

Liturgy as Art; the Art of Liturgy

Dwight W. Vogel

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

CONNECTIONS WITH AESTHETIC THEORY

Three basic factors: the creator, the object, the appreciator
(DWW: aesthetic experience involves all three)

CREATOR

creative impulse / germ

in - formed by sensitivity, insight, and intuition

with "passion" through disciplined technique

cf. Nietzsche: Apollonian (discipline, form, restraint) and
Dionysian (force, drive)

"Liturgy as creative within itself." (John Foley)

*Assembly as mother (gestation and labor physically present)

Spirit as father (God as source and summit)

conception, gestation, birth

Five Phases of the creative cycle (James Empereur)

-impulse to create

-gathering of materials and methods

-unconscious incubation

-conscious illumination

-revision and verification

OBJECT

media

form

content

James Empereur:

Liturgy is the place where the story of Jesus Christ (Paschal mystery) takes place.

Don Saliers: The art of liturgy as ritual enactment, proclamation and prayer: "No ritual enactment without gesture, movement and shared significant form; no proclamation without human utterance and common rhetorical forms; no prayer without the intrinsic music of sound and silence, speaking and listening, seeing and beholding."

Liturgy as epiphany as divine self-communication in and through the created order.

Romano Guardini: Liturgy as holy play -- "Set of improvisations on the cantus firmus of the song of the incarnation and the resurrection 'Glory to God in the highest.'" (Don Saliers)

APPRECIATOR

collective unconscious

fund of experience (context)

John Dewey: Within the flow of life: high intrinsic moments consumatory experience; involves "surrender" (DWV: receptivity, openness)

An experience versus experiencing

feeling and ideas must be fused

not primarily referential but evocative (I.A. Richards)

more than understanding at stake;

we enter into the world of the work of art itself

recognition of intrinsic value

value guiding

extrinsic pragmatic factors

Four characteristics of creative interchange (James Empereur)

-a new perspective

-progressive integration

-expanding appreciation

-setting and community

Liturgy forms persons and communities "in specific symbol systems and fundamental ways of being in the world" and "the means of expressing primary identity and passionate self-understanding." (Don Saliers)

Empathy -- not only of mood but as our whole life as lived and valued
(Louis Flaccus)

Psychical distance (Bullough) -- detachment from my own particular and petty strivings and purposes; intimate interaction but not identification with the object

overdistancing; not interested or involved

underdistancing; react to the object rather than in it

(sentimentality)

Liturgy and Aesthetics: Ambiguities

iconoclastic impulse and eschatological reservation

guard against "the idolatrous confusion of images with the divine reality they are to represent or express" (Don Saliers)

DWV: true for both Gregorian chant and praise songs!