Section V

Categories Of Transcendence And Immanence

Introduction

A quick look at any definition of the experience of the holy will show that it is made up of two seemingly contradictory elements. The experience is both fascinating and dreadful. This is a more affective way of saying that the experience of the holy is both transcendent and immanent. If we had started with the traditional study of the holy as a religious experience we would have met specifically theological language earlier. We have instead started with the power of the holy. Otherness is the power of the holy. To start with otherness rather than the more traditional names for the holy is to root Being more immediately in man's affairs.

In this section I will use traditional theological terms for descriptions of the two major modes of Being's presence. The two terms are 'transcendent' and 'immanent'. But I will use these terms untraditionally. The basis for my classifications and explanations will be my own consciousness rather than some 'objective' epistemological system.
Visual Categories Of The Holy
Which Are Transcendent To Me
At This Time
In the year of king Uzziah's death I saw the Lord Yahweh seated on a high throne; his train filled the sanctuary; above him stood seraphs, each one with six wings: two to cover its face, two to cover its feet and two for flying.

And they cried out to one another in this way: 
'Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Sabaoth. 
His glory fills the whole earth'.

The foundations of the threshold shook with the voice of the one who cried out, and the temple was filled with smoke. I said:

'What a wretched state I am in! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have looked at the King, Yahweh Sabaoth'.

Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding in his hand a live coal which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. With this he touched my mouth and said:

'See now, this has touched your lips, your sin is taken away; your iniquity is purged'.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

'Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?'

I answered, 'Here I am, send me'. He said:

'Go and say to this people, 
"Hear and hear again, but do not understand; see and see again, but do not perceive". Make the heart of this people gross, its ears dull; shut its eyes, so that it will not see with its eyes, hear with its ears, understand with its heart, and be converted and healed.'

Isaiah 6:1-11

(Jerusalem Bible translation)
The categories that I find to be transcendent have the type of feeling that is described in the quote from Isaiah above. The great scholar of the holy, Rudolf Otto, talks of the presence of the 'Totally Other' coming to man in fascination and dread. When one is introduced to the holy for the first time the feelings of dreadful fascination predominate. But as one becomes more at home with the holy the initial feelings of dread pass away to a sense of duty and then to a loving relationship of immanence. In the quote from Isaiah we see this natural transition from dread to duty.

Another interesting part of this particular quote is the notice to the prophet that what he says to the people will not be understood by them but will nevertheless condemn them for not understanding. This seems like a harsh trick to play on man. The harshness of the situation is a necessary factor since man is free to determine his own destiny by his free will. If a god were to make man sufficiently sensitive so as to accept the prophecy he would have predetermined man's response to the situation. But god has left man to cultivate otherness in his own heart. Since man has chosen to cultivate itness rather than otherness in his heart he will not understand and will be condemned because he forsook that which was most holy in his existence for the sake of
temporality. We live in a world that still fits the condemnation of the prophet.

**Note**

It should be remembered that all the categories that follow are distilled elements of the holy. The presence of Being admits to no categorization. Only the contemplation of the residual elements of the holy offers specification. I have not tried to delineate these categories so that they do not refer and rely on each other. I think that it is a mark of poverty in man's spirit to feel that black and white categories are necessary for rationality. My categorization is soft-focus. Around the edge of each category you will find the other categories encouraging it to presence.
The Monumental

I believe that there are three elements necessary to evoke Being well in monumental work. The work must be large, consistent with itself, and radical.

Largeness is probably the most relative factor of the three. Whether or not I find an object to be large depends on my own stature and the relative stature of objects similar to it. I like to design my work with some particular space in mind. When I design a piece I try to make it approximately two-thirds the size of the space it is to fill. If I wish it to be monumental. When the piece is a free hanging piece I will often make it approximately two and a half times as large as a normal person. I find these to be imposing dimensions.

If the various elements of the large work that one is doing are not consistent with each other they will tend to disintegrate the monumental posture of the work rather than make it seem more vital.

Radical means rooted. A monumental work must have its roots sunk into a very strong feel for the being that is coming to presence through the work. When a work is ordered according to a presencing being rather than to the stereotyped exigencies of being a proper piece of the current art market it
is radical. The artifact must be subject to no cultural rules other than those that Being imposes by being in beings. If Being's presence in beings is subject to the stereotypes of the art market before it can find a place in an artifact it will simply not be present. This why our culture produces more monumentally dull objects than monumental ones.
Reverse Ordering

Order is that which man imposes on groups of objects to serve specialized needs. Order only claims that part of the object that is pertinent to its goal. As such, order, as imposed by man for temporal ends, is not a manifestation of Being. It is ideology in action.

Reverse ordering was used in the work of certain Byzantine artists to show that God's ways are not man's. Generally reverse ordering is seen in the reversing of the logical position of light and shadow. Surrealism also made extensive use of reversing the logical or expected. Usually reverse ordering is more intellectual than emotive. This is true because order is most often thought of as a product of the mind rather than the presence of Being in beings. There is an order evoked by Being and its reversal is seen in modern technology. The emotive force, or more properly the onto-aesthetical effect, of the reverse ordering of Being in technology is contemporary man's feelings of boredom, alienation and ennui. By the same token the presence of Being in beings reverses technological society's ordering and causes feelings of insecurity and anger in the technological man.
The Voidful

The voidful is the opposite of the glorious. The voidful is Non-Being's presence while the glorious is Being's presence. The voidful is present in the 'dark nights of the soul' for a mystic and in the expressions of the primeval chaos for the early philosopher poets.

When the voidful leans upon our human existence our relationship to Being is brought into sharp focus. We become painfully aware of the distance that separates us from Being. The voidful brings Being to presence by delineating the shape of its absence in our lives.

The mark of the presence of the voidful is dread. Dread is much deeper than fear. I do not think that it is possible to fully express the voidful just as it is not possible to fully express the glorious. Both of these experiences of Being (the glorious) and Non-Being (the voidful) are too total to be relayed fully in a material being -- in this case an artifact. The very materiality of the artifact keeps it from bringing enough of the voidful or the glorious forward to be anything more than a hint of these actual states. But since Being and Non-Being are such total states a hint is more than enough to communicate the dread or the glory of the experience to man.

Black polyethylene in its reflective state is a good material for hinting at the presence of Non-Being.
The Primordial - Insectual

The primordial as animal is immanent and the primordial as insect is transcendent. The insect exhibits a basic indifference to man while man can become 'friends' with an animal. Man is an animal. Insects, on the other hand, do not admit to domestication by man unless you call what termites and roaches do domestication. One needs to do little more than increase the size of an insect to instill fear in most people. In fact during the 1950's there were many motion pictures which did nothing more than enlarge common insects for their starring monster.

The human animal is afraid of the insect because of the insect's savagery and indifference to anything other than its needs -- something like a technologist. Perhaps the only reason we are able to stand insects at all is because they are usually too small to be seen clearly.

In my work I use elements that are derived from insects. The insectual elements lend the entire work a threatening atmosphere. To a lesser extent I find that birds, reptiles, and fish exhibit some of the threatening properties that insects have. They have also had their moments of horror film glory.
The Gothic

I found the category of the gothic in Rudolf Otto's classic *The Idea Of The Holy* listed as an expression of the 'Wholly Other' in art. I use the term because it has such a rich heritage in Western art and because Webster's defines it as 'fierce', 'raw', 'crude'. The element which makes the gothic a category of the holy for me is its obsessiveness and intensity. The obsessiveness which we find in the gothic is a mark of most archaic periods. Archaic periods are times when there is much turmoil and destruction as one civilization dies and another is born. In fact the word 'gothic' means barbaric and savage.

As I mentioned, the element which I think makes a visual expression gothic is its obsessiveness. I think that some contemporary artists dealing with gothic phenomena are Linder, Bacon, Albright and Samaras to mention just a few. In the past one almost immediately thinks of Munch, Van Gogh, Fuseli, Grunewald to mention some among many. The forms which these men created almost disintegrate under the pressure of the vitality they are asked to hold. One can feel the line disintegrating under the pressure of the pain in the crucifixion of the Isenheim altarpiece by Grunewald. The atmosphere seems to evap-
orate from the intensity of Munch's "Scream".
I think that whenever we find obsessive vitality
pushing itself into presence at the expense of
the sobriety of the artifact we have an element
of the gothic. In most art there is a harmonious
relation between what is coming to presence and its
visual incarnation. But in the gothic we feel that
the very birth process will destroy the artifact.

The gothic is often 'busy' in its line and vol-
ume because it needs so much visual weight to hold
the presence that is on the verge of tearing itself
loose from the artifact. I use the gothic in my
work especially under the aspect of busyness.
Busyness engrosses the artist and the viewer in
its intricacies much more so than simplicity does.
Busyness is also more related to the Western spirit
than is simplicity. In the West our term for the
unity of beings is ousia. We reach this experience
of oneness after being acquainted with many other beings.
In the East the term for the same experience is om.
In the Eastern search for the unity of beings man
tries to rid himself of contact with beings so that he
may see them as they are when he finds their principle
of unity. When the East finds unity it finds the many.
In the West we find unity through the many.

The gothic is a transcendent element of the other
because its obsessiveness makes dialogue impossible.
The Cryptographic

A cryptogram is a strange symbol that seems to have a secret meaning -- or at least a meaning that is hidden from me. Since the cryptogram does not yield to my understanding it is other than me and unavailable for dialogue. The cryptographic hints at systems of understanding that are different than mine and hence affectively informs me of my limitations.

I use the cryptographic very much in my work. I might use it as a private cipher or in a strange arrangement of common material. I have found the periods which we call archaic to be great places for finding material for cryptographic works. I have also borrowed archaic shapes for my artifacts which have cryptographic quality from some of the early surrealists and abstract expressionists.
Visual Categories Of The Holy
Which Are Immanent To Me
At This Time
Then he was told, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh'. Then Yahweh himself went by. There came a mighty wind, so strong it tore the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the wind. After the wind came an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire there came the sound of a gentle breeze...

I Kings 19: 11-13

(Jerusalem Bible translation)
The transcendence of Being occurs when it wishes to be unapproachable or when man is unapproachable by being fragmented. When Being withdraws we have periods of transcendence such as St. John of the Cross's 'dark night of the soul'. When man withdraws we have periods such as the current 'death of god' transcendence.

But Being is also the source of all immanence. Being can be so violently immanent that it rips the person inside out in ecstasy. Or the holy can be gently present in the humble things of existence such as the quote from Kings above suggests.

In this section we will look at those incidents when Being is with beings. The following categories are not complete but only a general outline of where immanence may appear. Again it must be remembered that these are existentially derived categories and will be interconnected and encouraged to presence by their mutual interplay.
The Primordial - Animalistic

The primordial is that archaic vitality that seems to lurk in some objects. The object basically retains its identification as a rock, animal, insect, or whatever but, one feels the pressure of the other straining the skin of the object from within.

I feel that there are two basic types of the primordial. One is that series of shapes that relates to animals. The other series of shapes relates us to the insectual. The insectual forms are transcendent and the animal ones are immanent. I feel kinship or some basic archaic bond with animals. Indeed, man is an animal. The primordial relates me to the archaic life-force of all beings on earth by hinting that my present existence is intricately and mysteriously dependent on something very deep and ancient about this planet and the beings on it.

I make much use of the primordial as immanent in my work by shaping my pieces like animals which might have once roamed the earth. I also use the plastic-like skin to bring out the animality of the primordial.
The Numinous In Soft Light And Dark

Mark Rothko has fashioned a style of painting out of soft clouds which conceals the brooding presence of the other. For me these are clouds that conceal an immanent presence. The soft light or dark of the numen is intimate, while the harsh light and dark of the numen is transcendent. In the softness we have a presence who will treat man on a somewhat equal scale so that dialogue may take place if man will permit it. In the harshness we see a presence whose majestic intrusiveness intimidates man and admits to no dialogue.

For dark immanence I use satin blacks and greens which have little if any reflective quality. The dark polyethylene is well suited to this experience when it is made to lose its reflective quality.

For light immanence I use clear polyethylene in a non-reflective state. When the plastics are used in their non-reflective states they tend to be more animal than industrial looking. Their surfaces have the intimations of 'skin' rather than 'plastic'.
The Mysterious

mystery: Since mystery cannot be understood as a defective form of natural human knowledge, but is rather a reality ordered to the act of religion as such, we must call mystery that in reference to which man constantly rises above himself in the unity of his intellective and freely loving transcendence. Thus mystery is a primordial aspect, essential and permanent, of total reality, in that reality as a whole (that is, as infinite) is present for the finite, created spirit in the latter's intrinsic openness to the infinite. Spirit, as this openness to the infinite, is the capacity to accept the incomprehensible as such, i.e. as permanent mystery...

Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler

(Theological Dictionary, Herder and Herder, 1968, p.300)

Whenever man becomes an agglomeration of drives, his activity a function of economic or socio-political forces, his thought an instrument for solving problems, everything, including himself, becomes instrumental for something extrinsic to itself and intrinsic values disappear. That which is intinsically of worth is always encountered as mystery; it is surrounded by the mystery of its own being.

This fundamental distinction between problem and mystery lies at the root of all Marcel's thinking. The method of enquiry which is appropriate for problem solving excludes the possibility of the experience of mystery. Metaphysical reflection for Marcel is not directed toward problem solving but toward illumination, clarification or elucidation of mystery. By mystery he does not mean that which is not solvable and therefore unknowable. He means that which remains when all the results of analytical description have been checked off. It is that which one encounters as a presence rather than an object; that which is entered into or received into oneself rather than looked at; that which summons

(cont.)
us to authentic self-awareness rather than to positive knowledge about psychic functions. The mystery of Being cannot become an object of knowledge because it is presupposed in the subject-object relationship and envelops it. Metaphysical thinking is, therefore, not logical demonstration but a reconnoitering, an elucidation or clarification of those dimensions of experience which escape scientific or pragmatic reason.

Jean T. Wilde and William Kimmel
(The Search For Being, Noonday Press, 1962, p.418)

As you can see by the length of the introduction to this category we are dealing with something very important to the holy. Mystery is the posture that Being assumes when it is waiting. When one has used all the vocabulary in his work that he feels is necessary to bring the other to presence that presence ought to be marked by some degree of mystery. Gabriel Marcel is probably the foremost thinker about the presence that is mysterious. Marcel calls mystery the general way in which Being is found by contemporary man. Martin Heidegger has said that we are living in a limbo-time. We are living in a time after the gods have fled and before the time when 'the god who is coming' is present. In less poetic language, we are living in a time when man is becoming rapidly less dependent upon superstitious understandings of Being. Consequent upon this evaporation of superstition is the rise
of 'industrial-agnosticism' which results from a type of 'noble savage naivete' born out of the relationship of man and his technology. We seem to be growing out of this original innocence though and have noticed that all is not well with our marriage to technology. Technological culture does not take the integral human being into its accountings. The result of this is the atmosphere of alienation, loneliness and ennui that contemporary man lives in. These feelings of human disintegration pull man back on his roots for new answers to his problems. Man is trying to formulate the questions that must be asked and answered if he is to solve the problems that his marriage to technology has produced. The attempts at formulating the proper questions to be asked are gradually bringing 'the god who is coming' to presence in human affairs. But at least for the present 'the god who is coming' is waiting in mystery.

Mystery is present in art when the parts of the artifact are integral enough to evoke otherness. One cannot speak of the vocabulary of mystery as if it were just another incidence of the holy. Mystery is an over-all category that is the present day spirit of all the other categories of the holy. One can speak of the strength of mystery though. Oftentimes the integration of the various pieces
in the artifact will not quite be enough complete to bring being to mystery. The lack of mystery in the artifact is usually due to an inclusion of ordering other than that of Being's. One often includes rather arbitrary elements in his work. If these arbitrary elements are not made transparent to Being they will be obstructive to the bringing of Being into mystery. If these arbitrary elements are made transparent to Being we are made more integrated as a human 'being'.

I have found that I must usually work by adding all the elements that I wish to use into an over-all body of material that I can use as raw material for the artifact. I paint and shape the raw material until I feel that I can go no further. After a period of time I usually have to come back to the artifact and trim off the excess material from the presence which is then more visible to me.

Mystery is immanent. It is Being waiting to be introduced to me. The counterpart of mystery on the transcendent level is the cryptographic. It is a cheap counterpart to be sure, but through no fault of its own. The transcendent categories seem shallow when compared to the immanent categories because in immanence we are admitted to the full range of Being's presence and consequent richness. In transcendent categories Being holds
us at a distance and throws us back on the poverty of our own being. When we witness our poverty of Being we crash through those barriers that our everyday *episteme* existence sets up in order to function in the context of the it-culture. These barriers also keep Being from entering us and helping our being in finding its meaning in Being. Once our barriers of *episteme* are made transparent we give ourselves over to the language of art where Being may move in our being with the richness and grace that is characterized by glory.
The Glorious

Glory: Ot. Hb. Kabod signifies weight or heaviness. Glory is importance, that shows a man's inner worth and demands the respect of others... The glory of God is a complex theological concept which exhibits several aspects. The most primitive form of the conception appears to be found in the Pnt. Here the glory of Yahweh is described in terms suggesting the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire;... This is the glory which the Israelites can see (Ex. 16:7) The glory is described as fire and smoke... The glory is a cloud canopy over Israel (Is 4:5...) ... elsewhere the glory of Yahweh appears as a brilliant light, and it is visible to men only when it is veiled in a cloud which is rendered luminous by what it contains.

John McKenzie

(Dictionary Of The Bible, Bruce publishing co., 1965, p. 313)

Glory is a word with many ramifications. I wish to use the word to designate that experience where man is lifted out of himself in ecstasy. In majesty man is held at a distance by Being, but in glory man participates in Being. I think that there are two dominant ways of perceiving the glorious. They are ousia in the West and om in the East. I have treated these earlier in this paper.

I prefer to work out of the West's ousia and its attendant busyness. My working process in this regard is to gather many diverse elements and then seal them into a single sheet of plastic. Often times I will then use some paint or prints to give the sheet more
density. Density is directly related to the glorious as can be seen by the Hebrew's use of 'weight' to name the glorious. Indeed it is the sense of density which most suggests glory to me -- especially when that density is done in golds, greens, and reds.
Section VI

Conclusion

There's no time left to write poems. If you will write rallying cries, yes, do so, otherwise write poems then throw yourself on the river to drift away. Li Po's peach-blossom, even if it departs this world, can't help us. Pound's or Williams' theories on prosody don't meet the cries of dying children (whose death I think is no caesura). Soon there will be no ideas but in things, in rubble, in skulls held under the oceans' magnifying-glass, in screams driven into one lightning-void. Only you can resurrect the present. People need your voice to come among them like nakedness, to fuse them into one marching language in which the word "peace" will be said for the last time. Write slogans, write bread that pounds the table for silence, write what I can't imagine: words to wake me and all those who slump over like sapped tombstones when generals talk.

The world is not divided into your schools of poetry. No: there are the destroyers -- the Johnsons, Kys, Kusks, Hitlers, Francos -- then there are those they want to destroy -- lovers, teachers, plows, potatoes: this is the division. You are not important. Your black mountains, solitary farms, LSD trains. Don't forget: you are important. If you fail, there will be no-one left to say so. If you succeed, there will also be a great silence. Your names, an open secret in all hearts, no-one will say. But everywhere they will be finishing the poems you broke away from.

2.

What I mean is: maybe you are the earth's last poets. Li Po's riverbank poems are far, far out in eternity -- but a nuclear war could blow us that far in an instant: there's no time left. Tolstoy's "I would plow."

Plow, plow. But with no-one left to seed, reap, you write? 0 rocks are shortlived as men now. But still this BillyBuddworld blesses its murderers with Spring even as I write this...
so I have nowhere else to turn to but you. Old echoes are useless. Light from the fireball this planet will become already makes shadows of us.

There's Einstein. -- The light of poems streaking through space, growing younger, younger, becoming the poet again somewhere? No!

What I mean is....

Saint Geraud

"To American Poets"

(The Young American Poets, ed. Paul Carroll, p.354)
Bibliography

Most of what I've ever read, heard, or seen and then some.
Section VII

Eight Photographs