, a stillness in the midst of other human beings. The mystery is a constant reality to him who, in this world, is free from self-concern, a reality that grows peaceful and mature before the receptive attention of assent.’<sup>14</sup>

#### **4. BEING AT HOME IN THE WORLD: DIMENSIONS, ACCESS, RELATIONALITIES.**

However, despite its multiple locations or categories, Beauty can only be recognized by man’s rational faculties, by his reasoning and reasonability.<sup>15</sup> Only the rational, because it is experiential in as much as it strives toward the real as reality and reality as real, can grasp Beauty. Beauty is the spark of the real in as much as it is reality, of reality in as much as it is real, in history as it unfolds as mediation which is recognizable only to the rational, which in turn is the call to a greater universality, which Spirit, or the vocation of man toward fullness of integrity, can only respond to. Beauty is where the ideal and the concrete converge opening up a narrative of experience, which is the discourse of the Flesh, in history that breaks into eschatology as a narrative of the Spirit, that seeks greater participation in the Absolute in this immanent world with the hope of transcendence. And this participation is creativity which is the power of Art and which becomes concrete in artworks and artifacts, which are texts of rationality. In Creativity, in its power, the Logos of the Word becomes the Principle that has given made real in reality, reality in real culminating in the Logos becoming Flesh and dwelling among

<sup>14</sup> D. Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, London: Faber and Faber, 1968, 108.

<sup>15</sup> I am in debt especially to I. Kant on this regard, *Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 89-127 (I, 1, 1).

us, making this earth, this world, this house into a home. Logos is Word to become a Principle which is the force of Art. Logos is not Word to become a Tool which is the aim of Science and its dominance in Technology. Principles create homes, tools build houses. And we are at home in our culture, made concrete in artworks and artifacts which are testimonies of Creativity, of participation in the call of the Absolute as Beauty.

Only the rational, as stated, can grasp Beauty. This is true to the extent that whatever that is rationalistic may lay claim to be universality, may be proposed to all men to be acceptable as a major premise in a rational inference.<sup>16</sup> No matter how functional it can be.<sup>17</sup> Especially in an ambiance of pluralities, which has to be our a priori in order to understand and live with the totality of what is outside of us (universe) and that which surrounds us effectively (world) where our experience of ourselves take place, where there are movements and becomings challenging identities and constancies, most often of the moral kind with the persistencies, consistencies, constancies that challenge our visions<sup>18</sup> and that constantly make us derive from the surroundings our dwelling, our home where we are at ease, where we are comfortable, where we find Beauty to the point that we do not just find it but we make it findable to others by our creation, by our act of Beauty whose concrete and memorable texts are the artworks and artifacts by which the house of the universe of the world could become a home.

The only law of the home, in this light, is to be personal, by being an idiot, by being oneself, even to the point of encountering a personal God and have a personal relationship with him, given that loving the law more than God, as Levinas would put it, would mean having access to a Personal God.<sup>19</sup> In home, 'the land was ours before we were the land's./ She was our land more than a hundred years/Before we were her people'.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 213 ff.

<sup>17</sup> For this notion, I am especially indebted to: H. Putnam, *Mind, Language, and Reality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975; W.V. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, New York: Harper and Row, 1953; G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, London: Huthcheson, 1949; J. Searle, *The Rediscovery of Mind*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992; G. Strawson, *Mental Reality*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> I. Kant would denominate this as 'schauung' or 'point of view, *Critique of Pure Reason* A 681, B 710.

<sup>19</sup> E. Levinas, *Difficile liberté*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1963, 193.

<sup>20</sup> R. Frost, *The Gift Outright*, 1-3.

Beauty goes beyond usage or pragmatics (what is useful, profitable). It is placed on a 'higher', 'more noble plane'. It is often postulated as the meaning of life, in as much as meaning is the aim of all aspirations. Life is not just existence. The latter is just being there. The former is being there for someone, for something; for another, for a purpose. Life is personal, it is relating with the Absolute, who manifests His origin and Himself as Beauty and invites to this communion and participation, as a Person, as a Personal God. The other and the purpose become identified in the aspiration.<sup>21</sup> And to aspire is to be flesh. Flesh is aspiration to be Spirit. Body is not aspiration (or the wish or will to be there for something or someone or life) at all, but just 'being there'. To be flesh is to feel the experiential limits imposed by existence, characterized by history as waiting, aspiring to what is beyond, which is a new history, which is eschatology, which is attained by hoping. And hoping is undertaken by participation in the Transcendence which becomes available, incarnational as a call, as an effective presence in immanent history of the flesh which is Beauty and the pathway of Creativity it opens up as a Spirituality, as Way for Man, in the flesh, to become Spirit.

Beauty presents itself in history as an eschatological aspiration, especially in the midst of crises, privations, violence. It is not escapist. It rather wishes to make the presence of transcendence, in the midst of the conflicts of immanence, more effective. This is the very essence of Art, which is the execution of Beauty in its transcendence in the historical immanent realm. Beauty is the original voice of Good in the middle of so much evil, making a call to the origin as goal, as the originary. Beauty is the voice of truth in the middle of so many untruths in the form of lies. As a voice, Beauty is origin and opens up itself to be an

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<sup>21</sup> I admit having taking into account notions from the Existentialist movement, cfr. W. Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*, Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958; G. Cotkin, *Existential America*, Baltimore-London: John Hopkins University, 2003; M. Friedman (ed.), *The Worlds of Existentialism: A Critical Reader*, New York: Random House, 2004; V. E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, New York: Pocket Books, 1963; H. Kuhn, *Encounters with Nothingness. Essays on Existentialism*, London: Meuthen, 1951; M. Grene, *Introduction to Existentialism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948; F.H. Heunemann, *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958; J. Macquarrie, *Existentialism*, New York: Penguin Books, 1972; R. Solomon (ed.), *Existentialism*, New York: Random House, 1974. Existentialism as a movement may be a thing of the past but its questions, issues, concerns are perennial.

origin, a renewed origin in pluralities, for others in order to hear the voice of good and truth, in oneness, i.e., in solidarity, in communion and participation with others of the same world whom we welcome, by means of hospitality. This renewed origin, attained as the goal, is the originary. The origin is the starting point of history. The originary is history's origin reencountered eschatologically as a goal, presupposing the enrichment of history made liveable in a concrete path which we is Spirituality.

As origin, Beauty likewise accompanies man along the historical way until it becomes itself the eschatological goal by means of its own mediation in man's act of creation in Art made concrete, tangible in artworks and artifacts. Beauty as origin is the a priori of our lives that becomes a posteriori along the way in a more enriched manner<sup>22</sup> after undergoing the experience as mediation that unfolds itself in events (in the artworks and artifacts) that make man more mature, developed, by marking the passages of man's own development traceable in the concreteness of its texts (artworks, artifacts), and makes him grow as a living being of experience or Spirit always oriented toward an intimate contact with the Absolute Spirit in terms of love.<sup>23</sup> This is not done in isolation but in communion with other men, with other 'fleshes' to form a network of fleshes such that humanity in communion becomes a single flesh that aspires to the same integrity, that responds to the same vocation to be Spirit in participating in Beauty by means of Creativity made concrete, made flesh in Art and in its artworks or artifacts.

By welcoming them, we initiate, accompany, place them in the bosom of our own effectively lived world, which we call our home, in turn built up as hospitality as an ambiance (more than just time and space) for the event of homing, of being comfortable in the home, of being at home. This is what we all wait for (or what awaits us) as we face the origin, as we project it as a goal, to make the origin (the house) a home

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<sup>22</sup> I am somehow paraphrasing the Popperian adage: '*I should claim, then, that everything we know is genetically a priori*. All that is a posteriori is the *selection* from what we ourselves have invented a priori', K. R. Popper, *All Life is Problem Solving*, London-New York: Routledge, 2001, 46. This passage indicates growth, development, maturity as selection is a part of the experiencing process as it takes place. It indicates a way of how experience effectively becomes mediation.

<sup>23</sup> J. Leclerg, *Esperienza spirituale e teologia. Alla scuola dei monaci medievali*, Milan: Jaca Book, 1990, 147-149.

or the originary. The origin is a house that calls. The origin is a calling for its own experiential transformation as a home, which is attained eschatology within history. The house is an ambiance that opens itself as existence (just being there) but seeks to grow as life (being there for someone). The shift from existence to life demands that the transcendent not only becomes present (Mystery) but becomes effectively present (Sacrament), i.e., a truly living and dynamic present with purpose amidst the conflicts and difficulties of experience such that existence becomes life or full of meaning whose revelation is Beauty, whose revelation calls for participation in Art executed by creativity.

In effect, man in order to become Spirit must travel in his house, in his world, in this universe which is the totality of all that exists in history in order to discover and live its eschatological meaning as a home. In the house, the Mystery is present. But in the home, this same Mystery dwells. Presence is only existence whereas Effectivity of the Presence is life. To make this effective, there must be a process. Art is this process. In effect, art is mystagogy, i.e., the process of discovering the house as a home, of making history an eschatology, of encountering the principle or beginning (origin) as the goal (originary). In effect, it is Art. Art is executed by Creativity which consists in a mystagogy, a spiritual and integral process, made directional as a way, of man becoming Spirit (Spirituality).<sup>24</sup>

Art is a mystagogy, an initiation, accompaniment, placement of ourselves, always in communion with Others, in the bosom of the Mystery where what we deem to be the Absolute in its transcendence dwells in our immanence.<sup>25</sup> Art as Mystagogy becomes possible in history through Creativity, by which man becomes a Spirit and participates in the Absolute, made concrete in artworks and artifacts. Each work of art is an act of mystagogy, an act of hope that goes beyond the limits of history and enters into eschatology, into the fullness of participation with the transcendent Absolute.

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<sup>24</sup> Admittedly, I have benefited from some reflections of K. Rahner on this regard, 'Spirit and Existential Commitment' in: Idem., *Theological Investigations XVI: Experience of the Spirit. Source of Theology*, New York: The Seabury Press, 1979, 24-34.

<sup>25</sup> The reflections of E. Burke on the Sublime or the Absolute in the field of aesthetics still remain as potent sources for further investigations or researches, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

## 5. ART: HAPPINESS, EXPERIENIABILITY, DOMESTICATION.

From the Aristotelian ethical tradition, we derive that man is teleologically ordained to the pursuit of his happiness (*eudaimonia*).<sup>26</sup> Happiness is the key to his search for meaning in existence, as the existentialist movement would say. Happiness finds its concreteness in *eu zên* or living well. Living well is to be a spirit. Happiness is *eu* (well) and *daimon* (spirit or demon). Happiness is becoming this well spirit. It is being spiritual. Its path is a spirituality.

Beauty is the ideal in as much as it is, at the same time, the manifestation being, the source of this happiness characterized by an experience of order, harmony, sublimity that touches the inner fibre of man, i.e. the profound depths of man which we commonly call his conscience (but not limited to his moral sense but above is his sense for the Absolute), making him go beyond his selfish, base and isolating tendencies and instincts and instead invites him to take a way of expansion, integrity for the good and the truth, such that he would undertake a process of integration with the Absolute, the Supreme value that would guarantee that his existence be transformed into life.

Conscience (*syneidesis*) must be understood as the calling to living well, to *eudaemon*, to spirituality. Beauty (*kalos*) is the call to living well by living accordingly (*kalos kagathos*), i.e. according to the ideal of beauty and made concrete in goodness.<sup>27</sup>

Such an integration in man, which is his growth, maturity and development in terms of elevation to the transcendent given his immanence in history, would necessarily mean that Beauty in as much as it is identified as the force of the Absolute (*Apolutos* and in Greek it would be identified with *Ho Theos* or the God as opposed to other gods) as both source or origin and goal would be internal, inherent in such a transformation of existence (being there) into life (being there for someone or something).<sup>28</sup> Only this Absolute, identified with God (whether merely

<sup>26</sup> Cfr. especially Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, I, 7. I am especially in debt to R. A. Gauthier, *La morale d'Aristote*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958. Also: G. Hughes, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle on Ethics*, London: Routledge, 2001.

<sup>27</sup> I owe many insights to R. Wardy, *Doing Greek Philosophy*, London-New York: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> I have found inspiration in this statement by A.C. Danto: 'By 'integral' I mean that beauty is internal to the meaning of the work', *The Abuse of Beauty. Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*, Chicago-La Salle, Open Court, 2006, 9.

ontological or even personal, depending on the religious tradition and its Spirituality), can guarantee this meaning which is revealed in history and ultimately encountered in eschatology.

And this Absolute makes itself experienced, i.e. mediates itself as a vocation, a call to a fuller communion and participation in it. The voice of this vocation, this call that resonates not just like a tone or timber in history is itself origin and fount is Beauty. By this voice, which is the voice of the Absolute as Beauty calling out as God, there is a call to an immediate relation<sup>29</sup>, which is proper of being at home. Being at home even the Inexpressible is expressed in relationality, in deep intimacy, with the Absolute as Beauty as the hearth (this is the mystical, so to speak).<sup>30</sup>

A vocation, a call can only be heard in history as a promise. Meaning in history always denotes that the latter is a search for the former in soteriological terms.<sup>31</sup> The search of meaning takes place in the world which is the totality of reference points that points to geographies as to where the reference becomes not just a model but a mode of life, intimately assimilated up to the point of familiarity such that this mode of life becomes the home, wherein all referentialities converge.

The world is charted by referentialities. The home is where all referentialities converge in order to become relationalities. World is a criteriological reference point that is the essence of all Ontology. Home is a spiritual relational point which is the essence of all Metaphysics.

Art is homemaking. Its source and execution<sup>32</sup>, which is creativity, is a constant process of homecoming. When man is at home, man becomes fully human by being Spirit, by being in communion, in intimacy, with the Absolute that defines his existence as life and by which is God by participation. Beauty is the presence of the Absolute that is the origin or principle, the originary or the principle encountered at the end, the very originating process that consists of a homecoming upon hearing the voice of the home.

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<sup>29</sup> I am taking into account the reflections of E. Levinas, *Beyond the Verse. Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, Bloomington-Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994, 97-98.

<sup>30</sup> I have been enriched by this suggestive article on this regard, M. de Certeau, 'L'énonciation mystique', in: *Recherches de Sciences Religieuses* 64 (1976), 183-215.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. the reflections of K. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1949, 182-207.

<sup>32</sup> On the notion of execution, I have at the back of my mind the reflection of J. Ortega y Gasset, *¿Qué es conocimiento?*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1992.

This voice, this call: the tone or timber, the origin and fount is constant mediation<sup>33</sup> by which reality in itself becomes real in realities, in which the real becomes realities in reality. This constant mediation is experience. Only what is experientiable is real because the experientiable is reality in realities. Only what is experientiable is reality in the realities because it is real.

This mediation, by which experientiability is established historically from a transcendent origin which in history places itself as the goal eschatologically, has been classified or categorized by man's rational power or reasoning by which he becomes conscious of himself as being conscious and capable thus of evaluating everything by positing an Absolute Value, which he rationally postulates and would even believe to be as religious principle (religious in the sense of the link to the Absolute meaning of his life). This rational power, on the other hand, is also reasonability or capacity to establish order, harmony not only with oneself, vis-à-vis the Absolute, but others like man or other men.

Man's rational power classifies and categorizes the experientiable into two main areas: a) the given or what is termed as nature (it is often referred to as God-given) and b) the acquired or the artificial or culture or what is cultivated by man from what is natural or from nature, creating webs of meaning wherein interactions take place.<sup>34</sup> The experientiable is an intersection of two spheres or areas. From this intersection, man hypostasizes his aspiration toward the Absolute in terms of Communion and Participation in dimensions such as Religion, Politics, Sciences, Domestic Sectors, Civil Society, Art whose historical institutionalization are traditions incarnated by the Churches, Households States, Academies, Communities and Artistic or Cultural Movements.

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<sup>33</sup> Cfr. the suggestive reflections on mediation by P. Ricouer, 'On Interpretation', in: Idem., *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991, 1-20.

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. C. Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books, 1973; R Williams, *Culture & Society, 1780-1950*, New York: Harper & Row, 1958; C. Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984. E. Hall, *The Silent Language*, New York: Doubleday, 1959; A. J. Marsella et al. (eds.), *Culture and Self: Asian and Western Perspectives*, New York: Tavistock, 1985; B. Martin, *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981. See also the suggestive reflections of H. Dreyfus, 'Beyond Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault' in: G. Shapiro & A. Sica (eds.), *Hermeneutics. Questions and Prospects*, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988, 66-83.

In these dimensions the two main areas of the experientiable meet or have their intersection in order to continue history by creating new avenues of experience in terms of production of material, which all come together in events or happenings, for newer narratives, for newer circumstances for the flesh to incarnate and create in order to keep the historical conversation in search of meaning ongoing.<sup>35</sup> In the meeting of these two areas and in the specification of the same in the aforementioned dimensions, man creates a home (all that is effectively lived and thus livable for others through me from the world) from his world (all that is livable in all that exists), which in turn is created from the universe (all that exists).

Art is creating a home (domestication or homing within the world and eventually, if possible, of the world) from the world (totality of that which is livable and shareable out of all that exists) which is derived from the universe (totality of all that exists). The Universe (Kosmos) is identifiable with Nature (Physis) or the totality of that which is given or not man made, out of which man has to cultivate himself, create himself and an ambiance for himself which is culture of which civilization is the text. In the ancient times, the universe was identifiable with the earth, the planet named after the goddess.

However, modernity is characterized by a better distinction, differentiation of spheres, which are levels or degrees of specialization (which are levels or degrees of conquering, of vanquishing just like those explorers that expanded the notion of world through land and sea travel up to space travel) by which we can derive even better what we could define as world and home. This desire to conquer has brought about a crisis, a temptation to do harm that has caused man to be alienated from the cosmos, earth such that because of our penchant for conquering, wherein techne or art has become technology or simply mere facilitating the power of conquering but much distanced or alienated from Beauty, we have made this cosmos, earth less of a home. In this light, Collingwood hits the bulleseye when he affirms that 'art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See the suggestive introduction of E. T. Gendlin, *Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1962, 1-15.

<sup>36</sup> R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, London-Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, 336.

Only in rediscovering the Divine in its presence, in terms of Beauty, can we regain the home. On this regard, I find these words of a great scientist and mystic (T. de Chardin) worth pondering on: ‘The temptations of too large a world, the seductions of too beautiful a world--where are these now? They do not exist. Now the earth can certainly clasp me in her giant arms. She can swell me with her life, or take me back into her dust. She can deck herself out for me with every charm, with every horror, with every mystery. She can intoxicate me with her perfume of tangibility and unity. She can cast me to my knees in expectation of what is maturing in her breast...But her enchantments can no longer do me harm, since she has become for me, over and above herself, the body of him who is and of him who is coming. *The divine milieu*.’<sup>37</sup>

Taking all these into consideration, the home is where the divine has become an intimate part of human life. At home we construct our prayer nooks or monuments to our domestic gods by which we learn how to search for the Absolute in a wider sphere of hypostasis. The domestic gods or ‘homed gods’, the gods whose transcendent wings we have clipped so as to make not only their voice (Beauty) heard but so that we could participate in this same Beauty by making our mundane, immanent voices heard to them, especially in our cultic acts toward such a participation (Religion). The domestic gods are man’s fundamental formation coordination point which expands its geographies into the different hypostatic dimensions in an ever growing and maturing interaction within the intersection of what is given and what is cultivated. The domestic gods open up to the shared gods or values which coincide transcendently in the shared Absolute, the basis of communion and participation for all humankind in its search to be humanity, i.e., in humanity can existence become life.

Because of this, humanity is man saving man (as Saint-Exupery has written in the epigraph of our reflections), man seeing in each other the Spirit, the vocation to be Spirit in communion and participation with the Absolute by responding to the call of the Absolute which is Beauty, which is also the Absolute as origin and as the originary, the very same principle found as the end and goal of the adventure of the meaning of life which is Spirituality. Spirituality is the process of integrity which is captured as meaning in history but whose roots is the very harmony

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<sup>37</sup> P. Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu*, New York: Perennial Classics, 2001, 134.

behind this meaning which is Beauty, which flows like water, as Eliot portrays it and which at the same time is the source.

## 6. ARTWORKS AND ART: WORLDING TO HOMING

Art is a specific language.<sup>38</sup> We often confuse art or the homing from the worlding from the universe with artworks. Artworks are the concrete discursivity of art. They are the flesh of Art, the embodiment of Creativity, made into the textual weave of concreteness, of effective Presence which is Presence that touches the flesh and not just the body. In this sense, Art is not just the hypostization mentioned above which is the community of artists and cultural workers as the creative force of an even greater society (either Civil, Political or Religious or all of them combined).

*Teknh* (which we transcribe as *Techne*), from which the Latin *Ars* is derived, is usually translated for facility or ease to do something (hence the word technique). It means craft, the ease of skill to produce something distinguishing and uniting means and end, planning and execution, process and product. *Techne* is homing or facilitating one's being human by creating an ambiance of comfort, of ease, of facility which is the home, where the domestic gods can be cultivated (worshipped), creating a space for the Mystery or the Presence of the Divine in its transcendence as Absolute in the immanence of human history. The Mystery is usually identified with the Holy (*Hagios*).<sup>39</sup>

In light of this, it is preferable to deem the Holy as the Absolute in its transcendence but in its power of attraction or beauty as source or origin so as to inspire reverence which is action to grow, mature and develop into communion and participation with the Absolute as the end (or the originary or the principle reencountered at the end). The Holy creates an ambiance full of the manifestation in glory of the Absolute as the Holy in its Beauty. And this ambiance is what we call the Sacred (*Ieros*).

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. N. Goodman, *Languages of Art. An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co. Inc., 1976.

<sup>39</sup> This is mainly due to the influence of R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, London-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958. See the brilliant study of Q. Racionero, 'Lo sagrado y lo perfecto. Contextos de lo divino en la Antigua Grecia', in: F. Duque (ed.), *Lo santo y lo sagrado*, Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1993, 77-138.

The Sacred is the ambiance for the *Techne*. All homes are hearths for the Sacred. The Sacred is the fire that burns in all the homes, warming them from the cold of the impersonality of the world and the interaction between the given and cultivated worlds in the hypostasized or substantialized dimensions and the anonymity of the vast universe. Only in the home can Art, which is more than the specific sector of artisans, craftsmen, musicians, playwrights, writers, be cultivated and appreciated. Art is the call of homing, to create a home for the Absolute in as much as it is the ideal in Beauty. By homing the Sacred dwells and constitutes that specific ambiance of its dwelling as a home.

Artworks, whether they be plastic, performing, literary, are homes for in them the Sacred dwells. Of course, we are referring to genuine and authentic artworks, a criteriological issue which has generated abuse which need not concern us now.<sup>40</sup> The dwelling of the Sacred creates an ambiance of Mystery which is the familiarity in immanence but sublimeness and distance in transcendence which intersect as given and cultivated, Divine and Human.

In these homes, we are in contact with the Sacred by which the Absolute as Beauty is enshrined, homed from the impersonal broadness of the world. Artworks are tabernacles, holies of holy, temples. They are the discourses of Beauty. Hence, they are beautiful. The beautiful is the discursiveness of the Absolute in Beauty in concrete situations, in concrete homes or sanctuaries which are artworks.

In these homes, which are discourses, we find encapsulated a vision or look or glance (*schauung*) which may be grandiose or which expand the home into a world for its universal claims that go beyond restricted intimacies and their circles (*weltanschauung*). The artist or artisan (*techniths*), because he builds with his artwork a sanctuary for the Absolute as Beauty, is a beautiful soul, a nobleman or aristocrat (*kaloskagathos* from *kalos kai agathos* or beautiful and good man).<sup>41</sup>

This beautiful soul is in a sense divine, i.e., in communion with the divine and participates in the divine. His artwork facilitates our communion and participation into the divine. His artwork is this discursivity of the Mystery, of the home of the divine. Hence, it is a mystagogy or

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. for example the aforementioned work of A. C. Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty*.

<sup>41</sup> Cfr. for example, Plato, *Symposium*, 210 b; Idem., *Timaetus*, 87c; Plotinus, *Enneads*, 5, 8, 13.

accompaniment, initiation to the Mystery, to the ambiance of the divine. The Divine is above all ambiance. It is not God. God is the personal divine, the ambiance in Person who is relational.

Only in theistic traditions is the Divine God and therefore relational. Consequently, theistic mystagogy is personal and relationality. Nevertheless, in every tradition in this world (each specific tradition, in as much as it is institutionalized, is a home in the world, the permanence of the home in this world). Such a mystagogy necessarily makes use of language as a transfer (*metaphora*), with all its emotive and subjective nucleus<sup>42</sup>, from the intimacy of one's subjectivity to the shared world from which the home is constructed. The home is ambiance of communion and participation forged through hospitality and exercised in solidarity with sympathy as the current of realization.

Such discursivity is attained by parting from and developing a vision which in turn is built up by a looking at, an attitude of contemplation (*theoria*). And this vision is born out of perception, starting with the senses. It is aesthetics. Aesthetics brings together *aesthesis* (perception) and *logismos* (rationality, thought, calculation or production of the idea) thus producing a vision, a perspective, a theory (contemplation).<sup>43</sup>

Aesthetics is normally understood in terms of art appreciation, perception of beauty in the artworks, intuition or intuitive vision of the art in these works. 'Art (artworks) includes not just works of formal beauty to be enjoyed by people with 'taste' or works with beauty and uplifting moral messages, but also works that are ugly and disturbing, with a shatteringly negative moral content.'<sup>44</sup>

Beauty is not that which is just pleasurable. Beauty is the origin, manifestation, experientiability of the Absolute in as much as it is historical truth in this immanent world but with a bearing of transcendence that permeates beyond the immediateness of the home or the surrounding home of the artwork and can create or expand this home and homes in universality from the surrounding world. Beauty is the constant experientiability in Art, as discoursed in the Artwork, for all, expanding

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<sup>42</sup> Cfr. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, London-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936.

<sup>43</sup> Plato, *Republic*, VIII, 546b; Idem., *Phaedrus*, 249b.

<sup>44</sup> C. Freeland, *Art Theory. A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, 19.

its ambiance in Mystery, making possible that this home be shared with others in the world. This is what is called hospitality. Art is ultimately hospitality, i.e., sharing the home with the world by making this world a home for the many.

This many is humanity, which we must help, save, aid by means of mystagogy. Mystagogy is hospitality extended to create communion wherein Art, as the experience of the Spirit, by means of creation, participates in Beauty. This participation is the permanent quality of human immanence which because of its rationality is a call to Spirit, to integrity, to participate in the transcendence of the Absolute in which man goes beyond his own limitation which is capsulized by the world, the house and is manifested in man's capacity of transfiguring he house into a home, so that the Absolute in its Mystery will not only be present but be effectively present as Sacrament.

The dignity of humanity consists in its capability of being Spirit in communion with the Absolute by participating in the same Absolute in terms of Beauty and by making others participate in this same Absolute (Mystagogy). This capability is exercised in creativity by means of Art whose mystagogical value is mediational in the concrete artworks or artifacts. This same humanity, which is the experiential attitude in view of the many, must be upheld by us in terms of communion and participation, especially when the cosmos, earth, world become hostile and threaten our homes either with natural calamities (for example, earthquakes, floods or famines) or cultural or man-made disasters (like war or fire or acts of violence). To this same humanity which is the attitude by which we see the many as humanity in our image, in the concreteness of hospitality which is solidarity by which we must extend our homes, we open to extend this hospitality by opening the home which is the effective dwelling of the Mystery especially in Art in the artworks or artifacts.

We take, derive, adopt them from the world to welcome in the warmth of the hearth of the Absolute in as much as we effectively live it. This Absolute is Beauty in itself, as it dwells as Mystery in its divine milieu which is our home. This expansion of the home by hospitality in the world is Beauty in its execution. Humanity, where attitude and seeing ourselves reflected in the many as our image and likeness, is nothing more than extending the warmth of the hearth to those in the world in our homes, in the divine milieu. Adoption is the most radical form of

hospitality wherein the stranger becomes family, wherein those of the world become of the home. This is Art in action: the making of the home to adopt others.

## **7. CULTURE AND HOSPITALITY: VISION AND VISIONING.**

Hospitality starts with the development of an aesthetics as captured in the artwork. Aesthetics is born out of art, the task of sharing the home, of hospitality. Every vision which is the fruit of perception and discoursed as an aesthetics is a waiting. Waiting is worlding. Hoping is fulfilling by being hospitality. Waiting is formulating a vision. This is Aesthetics, the starting point, the origin.

Hospitality is a cultivation of the self for others in sharing and creating a home. Cultivation is the act of culture. Aesthetics is the act of being able to perceive, intuit, appreciate culture, not just its artifacts but its very act of culture, the act of cultivating which is waiting, which is worlding. Cultural artifacts, like artworks, are remnants of cultivating, which is waiting, which is worlding and which form the basis of hospitality which primordially is an act of formation, of building character, of building aristocratic people with sensibilities, to be beautiful and good persons, spirits, full of the spirit (enthusiasts from *entheos* or to be full of god or having god inside of oneself).

Culture is not a solitary act, just as formation of the beautiful and good soul, aristocrat or spirit is an act that opens up the home, expands it in the world, making everyone not just citizens of the same world or nation but family members in the same home, gathered around the same hearth, warmed by the Sacred which is presence of the Absolute as Beauty in as much as it is Holy. Culture is the flesh, in the world, that is a body that desires and that seeks the other flesh creating a network that brings together all of mankind's waiting in order to create a network for hope that would make ascend toward the transcend, which is viewed as the Holy, the totally Other from this humanly immanent history and yet is effectively present by means of its own calling which is Beauty and this calling is carried out and is responded to in Creativity.

The Absolute is the Holy in which it becomes present in its transcendence in the immanence of human history with the Sacred as its ambiance, with Beauty as its modality of presence as origin that invites

to itself in a journey of encountering this origin at the end of the experience, characterized by growth, maturity and development of the vision into the fullness of Art in creativity.

Only in art, by producing artworks, can there be an originating process. In creation, reality exercised its mystagogy over man. By means of Art, man participates in this mystagogy by originating. By mystagogy the waiting becomes a hoping which is homing, the creating of a home which is the originating process, the fulfillment of mystagogy. Mystagogy is faithfulness, it is fulfillment, it is the promise that comes to be fulfilled in making others creative by proposing a vision, a starting point, an originating aesthetic so that others may have a vision, an origin for their own mystagogy which is a journey to the ordinary from an originating process: the process of the origin reaching itself as the goal or the originary.

In view of the above, the following words are in order:

‘It is crucial to realize that the work of art draws on infinitely more than material existence. In this context a psychological approach is inadequate. More precisely, the psychology of art only sketches in an outline which, since by itself it is incomplete, must be given real form by being set within a much wider context. The work of art creates anew behind us an order which brings together the separated fragments of mankind. And this order is based, not on vague and absurd idea of man, but on the realization of that involvement and communication in which our freedom finds its true expression. In turn when the artist creates his work, he seems to incorporate into it an invisible community, the spirit of a society in which the social substance, the ‘manna’ which holds the secret of our future existence, is crystallized. Perhaps he can do this because we will never know absolute joy.’<sup>45</sup>

At this juncture, in the same vein, the following quote from a renowned Philosopher, known to be an aesthete, is in order:

‘The work of art can have an effect comparable to that of metaphor: integrating levels of sense that are overlaid, preserved and contained together. The work of art is in this way...the occasion for discovering aspects of language that are ordinarily concealed by its usual practice;

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<sup>45</sup> J. Duvignaud, *The Sociology of Art*, London: Paladin, 1972, 19-20.

its instrumentalized function of communication. The work of art bares properties of language which otherwise would remain invisible and unexplored.<sup>46</sup>

We are all surrounded by artworks and not only in museums, galleries or private or public edifices. To enter Museums like the ones of the Augustinians in Paseo de los Filipinos in Valladolid or in San Agustín, Intramuros, Manila is to enter into a world apart from the ordinary, everyday, natural world organized and thematized accordingly with exhibits of samples of creations configured in texts called artworks. To imagine a world without art, one might need to go to the Banawe Rice Terraces or view a body of water without land. We are often faced with beautiful views such as the Hollywood sign in Hollywood Hills viewed from Hancock Park amid buildings or the Sierra de Guadarrama in Madrid with all the edifices that 'block' our view from Príncipe Pío Station. Or try listening to a CD or Podcast of Glenn Gould playing Bach amid the chirping birds and meowing cats in your backyard. Or listening to Pop Stars like Michael Jackson with 'Thriller' being drowned by the sound of crashing waves in Balayan, Bay, Batangas. Or traveling musicians along Santa Monica Beach in California.

Doubtless, the contrast between Man and Nature are indeed stunning or more electrifying with such contrasting sights, views and even sounds. Or we could just see how the Basilica of St. Peter, together with the square and colonnades, has leveled or eliminated ancient Vatican Hill and try to imagine how this place was when Christians were being executed and people were buried therein. Countless times I myself stood facing the city of Salamanca from the Arrabal to imagine the whole scenery without the Twin Cathedrals, University, Casa de Lis, Roman Bridge, San Esteban and so forth. Or San Francisco Bay without The Golden Gate Bridge which in the X-Men film was lifted by Mutant Villain Magneto. Such a scene, though cinematographic, highlights the contrast, the struggle of Man and Nature which is resolved in creativity, in going beyond the immanent given into a possible transcendence with respect to such an immanence. Thus what is man-made (even for cinematographic effects, without any unimagined historical reality) is a means of cultivation, of caring in terms of the call of the Absolute which

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<sup>46</sup> P. Ricouer, *Critique and Conviction*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, 172.

is Beauty and of man's participative response as a creator within this call: Art.

A world without any of these man-made edifices, no matter how beautiful, sublime or grand, would be 'primeval' or 'pristine' or, even, 'primitive'. Or just plainly, given or natural. The presence of edifices and any form of artwork, which is categorized as 'artificial' or 'man-made', indicates the presence of Culture, which is Art being cultivated, cared for, nurtured. Culture is precisely what is man-made. What is man-made is artistic and denotes cultivation, care, nurturing for it is homemaking, defining a portion of the world as the home for the Sacred, to be cared for, nurtured.

In other words, Culture is the web or net or network made by man and consistently done so with patterns to show, given it is cultivated, cared for, developed by man, derived from his nature and making use by means of acquisition of the surrounding nature as his material (in the material sense or as tools and ingredients or in the formal sense or as inspiration and idea). Culture becomes the story of the house, 'that is no more a house', or of the farm 'no more a farm' or a town 'no more a town' that would all lead us, direct us to getting lost, to finding ourselves in a renewed shared reality which we have taken possession of and which has taken possession of us all, to making directives, which is metaphysical, which is the fulfillment of man in Art by Creativity:

Back out of all this now too much for us,  
 Back in a time made simple by the loss  
 Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off  
 Like graveyard marble sculpture in the weather,  
 There is a house that is no more a house  
 Upon a farm that is no more a farm  
 And in a town that is no more a town.  
 The road there, if you'll let a guide direct you  
 Who only has at heart your getting lost,  
 May seem as if it should have been a quarry-  
 Great monolithic knees the former town  
 Long since gave up pretense of keeping covered.  
 And there's a story in a book about it.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> R. Frost, Directive, 1-11.

Culture is man cultivating, in the act of cultivating given this cultivation creates webs, patterns, networks, communities, societies. Such webs, as stated, are networks of the flesh, patterning the flesh in its innate waiting to hope for the transcendental Absolute who calls out in terms of Beauty and whose response is creativity whose execution is Art. This is the principle of the execution of Beauty in Art which are the flesh of the human spirit in its participation in the Beauty of the Absolute, which are networks of flesh that wait and strive to hope. This execution is a carrying out of the flesh in its waiting shifting toward hoping that brings about the art work or the piece or text of culture, which we call civilization which is the story of the flesh, the narrative of culture or the process of cultivation, which creates networks of the flesh in the endeavor of Spirituality, by means of art and its execution which is Creativity. By creating networks, the flesh makes the Logos as Word in mediation as Principle of Realization of the mediation which is the experiential narrative itself, which parts from waiting in the origin and culminates as a Spirituality, in maturity, growth, development as Hope in the Originary in the level of eschatology.

Culture is also (and above all) an act that remains to be narrated in its text called civilization. It is a self-implicating act wherein man cultivates himself, from a living being (vegetative soul or *anima*) to discovering his sentient and rational faculties (as a rational being or *anthropos*) in order to become a fully-integrated person in its individual peculiarity with a reflexive basis (reflection means going outside of oneself to be conscious of the external world and eventually going back to oneself and implying oneself or being a subject) with a transcendental projection that goes beyond the limits of the immediate and immanent (spirit or *pneuma*). In the words of a renowned philosopher: 'Reflection does not withdraw from the world towards the unity of consciousness as the world's basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence flu up like sparks from a fire: it slackens the intentional threads, which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world as strange and paradoxical.'<sup>48</sup> Reflection is wanting to take part, it is participating (taking part) by waiting in the immanent world and hoping for a transcendent world wherein we could all take part and help others take part by our taking part in the call of

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<sup>48</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge, 2005, xv.

the Absolute, which is Creativity, made concrete, made flesh in Art and its artworks and artifacts.

Hospitality is the process of forming the discourse which is articulated into a vision. Aesthetics is more than just perception or appreciation. It brings together perceptions, appreciations, interactions in order to form a vision of the world in as much as it is liveable, hospitable. Hospitality is the act of making effecting this hospitability, by building, edifying, preparing a home within the world. An artwork is not just a viewpoint of the world nor is it a vision of the same. It is a home within the world. It is a home that seeks to welcome, to give hospitality. The home is for the flesh that wishes to be the effective presence of the Absolute. The home is creativity in making an ambiance for Art. Art is making this world, this house into a home.

### **8. ORIGIN, ORIGINATING, ORGINARY**

The task of producing the artwork is the task of waiting to make a home within the world and to articulate it as a finished home to share it with others. As stated, waiting is worlding. Worlding is establishing the world in which the home is to be built. Any building or edifying is production. The task of producing is a visioning to form a vision in order to form others in the world into the intimacies, intricacies, warmth of this vision, which is a home, as articulated in the artworld.

To form others in the world into this vision is the act of visioning which is discursive. This vision is a discourse of the mediation of the experience, by which reality becomes real in a specific reality (or realities), by which the real becomes reality (in realities) as condensed, presented, offered, gifted in the artwork as we run the course of our history, to its setting (by going westward) and by giving a vision which is still formless or 'unstoried, artless, unenhanced' from which all would become. To form others is to enable them to build their own narratives, their own discourses of the mediation of the flesh as it grows, matures and develops into Spirit which is experience, to help them be at home and to build homes by being participants in the Creativity, in the very task of Art which is the very process of Spirituality in as much as it is the Way of Creativity, to make the real effectively lived as reality, to make reality effectively lived as the real. Not just effectively existing or just

living. But effectively lived, i.e., Sacramentalized. And this opens up a discourse which are experiential narratives in themselves given that the artworks or artifacts are in themselves discourses of the flesh by being flesh in which the Spirit took itself and became flesh in the exercise, execution of Creativity, the living out of Participation in the Absolute in its eschatological transcendence, from our incarnated standpoint, who calls out in this immanent history as Beauty. Such discourses are histories of their own response to the transcendental Absolute in Art and, above all, they are echoes of the call of the transcendental Absolute in our immanent history or Beauty. Again, in the words of the sublime poet:

Such as we were we gave ourselves outright  
 (The deed of gift was many deeds of war)  
 To the land vaguely realizing westward,  
 But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,  
 Such as she was, such as she would become.<sup>49</sup>

The origin is found at the intersection where mediation takes place which is both given and received (in order to be cultivated). The deed of gift is the call to cultivate where givenness and reception converge, where call and response meet. To cultivate, to be cultural is to participate in the mediation of the Absolute which reveals itself as Beauty as the origin and is a call to communion by participation, by taking part. Participation is taking part to found, to establish, to set the origin intersecting with the dimensions of Religion, Politics, Civil Society, etc. Art is the process of this participation which is a call to communion, the realization of the vocation of communion. To participate is to be not just body in the world or universe or house, but flesh building a home to be Spirit in search, within history, of the originary which is the origin that becomes the goal at the end of history which is eschatology. The origin, once found, is hospitality opening itself up to be hospitable, to be made hospitable and calls forth hospitality. Participation is being flesh that takes part in the hope, i.e., effectively making this world, this house of all that is real, of all that is reality a home by making it hospitable, homely in Creativity, in Art which is the flesh building a network with other flesh to become Spirit, mediation toward the Absolute, the origin, in response to its call in the originary.

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<sup>49</sup> R. Frost, *The Gift Outright*, 12-15.

The origin is the point of mediation. A point of mediation is the point of departure for the search for meaning which is a waiting for meaning, a striving for meaning, a construction of the path, itinerary, journey to meaning. This point of departure is the logos as principle of encounter. Encountering is becoming rational. It is encountering the reason in all points of divergence and convergence, reconciling tensions, conflicts into a harmonious whole which is the main ingredient of Creativity. This main ingredient gives us a waiting shed, a point of waiting wherein the principle could commence to grow, mature and develop into hope for the originary. Waiting is searching, desiring, constructing, parting from the origin. This parting is a birthing toward growth, maturity and development. It is a parting from the universe passing through the world going toward home where the origin is reencountered as the originary, as the principle which is the goal of the experiential process in history of growth, maturity and development of man as a spirit via Beauty and participating in this Beauty in communion with it, which is the true essence of Art: creativity.

The mediation, because it flows from the origin, is not just a thing. It is the exercise of mystagogy. It is the exercise of art, from a vision which is the origin. However, we must not remain in the vision. We must, as finite and culpable beings incapable of creation 'ex nihilo' to appropriate for ourselves the given of the Absolute in the veil of Beauty as it is revealed in the cosmos and in the world, and create a home by the means of Art.

In Art, through the artwork, we create a home not only for ourselves. We make others at home, we make this house which is the world hospitable by transforming this body into flesh in order to grow into Spirit. This creation is an act of originating. In originating, we cease our waiting and start hoping by initiating, by communicating, by accompanying (mystagogy) through the vision (aesthetics) that we communicate in our artwork, so that others may participate, thus creating effectively a network of flesh, a weave of experience in communion, a texture of creativity which is a texture of mediation. However, the finality of it all does not consist in dwelling in in our vision or to remain aesthetical (which is waiting or remaining in the immanence of history) but to be artistic, to create, to re-create, to reappropriate the home offered in the hospitality (which is fulfillment in hope or eschatology) so that the orig-

inating process of art may generate creativity, which is the force behind the Art, the inebriation with the very creativity as derived from and developed in the aesthetic vision, so that others may too be creative.

Beauty, which is origin, does not remain as starting point nor in the process. It has to re-find itself as the goal which is the originary, which is the hope fulfilled in which a new vision is formulated, in which others become creative as well, participate in the hiddenness of the Absolute as it comes in Beauty. And this coming is its fulfillment in the flesh that calls out with the voice of the Absolute Spirit toward the human flesh to become a Human Spirit, in participation, by means of Creativity, by means of making this hostile house which is the world a home, by opening a path of hospitality to others to make them feel at home and live this home in mystagogy which is the growth, maturity and development of the Human Spirit together in Creativity, in hope.

Beauty remains as hope and hope reverberates in memory, memory of the origin that becomes present in the goal of creativity, in the end, in the ever-creative present that continues the mystagogy, for the dawn of creativity which announces a new day, a new hope, a change in man's activities, especially in the socio-political realm wherein creativity, for a better and more meaningful life, is necessary. In this realm, the originary must be found in the Beauty of living together (society) and doing things together (politics) for the betterment of society.

In all human activities, man must grow, mature, develop from being a soul that just waits for solutions into a spirit, in full metaphysical integrity (the quality for participation and communion with the Absolute which participates and communicates with man in Beauty) in order to live out life fully, from mere being there (existence) to being there for someone and something (life) in a new dawn, under the moon of passing stages and fads that fade, with the fire of creativity that is shared 'across a table' in communion with others to make them participate of the shared Absolute in Beauty, especially by means of education.

Mystagogy is above all education, despite the fatigues of everyday life, with its ups and downs, successes and failures, constant journeys like going 'back and forth all night on the ferry'. Mystagogy starts by presenting a vision (aesthetics) and perfects itself in parting from this vision of awaiting into the hope of creating from this vision thus offering new visions, by means of new works, which in themselves are acts of hos-

pitality, for they are homings, within culture, in the context of an even wider world and an even wider universe. History is a night time that does not await the dawn but makes it come by hoping, by creating, by means of Art which carries its aesthetic message and creative challenge to make Art, to create, to make a home and to feel this home wherein we could all rest and be merry, with the familiar smell of the stable, with the hearth, with the table of shared adventures and aspirations in hope, awaiting the new dawn of hope beyond the waiting, the expectations of history which has become hostile, unhomely to man's development to Spirit in terms of wars, conflicts, persecutions, violence, corruption which prevent the development of existence in waiting into life in hoping:

We were very tired, we were very merry-  
 We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
 It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable-  
 But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,  
 We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon:  
 And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.<sup>50</sup>

Artworks are not just for waiting, for visions. Nor are they for mere visitors to behold. They are challenges, calls for dwellers to feel at home and to be hospitable by being mystagogical. Artworks are not finalities in themselves. They are dawns, wherein the Logos, the Word has become Principle in its application, i.e., in its growth, maturity and development becoming enfleshed, being flesh that become Spirit, opening up paths of Spirit (Spirituality), which are paths of Creativity to others and thus open up new dawns in history, new opportunities, renewed chances to hope. Hope is continuous. It is the constant lighting of the colors of dawn, until the fullness of eschatology, tasting, participating in this fullness already in this life, by means of Creativity, by means of creative action, of mystagogy whose task is never finished, which promises new dawns not definitive mornings. But new dawns, new hopes, new commences, wherein the origin is always originary. O this 'hill-top underneath the moon' which is the hope of dawn, the hope of continuity in history which makes eschatology already present in Creativity made flesh in artworks that breathe the Spirit and create an atmosphere of Spirit for others.

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<sup>50</sup> E.St. Vincent Millay, *Recuerdo*, 1-6.

Artworks demand continuous creative actions especially in the socio-political realm where Beauty must be fully realized as True, Good, One, Thing and Other. Such actions could only be mystagogical. Artworks must be for hoping. With artworks, the dawn (or the dawns which are the homely light of hope in the midst of the darkness of the world) can come soon. With artworks, we can propose Hope as the metaphysical program of man to become Spirit, to realize his Spirituality.

The Dawn is always opportunity for hoping, which should be unceasing if it is to remain faithful. Faithfulness is the 'essence' of the Absolute whose fount and trace is Beauty, by which it calls man in his flesh, not just a body in the world, in the home to make a home, to be Spirit, to be faithful in hope creating new dawns by Creativity in Art.