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Religious and Agnostic Attitudes in Art

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Sacred and Profane Phases

Before there was a method to separate different disciplines, like art in relation to religion, there existed, under multiplicity of forms, *attitudes* and *behaviors* which reflected the two existent phases in human nature: sacred and profane, seen as attitudes and behaviors. In societies, there is a tendency to establish different periods which serve as limits and remain as such in groups made up by the *Homo Religiosus*; in other individuals, they only function as *attitudes* in some moments between these two worlds.

To apply said concepts to art, it is important to consider that, within the personality of some individuals, both phases are reflected in complex attitudes.

Therefore, in the same individual, during their sacred phase, they can recognize the existence of a divine superior power or being, who rules the existence of everything known; but during their profane phase, they will doubt or deny its interference in the normal or common existence of life, without considering extraordinary or divine any abnormal event that happens to them, but doing so as part of a simple natural order, i.e. will find themselves before the rivalry of religious and scientific beliefs, mysticism and materialism.

They are considered naïve in their sacred phase with their attitude before it, and non-religious—skeptical—in their profane phase.

It represents an anguished fight in the life of the individual, until either they set a certain order that allows balance and allows the coexistence of both or adopt one way or the other of thinking and acting.

If we talk about the *Homo Religiosus*, they will accept without objections and as part of their belief any imposition, i.e. a way of agreeing with a dogmatism that satisfies them when faced with reflections about understanding the order of the world in which they live, according to the sacred phase. But in other individuals, this way of accepting this supposed balance creates a conflictive way of reasoning in their profane phase, until they balance both attitudes, considering their profane attitudes more linked with scientific thinking, like a logic which allows them to question the entire religious world, to find clear answers to their behavior. This complexity in the determination of stages and their duration is associated with ritual ceremonies carried out with the goal of establishing clearly the periods of religious life¹.

Without getting purely into the field of religious ontology, if we begin from Eliade's expressed and supported concepts when it comes to the existence of a sacred and profane phase, expressed and applied in the individual of artistic nature, the human being finds themselves between these two parameters which are constituted according to concepts defined before; for some, they are a contradiction in the behavior and intellectual questioning, based on a certain logic which is within the conflict between reasoning and belief based on faith. This is the interpretation of the sacred and profane applied to another dimension... esthetics.

Sacred Attitudes in Art

Art is part of culture, but culture is not part of art. The former, in many ways, shows the individual attitudes of the artist before their environment, and the latter stems from a collective behavior which pretends to identify, homogenize and generalize a nation or an ethnic group.

In the field of arts, the artist shows, through their musical or plastic expressions, their attitudes within these two phases.

The present article will not get into an esthetic analysis of symbolism or techniques, or involve in them the diverse criteria of supposed *connoisseurs* and *specialists* of the works of a certain author, criteria which allows them to talk about the author's mistakes when addressing religious topics, considered within the Judeo-Catholic connotation, *connoisseurs* and *specialists* who exclude as a religion everything associated to other older cultures such as Sumer, Egypt, and later ones such as Crete, Greece, Rome. There is the case of painters like Goya or Cézanne, who are called *unsuccessful* when addressing such religious subjects, or the case of Rubens or Michelangelo as *successful* in their sacred and profane subjects, who work with topics or characters of the ancient Greek religion which include fauns, satyrs, deities, Amazon women, and nymphs, at the same time in which they work with topics of the Passion of Christ, saints, or angels. The criteria of those who want to categorize art and artists within a model that allows them to refer in a general way to the entirety of the productions of any of them and others is popular, even if there exist particularities in their executions that many times cannot be explained, but they are referred to as something that is out of the general scheme of their diverse productions.

When works that do not "fit", according to the known criteria, appear, in the production of artists labeled as

portrait painters or landscapists, situation that also happens in music with the works of eminent authors, who did not "achieve" the spirit needed when doing them, like with Berlioz, Bach, or Beethoven², in which arguing with esthetic or purely musical aspects, they allow themselves to deny the religious or profane values they possess.

The main goal of this work is to show, with certain associations, the existence of art of all times of these two positions, sacred and profane, in every author, and not consider them as incursions, term which is given to some works that are not within the context known by the generalities of the works of a certain artist, and lead by many interests to locate them as an oddity in the personal productions of composers, sculptors and painters³.

About Religious Art

There are clear differences between religious art, dedicated to religion, made in a period of profound faith which purpose is related to the service of the faithful, and the religious executions made in any period, which are part of individual religious expressions, either with a personal purpose, or commissioned. The differences that seem subtle are amplified when the concepts applied to them go beyond the limits of time and space. And if the main goal of this work is to reiterate on time, and sacred and profane attitudes in the individual, societies, and the resulting artistic product, it is appropriate to try and shed light on them to justify said behavior.

Through Time

An exam in which it is necessary to check in some ways the positions of religious beliefs cannot be omitted or ignored by those who relate not only the expressions to art, but also to the comprehension of the phenomenon as a belief on firm foundations or invented as a benefit or a religious instruction⁴.

In the believer of a religion, a relationship, mandatory in a way, is created between the individual and the ones in charge in different hierarchies, in which doubt is the link that keeps them tied in this vicious circle, both believer and religious leader.

The guidelines of every sect that derives from a movement—like Christianity—are given, and are introduced through repressive ways—in the west the Inquisition, the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, Councils, etc.

It is possible that expansionist beliefs such as Christianity and others would not have been very successful or been considerably spread if not for the extreme imposition by their defenders, also in charge of spreading them, like it is said, through blood and fire. So, the investigation of sects has been reserved for experts, who discuss everything related to their formation, like the *Essenes*, *Gnostics*, *Valentinians*, *Basilideans*, *Sethians*, *Ebionites*, *Mandaeans*—from the lower *Euphrates*—, *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, *Nazarenes*, *Elquesaitas*, *Sampseanos*, *Ebionites*, *Hemerobaptistas*, *Dositheanos*...

In the case of groups like the *Essenes*, they show a complex organization, congregation of the Dead Sea. A lot of them is said in the present century, with the discovery in Qumran, Palestine, of the so called Dead Sea Scrolls; it is a fortuitous discovery of two-thousand-year-old Hebrew documents, written and used by the *Essenes*.

As usual, contradictions happened between experts, mostly about religious points of view. Lesser known of the profane phase, much of these writings were classified in academic terms like apocryphal and pseudepigraphal, issue that, only being considered under aspects of the dominating religion in great part of the western world, questions and reveals the topic of messianic concepts, which Jesus, John the Baptist and other characters of their time answer to, who far from being found in biblical sources, where formed by writings and teachings coming in great part from the *Essenes*. These are circumstances that have not been understood by most Christians.

If these references are mentioned, they are mentioned in a dimension the thinker, the true scientist who studies religions, the freethinker, and of course the artist, should know as much as possible the attitudes they take in their respective fields, at the expense of the rejection from religious fanatics who are closed to any evidence which is against what they have been taught to believe.

Themes in the Artist

Divinity or humanity. The concepts of the artist, based on their knowledge of philosophic-religious thought, and their position as a freethinker, selecting everything that their logic or feeling dictates, is an important reference when it comes to their executions, for they reflect the artist's position within all types of connotations.

When in the field of art some artist, referring to their execution, uses the phrase *my art is my religion*, it does not have to be taken in a rhetorical way, for it translates into a true ideological creed which reflects their concepts and attitudes in everything related to their vision of the religious and profane worlds.

So, from every dual fight between these two worlds an inquisitive attitude results, which redounds in questioning and in taking a stand when it comes to beliefs and their expression through art.

In great part of the western world Christianity was introduced by conquerors, but it was a guided Christianity, which was explained, modified and modeled according to ideology interests, as it can be seen through the Councils, during which, because of sectarian interests—*Bizancio-Teodorico*—some documents were accepted and others that did not serve organization and religious power interests since

² Como ejemplo cito el caso de la ópera *Egmont* de Beethoven, que por muchos es considerado una realización no muy feliz ni acertada respecto a los "conceptos" operísticos.

³ Es muy común que el historiador, biógrafo o comentarista en el campo de las artes quiera o vea solamente lo que se refiere a esta disciplina, descartando todo elemento o juicio que se quiera asociar fuera de lo estético. Sin embargo, campos como la psicología, la religión o la medicina, para citar tres, son válidos en su aplicación al arte, dándonos otras connotaciones.

⁴ José Montserrat Torrents- *El Evangelio de Judas*. Ed. EDAF. 2ª. ed. Madrid, España, 2006.

the first moments of pre-Christian ideology were rejected, ignored, or destroyed; this ideology was collected and documented in the thought of groups which discussed philosophic problems, applied to the subject of religious beliefs.

In between these groups that laid out a series of questions related to beliefs were mainly the Essenes and the Gnostics, already mentioned, next with other groups of beliefs during those times. In the case of Gnostics, the interested individual is forced to introduce themselves to a certain topic and their outcomes, as Montserrat Torrents⁵ states.

When referring to Gnosticism, which was lunged at by the Church of Bishop Irenaeus, who selected four of all the gospels that were written around 20 years after the death of Jesus Christ, attributing them to Matthew, Luke, John, and Mark⁶, generally a general concept is enclosed to it; the term *Gnosis* is used, as Torrents states, to qualify all types of elitist, and marginal or marginalized groups. The same scholar expresses that once the diverse senses that said expression can convey are specified and defined, four senses of the term *gnosis* can be differentiated and stated⁷.

Dividing them:

- Broadest sense: distinctive property of an elite.
- Broad sense: knowledge reserved to an elite.
- Strict sense: religious knowledge reserved to an elite.
- Strictest sense: a determined group of ancient Jew and Christian systems—Gnosticism.

So therefore, the gnosés that receive the name of Gnosticism refer to the gnosés of the 2nd and 4th century, in the strictest sense, and in the sense of the religious being only reserved to an elite.

For our knowledge and comprehension of this phenomenon, it is necessary to tell of one of the fundamental elements which always exists in religious concept: a certain group's control within any religion, alluding to a divine knowledge, or to the possession of a revelation contained in sacred texts, which is the case of Christianity⁸, to which we have to add the Hebrew.

For that case, the issue of being aware that in religious beliefs there is always a division to differentiate between the ignorant from the connoisseurs arises. Torrents also recognizes another division within the connoisseurs: the ones who possess an ordinary or superficial knowledge of the sacred book, and therefore only practice the literal exegesis, and the ones who have a deep knowledge of the book, therefore practicing the allegoric exegesis.

These questions lead to issues like the awaited Messiah. If said coming is still awaited by religious groups, it is significant the issue of the messiah that appears around the 15th century in groups of Cabbalistic Jews.

A problem then appears when it comes to the coming of the Christian Messiah, who did not solve in any way the anxieties of those who awaited said coming or the problems of humanity. To not lose all hope or credibility, a second coming is spoken about, the awaited coming of the Hebrew Messiah.

Art and Religion

Which parameters are then necessary, and which limit the inquisitive forms in art when producing a work when it comes to the interpretations of religious content? That is related to the position the artist takes about certain questions that are enriched by knowledge of the religious matter in the field of sacred ontology. Which is the explanation of the knowledge and mechanisms that move beliefs in any religion?

The problem lies in establishing in both practices who possesses them, or who can they be attributed to, and on which foundation the superficial and profound of an allegoric and literal interpretation can be considered, given the intentions and purposes of the supposed connoisseurs.

From here the levels of interpretation arise, about sacred texts, from which there are thousands, searching mystic experiences for them.

It is known that mystics practiced or practice techniques of meditation that provoke a hypnotic trance, with the idea that in that way one can get to Divinity.

In this topic, which we will discuss later the mediums used to reach that closeness to the divine could fit in, these methods being, by their nature, word-image, according to concepts of eastern human thought, one of the most viable to achieve said relationship.

The mystics believed that God created the world through language—according to the cabbalistic—with the combination of letters and numbers.

The knowledge for an elite, with an erotic language; in the Cabala it is told about the two aspects of the personality of God, about body and sexuality.

Religious Christian art as a form of guided thought in the first years of its existence—starting from the establishing of dates like Gregorius X did, author of the Gregorian calendar that rules the western world—is constituted in many cases as the main vehicle to the elaboration and transmission of the dogmas and decisions the Christian Church makes about the ideas of the new testament.

The interpretations about the religious Christian topic and others about the Old Hebrew Testament made by artists in commissioned artworks—which were supposed to serve as illustrations and guides about Christian narrations—when made by many artists, it was thought that they were not in accordance with what was intended by Christian religion because these artists (Michelangelo, Leonardo, Tintoretto) were not familiar with the places where these stories took place.

5 José Montserrat Torrents, "El Evangelio de Judas, Ed. EDAF-Madrid, España-2", Ed.

6 Se refiere por otro lado, que para seleccionar a los cuatro evangelios conocidos, se recurrió a una selección "divina", la cual consistió en que se cayeron todos los evangelios presentados en el concilio...y quedaron sobre la mesa los cuatro atribuidos a los personajes en cuestión.

7 José Montserrat Torrents, "El Evangelio de Judas, Ed. EDAF-Madrid, España-2", Ed.

One explanation was that the artists had no idea about the environments where supposedly those stories developed, but upon examining and analyzing in more detail the topic, it is shown that in reality that was their way of dissenting about what was imposed as thought, from stories with weak or not foundation, but that worked as a powerful weapon to impose these ideas in the naïve and ignorant masses, having as an ally fear, through Inquisition methods and through Christian council arguments.

The official Christian world of its first years was reluctant to accept these beliefs of weak foundation before another quantity of doctrines and religious groups which were useful to create different points of view, and when considered by many interested people, it is said to be a great confusion. A reflection of said ideological and group struggles are letters and epistles against the groups that did not agree with certain religious ideas and therefore ended up widening the confusion in the so-called gospels. About these, it has been alluded for some time that they do not narrate historical events, written all, especially the chosen ones in the New Christian Testament, by people who were never in the places where those events took place, gospels which were attributed to four apostles: Luke, Matthew, John, and Mark.

And contrary to what has been taught in the west to believers and the public who does not know the historical topic of Christianity, the religion was not accepted easily, and was a resource of the official imposition of the eastern Roman empire, through *Bizancio*, through laws and legislations, when emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and officialized it. Such events and disagreements brought as a consequence the ideological separation of Christian groups, and ideological separation about certain topics, including the discussed Passion of Christ. A separation between Jews and the new groups of this Christian creed happened. Before the problem of Christianity, so persecuted in the west, scholars allude to blaming the Jews. Rome attacks, around 70 AD, through the invasion of Jerusalem by Titus, destroying the temple and taking to Rome all sacred objects; this event benefitted the first Christian groups, but caused the separation of both groups, even though Christians do not reject the Old Jew Testament, it is even presented in versions of the Christian Bible approved by religious people, but then the terrible repressive device of Inquisition appears.

After the years of formation of Christianity, by blood and fire, as with the Crusades and imposed in the same way, based on a repressive system, in its second phase when Christianity extended everywhere, as the fight against the unfaithful reminds us, in Europe said repressive ways harden, primarily due to the establishment of cultures such as the Arab, *Morisca* and Jew, through the path closest to the continent: Spain and Italy.

The artists, immersed in such religious problem due to their works being commissioned and overseen by the Christian-Roman Church, which established rules for the making of said works, just as objectives pursued by their recipients, questioned in many ways such measures, due to the inquisitive nature of art and the artist, when getting to know and investigating dogmatic prohibitions; it puts them, because of that circumstance, in the path of obtaining a broad knowledge of the religious Christian phenomenon.

Christianity has many shades that difficult its imposition since its appearance; scholars say that the main responsible, and the one who is accredited for its survival is Mary Magdelene. Alluding to said matter, the discussed existence of Christ appears, being the true founder of Christianity Paul of Tarsus. Of his life there exists no reliable proof, according to investigator Fernando de Orbaneja; the story told about him is suspiciously similar to that of Apollonius of Tyana, called the Nazarene.

The religious concept from the 13th century, derived from many speculations that start from the Roman-Byzantine empire, lays out new ways of thinking for artists, who in an environment dangerously repressive because of prevailing religious ideologies, kept by inquisitors, fanatics, and frenzied people, express them under symbology unknown to part of them.

Leonardo da Vinci has been one figure when it comes to ways of expressing under this symbology, under the eyes of scholars.

The ways in which his knowledge, discoveries and creations, made in a highly risky period could be hidden through resources like his right-to-left writing, in his pictorial works it has been intended to find elements that hidden under other forms, lay out, condemn, and express thoughts that do not agree with the ideas of that period, and which were interpreted through a code of gestures, color, symbols, etc.

Sigmund Freud had addressed under psycho-analytical ways said topic in his work *La Psico-sexualidad de Leonardo da Vinci*, starting from one of Leonardo's dreams and the persistence of symbology in his work; the familiar features of la Gioconda (Mona Lisa) which are found in the Virgin of the Rocks, in the two known versions and even in Saint John, are comparison to the famous self-portrait of Leonardo, made by sanguine.

The analysis about the works and ideas concealed in his executions has widened and unsettled the world of artistic investigation and the world out of it, his life and works, causing in between many reactions, wonder, discomfort, curiosity, and rejection of many concepts, expressed in scholar, religious and artistic environments.

The plastic works of Leonardo are prolific in experimentation with techniques, symbolisms hidden in gestures, attitudes, positions, and scenes.

Viteri had mentioned the index finger gesture in some of his characters, in Saint John the Baptist, the finger of the apostle in the Supper, the Virgin of the Rocks, the same as in *El Nacimiento*, where the tree in the central part has an important role in both the development of the balance of the work and in the symbolism. Behind said tree, a character whose hand shows the singular raised finger appears. Then there is the observation that the group of people in said work are not appreciating the adoration of the child, but their gaze is directed towards the tree; it has many meanings, in between them, an allusion to the Templars and Alchemists is made.

Da Vinci also possessed extensive knowledge in science and art. Grand master of the Templar Order, in between his scientific experiments the execution of the Shroud of Turin as an experiment with the Camera Obscura is attributed to him, and which character, Christ, has the features of Leonardo, achieved through chemical mediums printed in cloth. This was done during a period where every knowledge of this type was dangerous; he annotates his experiences and observations using right-to-left writing, to conceal it from inquisitors, enemies of all knowledge stranger to what was established, and who considered as dangerous ideas everything out of it.

The references to Leonardo fill thousands of volumes, about his works, life, inventions, and ideas; in our case, he is next to other thinkers and artists one of the most important examples of the so called "Intellectual irreligiosity" of the renaissance humanism, which was practiced at other levels by artists such as Michelangelo, Ticiano, El Veronese, El Greco, and others.

Criticism of the Inauthenticity of the Gospels

None of the four gospels that have been chosen in the New Testament, attributed to Matthew, Luke, John, and Mark, were written by in-person witnesses.

These gospels do not tell of historical events; according to connoisseurs and scholars, there is no proof Jesus existed. About the narrations, in between them the Passion and the choosing of Christ before the people, history says there exists no evidence that prisoners were released during the Jewish Easter; it was not that what was pursued. There is also doubt about Pilate and his role in the life of Jesus Christ. For Pilate the act of sentencing prisoners, which he did daily, was nothing more than a function he was sent to the east for. Pilate, pragmatic, severe, formed in the Roman military, has the opportunity of getting a better position; undoubtedly, he did not understand Jewish religion.

His function was repressing every attempt at insurrection and disorder, he was used to the daily crucifixion of dozens of sentenced, whose names or motives he did not remember; it is said that if it was that way with Christ, possibly the following day he would have already forgotten. Of his bloodthirsty personality Josefo speaks of the way in which he repressed, brutally and bloodily, a rebellion in Jerusalem; his life tells of corruption, violence, and the extremely cruel way of treating prisoners. For that reason, for scholars it is suspicious that in the gospels—in one of them he is almost seen with sympathy and as a just man, alluding the washing of his hands regarding the trial of Jesus, and in which only some symbolism is attributed to him, event that possibly did not happen. Pilate did not have to be sympathetic with anybody and the only one he had to give account to be the Roman Caesar.

This has caused an analysis of his role through the first Christians, analysis which alludes to the fact of finding in them a separation when finding out about the persecution of the Jews by Rome. That is the reason why, in Palestine, it is not spoken badly of Rome or the roman governors of Palestine, having as a logic consequence that according to Christianity, Jews are guilty of the death of Jesus, and now the Christians who were persecuted before by Rome can maintain their beliefs, blaming the Jews for the antipathy for Rome.

In the Christian thought there appear passive attitudes and attitudes of incomprehension, like the followers of said religion asking themselves why does not everyone believe in Christ; this is unbelievable for them, and even worse is doubting his existence, or his role in the life of western non-Christian religions.

Levels of Interpretation

Of these levels of interpretation in sacred texts of any type, there exists an inconceivable quantity. They are in accordance with a diversity of factors to make said interpretation.

In art, said levels have different ways of being expressed, and starting from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance where a great deal of themes are found, that have been caused since its execution, such as controversy, discussions, disagreements when it comes to questioning the esthetic regarding the symbolic, the supposedly historical, and guided art. In these cases, more than appreciating the work of art as a result of the plastic solution of a problem within what is pictorial—which also happens in other expressions of art—an ideological message is searched for, according to the nascent religions and its thesis of dogmatic nature.

Even though religious Christian art lasts as a unique expression until the 17th century with a quantity of variants due to the styles that arise through centuries and regions and the different destinies that are assigned by the ones who demand it outside the Church through those years, it reflects a crisis between artists and patrons, in this case the Christian Church. Later, it led to the fragmentation of the Roman Church and the separation in other churches like the Greek and Russian Orthodox, and the Protestant with a series of shades.

The interpretations of artists according to their knowledge, logic, and questionings in a period in which sinister organizations appear within the Church, like the Inquisition, laid out crises which are unknown by those outside the field of art, who maintained beliefs and religious laws modeled and imposed through religious councils.

Returning to the topic of gospels, they are a motive obviously addressed in religious Christian art. These gospels were written many years after the events narrated by them, by people who did not witness those events; that is why the versions vary in certain aspects that refer to the same event, destined to a Hellenized audience. For that, Pablo and the evangelists used Hellenistic mental processes, plotting an invented story about Jesus, which could not be refuted because the supposed eyewitnesses had already disappeared.

To give them more credibility, they attributed the texts to the Apostles; today it is known that they did not write any gospel, and reasonable doubt exists about the facts assigned to them.

Before the proliferation of writings about Jesus, the necessity of defining the cannon arose, for which the Nicaea Council was called (year 325). But its decisions were endorsed by the Laodicea one (year 363) during which only four gospels were miraculously chosen, discarding the others.

According to one version of the miracle, the authentic gospels were placed alone on the altar, moved by the prayers of the bishops. Another version assures that certain existent gospels were placed over the altar, and when praying, asking God to choose the true ones, a small earthquake dropped the false gospels to the floor and only left the true gospels on the altar.

A more credible source states that the so called four gospels were chosen by Bishop Irenaeus, because according to his interests, the other existent gospels differed with them.

Checking the conclusions reached by music, plastic, architecture and literary artists, controversy arises in the execution of the works of art in both technical and the intended message.

The extreme fanaticism found on every pole has harmed human groups. Art, in that case, is a powerful carrier when it comes to erudite or profane thinking. When analyzing expressions made in art, the dissidents with certain positions and attitudes that artists take, have reactions that show in them the existence of a desire to discredit a belief, of venting some complex, or being ignorant in the subject of religion.

If within the rules of art, the anatomic measure changed during different periods, pursuing various prototypes of the human form, the positions, color, and perspective, the clothing and nudity, the ideas of religion wanted to impose their theological questionings above the esthetic, which led to dramatic and delicate situations. Of the cases that have endured, with many variants as they were told, there is the case of the arguments between Michelangelo and pope Julius II and the exaggerated protests of the cardinals regarding *The Last Judgement* fresco, not only because of the way it was executed by the artist, but because he painted Jesus Christ naked. This is followed by the work of Tintoretto, in the cenacle scene, where next to Christ, monkeys, parrots and ladies appear in a courtly scene, and the extemporaneity of the Supper of Leonardo, carried out in a renaissance room and its discussed version, where Mary Magdalene appears leaning on Christ, not an apostle as it was considered for so many years. This has reconsidered the prohibitions of the Church over the guided literature, especially in the inauthenticity of biblical texts like they have been presented.

For the expressions of art, religion—any of the existing ones—comes, like Freud states, to perturb this free game of choosing and adapting when imposing everyone its unique way to reach happiness and avoid suffering. Its technique consists in reducing the value of life, and deforming deliriously the image of the real world, both measures who have as a previous condition to threaten intelligence⁹.

It is not the intention of this article to discuss the true or untrue versions of the New Testament especially, or the gospels, apocryphal, very important, just like the investigations on Judas Iscariot, who is the scapegoat of a situation which is unjust towards him. Neither is the intention to discuss the sectarian interests that do not agree with the known sources about his attitude or life, but it is important to point out that art, literary, plastic, and musical, has expressed much of these events and given the impositions, rules and taboos which are common in religious beliefs—they lack logic and historical foundations since Constantine—and the imposition of a guided Christianity, a reasonable conflict about the problem of art and religion has been created.

9 Freud.-Obras completas, (t. XIX)(Santiago Raeda Editor, Buenos Aires-1955, pp.32.

Pictorial art, on the other hand, has somehow managed to express its ideas through image and symbol, and given the concern of scholars, reasonable in some way, when it comes to technique and the problems of space, perspective and volume, this ideology expressed in a scarcely studied dimension, mistaken as allegories, presents a broad field to be studied, creating conflicts that have stopped being representations to take another role as questioning the ideologic-religious imposition of the 1st to 18th centuries.

Statues and Belief

When religious art, through sculpture, imagery, or painting—we refer to every type of religious art, from the first expressions, to Crete, Greece, Rome, Christianity and the art of other times and regions—produces works that move a certain type of believer, they acquire an attribute, not only for being religious representations, but because they transmit something very particular, to move. This particularity that has art for this first different group, within a congregation, separates it from the believers who identify themselves religiously for what any representation associated with their religion symbolizes. It is not that for the latter group emotion does not exist, but the type of believer we are referring to is so demanding in its critical sense that the expressive force of the author of the work intends not for it to be admired as a work of art, but for it to be a vehicle of communication for said type of faithful. This phenomenon studied through various religious forms is disturbing for this type of believer.

The work becomes the ideal mean of communication with divinity; it creates a special worship, to it, as a particular image, not as the representation it identifies. The emotional unloading applied to it by those who make up the above-mentioned type of believers creates a mental power that, according to some scholars of the religious phenomenon, through intimate experiences they achieve the purposes they pursue, from the most natural to those classified as extraordinary.

In some way, if we reason differently from religious thought, this mechanism works in the human mind, for in that way it is possible that the faithful are kept within the beliefs of any religion that exists and has existed and that in all of them the manifestations we call miraculous happen.

The existence of worshipping a certain statue leads to the formation of subgroups between the faithful, who identify one another for that motive. In that moment, a disintegration happens, event that other forms of religious thinking cannot understand.

The story of religions talks about a certain worship of Zeus of a determined region of Greece, where the believers went, as any other representation of Zeus of different places did not have the same power as the former; the same happens with the representation of Christian statues, representation that develops a special worship of Jesus or Mary of a determined place, where the churchgoers go, for they assume that Jesus or Mary of a certain place are more miraculous than the other existing images in other places. The result is the noticeable separation of cults or religious sects, who aspire to be the chosen ones, which goes to show it is not a statue the one that unifies or differentiates the believers, but the sectarian interests of its leaders and members.

This explanation is necessary to try and comprehend the expressions in religious art, in any of its manifestations.

The work of art suffers a transformation, from being considered as such, to become an object of worship with sacred attributes, becoming venerated by the believers, being distinguished from other representations of the same deity or divinity; it is no longer a regional variety, but something entirely different, creating confusion in between some when it comes to the identity of the worshipped object. It makes the existence of different groups possible, those who do not have the same objectives in the religious sense.

Hence, the artist executes a work of complex intention, a narrative, illustrative, symbolic, or critical one, including their own particular way of expressing their point of view through these plastic manifestations.

In regions like Latin America, where American Protestant sects have made an incursion, they keep divided these beliefs in their own country. Specifically speaking about Guatemala, in the newspapers there appears an image of Jesus Christ which alludes to the idea that Jesus is not the same in which all Christians and Protestants believe in, as every sect has a Jesus that seems to be different, and there is enmity due to a certain war that happens between everyone. Considering that every sect believes that the Christ they believe in is the true one, this is a pathetic and illustrative example of the lack of logic knowledge and religious awareness, which reveal the sectarian interests of a general belief.

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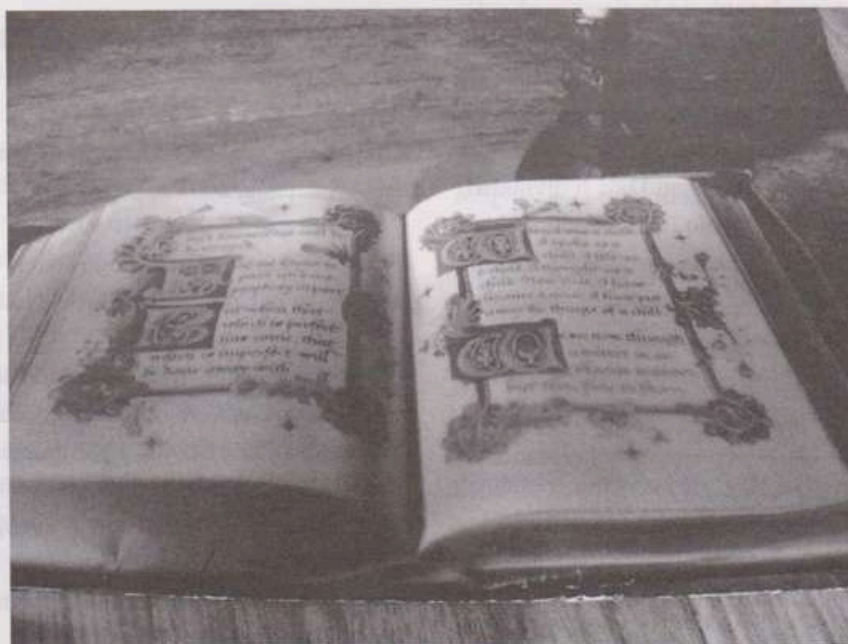
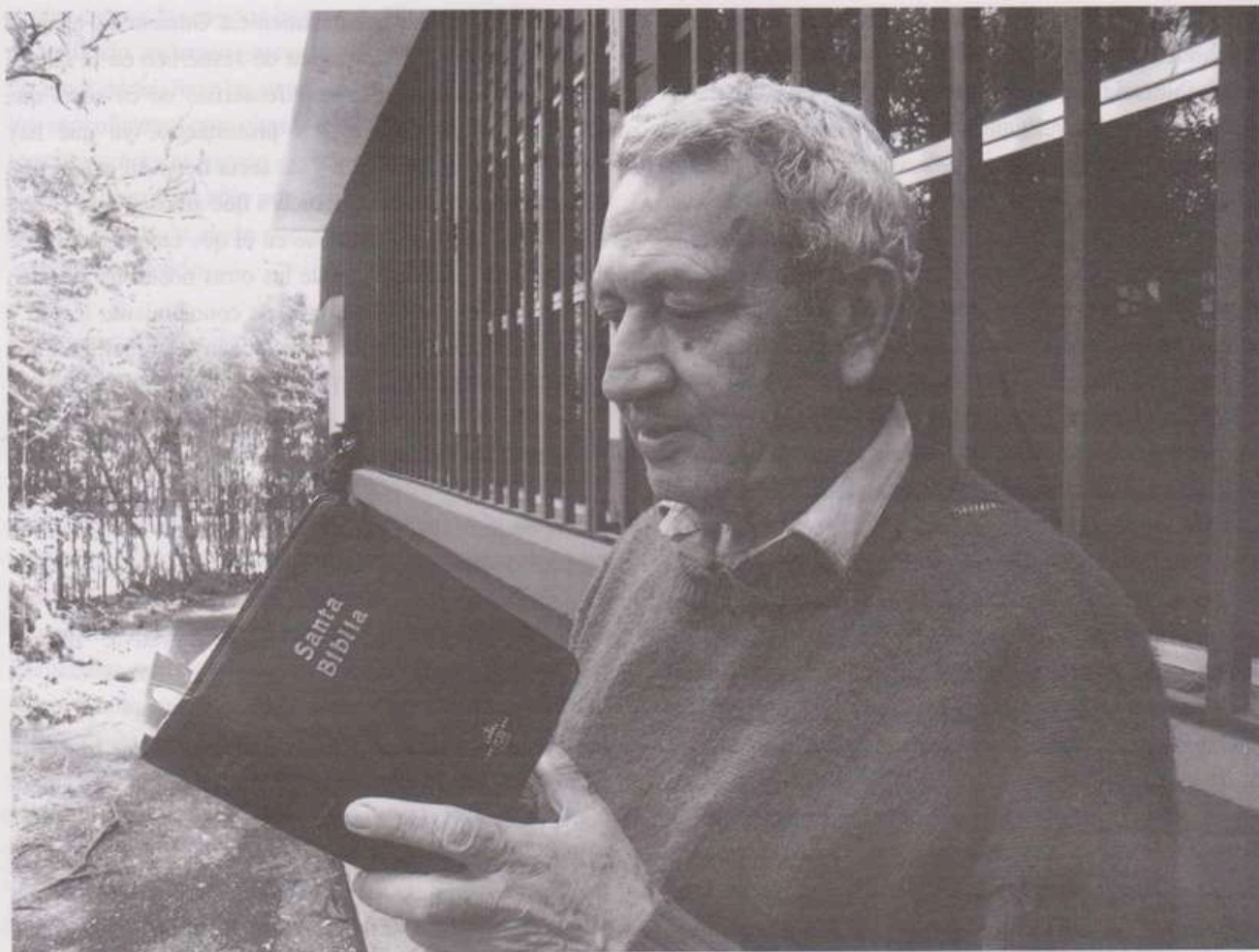
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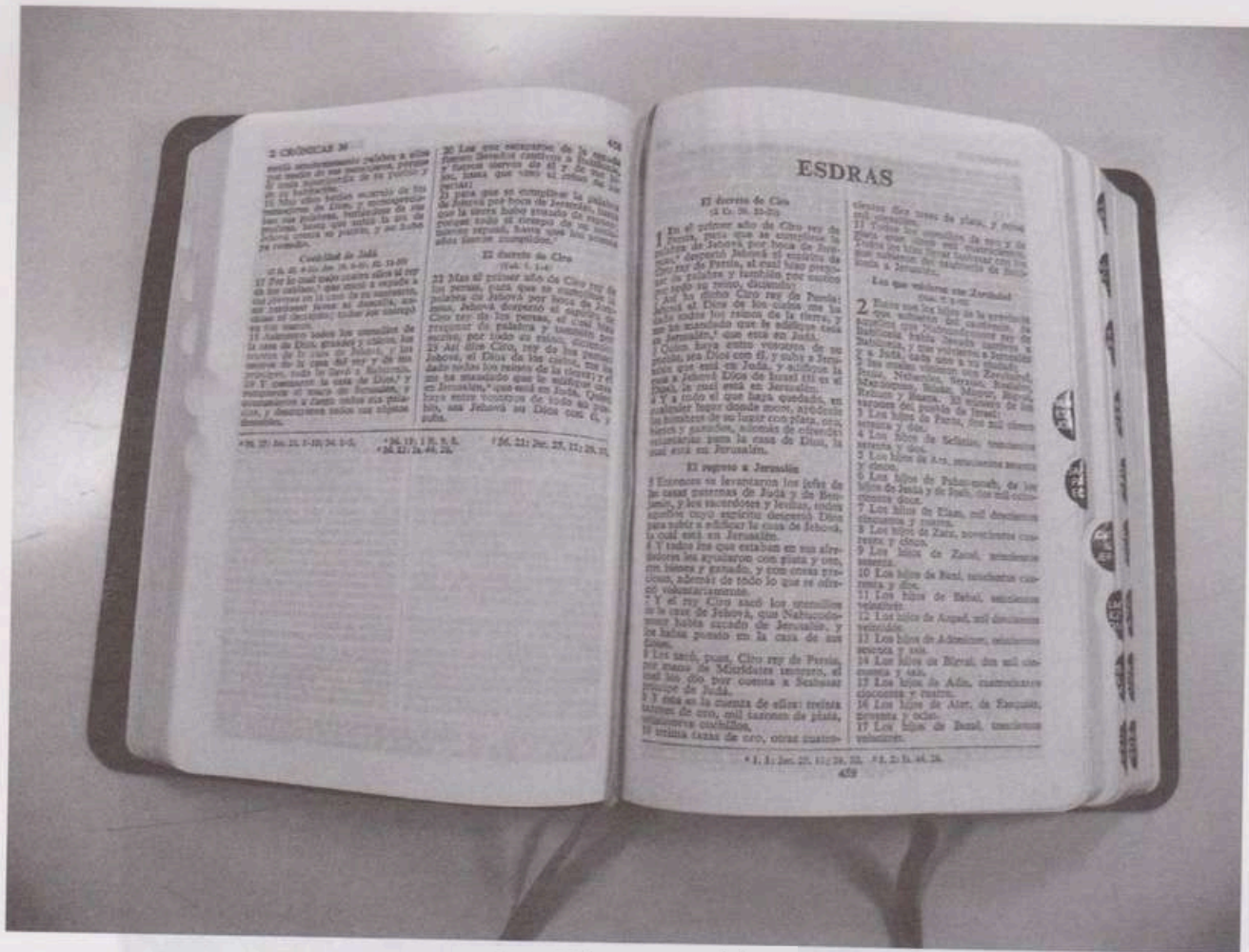
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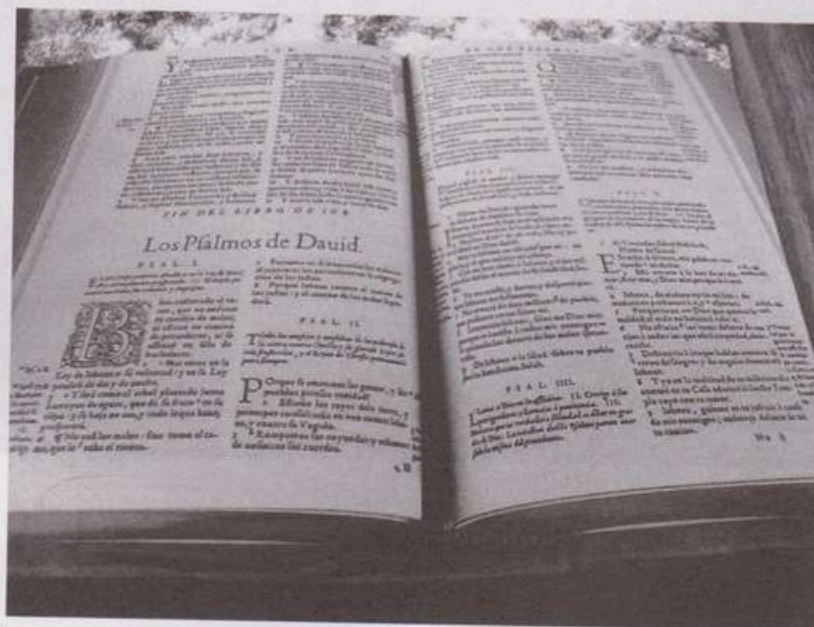
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Medieval Bible



Reina Valera version of the
Bible



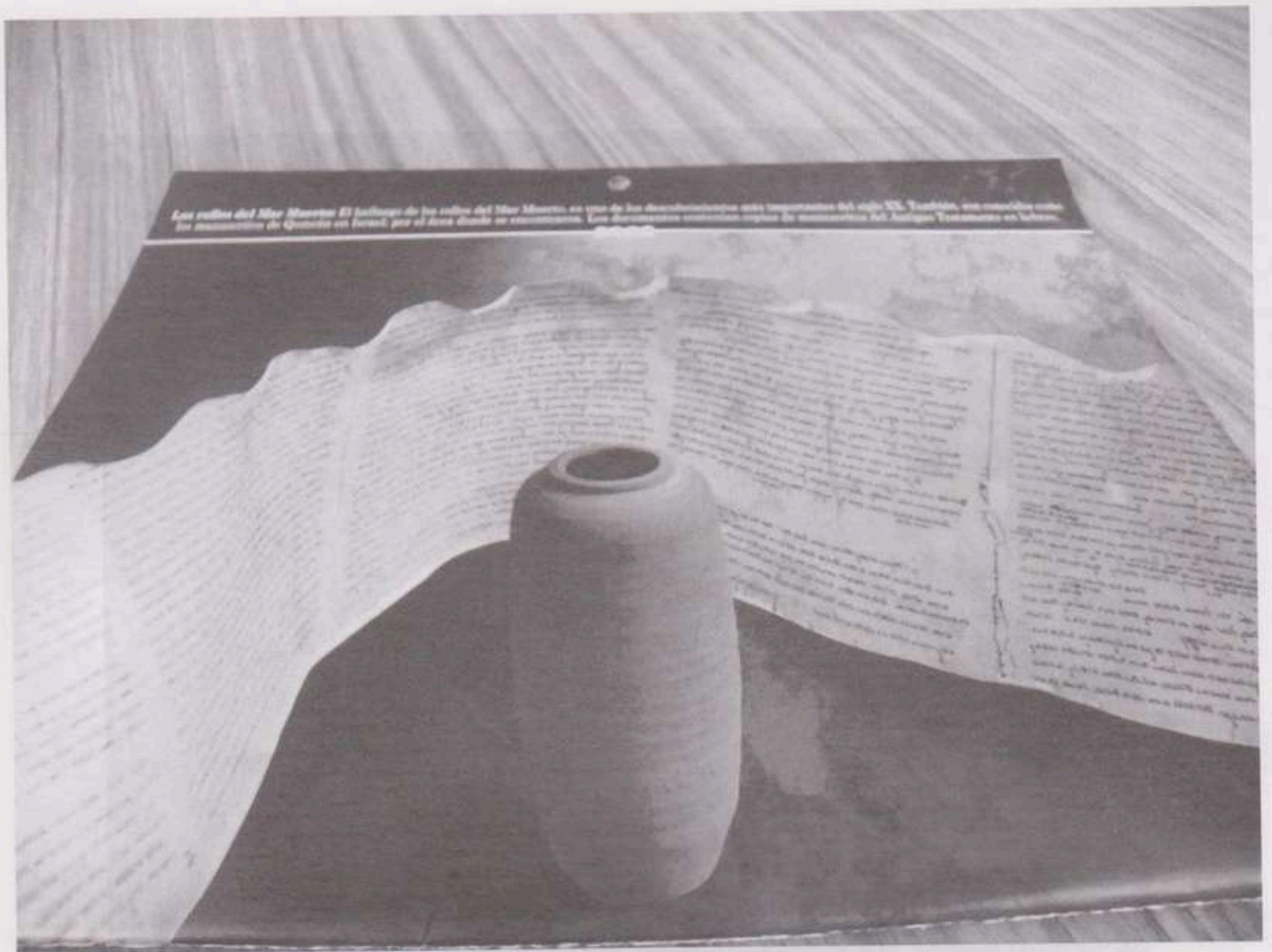
Inside pages of the Biblia del Oso (1569)



Biblia del Oso (1569)



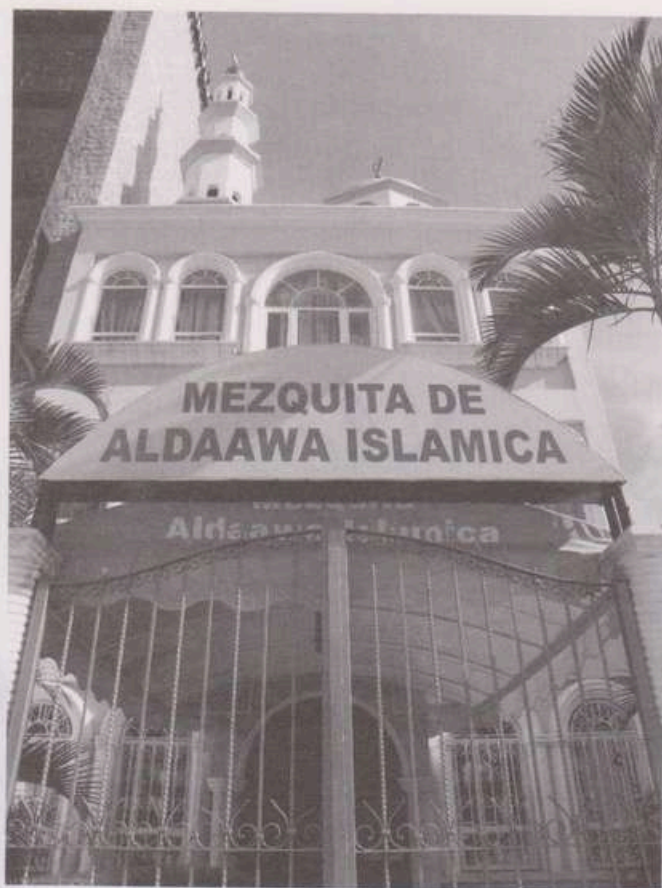
Central Evangelical Church, founded in 1838



Dead Sea Scrolls



*Gospel of Judas — National
Geographic Translation*



Star of David

Exposición de la Mezquita de
Aldaawa Islamica, en la Biblioteca
de la UCA, 14 de mayo de 1984.
Fotografía de la UCA, 14 de mayo de 1984.

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Metropolitan Cathedral



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