

An investigation of the theological questions raised by twentieth-century works of art which make use of the iconography of the crucifixion

Keith E Anderson (2014)

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An investigation of the theological questions raised by twentieth-century works of art which make use of the iconography of the crucifixion

PhD, Oxford Brookes University

An investigation of the theological questions raised by twentieth century works of art, which make use of the iconography of the crucifixion.

Keith Edward Anderson

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Abstract

This research developed from an observation that the iconography of the crucifixion was being used by artists in the twentieth century for purposes beyond its usage in earlier centuries. As an active member of a Christian Community this appeared to have implications for a Christian understanding of the theological significance of the crucifixion of Jesus and also its significance in the wider culture of twentieth century Britain. The foundation of this thesis is a Scholarly Edition of sixty works of art, produced from 1913 to 2000, by artists based in Great Britain. They are united by a common use of the iconography of the crucifixion. There is no other collection comparable to the Scholarly Edition. As an original contribution to learning the collection is innovative in bringing together the works of art as a resource for theological reflection.

The commentary describes the methodology used in collecting and analysing the works including an introduction to three areas relating theology and art. The analyses of individual works indicate that in the twentieth century the theology implicit in the works moved away from a teleological emphasis of Jesus as Saviour of the World, found in pre-seventeenth century works, to a diverse and diffuse approach to theology. Within this diversity, the works of art collected in the Scholarly Edition indicate that Christians and non-Christians during this period used it for a wider range of purposes than has been thus far reported. In the final chapter of the Commentary it is proposed that in the twentieth century the symbolic meaning of the iconography changed from centring on a Christian teleological understanding as Christ as Saviour to a non-religious personification of humanity as alienated, innocent and suffering, whose prototype is the crucified Jesus Christ. Finally, this change was related to radical Anglican theological proposals made during the twentieth century.

List of Contents

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	2
Conventions and Terminology Used in the Commentary	4
Acknowledgements	5
Chapter One: Introduction and Methodology	6
Introduction	
The Relationship between Theology and Art	
Literature and Resource Search	
The Methodology Relating to the Scope of the Research	
The Methodology for the Collection of the Works	
The Methodology for Presenting the Iconography of the Works	
The Methodology for Presenting the Contents of the Scholarly Edition	
The Methodology used in the Analyses of Individual Works	
The Conventional Theology in the Portrayal of the Crucifixion	
The Conventional use of the Iconography of the Crucifixion	
A Model of Three Archetypes	
Summary	
Chapter Two: Theological Analysis of Individual Works Contained in the Scholarly Edition.	41
Introduction	
The Testing of Panofsky's Process	
Method of Presenting the Analyses	
Works which Contain Elements of a Conventional Theology	
Works with a Different Focus	
Works which Appear to Abandon Traditional Christian Theology	
Works which Appear to be Antithetical to the Theology of Christianity	
Conclusions from the Analyses	
Implications for the Study of Secularisation	
Summary	
Chapter Three: The Unity of the Works	83
Introduction	
Symbolic Meaning	
Exceptions to the Symbolic Meaning	
The Context of the Change in Symbolic Meaning	
Symbolic Meaning and Issues of Theology in the Twentieth Century	
Summary and Conclusions	
Bibliography	106
Appendix A - Illustrations Relating to the Commentary	116
Scholarly Edition (A further index is included in the Scholarly Edition)	134

Conventions and Terminology Used In the Commentary

Dimensions – All dimensions are given to the nearest centimetre.

Biblical Passages – All are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version.

Footnotes – All footnotes follow the same convention.

For literature this is: Author, Title, Translator, (City of publication, Publisher, Date of publication), page number.

Where a footnote relates to the same work as its immediate predecessor the convention of 'Ibid, page number' is used.

Where a footnote relates to the same work but not its immediate predecessor, yet in the same chapter, the convention, author, shortened title, page number is used.

If there is more than one work by the same author the convention author, abbreviated title, page number' is used.

For art works the convention is: Artist, *Title*, (City of Location, Gallery or museum, dimensions, materials, date of creation).

Note: Location is given at the end of 2013. No information is given of ownership.

Where an electronic source has been used the convention is to use the form:
Web-site or other electronic site. Latest date accessed.

The term *Crucifixion* has a certain diversity of meaning. Customarily it refers to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but the use of this term may encourage the reader to assume this includes an historical meaning, a theological meaning and possibly an artistic statement. By adopting a convention of avoiding the use of the capital letter except in the titles of books or works of art etc. it is intended that the author and reader will be kept aware of this diversity.

Iconography in art history has two related meanings. The first is the study of the images in art, and is concerned with identifying, describing, classifying and interpreting them. The second refers to the image itself and its implied meanings. It is this second usage which is predominantly used in this thesis.

Teleology is defined as the study of final causes. In Christian theology it is normally associated with debates on the proof of God's existence. It is used in this thesis to indicate that conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion was concerned with the final causes for human life; that is judgement, eternal life or damnation. This will later be contrasted with an existential use of the iconography which is concerned with the present state of humanity.

Soteriology is that division of Christian theology which treats of salvation. It includes the doctrines of the fall of man and of sin; of God's redemptive work in revelation and in its culmination in the Atonement; of grace; of man's final destiny.¹

¹ A. Richardson, The Dictionary of Christian Theology, (London, SCM Press, 1974), 316.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The foundation of the research for this thesis is an investigation of the theological questions raised by twentieth century works of art which use the iconography of the crucifixion. The research initially arose out of an intellectual curiosity to explore the theological implications of these works of art

The Context

This research developed from an observation that the iconography of the crucifixion was being used by artists in the twentieth century for purposes beyond its usage in earlier centuries. They were not constrained by the theology associated with conventional images of the crucifixion of Jesus.¹ As an active member of a Christian Community this appeared to have implications for a Christian understanding of the theological significance of the crucifixion of Jesus and also its significance in the wider culture of twentieth century Britain.²

The Thesis

The overall process was to compare the use of the iconography of the crucifixion in twentieth century works of art with its use in an earlier period and identify and interpret any changes in theology observed. In order to do this a collection of works was made as the basis for this enquiry. A visual description of each works of art was made with a focus on their iconography and a brief survey of interpretations of the use of that iconography was recorded. The result of this is a Scholarly Edition of paintings and

¹ An explanation of the term 'conventional' is made later in this chapter.

² The author is a retired priest in the Church of England.

drawings created by artists in Great Britain between 1913 and 2000 which contain elements of the iconography of the crucifixion. The Scholarly Edition is a catalogue of sixty works of art by thirty three artists. The presentation of the thesis as a Scholarly Edition in the format of a catalogue arose out of the research. It was a pragmatic decision arising from the process of identifying and researching the individual works of art. By this format it places the primary sources (the works of art) at the centre of the thesis and offers the reader a resource of the pictures for theological reflection with the opportunity to consider the results of that research on each work of art relatively independently.

The Commentary complements the Scholarly Edition and comprises three chapters, which include a series of original insights developed through the collection and analyses of these works. This chapter describes the methodology used in collecting and analysing the works. It begins with a discussion on three areas of Theology and Art. This was necessary in order to clarify the purpose and process of the research. That is to lay the foundation of what was to be done and how it was to be researched. The three models explored, theology of art, theology in art and theology as art, make an original contribution to this academic discourse. The result of this discussion was to focus this thesis on theology as art; that is to present the theological insights which particular works of art convey within themselves.

This chapter continues the methodology with a discussion on the literature and resource search, followed by detailed descriptions on the methods of collection, presentation and analyses of the works. Chapter Two contains analyses of individual works in the Scholarly Edition structured in a way to highlight the diversification of theology in them. These analyses explore the hypothesis that changes in theology could be discerned in these twentieth century works as compared to those created before the

end of the sixteenth century.³ The selection of this date was based upon a literature search, which indicated that by the end of the sixteenth century the slow processes of the separation of art from religion had become established and although many of the iconographic conventions continued beyond that time, it was the works prior to the end of the sixteenth century that illustrated the conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion most clearly.⁴ This chapter offers a further contribution to the study of theology contained in works of art and indicates that there is a diversity and diffusion of theology implicit in the works contained in the Scholarly Edition as compared to those produced before the end of the sixteenth century.⁵

Chapter Three explores the most speculative areas of research. The second, hypothesis explored was that these works of art could identify the theological reflections of an unstructured social group, which was neither part of the institutional Christian Churches nor any specific secular community, but formed a bridge between them. The exploration of this hypothesis is important in the context of academic debates on the understanding of the nature of secularisation in Britain during the twentieth century. If this hypothesis had proved tenable, the identification of a bridging group sharing some distinctive theological values could have contributed to this debate. However, the analyses indicate that the diversity of the artists and their works precludes the possibility that any sociologically classifiable group is identifiable. But this research has led to an original finding that the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion has changed and become non-religious. It is this which may be seen as a

³ Anthony Blunt has suggested that changes around the beginning of the seventeenth century were partly due to changes in theological emphases within Catholicism, as the Jesuit Order became more powerful and partly due to artistic changes with the growth of Baroque and Mannerism. A. Blunt, Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989), 134-138.

⁴ Gertrud Schiller's seminal work on the iconography of Christian Art confirmed this decision. G. Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, trans. J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971). Diane Apostolos-Cappadona considered this change in terms of discovering the spiritual in the totally human. D. Apostolos-Cappadona, 'The Artistic Journey' in R. Crumlin. Beyond Belief - Modern Art and the Religious Imagination, (Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, 1998), 21-22.

⁵ The terms diversity and diffusion are developed in Chapter Two.

bridge between a Christian view of the crucifixion of Christ and a secular understanding of it. This change in symbolic meaning is explored in Chapter Three.

Consideration is given to how this change in symbolic meaning may have developed and how it relates to theological debate in the twentieth century. With a more specific focus to pastoral theology, a brief consideration is given to its relationship to conventional and Jewish theology, leading into a consideration of the relationship of this symbolic meaning with more radical modern Anglican and Protestant theology and in particular the theology of Don Cupitt.

The Audience

As the primary original contribution to learning in this thesis, the information in the Scholarly Edition documenting the changes of use of the iconography of the crucifixion has been collected and presented as a resource for academic art historical and theological research; what Elkins describes as those exploring ‘the path of wilderness between art and religion.’⁶ There is no other comparable collection.

However, whilst it is considered that this research has significance for this wide readership, it holds particular interest for those engaged in Christian pastoral theology from within Christian Communities as a resource for reflection upon the cultural context in Britain within which they carry out their role; and the Commentary reflects this particular focus.⁷ This thesis has demonstrated that the use of the iconography of the crucifixion has diversified in the twentieth century and that this diversification may indicate changes in the cultural place of the crucified Christ in the twentieth century. This thesis offers pastoral theologians resources on the nature of this secularisation, for reflection within the disciplines of Christology, homiletics and apologetics. For the

⁶ J. Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, (London, Routledge, 2004), 27.

⁷ The term pastoral theology is used to describe the particular theological concerns of those within a Christian community who are engaged in relating the beliefs of Christianity to the lives of people within and beyond that community.

pastoral theologian the process of theological conversation with those outside that community needs to begin on common ground and this thesis offers some insight into that common ground.

THE METHODOLOGY

The Relationship between Theology and Art

As a foundation of the research, a working model for the relationship between art and theology was developed. The purpose of developing this model was to articulate the presuppositions on which the research was undertaken and to re-visit them throughout the research. It is proposed here that the discourse between art and theology may be divided into three complementary components: theology *of* art, theology *in* art and theology *as* art.

1. Theology of Art

The theology of art may be defined as placing the concept of art within a framework of the study of the nature of God and religious belief. In the West the theological framework has principally been that of Christianity.⁸ The questions raised in the theology of art are concerned with how the nature and quality of art may be considered in the context of a creative and saving God.⁹ Different approaches over time have been adopted in defining a theology of art without a consensus. In the twentieth century theologians, such as Maritain, Tillich, Rahner and Küng attempted to articulate

⁸ For example, G.E. Thiessen's comprehensive reader assumes that theological aesthetics is a purely Christian discipline. No justification is given for this approach: it is assumed. See G.E. Thiessen, Theological Aesthetics. (London, SCM, 2004).

⁹ In considering the challenge of creating a theology of art G. Pattison wrote: "Were this book to be attempting to offer a full-scale 'theology of art' it would have to complete the following tasks. In the first place, it would have to demonstrate and justify the selection of its doctrinal perspective. That is to say, it would have to show why art was best viewed theologically from, for example, the perspective of creation, sacra mentality, or Christology. It would then also need to show how what was said under that rubric affected or was affected by what is said from the viewpoint of other theological topics, for example how sacra mentality is related to creation and to Christology. And - if it wished to do what most theologies feel obligated to do - it would also need to indicate how it generated norms to be applied in the actual production and reception of art." G. Pattison, Crucifixions and Resurrections of the Image: Christian Reflections on Art and Modernity, (London, SCM Press, 2009), 6.

a theology which understands art in the creative and revelatory work of God, whilst allowing for the inspiration of the artist to be independent of their religious beliefs. Maritain places the task of the artist as reflecting the beauty of God. Tillich relates art to ultimate reality, while Rahner's approach is to suggest that art should be understood as an integral part of theology.¹⁰ George Pattison wrote on the theology of art in Art Modernity and Faith, but failed to define their relationship, accepting 'There is no agreed in either art or religion, nor even a clearly defined or defining tradition of authority against which to mark out our own position.'¹¹ In this research it has been accepted that a definitive theology of art has still to be achieved, because of the continuing difficulties in defining the nature of art.

2. Theology In Art

Theology in art is concerned to explore and comment upon the spiritual experiences of engaging with a work of art. The discourse here is between the theologian and the viewer. The theologian is less concerned with the intentions of the artist, whether conscious or unconscious, than with communicating to the viewer their own theological interpretation of the work. An example of this is in Sister Wendy Beckett's book on prayer. She wrote: 'What Grant Wood shows us in *Spring Turning* is the World as we would like it to be, the world as we somehow feel in God it should be.'¹² Sister Wendy Beckett's comment is an invitation to the viewer to interpret the work in a particular way consistent with her Christian beliefs.¹³ Independently, the

¹⁰ See J. Maritain, Art and Scholasticism and Frontiers of Poetry, trans. J.W. Evans, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962). P. Tillich, On Art and Architecture, (New York, Crossroads, 1987). K. Rahner, Theology and The Arts, in Thought vol.57, no.224, reproduced in G.E. Thiessen, Theological Aesthetics, (London, SCM, 2004). H. Küng, Art and the Question of Meaning, (London, SCM, 1981), 53.

¹¹ G. Pattison, Art, Modernity and Faith: Restoring the Image, (London, Macmillan, 1991), 177.

¹² Grant Wood, *Spring Turning*, (Winston-Salem USA, Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, 1936), Appendix A - Fig. iii. Sr. W. Beckett, Sister Wendy on Prayer, (London, Continuum, 2006), 125.

¹³ An approach to the concept of Theology in Art from the standpoint of the work of art itself was given by E.B. Feldman, describing it as Spiritual Art: "Religious art tells a sacred story, or enjoins right behaviour, or endeavours to sustain faith. But spiritual art endeavours to be a revelation of the divine in human nature and in the world. That is to say, spiritual art tries to declare the immanence of the divine in the world, often finding it in unexpected places. But it does not come to us with appropriate labels, and its creators may not necessarily think of their works as having a spiritual quality." Since Feldman accepts

viewer can engage in theology in art when they interpret a work of art in the context of their own faith.

In September 2013 Richard Harries published The Image of Christ in Modern Art. Although this study has considerable overlap in the choice of art works with this thesis, its objective is different. Harries's book is focused on theology in art. He expressed this intention in Chapter One when he wrote:

So the question behind this book is: how did artists who wished to relate to traditional Christian themes in some way do so whilst retaining their artistic integrity?¹⁴

Harries explores a series of works to discover how they may have revealed traditional themes in a new format; his priority is with Christian themes.

In the last chapter of Art Modernity and Faith, George Pattison presents four modern works of art which can be interpreted in a Christian context, one is Craigie Aitchison's *Crucifixion* of 1994, on display in Kings College Chapel, Cambridge and which is included in the Scholarly Edition.¹⁵ His analysis of this work is in the context of theology in art. Pattison offers this work as a piece of art which can be interpreted by the viewer in a Christian context. He accepts that the work does not impose a predetermined meaning onto the viewer, but placing it in a side Chapel allows it to be interpreted within a Christian context. This thesis has taken on Pattison's concern that the primary source of a theology of art has to be art itself.¹⁶ The foundation for this must be in taking seriously any theology which is implicit in the iconography of the work. This approach is defined here as theology as art.

that the artist may not be aware of the spiritual content of the work of art this thesis has taken the approach of identifying theology in art as that which is discovered through the theology of the viewer. E.B. Feldman Varieties of Visual Experience, (New York, Harry N Abrahams Inc.), 39.

¹⁴ R. Harries, The Image of Christ in Modern Art, (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 6.

¹⁵ Pattison, Art Modernity and Faith, 186-188.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 178.

3. Theology As Art

This thesis is concerned with theology as art. The concern here is to discover the theological insights which particular works of art convey within themselves. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the artist, in creating a work of art, may convey into it theological implications. Using the concept of theology as art this thesis tries to identify them. It is an attempt to allow the work of art to 'speak' for itself. This contrasts with theology in art where the theologian brings their understanding of theology to the work.

For example in the central panel of the Isenheim altarpiece, Matthias Grünewald depicts the figure of the dead crucified Christ in horrific detail. The image leaves the viewer in no doubt about the suffering that Jesus endured. However, to Jesus's left stands a figure which, to modern eyes, looks almost comical. John the Baptist stands with a finger pointing at the dead Christ.¹⁷ The inclusion of the Baptist balances the sacrificial message of the dead Christ with the prophetic call of hope from John 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'¹⁸ The process of interpreting the iconography of this work is that of theology as art.

This differentiation of the relationship between art and theology into three areas is not perfect, but it provides a useful methodological tool in identifying the distinctive focus of this thesis. This differentiation is original to this thesis and is offered as a fresh approach to research into the relationship between theology and art. The Scholarly Edition is offered as a resource for all three aspects of theology and art. Where appropriate in the discussion, reference is made to a particular theological understanding of a work of art, but no attempt has been made in this thesis to develop a theology of art.

To summarise the central concern in the Commentary is with theology as art, and in particular the theological implications of the iconography wittingly or

¹⁷ Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*, - Central Panel, (Colmar, Alsace, Isenheim altarpiece, Musée d'Unterlinden, 1512-15) See Scholarly Edition – Appendix B, Fig. 36.

¹⁸ Gospel of John 1:29.

unwittingly used by the artist. In contrast to theology in art, this thesis explores the variety of theological themes which the iconography in the works suggests without attempting to impose a particular theological stance upon them. It is recognised that a limitation of this methodology is its dependence upon the researcher's ability to remain objective. The research for this thesis has not discovered any other systematic attempt to explore the concept of theology as art and it is offered as an original contribution to learning. In Chapter Two analyses of individual works will be made in the context of theology as art.

Literature and Resource Search¹⁹

This thesis brings together scholarship in art history and theology. Initially a search of art history resources was made to explore the viability of the research and whether similar resources to the proposed Scholarly Edition were available. At the beginning of this research in 2008 no resources were found to be comparable to the Scholarly Edition. General exhibition catalogues contained useful information on individual works and two exhibitions were identified which centred upon Christian themes in art; both have been used as resources for this research, but neither focused upon the iconography of the crucifixion.²⁰ Similarly, collections of images of art works, such as 'Bridgeman Education' were found to be available on the internet and were valuable resources.²¹ However, their collections are not comprehensive in the area of this research containing limited information on the works to be considered. In 2010, an exhibition was held on the theme of images of the crucifixion and this has been a significant resource for the Scholarly Edition, although its works were more international and its focus more general.²²

¹⁹ The most significant primary resources for this research are the works of art.

²⁰ These exhibitions were 'Images of Christ,' (Northampton, St. Matthew's Church, 19 March - 16 May 1993) and 'Seeing Salvation,' (London, The National Gallery, 26 February - 7 May 2000).

²¹ <https://www.bridgemaneducation.com/>

²² 'Cross Purposes: Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion,' Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood, Kent, 5 March to 29 May 2010.

Associated literature searches were made related to the state of academic research on iconography; its results are described later in this chapter. Similarly, a search was made on the relationship of art and theology. It revealed a lack of clarity on this relationship. Scholars have so far either focused on the theology of art and/or on theology in art.²³ Whilst helpful as resources, many of which are included in the bibliography, this thesis develops an original concept of theology as art.

A substantial literature search was made of developments in theology in Britain from the end of the nineteenth to the latter part of the twentieth century, with a focus upon Christology relating to the crucifixion of Jesus. The purpose of which was to explore any possible connections between the changes in implicit theology revealed in the works of art in the Scholarly Edition and the debates occurring in theological circles during the time these works were created. Because of the leading position of the Anglican Church in Britain, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century this literature search shows a bias towards Anglican and Protestant authors in these debates.²⁴ Theological perspectives on the crucifixion from for example Catholic and Orthodox sources continued to maintain an existing conventional or traditional theology present in their communities. More radical perspectives were largely absent from these Christian Communities in the time considered.

In the first half of the twentieth century, when the diversification in the use of the iconography of the crucifixion began in art in Britain, there appears to be little influential debate in Britain from Roman Catholic theologians on subjects related to the

²³ Examples of studies in the theology of art include G. Pattison, Art, Modernity and Faith: Restoring the Image, (London, Macmillan, 1991) and J. Maritain, Art and Scholasticism and Frontiers of Poetry, trans. J.W. Evans, (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

Examples of theology in art include J. Elkins, On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art, (London, Routledge, 2004) and R. Harries, The Image of Christ in Modern Art, (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013).

²⁴ A differentiation has been made here between Anglican and Protestant, because many members of the Anglican Communion would consider their heritage to be Reformed and Catholic rather than Protestant. This thesis makes no attempt to enter that particular debate, but acknowledges the sensitivity of the terminology.

thesis. Roman Catholicism during the early part of the twentieth century was growing in Britain and the major concerns were pastoral. Considerable effort was being made in the construction of new churches and particularly new schools.²⁵ Theology reflected a strong anti-modernism agenda in Europe, which though not as intense in Britain was nonetheless influential.²⁶ In particular, the excommunication of Father George Tyrrell in 1907 effectively brought to an end any public debate on theological development until the 1960s and Vatican II.²⁷ By contrast, during this time, Anglican and Protestant theologians were investigating controversial new radical approaches to Christology in the light of the modernist movement. These developments in Christian theology in the twentieth century are identified at the appropriate points in the Commentary.²⁸

Although this thesis is written from a Christian perspective and an Anglican viewpoint this has not affected unduly any academic judgement. Effort has been made to ensure that the author's theological preferences have not been privileged; nevertheless it would not be possible to eliminate them

The results of resource and literature searches relating to the identification and description of individual works are acknowledged at appropriate points in the Scholarly Edition and Commentary.

²⁵ A. Hastings, A History of English Christianity - 1920-1985, (London, Collins, 1986), 134.

²⁶ An extract from a review in the Tablet of 1907 is typical of the attitude towards academic theology in Britain at this time: "Yet here we have Dr. Sanday, the greater part of whose book is occupied with a sympathetic analysis of the psychological criticism in which independent scholarship has been so prolific, gathering up the fragments of the New Testament that remain when the critics have done with it and declaring that all the baskets are full. Catholics may be mystified, but they will also rejoice that, apart from belief in the doctrine of the infallible Church, there are yet scholars in the front rank who can find enough evidence to justify the confession, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." From Reviews, Anglican Orthodoxy, The Life of Christ in Recent Research. By William Sanday, D.D: Oxford, Clarendon Press, in The tablet, 9th November, 1907. See - <http://archive.thetablet.co.uk/article/9th-november-1907/12/reviews>. Accessed 27 January 2015.

²⁷ N. Sagovsky, On God's Side: A Life of George Tyrrell, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990).

²⁸ In Chapter Three there is also a brief discussion on the Jewish understanding of Jesus in the twentieth century.

The Methodology Relating to the Scope of the Research

Five criteria were used in the collection of works for the Scholarly Edition. The first three were employed from the beginning of the research whilst the remaining two were developed during the research.

1. The Choice of the Iconography of the Crucifixion as the Focus of Study

This study has restricted itself to the specific area of the iconography of the crucifixion.²⁹ As an image, the crucifixion is central to Christianity. By focusing upon those works of art which used its iconography, insights into how this primary Christian image has been reinterpreted in the twentieth century has been made. The prime criterion is that the work should contain one or more of three elements, any of which would indicate that the artist was referring the viewer to the tradition of the depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. These elements are ‘a cross,’ ‘a crucifix,’ and/or a title directing the viewer towards the crucifixion.

2. The Choice of Medium

The choice of medium for this research is restricted to paintings and drawings. The reasoning behind this is the recognition that the different genres of alternative media could make the research unwieldy.³⁰ An additional restriction is the exclusion of works which are part of the ‘Stations of the Cross.’ Although this has created a certain bias in the Scholarly Edition, it is balanced by the recognition that these unique works should be assessed in the context of their place in a unified set of images rather than taken out of context.

3. Works of Art with Public Recognition as a Criterion

The decision was made to only select works which had received public recognition from such sources as the artists’ peers, art historians, dealers and public

²⁹ Similar iconography is used in other Christian artworks, such as ‘The Carrying of the Cross,’ ‘The Deposition’ and ‘The Pietà,’ but this research has focused upon the crucifixion.

³⁰ So for example the extensive uses of sculptures as monuments or prints as illustrations lend them to alternative modes of research.

collectors (including public galleries, churches etc.). This minimised personal artistic preferences of the researcher and provided a selection strategy made on a more (though not entirely) objective ground of public significance. This criterion is not without its difficulties.³¹

4. The Works Studied to be by Artists Based in Great Britain

Initially a record was made of appropriate works produced from artists based in Europe and North America. Though this contained works of considerable interest, it was realised that to attempt to relate these works to their indigenous cultures was unrealistic. The decision was made to restrict the collection to works produced by artists predominantly resident in Britain. That is essentially England, Scotland and Wales. Ireland (both North and South) is excluded, because the social and theological cultures warrant a separate programme of research. This criteria allows for the inclusion of artists not born in Britain (for example Francis Bacon), but who were active here for the majority of their creative life; however, reference is made in the Scholarly Edition and Commentary, where appropriate, to works from outside Britain.

This boundary of inclusion was still open to subjective decisions; so for example Ronald Kitaj was excluded. Though he spent many years in Britain a decision was made that his cultural and artistic roots remained essentially North American. The work of Hughie O'Donoghue has also been excluded. Though he was born in Manchester, his major works using the iconography of the crucifixion were created after he migrated to Ireland.

5. The Works Studied are Restricted to those Created Between 1913 and 2000

³¹ A borderline example of a painting which was ultimately excluded is David O'Connell's *Crucifixion* of 1998 displayed in Launde Abbey, the Leicester Diocesan Retreat House at East Norton in Leicestershire. The painting was completed in a cubist style and was of some interest; however except for a series of works completed for the Roman Catholic Church of St Richard's Chichester, including a similar *Crucifixion*, there appears to be little known of the artist. Similarly a triptych by Anthony Pilbro entitled *What Keeps Man Alive* was seriously considered for inclusion, but was excluded on the grounds that except for a description published by Bonhams prior to its sale, little else seemed to be known of the work.

The fifth criterion was to define the time span in which the works had been produced. The starting point for the collection of 1913 developed as the work progressed. Roger Fry organised a major exhibition of modern art, the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* from 5 October to 31 December 1912. Unlike the first exhibition it contained works by British artists demonstrating a new freedom of expression in art.³² The date of 1913 was also close to the first major cultural change in the twentieth century: the beginning of the First World War in 1914. A terminus of 2000 was adopted, which coincided with the major exhibition, *Seeing Salvation*, held at the National Gallery in London from 26 February to 7 May 2000, which may have challenged perceptions about the nature of religious art in Britain. This terminus gave time for any critical analysis of the later works in the Scholarly Edition to have been produced. Again subjective decisions had to be made. For example, Craigie Aitchison's creative output of crucifixion paintings continued until his death in 2009 and showed signs of developments in their theology, but these later works have been excluded.

The Methodology for the Collection of the Works

The initial process of identification of works to be included in the Scholarly Edition was conducted through a series of complementary approaches. A literature search identified the major British artists of the period.³³ Each artist was then researched for works of art which incorporated the iconography of the crucifixion. Alongside this approach, searches were made for works entitled Crucifixion, Calvary or Golgotha.³⁴ Sources used included internet sites, exhibition catalogues, major art galleries, primary

³² The first was the 'Manet and Post Impressionists Exhibition', Curator – Roger Fry, (London, The Grafton Galleries, 8 November 1910-15 January 1911).

³³ The main works used were, F. Spalding, *British Art Since 1900*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1986) and D. Bindman, and C. Stephens, *The History of British Art*, vol. Three, (New Haven, CT, Yale Center for British Art, Tate Britain, 2008).

³⁴ The search by title was limited in its effectiveness. Several works were ultimately discovered with titles which bore little resemblance to their content. So for example, John Burnaby's *Pourquoi? II* was not discovered until quite late in the research and there may remain other examples yet to be found.

and secondary literature as well as particular collections of artwork images. This process of identification continued throughout the research programme and the contents of the Scholarly Edition developed as new discoveries were made. In the preparation of the Scholarly Edition close similarities in the works of art by the same artist required a degree of selection. So for example, Craigie Aitchison has produced many works using the iconography of the crucifixion.³⁵ The inclusion of all the Aitchison works would have created an overwhelming bias in the Scholarly Edition. Therefore, only a selection of the works by Aitchison up to the year 2000 has been included. The Scholarly Edition does not claim to be comprehensive, but a representative resource for analysis and theological reflection, that is open to extension by future research.

The Methodology for Presenting the Iconography of the Works

The analytical process, outlined in Erwin Panofsky's Introduction to Studies in Iconology, has been influential in this thesis.³⁶ The first stage in Panofsky's process consists of an initial analysis of the subject matter, identifying the various images portrayed in the work, for example man, sheep, sword, or city. This first stage also seeks to identify the relationship of these objects, such as describing a woman seated with a child on her lap. The expressional qualities are also noted, such as affection and fear, or a homely interior of a room. Panofsky describes this first stage as the world of pure forms which are carriers of primary or natural meanings – artistic motifs.³⁷ This stage is not always obvious; so for example in the present research an interpretation of the bio-morphs in Merlyn Evans's *Crucifixion* is difficult to provide.³⁸

³⁵ No Catalogue Raisonne has been found for Aitchison, but fifty works is a reasonable estimate.

³⁶ E. Panofsky, Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance, (New York, Harper and Row, 1939 - reprinted 1962), 1-16. Roelof van Straten has offered a modification to Panofsky's process with four phases in which the first stage is divided into two sections. However, it was considered that Panofsky's process was sufficient for this thesis. See - R. van Straten, An introduction to iconography, (Reading, Gordon and Breach, 1994).

³⁷ E. Panofsky, Studies in Iconology, 5.

³⁸ Scholarly Edition, 195.

Panofsky's second stage involves the identification of themes. If the woman with a child on her lap wears a halo and is dressed in blue, the work can be identified as the Madonna and Child. If a man carries a set of keys it indicates that he could be St Peter. This language of symbolism is at the heart of iconography - the identification of objects or compositions which lead the informed viewer to relate the work of art to particular characters, stories or allegories.³⁹ Panofsky used this process in the analysis of Renaissance works of art to clarify the themes of those works, often in relation to Greek and Roman myths, or Christian topics. However, it can also be used in more modern works. So for example in Richard Hamilton's *Just what is it that Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?* the identification of the strong man as Charles Atlas, a popular advertising icon of the 1950s, helps to 'read' Hamilton's observations of England in that decade.⁴⁰

In this research, these first two stages of Panofsky's methodologies have been adapted; the iconography of the crucifixion has been divided into three elements, primary, secondary and tertiary. The primary iconography is defined as that which relates directly to the crucifixion of Jesus, that is the title of the work (Crucifixion, Golgotha, Calvary etc.),⁴¹ the cross and the central character (Christ).⁴² The secondary iconography consists of the images of the main characters that have been identified with the crucifixion of Jesus, either recorded in the Gospels or developed in later traditions, such as the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, or St Francis of Assisi.⁴³ The tertiary

³⁹ Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 6.

⁴⁰ Richard. Hamilton, *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (Kunsthalle, Tübingen, Germany, 26x25, Collage, 1956), Appendix A - Fig. i. A full analysis of a modern work of art using Panofsky's methodology can be found in G.T. Noszlopy, *Robert Delaunay's La Ville de Paris: A Temporary Revival of the Humanistic Practice of Joint Authorship*, (Birmingham, ARTicle Press, 1991).

⁴¹ The use of the title as a primary iconography is justified in this thesis by the inclusion of works which do not contain the artistic archetype of the crucifixion, but which infer its significance through the title.

⁴² One of the findings from this research is that in the twentieth century, artists would at times replace Jesus with an alternative character. These alternatives are included in the primary iconography.

⁴³ In some works the artist has replaced these with alternative figures in a similar manner to the replacement of Jesus.

iconography has a looser definition and is made up of animals, inanimate objects, including the background and buildings.

The third part of Panofsky's process he describes as Iconology.⁴⁴ By careful analysis of the work of art in comparison with other sources (including other art works), 'those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion – unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work' could be ascertained.⁴⁵ Panofsky's third process considers that a work of art may be used as a piece of historical evidence; a contemporary record of aspects of the culture of the time it was produced.⁴⁶

Within the Scholarly Edition the use of Panofsky's third process is utilised, but is limited to documenting hypotheses expressed by other researchers into the works and any response considered appropriate. It is used more fully in the analyses in this Commentary.

To summarise, a central principle of the methodology for this research is the use of Panofsky's process to study the works of art produced during the twentieth century which use the iconography of the crucifixion, in order to explore the implicit theology contained in the works.⁴⁷ Panofsky's methodology is most effective in paintings where

⁴⁴ A.C. Moore has summarised this third process using the term introduced by Panofsky. "The methodological schema of Erwin Panofsky has been influential in giving a new meaning to the term 'iconology' to signify a synthetic study and interpretation of images. Iconography deals with the form of visual symbols by first describing and then classifying them according to the subject matter; this is the task of analysis. Iconology goes beyond this to interpret the meaning of the symbols and images in relation to the culture where they appear, placing them in the history of tradition; this is a task of synthesis involving the art historian and others in an interdisciplinary enterprise. Of particular importance here is the process of development and change in the 'life of images'; some images fade away, others persist (as in the case of classical Greece and its influence on the Christian West), others are transformed by conflation and reinterpretation." A.C. Moore, *Iconography of Religions*, (London, SCM, 1977), 25.

⁴⁵ Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 7.

⁴⁶ Panofsky used this threefold process in correcting the subject in a work by Piero Di Cosimo from that of *Hylas and the Nymphs* to an *Incident in the life of Vulcan*. See, *Ibid*, 33-44.

⁴⁷ Alternative approaches could have been made; the most attractive being an application of the theories of semiotics. Panofsky's methodology was however, simpler to apply, particularly at the early stages of selection. An additional approach using a modification of Paul Tillich's theological categories of art by Joshua Taylor was tested. It was an interesting approach to the study of theology as art, but in this research it did not add anything significant to the discussion and was discarded. A summary of its methodology may be found in D. Adams, 'Theological Expressions through Visual Art Forms', in D.

there are direct relationships between the image and the interpretation of those works of art. In works where formal iconography has diminished or disappeared it is of more limited value. However, the focus on the iconography of the crucifixion in this Scholarly Edition provides a compelling justification of the Panofsky approach, although it has limitations for some of the included works. For example the use in the work of Francis Bacon has been particularly tentative, because of the illusive nature of Bacon's imagery. In Bacon's *Crucifixion* of 1965 the nude figure in the left hand panel could be identified with Mary Magdalene. Like Mary, the nude stands below the crucified figure. Her immodesty, though not normally associated with a conventional painting of the crucifixion, does relate to the traditional view of Mary Magdalene as a woman of low morality and she has been depicted nude in works not directly related to the crucifixion, such as Gregor Erhart's *Mary Magdalene*.⁴⁸ However, other than the position in the painting, there is little to identify this nude as representing Mary Magdalene.

The Methodology for Presenting the Contents of the Scholarly Edition

Having produced a list of works suitable for inclusion in the Scholarly Edition, a methodology for the production of its contents was developed. This is based upon art historical methods, but adapted for its theological emphasis. The layout of the individual entries is based upon standard catalogues, whilst the content is directed at the enquiring theologian. The information section for each work includes an image of the work, the artist, the title, the year of creation, details of the medium used, its size and its current location if known. No attempt was made to establish the ownership of the work; this was considered unnecessary for theological research. In order that the details could

Apostolos-Cappadona, ed. *Art, Creativity, and the Sacred: An Anthology in Religion and Art*, (New York, Crossroad, 1992), 311-312.

⁴⁸ Gregor Erhart, *Mary Magdalene*, (Paris, Louvre, 177x44x43, polychrome on lime wood, 1515-1520), Appendix A - Fig. ii.

be verified or challenged the source of the information is included. Where possible this source has been verified from information obtainable at its location; if this is not possible or the information is incomplete the most reliable alternative sources are given.

The remaining information is more qualitative and dependent upon published work available. Speculation is restricted in the descriptions of the works. Where this is inevitable it has been made clear. Three major sections are employed. A brief overall description of the work is given with any related issues. Then the iconography is described under the headings of primary, secondary and tertiary iconography. Finally a comment section is included, which contains some speculation on the work and its theological interpretation. These sections are complemented by footnotes relevant to the particular work and an extensive collection of images contained in Appendix B to the Scholarly Edition and the bibliography which forms part of the Commentary.

To fulfil the purpose of the Scholarly Edition as a source for theological reflection a major decision was made in the order of the presentation. Cataloguing of the works by alphabetical order of the artists' names was considered as it would give ease of reference to the work; however this lacks any chronological or thematic connection. Arrangement by date of the work would have afforded a simple reference for the consideration of any theological developments, but would have separated an individual artist's works. A third option was to group the works by theological characteristics. However, it was considered that this could constrain alternative explanations in future research. The Scholarly Edition is arranged in groups of works around their respective artists, and in order of the date of their first significant work. This has the advantage that by grouping the works around an artist their relationships to one another can be observed. A limitation of this approach is that works by the same artist which extend over several decades inevitably appear out of chronological order.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This is a particular difficulty with Francis Bacon's and Craigie Aitchison's works.

The Methodology used in the Analysis of Individual Works

The methodology described up to this point has been directed at the collection and production of the Scholarly Edition. Having produced the Scholarly Edition, as a contribution to learning, the opportunity to use it for original research was taken and a methodology and a series of tools for theologically analysing the works were developed.

The Conventional Theology in the Portrayal of the Crucifixion

This thesis compares the theology of twentieth century British art, which uses the iconography of the crucifixion, with the theology of works created before the end of the sixteenth century to ascertain if there had been any changes. A necessary preliminary study was undertaken to establish whether a consistent conventional theology could be discerned in a cross section of works produced before the end of the sixteenth century. Gertrud Schiller's two volume work, Iconography of Christian Art, is central to the scholarship in the field of the iconography of the crucifixion and was used as the major reference work.⁵⁰ Schiller's analysis was also compared to earlier works and popular works in case a substantially different interpretation was evident.⁵¹ These works in general indicated a consistency with Schiller's scholarship.

Schiller argues that Christian art developed slowly in the early centuries of the Christian era, but by the tenth century, the crucifixion had become a central theme.⁵² Up to the end of the sixteenth century, there was a great deal of variation in style, content and emphasis in the depiction of the crucifixion of Jesus; but in Schiller's analyses a consistent element was recognised which marked out a model of a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion. This model was a teleological theology. The artist's work was not just concerned to narrate a past event, (the crucifixion of Jesus), but to

⁵⁰ G. Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, trans. J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971).

⁵¹ A.N. Didron, E. J. Millington, et al, Christian Iconography: History of Christian art in the Middle Ages, (New York, F. Ungar, 1965 - reprint of the original of 1851). A.B. Jameson and E. Rigby, The History of our Lord, as Exemplified in Works of Art, (London, Longmans, 1864 - There were later editions of this popular work up to 1892).

⁵² Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, vol. 2, 14 and 99.

present to the viewer a vision for which the purpose was to invite the viewer to respond in the present in worship and reflection, with the hope or fear of its consequences for the future. This visual teleology had its roots in Christian soteriology. Using the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary iconography introduced earlier, a summary of how this teleological model was related to the iconographic conventions is now offered.

Primary Iconography

The literature search indicated that contemporary scholarship understands the iconography of the crucifixion to have developed from the third century.⁵³ The introduction of the cross in art occurred as a result of the influence of the narratives concerning Constantine's conversion, Helena's discovery of the original cross, its veneration, the erection of a cross at Calvary and its loss and subsequent recovery.⁵⁴ At approximately the same time as the development of the Veneration of the Cross, Christ was being portrayed as the victorious risen Christ - *Christus Victor*.⁵⁵

The first crucifixion works combined these two elements, the Cross and *Christus Victor*.⁵⁶ In this image Christ often stood in front of the cross, had his arms outstretched, and eyes open.⁵⁷ In a later fresco in the Chapel of Theodotus in the church of St Maria Antiqua dated 741-752, Jesus can be seen to be nailed to the cross, but continues to be portrayed as *Christus Victor* and wears the Colobium.⁵⁸ Although the secondary iconography refers to the crucifixion of Jesus (see below) the figure of Jesus is the risen

⁵³ Ibid, 88-94.

⁵⁴ For Constantine see Lactantius, 'On the deaths of the Persecutors' 44, 3-6. Extract quoted in J, Stevenson, New Eusebius, Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337, (London, S.P.C.K. 1957), 298-299.

For Helena see Rufinus, 'H.E. X 7-8' in J. Stevenson, Creeds, Councils and Controversies: Documents Illustrative of the Church A.D. 377-461. (London, S.P.C.K. 1966), 30.

For the erection of the cross see Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, 12 -13.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 3-7.

⁵⁶ Schiller illustrated this iconography with an example of a third century gem of Christ in front of the Cross with the twelve apostles – Ibid, Fig. 321.

⁵⁷ An example of this is a carving on the door of St. Sabina in Rome of 432, (Appendix A - Fig. iv).

⁵⁸ *Crucifixion*, (Rome, Chapel of Theodotus in the church of St Maria Antiqua, Fresco 741-752). See Scholarly Edition, Appendix B - Fig. 5.

The colobium was a long white tunic artistically related to that worn by the High Priest in Jerusalem. It visually relates the image to the theology expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews of Christ as the great high priest who having sacrificed himself for the sins of the world now sits at the right hand of God - see Hebrews 10:12.

Christ. The purpose of the image of *Christus Victor* is to take the viewer from the past, (the event of the crucifixion) through the present, (the call to worship), into the future as salvation (the victorious risen Christ).

According to Schiller, in the West, *Christus Victor* was gradually replaced by *Christus Patiens*.⁵⁹ An example of this can be seen in *The Crucifixion* fresco in the Church of the Theolokos, Daphni in Greece, dated around 1100.⁶⁰ In this form, Christ's body was depicted as dead or close to death, the eyes usually closed, the body sagging, his head hanging.⁶¹ This form of the crucified Christ emphasised the suffering and sacrifice of Christ in contrast to the triumph of the resurrection and ascension in *Christus Victor*.⁶² This move from *Christus Victor* to *Christus Patiens* can be seen as a move from an emphasis on the Christ as the victorious King, to Christ the one who was sacrificed for the sins of the world – the Lamb of God of John the Baptist or the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.⁶³

In summary, the conventional iconography presents an interpretation of Jesus either as *Christus Victor* or *Christus Patiens*. Viewed in isolation, they present a different emphasis in their teleology. *Christus Patiens* calls the viewer to look back at the suffering of Christ and through it to respond in the present. *Christus Victor* presents Christ as already pre-empting his resurrection and ascension. Although *Christus Victor* implies the teleological element of victory and salvation, which is absent in the

⁵⁹ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 98.

In the Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe there has remained a stronger emphasis than in the Western Churches on Christ as Victor through the Incarnation, Transfiguration, Resurrection and particularly the Ascension of Christ. See A. Coniaris, *Introducing The Orthodox Church*, (Minneapolis Minnesota, Light and Life Publishing Company, 1982).

⁶⁰ *The Crucifixion*, (Daphni, The Church of the Theolokos, fresco, 1100) Scholarly Edition, Appendix B - Fig. 4.

⁶¹ A summary of *Christus Victor* and *Christus Patiens* can be found in 'Crucifix, Crucifixion,' in P. Murray, and L. Murray, *A Dictionary of Christian Art*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), 126-7.

⁶² The terms *Christus Victor* and *Christus Patiens* should not be seen as rigid categories; there were variations, but the terms indicate a general trend in the iconography.

⁶³ 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' The Gospel of John 1:29 and a Christian interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy - Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12.

iconography of Christ as *Christus Patiens*, in both forms the secondary and tertiary iconography outlined next reveal a consistent teleological model.

Secondary Iconography

The secondary iconography consists of the images of the main witnesses which have been identified with the crucifixion, either recorded in the Gospels or developed in later traditions. The pre-seventeenth century works include images of characters that were not just visual records of the crucifixion, but also performed a function or functions in the teleology underlying the work. So in *Crucifixion* at St Maria Antiqua, Jesus's mother, Mary, is viewed in what had become the traditional position to the right of Jesus with John the Evangelist to his left.⁶⁴ The significance of the positioning of figures to Jesus's right and left can be derived from Jesus's proclamation of the coming of the Son of Man in Glory when the blessed sheep would be placed on his right and the condemned goats on his left.⁶⁵ The viewer would then be challenged as to where they stood with Christ. Mary's role is multiple and varied, but may be seen as representing the witness of the living Church whilst John represented the witness of scripture to those who were yet to be saved. Their postures and expressions are ones of grief. This interpretation of the theological role of Mary is re-enforced in the fresco at the Church of the Theokos at Daphni. Mary is seen receiving the blood of Christ as it issues from his side. This outpouring of Christ's blood emphasised a third element in the theology which became conventional in the iconography, and complemented *Christus Victor* and *Christus Patiens*, this was of *Christ as saviour of His people* – His Church. This ecclesial theology became clearer in later images of the crucifixion, Mary was portrayed

⁶⁴ In other works John often carried a book - his Gospel.

⁶⁵ Gospel of Matthew 25:31 – 46. Vladimir Gurewich has suggested that its origins are older than this and that it goes back to Greek tradition in which the right side is considered the side of honour. V Gurewich, 'Observations on the Iconography of the Wound in Christ's Side, With Special Reference to its Position,' in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 20 No3/4, (London, Warburg Institute, July-December, 1957), 359.

more clearly as Mother of the Church and Christ's blood was seen to be collected in a chalice often with the support of angels.⁶⁶

Two other figures are the two thieves, who were crucified on either side of Jesus. According to Luke's version of the crucifixion one thief hurled insults at Jesus whilst the other pleaded for compassion from Jesus.⁶⁷ By tradition, the repentant thief was placed at Jesus's right and the unrepentant thief to his left.

Two other individuals could also form part of the secondary iconography, one carries a lance (on occasions thrust into Jesus's right side) and sometimes named as Longinus.⁶⁸ The second to Jesus's left offers Jesus a sponge and again is sometimes named as Stephaton.⁶⁹ The placing of these two refers to John's Gospel where both were seen to act out Old Testament prophecies.⁷⁰ In some traditions Longinus was combined with the centurion of Matthew's Gospel who proclaimed Jesus as the 'Son of God' at the Crucifixion.⁷¹ In terms of their teleological significance, tradition held that although Longinus pierced the side of Jesus, the blood healed his blindness, through which he was converted and later canonised.⁷² Stephaton by contrast was portrayed as heartless because he would only give the dying Jesus vinegar to quench his thirst.⁷³

⁶⁶ In the art historical literature there is little discussion of the symbolism of Mary as the Church, but Schiller confirmed this interpretation when referring to two works from the sixteenth century in which Mary stands below the cross with a chalice in her hand collecting the blood of Christ. See Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, 159-160. The earliest works in which Mary is seen in this pose go back at least to the ninth century. Ibid, Fig. 364-365. The earliest example identified by the author of angels collecting Christ's blood is in the fresco of *The Crucifixion of Christ*, in The Church of the Holy Virgin Studenica dated 1202. Appendix A - Fig. v. It is possible that its developing use was related to the growing significance of the theology of transubstantiation from the thirteenth century.

⁶⁷ Gospel of Luke 23:39 and 42.

⁶⁸ The soldier who speared Jesus is not named in the Gospels but he is named as Longinus in the Gospel of Nicodemus or Acts of Pilate – see M.R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1953), 113.

⁶⁹ Little is known of the origin of this name, but Stephaton came to be compared to Longinus. The first as evil because when Jesus cried that he was thirsty he only offered him vinegar, whilst according to legend Longinus was redeemed by the blood and water which flowed onto him from the wound he inflicted. B. Noble, *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation*, (Lanham, University Press of America, 2009), 85 and note 61.

⁷⁰ Gospel of John 19:35-37.

⁷¹ Gospel of Matthew 27:54.

⁷² J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints – Volume 1*, trans. by W.G. Ryan, (Chichester, Princeton University Press, 1995), 184.

⁷³ Gospel of John 19: 28-30.

Like Mary and John the Evangelist these examples of secondary iconography are given highly symbolic roles in the imagery beyond their place in the narrative of the crucifixion. The repentant thief symbolised the hope of redemption for all sinners, whilst his counterpart symbolised the consequences of rejecting that hope. Finally the enigma of life and death was symbolised; first in Longinus who unwittingly injured the saviour's body, but through God's forgiving grace received his sight and salvation, and Stephaton, who having the opportunity of offering succour to the thirsting Jesus, rejected the opportunity of any compassion by the administering of vinegar.

Tertiary Iconography

The literature also indicates that the conventions for different pieces of tertiary iconography were also consistent with the model of a teleological theology.⁷⁴ At the base of the cross in the crucifixion fresco at the Church of the Theolokos, a skull was painted. Tradition held that the cross, (at times compared to the tree of life from the Genesis account of the Fall), had been placed on the grave of Adam.⁷⁵ The image of Adam's bones below the crucified Christ visualised the Pauline theology of Jesus as the second Adam who came to save the first Adam, and through it, all who followed Him.⁷⁶ As indicated earlier, Christ's blood and chalice were included to remind the viewer of the saving power of the crucifixion, which was re-enacted in the present in the Mass as a means of God's grace of sanctification of the viewer for the future.⁷⁷

Images of the sun and moon are also depicted in some crucifixion pictures.

These can be seen in early images of the crucifixion and in a later fifteenth century work

⁷⁴ See Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, 113 and J. Speake, "Skull," *The Dent Dictionary of Symbols in Christian Art*, (London, Dent, 1994), 129-130.

⁷⁵ This story was presented by Origen in the third century and also in the Syrian book *The Cavern of Treasure* – See M. Eliade, *Images and Symbols - Studies in Religious Symbolism*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991), 43. A full discussion of the typology of Adam can be found in Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, 130-3.

⁷⁶ 1 Corinthians 15: 20-49.

⁷⁷ This is proclaimed in the Anaphora (the central prayer of consecration of the bread and wine) and in particular in the Anamnesis.

by Hans Memling.⁷⁸ There is an amount of mythology related to these heavenly bodies, but the placing of the sun to the right of Christ and the moon to the left was used to reinforce the division of the painting into the two zones. On the right the sun symbolised the New Testament and on the left the moon symbolised the Old Testament which could only be illuminated by the light of the New Testament.⁷⁹

Toward the end of the Middle Ages the depiction of the crucifixion became more flexible; larger groups surrounded the cross, the pictures moved from a symbolic representation towards a narrative approach.⁸⁰ More secondary figures, alongside other symbols, emerged. The ecclesial theology of Jesus as saviour of His Church became clearer in later images of the crucifixion. Mary Magdalene was introduced, often embracing the foot of the cross, and was used as a balance to the Virgin Mary – the former the repentant sinner, the latter the sinless virgin.⁸¹ In some works John the Baptist appeared, visually proclaiming his prophetic words: ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ He normally stood to the left of Jesus as the last prophet of the Old Covenant. Other Biblical figures were introduced and later saints and finally donors;⁸² but all were seen to be placed in a position of grief or adoration before the sacrificed Christ and all had a purpose in the teleological setting of the work.

This division of left and right was also used in contrasting the Jew with the Christian. From an early time Stepaton (to the left of Jesus) was depicted dressed in a long sleeved tunic, indicating his apparent Jewish origins whilst Longinus was dressed in the short sleeved tunic of a Roman soldier. Some works introduced the synagogue as

⁷⁸ *Crucifixion, Rabula Gospels*, (Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo Laurenziana, Manuscript Illustration, 586), Appendix A - Fig. vi and Hans Memling, *Passion*, from the Greverade Altarpiece (Lübeck, St. Annen Museum, 205x150, oil on panel, 1491), Appendix A - Fig. vii.

⁷⁹ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, 109.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 151.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 153-154.

⁸² E.g. Hieronymus Bosch, *Crucifixion with Donor*, (Brussels, Musée Royaux des Beaux Arts, 75x61, oil on oak, 1480-85), Appendix A - Fig. viii.

pre-Christian and blind, placing it at Jesus's left, whilst the Church was placed at Jesus's right.⁸³

The pattern of Christ pictured at the centre of the work, with or without the two thieves by his side and witnesses surrounding the base of the cross, continued until around the end of the fifteenth century when complex arrangements began to appear in some works alongside the existing format.⁸⁴ But throughout, the teleology remained consistent; the viewer was called to action (worship, penitence, good works etc.) in the context of the past (the crucifixion), present (the kingship of Christ) and as necessary for a happy outcome in the future, which was pre-ordained (Second Coming, the Final Judgement and eternal life or damnation).

To summarise, scholarship of the iconography of the crucifixion suggests a consistent theological position although variations within this were indicative of a developing and more complex process of visualising theology. These basic elements in the images that have been outlined here can be traced back to the Christian understanding of Christ as summarised in the Nicene Creed,⁸⁵ of which the central elements are that Jesus died on a cross; this act was an act of sacrifice which would bring salvation to the believer; that the victim (Jesus) was both Man and God; that the death of Christ preceded his resurrection and ascension into heaven as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, before whom all people would ultimately be judged. In addition to this was the development of the theology of the Eucharist in which his body and his

⁸³ E.g. *Christ Crucified by the Virtues, Ecclesia and Synagogue, Caritas*, (Besancon, Manuscript, Upper Rhine Psalter, 1275), Appendix A - Fig. ix.

⁸⁴ See: Giovanni Antonio Pordenone, *Golgotha*, (Cathedral of Cremona, fresco, 1520-21), Appendix A - Fig. x.

⁸⁵ The relevant section from the Nicene Creed is: "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from True God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end."

blood that poured out at the crucifixion nourished His Church at the Eucharist.⁸⁶ In these works the theology was both Christo-centric and Theo-centric, for there was seen to be no division between the place and work of Christ from that of the nature of God. From this literature search, the proposal of this thesis is that whilst the crucifixion iconography included variations, which at times were important, a central theological model was present in these works of art of Christ as Saviour of the World calling the viewer to worship in the hope of eternal life. This theology will be used as an indicator of a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion. Centrally for the artist this meant creating a work which called the viewer beyond the past into action in the present in order to secure their future - described here as the teleological element.⁸⁷

The Conventional use of the Iconography of the Crucifixion

As the thesis focuses on theology as art it was important to examine and clarify the extent to which the related expressions *conventions*, *conventional works*, and *conventional use* are related in the analytic process. Within iconography the term *conventions* connotes a set of guidelines which artists use to help the viewer ‘read’ the work; colour and positioning are examples of conventions used by artists. So for example the Virgin Mary would be dressed in blue and/or red, Mary Magdalene in green.⁸⁸ Symbolism in colour had a long tradition in religious art. Yazykova and Luka described this in relation to icons: “Red is an earthly colour, the colour of blood and

⁸⁶ The relationship between Christ’s blood and the Eucharist can be traced back to the earliest Christian traditions – see I Corinthians 12: 23-28.

⁸⁷ Berenson comments: “The Church from the first took account of the influence of colour as well as music upon the emotions. From the earliest times it employed mosaic and painting to enforce its dogmas and relate its legends, not merely because this was the only means of reaching people who could neither read nor write, but also because it instructed them in a way which, far from leading to critical enquiry, was peculiarly capable of being used as an indirect stimulus to moods of devotion and contrition. Next to the finest mosaics of the first centuries, the early works of Giovanni Bellini, the greatest Venetian master of the fifteenth century, best fulfilled this religious intention.” B. Berenson, The Italian painters of the Renaissance Volume 1: Venetian and North Italian Schools, (London, Phaidon, 1968), 1.

⁸⁸ Some caution is required in the interpretation of colour, since the stability of pigments varied and some greens for example could turn brown in time. See J.S. Dunkerton, J.S. Foster, et al, Giotto to Dürer – Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery, (London, Yale University Press and the National Gallery, 1991), 185.

sacrifice, yet at the same time a royal colour. Blue is a divine, celestial colour, which stands for purity, virginity, electedness. Green is the colour of the Holy Spirit, eternal life and eternal flowering.” Other colours are also described “White is the colour of transfiguration and the robes of the righteous. Black is the colour of darkness, the abyss of hell, yet dark colours or black also symbolize the Divine darkness, which is blindingly bright. Gold is the colour of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which John the Theologian describes in Revelation as a radiant city with walls garnished with all manner of precious stones, while the streets are “pure gold, as it were of transparent glass” (Rev. 21. 18-21). The pictorial resonance, noble colour and varied textures of the icon are a reflection of the beauty of the Kingdom of Heaven.”⁸⁹ C.E. Clement gives a similar description of the symbolic meanings of colours in medieval Western religious art, where there was a greater measure of flexibility.⁹⁰

A further convention was that the penitent thief was placed on the right of Jesus and the unrepentant thief on his left. However, comparison of the earliest works with those up to and beyond the end of the sixteenth century indicates that although these conventions endured, they continued to be used by some artists and not by others. For instance in Duccio’s *Crucifixion* of 1308-11, the tension in the painting is created by a strict iconographic convention of the sinners placed to Jesus’s left and the saints to his right.⁹¹ Conversely in Simon Vouet’s work, painted in 1636 this convention has been abandoned; Mary lies at Jesus’s feet to his left and the tension is created through the poses and expressions of the figures in the work.⁹² Therefore although the identification of the use or otherwise of the *conventions* remains beneficial in the

⁸⁹ L. M. Evseeva et al. *A History of Icon Painting: Sources, Traditions, Present Day*, trans. K. Cook, (Moscow, Grand-Holding, Distributor of English ed. Orthodox Christian Books, UK, 2005), 16.

⁹⁰ C. E. Clement, *A Handbook of Legendary and Mythological Art*, (New York Hurd and Houghton, 1876), 7-8.

⁹¹ Duccio de Buoninsegna, *Crucifixion*, (Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, formerly behind the high altar of Siena Cathedral, 100x76, tempera on wood, 1308—11), Appendix A - Fig. xi.

⁹² Simon Vouet, *Crucifixion*, (Lyon, Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon, 216x146, oil on canvas, 1636), Appendix A - Fig. xii.

analysis of modern works, providing as they do indicative evidence of probable underlying theologies, *conventions* are not conclusive; other visual evidence from the art works has to be used alongside them.

The term *conventional work* has also a limited application. In this thesis it is used in the context of a comparison with a model of a painting in which the teleological Christian theology is the dominant theology in the use of the iconography of the crucifixion. Returning to the Vouet work, the iconography and form suggest a focus on the theological place of Mary in God's initiative of salvation rather than the vital place of the crucifixion in that salvation initiative. However, implicit in both the Duccio and the Vouet works there remains an underlying conventional soteriology of Christ. Both the Duccio and the Vouet contain within them the grand-narrative of Christ and salvation, but the Vouet focuses on the meta-narrative of Catholic Mariology.⁹³ Whilst the Duccio is an example of a *conventional work*, the Vouet is not. However, both maintain a *conventional use* of the iconography. The iconography in both indicates that Christ is dying for the sins of the world and will rise again; the iconography does not suggest an alternative understanding of the crucifixion. These examples illustrate findings, from the study of individual works and from the literature search, that the period up to the end of the sixteenth century can be characterised as making *conventional use* of the iconography of the crucifixion. This has been used as the major tool in analysing the modern works which use the iconography of the crucifixion.⁹⁴

A Model of Three Archetypes

To establish an analytical framework for theology as art, three models were constructed. They do not define the theology found in the works contained in the

⁹³ Mariology is 'the study of doctrine concerning the Virgin Mary connected with her person as such and her role in the plan of redemption.' J.D. Douglas, Dictionary of the Christian Church, (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1974), 631.

⁹⁴ No images were discovered which had an unconventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion prior to the end of the sixteenth century. It is possible some were produced, but discovery of these would not affect the hypothesis that a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion was the norm during this time.

Scholarly Edition, but assist in analysing the functions performed by the iconography of the crucifixion in each individual work. These models are referred to as Archetypes to emphasise their idealised nature.⁹⁵ These archetypes are defined as the Artistic Archetype, the Semiotic Archetype and the Sacred Archetype.

1. Artistic Archetype

The Artistic Archetype appears in all the works and is concerned with form; any meaning is perceived in the visual impact of the work.⁹⁶ This Archetype carries with it no psychological or theological implications and may be compared to Panofsky's first level iconographical process. The Artistic Archetype is fundamental to the work of art and contributes to its overall purpose as an aesthetic experience. An example of the most extreme use of the Artistic Archetype is Kazimir Malevich's *Black Cross* of 1915.⁹⁷ Any attempt to read into the work any connection with the cross of Christ would be to misunderstand the purpose of the work, which is abstract and concerned with paring the work of art down to its minimum form.

2. The Semiotic Archetype

The term Semiotic Archetype is used to indicate that the iconography is acting as a sign. For example when an artist titles a work *Crucifixion* or *Golgotha* it invites the viewer to call to mind all the implications these words imply. Similarly, if a figure is seen to hang on a cross this signifies more than the Artistic Archetype; it invites interpretation of the work in the context of all the traditions associated with that image, but it does not necessarily demand of the viewer any religious response. The impact and

⁹⁵ During the research for this work, Jennifer Swan published an essay in which she argued for a psychological approach to be taken as an interpretation of the archetypal nature of the Crucifixion. The approach taken in this work is focused more on the purpose of the work of art. J. Swan, The Archetypal Nature of Crucifixion, in N. Hepburn, Cross Purposes – Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion, (Paddock Wood, Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 15-17.

⁹⁶ There are a limited number of works in the Scholarly Edition which do not contain an Artistic Archetype of the crucifixion but are included through their title. Jack Smith's *Creation and Crucifixion* is the simplest example of this. However, it will be argued that this work implies a Semiotic Archetype within it.

⁹⁷ Kazimir Malevich, *Black Cross*, (St. Petersburg, State Russian Museum, Oil on Canvas, c 1920-23), Appendix A - Fig. xiii.

interpretation of the work will depend upon the viewer's knowledge of the significance of that image. The Semiotic Archetype requires the viewer to reflect on both the visual impact of the work and the multitude of meanings and values implicit in it. The Semiotic Archetype does not assume any doctrinal association by the artist but does contain within it all its cultural history.

3. The Sacred Archetype

Where the Sacred Archetype appears, the inclusion of particular pieces of iconography, their settings, and their theological significance are intended to call the viewer to respond to it as a 'window' to God.⁹⁸ The work of art has a direct purpose; through its imagery, the viewer is challenged to respond to the theological message contained within it. The Sacred Archetype does not exclude the other two archetypes, but may over-ride them. Religious icons are the most prominent example of the use of Sacred Archetypes, but the medieval crucifixion paintings of the West fall into this group. The impact of the Sacred Archetype may be diminished as cultural changes leave the viewer unaware of their theological intent. Today, it is not always apparent to the viewer that these works are intended to come with a doctrinal theology.⁹⁹ The inclusion of the Sacred Archetype is characteristic of a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion of Jesus.

The Artistic Archetype is always present in a work of art; in the use of the iconography of the crucifixion the Semiotic Archetype is normally more influential in

⁹⁸ "... it follows that the mystical element [of Christian art] must necessarily, as the very condition of its vitality, prevail over the inferior elements of drawing and colour, as well as the imitation of natural objects, which are all but means to an end." Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, Dublin Review, Jul 1836, 455.

⁹⁹ Kathryn McClymond summarised the situation in this period - as:

"...much of what we think of art was never meant to be distinguished from religious practice at all. Rather individual pieces were crafted as vehicles for religious instruction, teaching tools intended to communicate foundational stories and theological truths for particular religious communities. Eliot Deutsch comments: 'The dominant presupposition from the Hellenistic period to the Renaissance was simply that art was subservient to...the demands of morality, as theologically and politically defined and understood.' Art, one of the material dimensions of religious life, was secondary to doctrine, the dominant dimension of religious life." From the article, K. McClymond, 'Religion and the Arts', in E. M. Mazur, Art and the Religious Impulse, (Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, 2002), 28. Quotation from E. Deutsch, Essays on the Nature of Art, (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996), 82.

the interpretation of the work, and the Sacred Archetype directs the imagery towards a demand for a religious response.

To clarify these three types it may be helpful to use a different example from the crucifixion - the use of *the bull* as Archetype. George Stubbs in 1790 painted *The Lincolnshire Ox*.¹⁰⁰ It was a picture of a bull which had become nationally famous at the end of the eighteenth century. The image may be seen as a good example of a work in which the Artistic Archetype is prominent. The viewer is invited to view and reflect upon this animal as it is; emotions of power and beauty are invoked with some fear at its strength and sexual potency. It is a classic work of art of what it is to be a bull.

In *The Rape of Europa* by Martin de Vos,¹⁰¹ the Artistic Archetype is still to be seen, but now to appreciate the work fully, the viewer is called to appreciate that de Vos's bull is also a Semiotic Archetype. The impact of the work depends upon an understanding of the Greek myths of Zeus and Europa. However, the work remains a non-religious work of art.

If the viewer is now confronted by a statue of a Golden Bull, this example still maintains its Artistic and Semiotic Archetypes, but the statue now calls the viewer to worship. Its purpose is bound up in the worship of Baal, the sacred bull of Canaanite religion. The predominant Archetype is that of the Sacred Archetype.

From the Scholarly Edition, Tristram Hillier's *The Crucifixion* of 1954 provides an illustration of the use of all three Archetypes.¹⁰² As Artistic Archetype, the use of grey/black in the work, in contrast to the white skins of Jesus and Mary and along with the poise of its form, creates a work which draws the viewer into the scene. In this work

¹⁰⁰ George Stubbs, *The Lincolnshire Ox*, (Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, 68x99, oil on panel, 1790), (Appendix A - Fig. xiv).

¹⁰¹ Martin de Vos, *Rape of Europa*, (Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, 134x175, oil on oak panel, late 16C.), (Appendix A - Fig. xv).

¹⁰² See Scholarly Edition, 217.

there is no direct reference to a Christian theology of atonement,¹⁰³ but the Sacred Archetype can be discerned through the sense of stillness or silence in the work giving it a sacred quality. However, it is the Semiotic Archetype in the work which is predominant. Different elements in the iconography become signs with many interpretations. The cross for example is constructed from massive black wood. Through it one can be drawn to the memory of the smell and texture of telegraph poles and railway sleepers, symbols of modern communication in the twentieth century which used similar materials for their construction. But this black wood also integrates the cross with the chief mourners who too communicate to the world their grief and adoration. So through the Semiotic Archetype, (the signs associated with the cross) the viewer can make connections between the world of the crucifixion and the twentieth century.

The strength of these three Archetypes as models is that they have a degree of objectivity, but their limitations are in their application, as there is inevitably a degree of subjectivity in according dominance of one of these Archetypes to a work of art.

These Archetypes have assisted in identifying the major function of the iconography in any particular work and may be seen as offering a bridge between the investigation of these works of art as part of art history to their exploration as sources of theology. The paintings of the medieval period whilst exhibiting all three Archetypes were principally focused on the Sacred. The purpose of the works was to call the viewer to meditate upon and worship the crucified Christ. Whatever subtleties of theology they contained, whether focusing on the *Christus Victor* or *Christus Patiens*, or whether there was a sacramental or ecclesiastical emphasis, the painting was principally directed

¹⁰³ Note through the Semiotic Archetype the individual viewer may decide to interpret this work more closely with traditional Christian beliefs.

towards faith development. This could be didactic or as an aid to worship and most of the works of art were placed in churches or in homes for these purposes.¹⁰⁴

From the twentieth century onwards the focus has shifted. Works which call the viewer to worship are still produced, but this research indicates that the focus has moved from reflecting upon the status of Christ through the Sacred Archetype to the nature of the human condition, where the Semiotic Archetype predominates. This change is illustrated in the works which form the core of the Scholarly Edition and is demonstrated in the analyses in Chapter Two.

Summary

This chapter established the scope of the research. It described its context as arising from within a Christian Community. It invited a wide readership, but acknowledged a focus on those concerned with Christian Pastoral theology. It examined the relationships between art and theology and confirmed the focus of this thesis as theology as art. The methodology used in the production of the Scholarly Edition including Panofsky's threefold process for the analysis of iconography was outlined. The concept of a model of the conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion was introduced and a model of three archetypes discussed. The iconographical analytical method developed here represents an original contribution in the development of the study of theology and art. In the context of the Scholarly Edition as a research resource, the analyses of individual works will be made in Chapter Two and in particular the hypothesis that changes in theology could be discerned as compared with conventional works will be investigated.

¹⁰⁴ For a full discussion of the placing of sacred images see J.S. Dunkerton, J.S. Foster, et al, Giotto to Dürer – Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery, (London, Yale University Press and the National Gallery, 1991), Chapter One.

CHAPTER TWO

The Theological Analyses of Individual Works Contained in the Scholarly Edition

Introduction

As an original contribution to theology as art, this research tests the hypothesis that changes in theology are evident in the works featuring the iconography of the crucifixion created in Britain in the twentieth century, compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century. This chapter presents analyses of the works in the Scholarly Edition. The tools for these analyses are Panofsky's three fold process of iconographic analysis, the model of conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion as a comparator and the three Archetypes as discussed in Chapter One.

The analyses are focused on the iconography of individual works within the approach of theology as art outlined in Chapter One. The argument developed in this chapter is that works produced in Britain during the period covered in this thesis reveal a considerable diversification in theology as the artists enjoyed and exploited a freedom from constraints of the conventional use of the crucifixion iconography.

As a preliminary to the analyses a summary of the results of a critical testing of Panofsky's third process is given.

The Testing of Panofsky's Process

Erwin Panofsky's process introduced in Chapter One predicted that cultural concepts, which are general in society, can be discerned in works of art. If a change in emphasis on the interpretation of the crucifixion could be identified in other parts of twentieth century society this would strengthen confidence in the use of Panofsky's process with modern works. Assessment of theological works produced before the beginning of the period covered in this thesis indicate that the significance of the

Atonement was in decline and that attempts were being made to re-visit the theology of the crucifixion. In 1912, W.H. Moberly wrote of this decline in interest in the theory of the Atonement:

The mental outlook of the average educated man has been greatly transformed in recent years, and, as we all know, this has affected his theology. But nowhere is the change more marked than in connection with the theology of Atonement. For centuries the Atonement was the centre of Christian belief with the great mass of sober Christian men. The forgiveness of sins through the death of Christ was the heart of the Gospel message; trust in that forgiveness was the hallmark of the individual believer; and to become a Christian was truly to enlist in a "salvation army." To-day such language no longer rises in men's lips. This does not mean that the world has grown less religious; for among religious as well as irreligious men the Atonement has receded into the background.¹

The significance in Moberly's observation is not only that he thought interest in the Atonement had declined, but in academic theology this trend was apparent before the First World War.

Not only was there a change in the significance of the Atonement, but there was also an attempt to revise the theology relating to it. For instance J. G. Simpson writing from an Evangelical standpoint in a standard theological reference book published in 1906 mourned the change in the academic approach to the Atonement:

From what has been already said, it follows that an adequate soteriology, or theology of the Atonement which is genuinely evangelical, must be the expression of a spiritual experience resting upon Christ's death as the expiation of sin. With a few notable exceptions, foremost among them Dr R. W. Dale, the trend of modern theology, since the publication of M'leod Campbell's treatise on *The Nature of the Atonement*, has been on the whole to develop the doctrine on its ethical side, and to find its spiritual principle either in sinless penitence or the perfect obedience of Jesus (e.g. Wescott, Wilson, Moberly, Scott Lidgett).²

These sources of themselves do not make an overwhelming case for the decline in the significance of the doctrine of the Atonement in Christian theology, but they do point to the probability that this belief was no longer dominant at the end of the nineteenth century.

¹ W.H. Moberly, 'The Atonement,' B.H. Streeter, *Foundations: A Statement of Christian Belief in Terms of Modern Thought*, (London, Macmillan, 1912), 269.

² J.G. Simpson, 'Atonement' in J. Hastings et al, *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol.1, (Edinburgh, T.&T. Clarke, 1906), 135.

In addition evidence for movement from the centrality of the crucifixion as part of a divine process of salvation towards a greater interest, theologically, in Jesus as a model of human suffering can also be found in an extract from Lux Mundi. J.R.

Illingworth, in his article on 'The Problem of Pain' wrote:

But again, it is only in the light from the Cross, that we can see why pain should possess this power. For in that light we understand how pain unites us to each other, because, as even natural religion dimly felt, it unites us to God, and therefore through Him to those who in Him live and move and have their being. It unites us to God because it purifies us, because it detaches us from earth, because it quickens our sense of dependence, because it opens our spiritual vision, and above all because He too, as man, has suffered.³

This reappraisal of Jesus can also be found in T. Bailey Saunders translation of Adolf Harnack's What is Christianity?. This work, a collection of lectures given by the professor of Church History in Berlin was well received in Britain:⁴

.....he desired no other belief in his person and no other attachment to it than is contained in the keeping of his commandments.....

He is certain that everything which he has and everything which he is to accomplish comes from his Father. He prays to Him; he subjects himself to His will; he struggles hard to find out what it is and to fulfil it.... This is what the Gospels say, and it cannot be turned and twisted. This feeling, praying, working struggling and suffering individual is a man who in the face of his God also associates himself with other men.⁵

There is evidence, therefore, that in the early part of the twentieth century theological interest had shifted away from the process of salvation to an interest in Jesus, the man, and his place as a model of humanity. The strength of this evidence is that they are taken from works which had extensive circulation and by writers in positions of influence within British theological circles.⁶ Other views may also have been held at this time by other theologians, but it is reasonable to argue that changes in the meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion are consistent with the theological

³ J.R. Illingworth, 'The Problem of Pain,' in C. Gore, et al, Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation, (London, John Murray, 1890), 125.

⁴ The popularity of this work was noted in 'Mr Bailey Saunders the Obituary,' *The Times*, Friday, 10 February, 1928.

⁵ A. Harnack, What is Christianity? (London, Williams and Norgate, 1901), 125-26.

⁶ Moberly was Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, Illingworth Fellow of Jesus College and Simpson Vice-Principal of Edinburgh Theological College and later Dean of Peterborough.

reflections of a major section of British culture in the first two decades of the twentieth century and lends support to the dependability of Panofsky's process.

A Theological Model as a Method of Presenting the Analyses

In the analyses of the individual works, three possible approaches to the presentation of these results were considered: a chronological, an iconographical or a theological presentation. Each has advantages, but the purpose of the thesis, to present to the reader the breadth of theological diversity, is given highest priority. The chronological approach has the advantage of highlighting any process of development throughout the twentieth century and of comparing and contrasting works which are contemporaneous. This approach also has the benefit of being the most natural in following a historical pattern. However, no evidence for a coherent chronological development from a conventional to an unconventional theology has been observed in these works of art. Diversification could already be observed in the early years studied,⁷ whilst works related to a conventional approach were still being produced towards the end of the century.⁸

The second potential approach is to consider the works in the context of their iconographical similarities and contrasts, grouping the works of art according to whether they contain an image of the crucified Jesus, or a substitute for him, or just a cross, and finally those without a cross or crucified person. Although this approach has a strong case from an art historical perspective it does not direct the reader to the theological issues.

A third option has been used, as it is consistent with the research questions being addressed. This presentation of the analysis is the most artificial. The discussion of the various works has been arranged theologically into four groups. This model of grouping

⁷ E.g. James Dickson Innes *Crucifixion* of 1913 and Gerald Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1915, Scholarly Edition, 138 and 140.

⁸ Norman Adams, *Golden Crucifixion* of 1993 maintains a substantially conventional iconography of the crucifixion. Scholarly Edition, 267.

paintings by theology is not intended to claim four distinct approaches by the artists to the use of the iconography of the crucifixion or to identify artists with common interests. There does not exist a rigid separation of theology into four insular groups, there is overlap between these groups and within each group, the works are quite diverse. The intention is to highlight the divergence of theology away from the conventional use of the iconography implicit in the works. This diversification of theology has been a major finding of this thesis. The first group is those which suggest a theology compatible with a conventional or traditional theology; second, those which whilst not incompatible with a conventional theology suggest a different focus; third, those which appear to abandon the central traditional Christian theology; and finally those which appear to be antithetical to that theology. In these analyses the information contained in the Scholarly Edition is assumed.

The discussion presented here begins with a consideration of David Jones's early work *Crucifixion* of 1919 to illustrate the overall argument in this thesis of the freedom artists felt in the twentieth century to diverge from a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion.

David Jones, *Crucifixion*, 1919⁹

David Jones's 1919 *Crucifixion* was completed two years before he was received into the Roman Catholic Church and two years after being spiritually moved by the sight of a Catholic Mass near the front line where he was serving in the army during the First World War.¹⁰ It is a sketch squared up in preparation for transfer to a final painting. As far as is known, the painting was never produced. The description of this work in the Scholarly Edition highlights the ambiguity of the three crucified victims - who or where is Jesus? Who should be mourned or worshipped? Who was rightly executed and who was innocent? This work raises these questions, but offers no

⁹ See Scholarly Edition, 142.

¹⁰ J. Miles and D. Shiel, *David Jones the Maker Unmade*, (Bridgend, Poetry Wales Press Ltd., 1995), 30.

answers. In contrast to his later conventional works of the crucifixion this work has no settled implicit teleology. Each character in the work has a personal space and narrative. The Semiotic Archetype of Jesus draws the viewer back to the traditions of the crucifixion of Jesus, whilst the iconography of the soldiers calls the viewer to the Great War. There is no hint of a sacred purpose, no resolution of the questions raised, no call for worship or repentance, just an invitation to explore the incongruities through the individual figures.

Jones's work may be interpreted as a precursor to his first major poetic work, *In Parenthesis*. In this work, published in 1937, Jones wrote of his experience of the First World War. He contrasts the dull drudgery of life as an infantryman, relieved only by the camaraderie of his fellow soldiers, with the experience of the instant annihilation of friends, foes and animals in the carnage of mechanised warfare.¹¹ Absolute obedience was called for from British troops during the conflict, which was fought as a righteous war.¹² Similar demands were made on German troops from their leaders.¹³ The godly, the ungodly and the penitent (who hours before existed in a kind of expectant limbo) were swept away with equal ferocity at the hands of Allied or German armament. This crucifixion drawing invites the viewer into the ethical confusion of war. Who were the righteous victims sacrificing their lives and who were those for whom the destruction was justified? All three who are impaled enjoy the adoration of someone, yet all three

¹¹ In the last paragraph of his Preface, Jones explained that the title was because the war was held 'in brackets' between life before and life after. D. Jones, *In Parenthesis*, (London, Faber, 1978 - First pub. 1937), Preface, IX.

¹² Cecil Spring-Rice's hymn 'I Vow to Thee my Country' reflects this demand. However, though written as a poem in 1908 it did not become a hymn until 1923. *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, (Norwich, Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd., 1983), Hymn 295.

¹³ The conflict of how to relate to the vanquished German soldier as enemy, victim or companion was also personalised by the poet Wilfred Owen in the poem 'Strange Meeting.' In the last lines of the poem Owen converses in Hell with his former enemy, who Owen had killed in battle:

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.

From C. Day-Lewis and W. Owen, *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1963), p35.

also suffer the ultimate ignominy of the disinterest and boredom exhibited by the soldiers who are immediately responsible for their situation. The viewer is left unsure as to which victim is to be worshipped, which is to be venerated and which is to be rejected. Jones expressed, in this confusion, a deep sense of sympathy with those suffering, whether in righteous sacrifice or in penal punishment.¹⁴

Jones's sketch reveals a change in the place which the crucifixion can hold in the process of theological reflection; the crucifixion is not viewed as an uncontested icon of the atoning work of God in Christ, but as a complex image, which through its historical, theological and artistic inheritance invites the viewer to reflect upon the most basic of ethical and theological questions who is righteous and who is unrighteous and where is God? It is Jones's visual response to the problem of evil and the God of love. This problem would continue to exercise theologians' minds throughout the twentieth century.¹⁵

In this work, some of the issues which keep recurring in this analysis can be identified; the shift from Sacred to Semiotic Archetype, a lowering of the significance of the atoning work of Christ, a move from the centrality of the person of Christ to a symbolic understanding of the crucifixion and a diversity of possible theological interpretations within a particular work. With David Jones's work as a foundation, a major selection of the works in the Scholarly Edition will be discussed making use of the theological framework described earlier.

1 - Works which Contain Elements of a Conventional Theology.

In the first group of works discussed here the conventional theology of the Christ of Salvation can still be discerned, although evidence of a diversification of theological emphasis is present.

¹⁴ In the preface to *In Parenthesis*, Jones wrote 'I did not intend this as a 'War Book' – it happens to be concerned with war.....We find ourselves privates in foot regiments. We search how we may see formal goodness in a life singularly inimical, hateful to us.' Jones, *In Parenthesis*, ix.

¹⁵ For example, J. Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, (London, Macmillan, 1966).

David Jones, *Crucifixion, 1922* and *Sanctus Christus de Capel y ffin, 1925*.¹⁶

In contrast to his sketch of 1919, in *Crucifixion* of 1922-3, painted for the chapel at Ditchling, Jones used the iconography of the crucifixion in a manner close to a conventional theology. This work is in a tradition of painting the crucifixion with a minimum of witnesses and set in a contemporary background.¹⁷ Giovanni Bellini's *Crucifixion* of 1455 contains similar iconography.¹⁸ It does, however, show some freedom within the traditions of this genre. Mary Magdalene replaces John the Evangelist, and though it does not include direct references to the complete salvation story (there is, for instance, no direct visual reference to Adam or the sacrament of Holy Communion), it does call the viewer to reflect with the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene before Christ on the Cross who is already revealed as *Christus Victor* - the risen Christ.¹⁹ There are also some differences of emphasis between the fifteenth century Bellini and the Jones *Crucifixion*. The expressions of the two witnesses in the Bellini are of grief, whilst in the Jones they are of peace. Similarly, Bellini's Christ is in agony, whilst Jones's Christ evokes a sense of calm.²⁰ These differences are indicative of the freedom that twentieth century artists enjoyed in the use of the iconography of the crucifixion. Both call the viewer to worship, but the Bellini, by emphasising the suffering of Christ calls the viewer to a prayer of repentance, whilst the Jones painting calls the viewer to meditate with the crucified 'Prince of Peace.'

This freedom can also be seen in Jones's 1925 work which also has a predominantly conventional theology. Like *Crucifixion* of 1922, in *Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-ffin*, the Sacred Archetype remains dominant; the painting calls the viewer to

¹⁶ See Scholarly Edition, 146 and 148.

¹⁷ E.g. the Daphni *Crucifixion*, Appendix B - Fig. 4.

¹⁸ Giovanni Bellini, *Crucifixion*, (Venice, Museo Correr, 55x30, tempera on wood, 1455), Appendix A - Fig. xvi.

¹⁹ Jesus bares the lance wound inflicted after his death, yet his eyes are open as the resurrected and ascended Christ.

²⁰ Although the most common emotion expressed by the witnesses in conventional paintings of the crucifixion is one of grief, a pose of adoration is also not uncommon, e.g. El Greco, *Crucifixion*, (Madrid, Prado, 312x169, oil on canvas, 1596-1600). See Scholarly Edition Appendix B - Fig. 49.

worship. In this small work, Jones has chosen to depict the dead Christ as *Christus Patiens*. As noted in the Scholarly Edition, *Sanctus Christus de Capel y ffin*, contains several iconographical changes from earlier sacred works. The most prominent of these is the switch of the lance wound from Christ's right to his left, indicating a shift from a sacramental symbolism of this wound to an emotional psychological one.²¹ In addition, the black horse in the bottom right hand corner, though consistent with the rural landscape of the background introduces a piece of iconography peculiar to David Jones representing a state of peace.²²

David Jones's crucifixion paintings of 1922 and 1925 continued the tradition of religious art as a visual call to worship, but moved the emphasis from that of a call to repentance to an invitation to rest in the presence of the image of the crucified Son of God.

Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, 1946²³

Graham Sutherland painted several works based upon the iconography of the crucifixion in the 1940s; the 'Northampton' *Crucifixion*, painted in 1946 for St Matthew's Church in Northampton, was the central work of this series. At the base of the work is an image of a brass rail, which separates the image of Christ from the viewer. This simple addition performs two functions: it creates a barrier beyond which is holy ground; it also informs the viewer that they are not looking at an image, but at an image of an image. Though this work remains within the genre of sacred painting, it does not represent an existential link between the worshipper and God, but a link between the mind of the viewer and that of Sutherland. Berthoud in his biography of

²¹ The wound is no longer seen to release the sacred blood of the Eucharist, but to pierce the sacred heart of the victim. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

²² As noted in the discussion of *Vexilla Regis* in the Scholarly Edition, Jones's compared the grazing horses to those set free by their knights at the end of Morte d'Arthur and in a similar act by the Roman armies, signifying the life of battle was ended. M. P. Hills, D. Jones, et al, *David Jones*, (London, Tate Gallery, 1981), 113.

²³ See Scholarly Edition, 202.

Graham Sutherland reported that shortly before he died, Sutherland wrote of his Roman Catholic faith:

Although I am by no means devout, as many people write of me, it is almost certainly valuable support to all my actions and thoughts. Some might call my vision pantheist. I am certainly held by inner rhythms and order of nature; by the completeness of a master plan.²⁴

Sutherland may have brought to this painting both his Catholic theology of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and his more pantheistic views of the cross as an image of all suffering. The rail reminds the viewer that what they are looking at is Sutherland's visual reflections on the crucifixion of Christ.²⁵ The rail accentuates the isolation of the viewer from a vision of the Son of God. By the adaptation of Grünewald's iconography, the painting can be seen to be relating the crucified Christ to the traditions of the Church. To the pious viewer in St Matthew's church Northampton, it maintains the traditions of the conventional crucifixes of the medieval period in which the image of the suffering of Christ on the cross is placed in the context of the incarnation as the Son of God and Saviour of the World.²⁶

The second interpretation offered by the painting again refers the viewer back to Grünewald's work and its relationship to the pan-European disaster of St Anthony's Fire;²⁷ inviting the viewer to reflect upon another pan-European disaster - that of the

²⁴ Extract from a letter to the author from Graham Sutherland, received January 1980 in R. Berthoud, *Graham Sutherland: A Biography*, (London, Faber, 1982), 56.

²⁵ Sutherland at this time was influencing and was influenced by Francis Bacon. In Bacon's *Painting of 1946* (See Scholarly Edition), a rail is also used. Both want the viewer to be aware that the image portrayed has no objective reality except as an image. For different reasons, they both distanced themselves from the crucifixion of Christ and rather addressed the viewer with the *idea* of the crucifixion.

²⁶ The visual presentations of the incarnation in St Matthew's church is the sculpture of the Madonna and Child by Henry Moore, the visual presentation of the saving Christ is the perpetual presence of the reserved sacrament in that church.

²⁷ See the article S. Meisler, 'A Masterpiece Born of Saint Anthony's Fire', in *The Smithsonian Magazine*, (Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1999), vol.30, no 6, 70-79.

Second World War and the Holocaust.²⁸ This is consistent with a comment Sutherland made to Edwin Mullins in 1970:

I remember receiving a black-covered ... book dealing with the camps. It was a kind of funeral book. In it were the most terrible photographs of Belsen, Auschwitz and Buchenwald ... in them many of the tortured bodies looked like figures deposed from crosses. The whole idea of the depiction of Christ crucified became much more real to me ... and it seemed to be possible to do this subject again.²⁹

The vision is of Christ at one with humanity, but a humanity which suffers the sins of the Concentration Camp and poverty. In this second interpretation Sutherland may also have been influenced by the patron saint of the church in Northampton. The theme of identification with the poor and estranged is emphasised particularly in chapter twenty five of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus warns that when the Son of Man comes, judgement will be made in the context of how the judged responded to the needs of the poor and estranged.

.. I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not cloth me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me. (Gospel of Matthew 25.42-43).

In this interpretation, Sutherland's work reflects his pantheistic views as a call to the viewer to reflect on their estrangement from the suffering Christ and of His call to

²⁸ For a discussion on Sutherland's adaption of the figure of Christ in the Issenheim *Crucifixion* See Scholarly Edition, 204.

²⁹ Sutherland, letter to Edwin Mullins in Telegraph Magazine, no.359, 10 Sept. 1971, republished in R. Tassi, Graham Sutherland: The Wartime Drawings, trans. Julian Andrews, (London, Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1980), p.153.

take up their cross and follow Him with the poor and victimised with whom Jesus identifies himself.³⁰

The dominant Archetype remains the Sacred. This work is essentially conventional in its use of the iconography of the crucifixion, but the use of the rail shifts some of the emphasis away from Christ as Son of God towards Christ as an icon of suffering humanity.³¹ This concept of suffering humanity is discussed further in Chapter Three.

Three further works contained in the Scholarly Edition depict a conventional iconography and a conventional theology. They are *Crucifixion* by Roy de Maistre of 1945, *Crucified Tree Form* by Lee Elliott of 1959 and *Crucifixion* by Graham Sutherland of 1963. Although these works reflect a theology within the conventional boundaries of Christianity, it is significant that there is an absence of any signs of hope in these images. There is no indication in the iconography of the resurrection and ascension or of the anticipation of the Eucharist.³² As individual works these are not unique; many of the crucifixes of earlier times portrayed only the dying Christ.³³ What

³⁰ It should be note that it would be an anachronism to relate Sutherland's *Crucifixion* with the pastoral theology of 'Bias to Poor' which was developed by Bishop David Sheppard in 1983. See - D. Sheppard, *Bias to the Poor*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1983). Sutherland's approach may be considered as an invitation to meditate on Christ's relationship with the poor and victimised, arising from his experiences in the Second World War; whilst Shepherd's more controversial approach was to invite a program of action based upon his experiences of ministry in deprived urban areas of London and Liverpool.

³¹ Chris Stevens, when writing for the Tate Gallery articulated this double interpretation in terms of an existentialist approach to the theme: "With his series of crucifixions Sutherland, in common with many artists at that time, revived a traditional motif *to present a cathartic demonstration of contemporary experience* (my italics) and to offer the hope of redemption. In so doing he fell in with a strand of Christian existentialism that was an important feature of post-war culture in Western Europe. In France, the Catholic church developed a concept of 'personalism' through the work of such writers as Emmanuel Mounier in a bid to forge links with the individualism of the increasingly popular existentialism. Similarly, the nature of Sutherland's painting has been associated with a movement among Anglican modernisers to revise the Church of England's outlook and incorporate modern psychology. Sutherland's treatment of sacrifice in terms of Christ's personal suffering exemplifies such ideas." The catalogue for Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (London, Tate Galleries, 1946), <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sutherland-crucifixion-n05774/text-catalogue-entry> Accessed 23 March 2013.

³² The iconography anticipating resurrection could include the appearance of John the Baptist, angels watching over the dying Christ, the contrasting images of the sun and moon or the idealisation of the body of Christ. Complementing this, the iconography anticipating the risen Christ feeding his people through the Eucharist would include the collection of his blood either by Mary or by angels.

³³ For a discussion of crucifixes see G Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol. 2, trans. J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 140-151.

makes this observation significant is that it is not until the end of the twentieth century that works which use the iconography of the crucifixion return to any element of hope.

Norman Adams, *Golden Crucifixion*, 1993.³⁴

The prime example of this re-emergence of resurrection hope is Norman Adams's *Golden Crucifixion* of 1993.³⁵ The work is modern in its form, the crucified Christ is still revealed in the centre of the work and there are references to Christ's suffering; but the cross is overlaid with the image of a butterfly, a traditional Christian symbol of resurrection.³⁶ This re-emergence of Christian hope can also be seen in some of Craigie Aitchison's works which are reviewed below.

The works considered in this section imply some divergence from the conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion, although they remain compatible with a conventional or traditional theology. The next group exhibits more clearly a diversification in theological focus.

2 - Works Compatible with a Conventional Theology but with a Different Focus

In this group the diversity observed in the first group has widened to the point where the conventional theology associated with the use of the iconography of the crucifixion whilst still present is no longer central.

David Jones, *Vexilla Regis*, 1947-48³⁷

This painting was completed in 1947, five years before the publication of David Jones's major poetic work, *The Anathemata*.³⁸ Jones considered the process of art to be sacramental. Just as the elements of bread and wine in the Catholic Mass materially

³⁴ See Scholarly Edition, 267.

³⁵ Richard Harries wrote of this work 'In a world so dominated by tragedy, tragedy reflected in so much art, this is one of the most genuinely hopeful icons of our time.' R. Harries, *The Image of Christ in Modern Art*, (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013), 116.

³⁶ The image of a butterfly is more commonly associated with the infant Christ. E.g. Giuliano Bugiardini, *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist*, (Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, 118x91, oil on panel, 1520), Appendix A - Fig. xvi.

³⁷ See Scholarly Edition, 150.

³⁸ D. Jones, *The Anathemata*, (London, Faber, 2010 – First pub. 1952).

were still bread and wine after the consecration, but had become the body and blood of Christ, so the painting was still canvas and paint, but it too had become transcendent.³⁹ What was critical for Jones was his conception of sign.⁴⁰ In order for these sacramental events to be recognised they had to be received as sign.⁴¹ On page sixteen in the preface to The Anathemata he discussed the significance of water as sign.

Water is called the ‘matter’ of the Sacrament of Baptism. Is ‘two of hydrogen and one of oxygen’ that ‘matter’? I suppose so. But what concerns us here is whether the poet can and does so juxtapose and condition within a context the formula H₂O as to evoke ‘founts,’ ‘that innocent creature,’ ‘the womb of this divine font,’⁴² ‘the candidates,’ or for that matter ‘the narrows’ and ‘the siluer sea, Which serues it in the office of a wall, Or as a Moat defensiuie to a house.’⁴³

As the word water was used in poetry, its significance was extended beyond its immediate definition as H₂O. As sign, it was transformed into a source of endless connections and histories. For it to be recognised as an anathemata of a culture, the society which received it had to know it as a sign with transcendent connections.⁴⁴

David Jones expressed a concern that since the middle of the nineteenth century the signs which had served humanity in the West for millennia upon millennia were being lost – water was just becoming H₂O.⁴⁵

As discussed in the Scholarly Edition the title of the painting, *Vexilla Regis*, was taken from a hymn attributed to Fortunatus.⁴⁶ The hymn looked back to the cross and forward through the triumph of the tree. The picture, however, was not a simple

³⁹ For Blamires’s discussion of Jones’s theory of art as sacrament see - D. Blamires, David Jones: Artist and Writer, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1971), 29-30.

⁴⁰ See D. Jones, The Anathemata, 16-28, for a full discussion by him of the significance of the *sign*.

⁴¹ In this Commentary the term Semiotic Archetype has been used as a term for what Jones may have called the *sign* of the crucifixion, in that the term encapsulates the whole history, mythology and theology of its use.

⁴² From the Roman Catholic liturgy of The Blessing of Holy Water on Saturday, the Vigil of Pentecost.

⁴³ Jones quoting W. Shakespeare, Richard II, Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 46-47 - Jones’s spelling.

⁴⁴ Collins Dictionary defines Anathemata as ‘dedicatory gifts offered to gods.’ In the preface to The Anathemata Jones widened this definition giving a typically obtuse and rambling indication of how he understood the term. Perhaps he comes closest to his definition of the term when he wrote: “So I mean by my title as much as it can be made to mean, or can evoke or suggest, however obliquely: the blessed things that have taken on what is cursed and the profane things that somehow are redeemed.” Jones, The Anathemata, 28-29.

⁴⁵ Jones discussed this ‘break’ as he called it briefly in the preface to The Anathemata, 15-16.

⁴⁶ For the hymn Vexilla Regis, see Scholarly Edition, 150.

reflection on this hymn; its iconography also contained other elements. As noted in the Scholarly Edition the tertiary iconography of this work was consistent with Jones's understanding of signs, in that cultural history could be seen to revolve around the great sacramental act of Christ's sacrificial crucifixion.

What makes David Jones's use of the iconography of the crucifixion unconventional is not his theology, which is rooted in Roman Catholicism, but its freedom from any conventions of sacred art. It invites and challenges the viewer to spend time reflecting upon each ingredient to the work, realise the depth of their meanings in history, in mythology, in art and in theology and begin to share in Jones's unified vision of all these in the context of the central action of God in the crucifixion of Jesus. This work is not primarily concerned with worship, but with apologetics, with defending the Christian understanding of the passion in the context of the whole of history. Jones used the iconography of the crucifixion to extend Catholic sacramental theology to embrace the whole of human existence - which he expanded as poetry in The Anthemata. Whilst *Vexilla Regis* is consistent with a conventional theology of the crucifixion, it focuses upon integrating the sacramental nature of that event with the actual and cultural history of the world.

William Roberts, *Crucifixion*, 1922.⁴⁷

Whereas the Semiotic Archetype dominates David Jones's *Vexilla Regis*, William Roberts's *Crucifixion* of 1922 is centred upon the Artistic Archetype. Roberts's work contains much of the iconography of the crucifixion, but it is the structure of the work which is significant.⁴⁸ The work may be considered a narrative painting (the account of the crucifixion), but it is minimised in order that the aesthetic balance of the work may be maximised. Although a narrative element is evident it is the sense of

⁴⁷ See Scholarly Edition, 162.

⁴⁸ See Comments in the Scholarly Edition, 163.

movement and balance in the work which is dominant. The work exhibits what Roger Fry called 'decorative unity of design' in its construction.⁴⁹ So whilst Roberts's *Crucifixion* contains all the elements in its iconography of a conventional Christian theology, its purpose is not that of worship but of aesthetics. It is not of great theological significance, but it is indicative of the breadth of the diversification of the use of the iconography. Whilst the work remains conventional, its impact is agnostic; no attempt is made by the artist to claim any religious imperative in the work.

Roberts's *Crucifixion* and Jones's *Vexilla Regis* represent the extremes of this group of works. Whilst both are compatible with a conventional theology of the crucifixion of Jesus, Roberts's work, although rich in the iconography of the crucifixion, is barely a religious work; its emphasis is upon the Artistic Archetype and the aesthetic qualities of the work. Jones's work depends upon the Semiotic Archetype; it is less concerned with a proclamation of theology of salvation than with a theology of sacrament. Other paintings in the Scholarly Edition which fall between these two extremes are now discussed.

Graham Sutherland, *The Crucifixion*, 1947.⁵⁰

Graham Sutherland was able to create more freely in his Chichester *Crucifixion* of 1947 than in his Northampton *Crucifixion* of 1946.⁵¹ Whilst the St Matthew *Crucifixion* can still be considered as using the Sacred Archetype of the crucifixion as its dominant image, the 1947 *Crucifixion*, illustrates a predominantly Semiotic Archetype. In the former, there still remained a call to the adoration of Jesus; in the

⁴⁹ Roger Fry, 'The French Post-Impressionists' in C. Harrison, and F. Francina, Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology, (London, Paul Chapman in association with the Open University, 1988), 90.

⁵⁰ See Scholarly Edition, 210.

⁵¹ The Revd. Canon Walter Hussey as the incumbent of St Matthew's Northampton was the driving force in the commissioning of Sutherland's *Crucifixion*. See the essay – G. Pattison, 'The Achievement of Walter Hussey,' in T. Devonshire Jones and J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art. (Northampton, St. Matthew's [Northampton] Centenary Art Committee, 1993), 13-16.

latter, Sutherland had progressed to reflect upon the natural world. The secondary iconographies of biomorphic images, which stand on either side of the crucifixion, are based upon the spikes of the palms he had observed on his first trip to the Riviera in 1947. Cooper, when introducing his readers to the 1947 works of Graham Sutherland which he had produced from observations of the flora on the Riviera, gave an indication how this crucifixion picture might be read.

“Yet, he was soon to discover, there lurks beneath the luxuriant and unruffled outward appearance of the place *an acute struggle for survival* (my italics). Nature’s products are either swathed in protective covering or else defensively armed. Sutherland’s eye was caught by the pomegranates bursting their tough skin, the ripe maize cobs casting off their sheath of foliage, the delicate undulations of banana leaves, the tough bottle-like gourds, and the sinuous vines tying themselves in curves to the framework of the pergola. At the same time he did not overlook *the spikes of the palm-branch*, (my italics) nor the prickly defences of the artichoke and the cactus, nor yet the scaly armour and serrated legs of the cicada or the predatory attitudes of the mantis.”⁵²

In the 1947 *Crucifixion* Sutherland compares ‘the struggle for survival’ of the palms with that of ‘the crucified one.’ In conventional works these places would have been occupied either by the dying thieves or by the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist. The depiction of two megalithic forms of vegetation represents abstractions of natural forms, evoking paraphrases of nature.⁵³ The crucifixion, then, may be interpreted as an event within the natural order and witnessed by it; the continuing threat of destruction of the good, the perfect, and the peaceful being always present in the whole of creation.

This interpretation suggests that the crucifixion was not just an intervention into the natural world, but was the ultimate vision of the natural world. In this picture Christ is not just representative of humanity, but is representative of the whole of nature.

⁵² D. Cooper and G. Sutherland, The Work of Graham Sutherland, (London, Lund Humphries, 1961), 43. An illustration of this can be seen in: Graham Sutherland, *Palm Palisade*, (Private Collection, 50x40, oil on canvas, 1947), Appendix A - Fig. xvii.

⁵³ Sutherland used the term paraphrase in his admiration of Picasso’s *Guernica* and as part of a description of his intentions in his paintings. D. Cooper and G. Sutherland, The Work of Graham Sutherland, 17.

Sutherland's Chichester *Crucifixion* suggests to the viewer that the crucifixion was not just an act of pacifying a righteous God, but of 'compressing' the dichotomies of the beauty and ugliness, the creativity and the destructiveness, and the harmony and competitiveness of all nature into a revelatory paraphrase of how God's natural order works. If this interpretation is accepted, one can see how much this work has diversified in its central concerns from a conventional crucifixion picture.

Carel Weight – *Crucifixion* 1959.⁵⁴

As suggested in the Scholarly Edition the setting of *Crucifixion* of 1959 was the terrace in Crystal Palace Park, Sydenham. The central iconographies are the three crosses placed upon a massive rock in which the viewer is at the rear.⁵⁵ Weight centres his iconography on the crowd's response rather than on the nature of the victim. The effect of this is that the theological focus of this work is not on the saving work of Christ, but on the crowd's attitude. No assumption is made that the viewer should be drawn into worship; the viewer is instead confronted with the crowd.

The picture perhaps reveals Carel Weight's awareness of the tensions in English society concerning Christianity at the end of the nineteen fifties, which would become apparent in the nineteen sixties.⁵⁶ In Weight's probable borrowing of the imagery of Nazi Germany, the picture raises an irresolvable dilemma. Like the rallies of Nazi Germany, this can be interpreted either as a moment of great hope or of great evil. In retrospect, the speakers and the crowd at the Nazi rallies were condemned as co-conspirators of a great evil, but in their own time the crowd viewed the occasion with great hope.⁵⁷ In Carel Weight's work the red sky and claw-like rock give a sense of impending evil, but the question of this evil is not answered. Is the evil in the lack of

⁵⁴ See Scholarly Edition, 225.

⁵⁵ For a full description of the iconography see Scholarly Edition, 213-215.

⁵⁶ A summary of the radical changes and decline of Christianity in England, particularly in the Anglican Church during the 1960s can be found in A. Hastings, *A History of English Christianity - 1920-1985*, (London, Collins, 1986), 532-560.

⁵⁷ See 'Nurnberg Rally,' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/422665/Nurnberg-Rally> - Accessed 20 May 2014.

response by the crowd to the cross, or is there a suggestion that the Christian enterprise itself is the source of the evil? No answers are given by Carel Weight. This work is not only an example of how theology was diversifying between works of art, but of a conscious or unconscious imprecision in the theology offered within the work. The viewer is not offered a clear theological stance; instead the image asks a variety of theological questions. This imprecision has been defined as a diffusion of theology within individual works and is a significant finding in this research.

Carel Weight, *Crucifixion II*, 1981⁵⁸

This work shows major differences to his 1959 *Crucifixion*. The atmosphere of the work is calmer; the sense of threat present in the earlier work has disappeared. In *Crucifixion II* there is almost a sense of normality, except for the anomalous presence of a cross (not a crucifix) and the German soldier at its foot. The lightness of touch in the style of the work creates an atmosphere of mutual acceptance. This work invites a theological response to the questions: has the crucifixion event become devoid of its central character? Has religion become a symbolic activity acted out by a small group of devotees, observed sympathetically by the rest of society and yet also disengaged from them? If Panofsky's third process is appropriate here, it reveals that in Weight's mind the question of Christianity has moved from an ethical basis, which he may have been questioning in his 1959 work to its social and personal relevance. In the earlier work the question, 'is Christianity possibly evil?' is raised, along with other insights, whilst in the 1981 version the question has now become, 'is Christianity of any significance?'

Roger Wagner, *Menorah*, 1993⁵⁹

Roger Wagner's crucifixion scene is set in an English landscape, but not the heavenly village of Spencer's work.⁶⁰ This profound work is mystical in its approach.

⁵⁸ See Scholarly Edition, 228.

⁵⁹ See Scholarly Edition, 269.

⁶⁰ A. Glew, ed. *Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings*. (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 164-165.

The crucifixes are conventional in form, but no visual judgement is made on the status of the three victims. The enormity of their setting moves the viewer to see in them a Sacred Archetype; the painting *feels* holy. Competing with this traditional feel to the work is the contemporary element of the chimney and cooling towers of Didcot Power Station. These images threaten to overpower the significance of the crosses. The Jewish element however disallows it; their presence draws the viewer back to the crucifixes. The Jews in this work do not bring clarity but diffusion; they bring questions. In their grief (either individually or in groups; either grieving over the deaths in the concentration camps or grieving over their survival) they raise questions about the power of scientific humanity and the power of Christ. Are they the saviours of this broken remnant or are they the perpetrators? No answers are given. The sacredness of this work is that it calls the viewer to question the very foundations of their lives; is their faith for good or evil? Is their modernity, life giving or oppressive? Whilst this work does not use the iconography of the crucifixion in any way contrary to the conventional theology of salvation, its focus is to question the assumptions about the holiness of modern Christian Western Europe in the light of the evil of the Holocaust.

The inference of Weight's and Wagner's paintings is that a significant change has occurred in the theological implications of the crucifixion iconography. In conventional works the iconography was focused upon Jesus, but in Weight's and Wagner's works the iconography has become a symbol of something broader – the idea of “Christianity” or “the Church” or of “suffering in general.” In the rest of the paintings in this group this trend can be seen more clearly.

Gilbert Spencer, *Crucifixion*, 1915⁶¹

The conventional figure of Christ on the cross projected a sense of human suffering, but as an image of its perfection. In the twentieth century works images are

⁶¹ See Scholarly Edition, 140.

offered as visions of the danger of dehumanisation. In Gilbert Spencer's work it is the 'father' or the older generation who is exposed. This work is one of a number of works in the Scholarly Edition in which the figure of the crucified Jesus has been replaced by an alternative figure. From an extensive survey of images this does not appear to occur in the art of the crucifixion produced before the seventeenth century,⁶² but both in Britain and abroad pictures appear throughout the twentieth century with this substitution.⁶³ They represent a further diversification in theological approach and Spencer's work is one of the earliest identified. In his 1915 *Crucifixion* the artist has replaced the figure of Jesus with his father, William.⁶⁴ The five men supporting the cross are reminiscent of the five surviving Spencer brothers at the time of its painting.⁶⁵ By replacing Christ on the Cross, it implies that the focus of theology has shifted from the status of its victim as Saviour to a theology of the crucifixion as symbolic of suffering humanity. Jesus has ceased to be the focus of this work; the crucifixion has become symbolic of innocent suffering and destruction. Once again there is no precision in its interpretation; from the artist's comments it is clear that he did not have a considered theology of the work, but by his inclusion of his father and reference to the five brothers he has raised the question of their relationships.⁶⁶ It may be inferred that the destruction of the older generation's culture by the younger generation in the First World War is an element in this work.

⁶² Some two thousand images were surveyed through internet resources such as Broadman Education and Artstor as well major art galleries.

⁶³ Examples from Europe include Mona von Wittlage, *Crucifixion*, (London, Saatchi Collection, 215x160, Blood on Sanitary Bags, not dated), (Appendix B - Fig.69) and from the USA, John Biggers, *Crucifixion*, (Hampton Virginia, Hampton University Museum, 128x88, oil on Masonite, 1942), Appendix A - Fig. xviii.

⁶⁴ In the Foreword to Gilbert's biography of his brother he wrote, '...though not before my brother had observed, after seeing my painting of *the Crucifixion*, in which I had used Father as a model, "I don't know what it is, but when Gil paints Pa his pictures seem to be alright."' G. Spencer, *Stanley Spencer: by his Brother Gilbert*, (London, Victor Gollancz, 1961), Foreword.

⁶⁵ See the article, F. MacCarthy, 'Sir Stanley Spencer' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, at www.oxforddnb.com. - Accessed 25 March 2014.

⁶⁶ By his own admission Gilbert was 'a confirmed agnostic.' - G. Spencer, *Memoirs of a Painter*, (London, Chatto and Windus, 1974), 59.

Anthony Green, *Golden Crucifix*, 1965.⁶⁷

Anthony Green's *Golden Crucifix* of 1965 reveals a light almost comic touch. Since the early 1960s Anthony Green's pictures have been a pictorial commentary on his family life.⁶⁸ Green seems to be comparing his wife's relationship with him to that of the holy attenders, pouring out their love to Jesus in his place of extreme agony. But by the use of gentle caricature he has lightened this comparison, reminding the viewer that it is not an image of the dying Christ they are looking at, but just a neurotic middle class artist.⁶⁹ For the painting to have impact it is not the Sacred Archetype which is important but the Semiotic Archetype. Similarly, to appreciate Greens's 'suffering the loss of bachelorhood' in marriage as an insight into the state of marriage it is necessary to interpret the iconography in terms of suffering humanity. However, the viewer is left to interpret the possibility of new life as husband. Similarly in Smith's *Creation and Crucifixion*, it is the wife who suffers, but now with the possible overtone of sainthood.

The theological implications of this work are a loosening of the reverence for the iconography. Though Green maintained a Christian faith, this did not bar him from using it with a touch of humour to reflect on his own situation.⁷⁰ Green does not call the viewer to worship through his work or even to acknowledge the atoning power of the 'Holy Crucifixion,' but simply to compare the emotional world of himself and his wife Mary with the traditions of the crucifixion. The crucifixion of Jesus has become a

⁶⁷ See Scholarly Edition, 236.

⁶⁸ Green wrote: 'As an eighteen-year-old student, I had fallen passionately in love with a beautiful girl. This was my crucial breakthrough as an artist. Falling in love gave me the motivation and subject matter I needed – I would chronicle my relationship with Mary, our family and its continuing story.' A. Green, *Anthony Green 1960-86*, (Tokyo, The Japan Association of Art Museums / Yomiuri Shinbun, 1988), 8-9.

⁶⁹ Devonshire Jones put it another way: "His subject has always been himself, his wife and their story, and in this painting, the couple play the parts of Christ, God, Man, St. Veronica and a host of angels. In Green's irreverent treatment of this serious theme 'Heaven...is situated in the congregation chapel at Pound Square, Highgate Village, London, N6. St Veronica holds her cloth bearing Christ's image outside Lissendon Mansions, and Man is cast into a Hell situated near the railway bridge at Gospel Oak station, North London. Mary Magdalene can be identified by her dark red underwear – (Mary Green wore similar knickers during the 1960's winters)." N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes – Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood, Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 47 (Quotation from A. Green, *Anthony Green 1960-86*, 64).

⁷⁰ This is confirmed by Green - 'By then Nonconformism sustained my Christian faith.' A. Green, *Anthony Green 1960-86*, 29.

signifier of suffering, even for the moderate discomforts of family life. Its significance for this thesis is that in the twentieth century the diversification of the use of this iconography reached the point where it could be part of a humorous narrative work.

Alexander Guy, *Crucifixion*, 1992⁷¹

In Alexander Guy's *Crucifixion* of 1992 it was not the world of nature or family life that Guy addressed but the cultural world of the later part of the twentieth century. The impact of this work is in the tension between the two characters, Jesus and Elvis Presley. The notes by Alexander Guy on his massive painting quoted in the Scholarly Edition give a strong indication of the impact of the Semiotic Archetype in this work.⁷² Guy's notes are not developed, but they indicate the direction of the symbolism in the work; the Elvis suit arranged as a cruciform and the title refer to the world of American culture and the fate of Jesus. Jesus was the 'superstar' of the Sermon on the Mount, the feeding of the five thousand and of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but also the one who died a thief's death. Elvis Presley was the King of Rock and Roll, the idol of Memphis and Los Angeles, but the one who died on a lavatory seat. America was the home of the glitz of Rock and Roll, the military might and the astronauts; but it also housed the extremism of racism and religious fanaticism. Guy's *Crucifixion* is both a potent example of the secularisation of the sacred passion of Jesus and that other movement of the twentieth century, the sanctification of the secular. The culture of Elvis Presley and the crucifixion of Jesus have been used as a pictorial simile for life, death and the cult of the modern celebrity.

In this work the Sacred Archetype is not evident. Like Anthony Green's *Golden Crucifix*, whilst heavily dependent upon the Semiotic Archetype to call the viewer to

⁷¹ See Scholarly Edition, 265.

⁷² 'August 1992: Jesus died for our sins, Elvis died for our twentieth century sins. If Jesus is alive today then so is Elvis. The fact is they are both dead and alive so Jesus=Elvis. November 1992: The Elvis suit is not Elvis. It is the myth. It is astronauts, Klu Klux Klan, Military, God, Rock n' Roll, Burden, Self-protection, Martyrdom, TV Evangelism, Cult, Fashion and Shroud.' C. Baker, Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow, Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow - The First Years. (London, Scala Books, 1996), 57.

make comparisons with Jesus, the artist has transformed the crucifixion of Jesus from a part of sacred history to the realm of myth. In this sense the work stands on the boundary between this group of works and the next which abandon the central tradition of Christian theology.

3 - The Works which Appear to Abandon Traditional Christian Theology.

The analyses presented here suggest that this group of works indicates a diversification in theological approach to the point where they no longer conform to the core of Christian beliefs implicit in the conventional use of the crucifixion iconography.

Stanley Spencer's Crucifixion Pictures.⁷³

What unites the three Stanley Spencer works is that although all three are entitled *Crucifixion* and each contains an image of Christ on the cross, they show little concern for the historic event or its significance as sacred art. Inspection of Spencer's three crucifixion pictures reveals a progression from 1921 to 1958. In the earliest picture, Spencer painted the victims facing the viewer with Christ at the centre. However, he distracts the eye of the viewer from Jesus, both by enfolding him in the landscape and through the busyness of the secondary characters in the work.⁷⁴ In *The Crucifixion* of 1934 the significance of Christ is further reduced by Spencer's decision to view him from the rear and almost de-humanise him through a visual reference to a scarecrow. In this work, although Christ has not been demoted to a secondary figure, other figures now compete for the attention of the viewer even more strongly than in the 1921 version. The composition is centred on the reactions of the bystanders rather than on the act of crucifixion itself. In the 1921 version, Jesus perhaps symbolises the artist's sacrifice through the suffering of war. In the 1934 version, it may have related to

⁷³ See Scholarly Edition, 153-160.

⁷⁴ For details of the secondary characters (secondary iconography), see Scholarly Edition, 153-154.

Spencer's 'crucifixion' as his marital crisis unfolded in the public gaze of his home village.⁷⁵

Finally in the work of 1958, though Christ is painted in the foreground, it is the roar of his fellow victim which is the focus of the work. This work is unique in Spencer's religious painting, in that it shows a character at the extreme of violent emotion. The thief on the right of the picture displays a level of anger unknown in Spencer's other works. Keith Bell considered that Spencer identified with Christ experiencing the 'cruel vitriol of the non-penitent thief and the physical attacks of 'the nailers,' but, just as in his *The Deposition and the Rolling away of the Stone* and *Crucifixion* of 1934, the face of Christ shows no sign of any suffering.⁷⁶ In the conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion, the theology was centred on salvation. In *The Crucifixion* of 1958 the emphasis is on the reaction of people to the crucified Christ. Whilst some like Mary 'flopped' in simple adoration,⁷⁷ others like the workmen went about their routine task of crucifying Christ, and the robber howled accusation against the passive Christ.⁷⁸ In this painting, Stanley Spencer appears also to have addressed the issue of blame.⁷⁹ In this depiction, Spencer's thief perhaps dares to blame God. This work is unconventional in its theology; in common with Christian Science theology it denied the physical suffering of Christ, but more pertinently in line with a more general trend in the twentieth century it hinted at an unorthodox theology of

⁷⁵ See Scholarly Edition, 156.

⁷⁶ Quotation from: K. Bell and S. Spencer, *Stanley Spencer*, (London, Phaidon, 1999), 232. Painting: Stanley Spencer, *The Deposition and Rolling Away of the Stone*, (York, York Museum, 110x57, oil on canvas, 1956), Appendix A - Fig. xix.

⁷⁷ For an explanation of Christ's apparent lack of suffering and for Spencer's term 'flopped,' see Stanley Spencer, *Crucifixion*, 1958 in the Scholarly Edition, 160.

⁷⁸ J. S. Rothenstein reported that Spencer made a strange remark to the boys at Aldenham School, 'I have given the men who are nailing Christ on the cross – (and making sure they make a good job of it) - Brewers caps, because it is your Governors and you who are still nailing Christ to the cross.' - S.S. Spencer, and J. S. Rothenstein *Stanley Spencer, the Man: Correspondence and Reminiscences*, (Athens, Ohio University Press, 1979), 131.

⁷⁹ The rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* by Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice first performed as a record album in 1970 takes up a similar theme, but with Judas Iscariot making similar accusations.

evil and sin. In all three works Spencer seems to be using the crucifixion as a visual metaphor for suffering, rather than as a symbol of God's sacrificial saving love.

Emmanuel Levy, *Crucifixion*, 1942.⁸⁰

Although Emmanuel Levy's *Crucifixion* is a powerful cry of horror at Jewish persecution, the picture carries with it a more complex message.⁸¹ David Breur-Weil in his commentary on this picture interpreted the central figure as Jesus, but it is clear that Levy has replaced Jesus with a modern archetypal Jewish martyr.⁸²

Levy's use of the iconography of the crucifixion can be seen in the context of political imagery of humanity. Both Communism and Nazism developed their own vision of the idealised human. From a Marxist perspective, salvation was centred upon economics, the nature of work and relationships moulded by it. Alienation, the loss of true humanity, could be addressed by the integration of work and worker and the elimination of class distinctions. From this standpoint salvation was through class revolution and the idealised human was the worker. Ivan Bevzenko's *Young Steel Workers*, of 1961 is a typical painted example of it, whilst Vera Mukhina's bronze sculpture *Industrial Worker and Collective Farm Girl* of 1935 is the classical representation.⁸³ In contrast, the National Socialist (Nazis) perspective accentuated and built upon the perfection of the Aryan body. J. A. Mangan has written on how the ideal of the hero was transformed into the concept of 'militant muscularity' before the First World War. This eventually led to the Nazi ideal of racial dominance.⁸⁴ The idealised

⁸⁰ Scholarly Edition, 193.

⁸¹ The interpretation of Jewish persecution is made by David Breur-Weil – see D. Breuer-Weil, in N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes*, 35.

⁸² Levy was probably influenced by the work of Marc Chagall in his choice of the central figure. See in particular – Marc Chagall, *The Martyr*, (Zurich, Kunsthaus, 165x231, oil on canvas, 1940), Appendix A - Fig. xx and Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion*, (Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 154x140, oil on canvas, 1938), Appendix B - Fig. 6.

⁸³ Ivan Bevzenko, *Young Steel Workers*, (Private Collection, 80x156, oil on canvas, 1961), Appendix A - Fig. xxi.

Vera Mukhina, *Industrial Worker and Collective Farm Girl*, (St Petersburg, State Russian Museum, 158x106x112, bronze sculpture, 1935), Appendix A - Fig. xxii.

⁸⁴ J.A. Mangan, *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as a Political Icon*, (London, Frank Cass, 1999), 128-9.

human was understood to be the young Aryan. Arno Breker was a major artist in Germany during the Nazi period and *Prometheus* his favourite subject.⁸⁵ A female equivalent of this was Iva Saliger's *Diana's Rest* of 1939-40 in which the Goddess and her companions were portrayed as idealised Aryan women.⁸⁶ The use of the iconography of the crucifixion offered an alternative vision of humanity from that of the Marxist and Nazi perspective.

In Emmanuel Levy's *Crucifixion* this is most prominent. The central figure is a European Jew, labelled 'Jew' in blood above his head, with physical characteristics which were used by anti-Semites as propaganda pictures.⁸⁷ This figure however calls the viewer to reflect upon the sacred history and theological traditions of the crucifixion of Jesus in the context of those Jews who were suffering vilification and persecution in Europe at that time. Levy's victim is not dead; the artist did not invite the viewer to compare him with *Christus Patiens*. The Christ he called the viewer to reflect upon was the dying Jesus crying out to God. By the use of phylacteries and prayer shawl he has transformed the victim into a man in prayer. By disrobing his upper left side, the humanity of the victim is accentuated by the artist. The stereotypical Jew of Nazi propaganda is revealed as a human being and man of prayer; but what prayer? The informed viewer is left to reflect upon Jesus's words of desolation 'My God my God why have you forsaken me' and His words of compassion 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'⁸⁸

The tertiary iconography complements this invitation to an open ended reflection by the viewer. Levy has arranged the prayer shawl (tallis) to give the

⁸⁵ Arno Breker, *Prometheus*, (Photographed outside Reich Chancellery, Sculpture, 1939), Appendix A - Fig. xxiii.

⁸⁶ Ivo Saliger, *Diana's Rest*, (Federal Republic of Germany, 200x190, oil on canvas, 1939-40), Appendix A - Fig. xxiv.

⁸⁷ As an example see Appendix A - Fig. xxv, taken from an anti-Semitic article on the internet. The visual impact is still intended to create a sense of loathing in the viewer. See http://blockyourid.com/~gbpprorg/judicial-inc/88meet_the_president_of_poland.htm - Accessed 13 June 2012.

⁸⁸ Gospel of Mark 15: 34 and the Gospel of Luke 23:34.

impression of wings on which the victim seems to hover above a Christian cemetery.⁸⁹ The victim can now be viewed as a messenger of God to the host of fallen Christians buried below him witnessing the destruction of a city with its church or cathedral revealed in its traditional place to the right of the victim. At first glance the sky looks like a rather poorly painted cloud scene, but as the viewer concentrates on the clouds, they seem to take the forms of more threatening creatures. The two lower clouds look like giant sharks about to attack. Consciously or unconsciously Levy has replaced the ministering angels seen in conventional crucifixion pictures with an image of potential destruction. The sky in Levy's *Crucifixion* has raised the question of whether even the heavens are antagonistic to the dying Jew. By elevating the cross and distorting the sky, Levy has placed the Jew in the reality of his dilemma in 1942, crucified by the World and apparently abandoned by heaven. Yet through this, the Jew is revealed as suffering innocence in stark contrast to the Nazi propaganda which portrayed the Jew as sub-human and of no significance.

In common with many other works in the Scholarly Edition, Levy's work speaks on many levels inviting the viewer to explore and interpret freely. In this work, produced in the middle of the Second World War, the Semiotic Archetype of the iconography of the crucifixion has been used as a metaphor for 'suffering humanity' without any reference to the conventional use of the iconography. The iconography has become a powerful ethical sign of the destructiveness of the anti-Semitism of that time and has disengaged from the salvation theology of mainstream Christianity.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ The white crosses may refer to a military cemetery, though these usually have a more ordered layout (for example the Somme American Cemetery in Bony, France). Or he may have been influenced by Stanley Spencer's altarpiece at Burghclere. Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection of The Soldiers*, (Sandham Memorial Chapel, Appendix A - Fig. xxvi).

⁹⁰ No equivalent has been found in Britain for the cry of the black community, but in the USA John Biggers *Crucifixion* of 1942 is a most powerful crucifixion image from this community see (Appendix A - Fig. xviii).

Betty Swanwick, *Lost Wilderness*, 1974⁹¹

This work illustrates a further diversification in the use of the iconography of the crucifixion. The central concern is not that of a saviour Christ; through the use of the Semiotic Archetype, Swanwick's work addresses the need for salvation of the ecology. By painting the background a blue/grey, Swanwick has created a landscape of dead or dying life. The only life depicted is in the foreground. The mistletoe survives as a parasite of the tree; whilst the foxes are depicted as scavengers through the images of the bones placed around them. These suggest, by association, the human as a parasitic scavenger of nature. The central tree is positioned as a link between the lifeless background and the living but passive foreground. The branches which support the human victim are broken, but the trunk appears green, giving it some hope of life.

There is ambiguity in the work. Whilst Swanwick has used the iconography to remind the viewer of the crucifixion of Jesus, its pose, with its arms curled around the branches and head held up, is closer to that traditionally associated with the repentant thief.⁹² In addition, the right hand of the victim refers the viewer to Grünewald's Jesus, whilst the left hand, to his John the Baptist.⁹³ It is not clear whether Swanwick's *Lost Wilderness* is about sacrifice or redemption. Both readings are possible; the central character can be read as a 'Mother Earth' figure, precariously hung from the tree of life and in danger of extinction through her own greed. Or it can be interpreted as a vision of hope in which this suffering earth can be restored. In this interpretation, the central figure as the penitent victim cries out for mercy. The left hand points to the earth, but also to the metaphor of Christ who 'takes away the sins of the world.' Betty Swanwick has left these issues unanswered; the iconographic complexities of the painting invite the viewer to make their own interpretations.

⁹¹ Scholarly Edition, 256.

⁹² See - Antonello de Messina, *Crucifixion*, (Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, c 1475-76), Appendix A - Fig. xxvii.

⁹³ Matthias Grünewald, *Crucifixion*, (Colmar, Alsace, France, Unterlinden Museum, 1512-1516), Scholarly Edition, Appendix B - Fig. 36.

This work perhaps typifies the challenges of reflecting theologically upon these modern works which use the iconography of the crucifixion. The artist has felt no constraint to conform to traditional expectations of the place of the crucifixion in Christian theology, but has used the imagery to raise agendas relating to modern life - alienation, ecology and suffering. Paul Fiddes has approached some of the themes explored by Betty Swanwick from a Christian perspective using the term relationlessness. Paul Fiddes wrote:

If we wilfully fragment our relationships with our own selves, with others, and with God, then death takes on the threatening aspect of acute loss of relationship....Now God, by his own sovereign will, holds himself in possession through relating himself to his creation. That has been the argument of our study. To claim that God experienced the most intense kind of human death in the cross of Jesus is to suggest therefore that he reached the furthest pitch relationlessness....the doctrine of the Trinity seems to offer a way in which we might think of this experience of relationlessness, and thus death, as entering into the being of God.we might think of death (or perishing) as separation entering into the heart of God's relationships with himself.⁹⁴

Lost Wilderness can be interpreted as inviting the viewer to reflect upon this relationlessness in the context of the destruction of the natural world.

The Crucifixion Paintings of Craigie Aitchison

Aitchison painted from his personal iconographic collection. Over the long period of his creative life this included: landscapes remembered from his childhood, animals (particularly his beloved Bedlington Terriers), the cypress tree planted by him in Italy and even Easter eggs. However, his artistic life and reputation centred around his commitment to the iconography of Christ on the cross.

It is proposed here that his crucifixion paintings, and particularly those before 1989, are sentimental (but not in a disparaging sense), and that their appeal is dependent upon it. They reflect a form of social theology, a lonely longing for a comfortable Christ or Christianity, of a mythical past, which has been lost in the present. As evidence of this, two of his works are discussed here.

⁹⁴ P.S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), 200-201.

C. Aitchison, *Crucifixion in a Landscape, 1967-70*⁹⁵ and *Crucifixion, 1984-86*.⁹⁶

In his early work, *Crucifixion in a Landscape* of 1967-70, the cross is set in the landscape of Holy Island and the Isle of Arran, which is where Aitchison spent some of his childhood.⁹⁷ In his later work *Crucifixion* of 1984-86 the sense of a sentimental past is re-enforced by the introduction of the Bedlington Terrier. This addition to Aitchison's iconography is related to the death of the artist's pet dog Wayney in 1986.⁹⁸ The sentimentality of Aitchison is not that of John Betjeman's church poems in which the poet reflects upon the passing age of early twentieth century Anglican spirituality.⁹⁹ Aitchison was harsher. Whereas Betjeman's poetry suggested the anachronistic spirituality was still present in his time, Aitchison places the image of Christ crucified in his personal past. Whilst the major emotion engendered in Aitchison's series of crucifixion pictures is one of isolation, or even loneliness, that isolation is directed at the passing of a cherished experience.

Aitchison's images of the crucifixion are without detail; their only concern is with the idea of the crucifixion, not with its significance for the salvation of the viewer. They are, in original artistic terminology, an abstraction. The removal of arms or other details are essential for his works. The viewer is not invited to look at Christ on the cross, but at what has happened 'today' to Christ on the cross. Like his childhood and his dog, the experience of Christianity, visually articulated in the iconography of the crucifixion, is depicted as a beloved memory.

⁹⁵ Scholarly Edition, 240.

⁹⁶ Scholarly Edition, 244.

⁹⁷ 'Craigie Aitchison in an interview with Andrew Lambeth' recorded in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, Craigie Aitchison, (London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1998), Section 4 (no pages given).

⁹⁸ See Scholarly Edition, 245.

⁹⁹ E.g. John Betjeman, 'Verses turned in aid of A Public Subscription (1952) towards the restoration of the Church of St. Katherine Chiselhampton, Oxen,' in J. Betjeman, John Betjeman's Collected Poems, (London, John Murray, 1958), 172.

Aitchison's works painted prior to 1989 might also be understood in the context of the contemporary debate about the 'Death of God.'¹⁰⁰ His works are not images of the crucifixion nor are they images of what the crucifixion may represent – suffering, redemption etc. Aitchison's crucifixions are a powerful evocation of 'what is stirring in the hidden subconscious of this generation.'¹⁰¹ The viewer is invited to reflect that God is dead – but we mourn the passing. Aitchison's paintings are like graves to 'the crucifixion.' Their colours are beautiful, they convey a sense of peace and sentimental yearning for what was. Just as a visitor to a grave may stand in a place of peace and beauty to remember what or who has passed away.¹⁰²

Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, 1988-89, *Calvary*, 1997¹⁰³

After 1988, Aitchison's iconography reveals a greater optimism. In *Crucifixion* of 1988-89, a beam of light is introduced to indicate a heavenly revelation in a manner similar to that used by Fra Angelico in his Annunciation pictures.¹⁰⁴ This is the first hint of hope to be seen in his crucifixion pictures. In *Calvary* which is displayed in Truro Cathedral, this hint is further developed - the details of which are discussed in the Scholarly Edition.¹⁰⁵ The hint of hope is in the fourth panel in which the artist has replaced the cross with a barren tree and rising moon, both of which can be interpreted as symbols of Easter Eve. However, this can still be interpreted in a diversity of ways.

¹⁰⁰ In this instance the term "Death of God" is used in the context of Friedrich Nietzsche, who proclaimed that in nineteenth century European culture the significance of the Christian God had died. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. with commentary Walter Kaufmann, (New York, Vintage Books, 1974).

¹⁰¹ Canon Eric Turnball quoted in A. G. Williams, and C. Aitchison, *Craigie: The Art of Craigie Aitchison*, (Edinburgh, Canongate, 1996), 115.

¹⁰² A contrast to this treatment of Aitchison's *Crucifixion* pictures is made by Richard Harries, where he gently positions these works into a traditional context. Careful reading indicates that Harries finds this not entirely satisfactory. "...all we can do is look at the paintings and let them convey what they will. There is no emphasis on suffering as such, but there is a powerful sense of spiritual isolation..." This is an example of Harries' approach as theology in art, which has its own validity and is also indicative of the diversity and diffusion of the works discussed in this thesis. R. Harries, *The Image of Christ in Modern Art*, (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2013), 94 – 97.

¹⁰³ Scholarly Edition, 247 and 251.

¹⁰⁴ This observation was made by Christopher Andreae in his review of A. G. Williams, and C. Aitchison, *Craigie: The Art of Craigie Aitchison*. See [http://www.csmonitor.com/1996/0717/071796.home.home.1.html/\(page\)/2](http://www.csmonitor.com/1996/0717/071796.home.home.1.html/(page)/2) - Accessed 28 October 2013.

¹⁰⁵ For a full discussion of its iconography see Scholarly Edition, 251-252.

Has Aitchison developed his iconography to allow the Easter Story to be told, all be it in very simplified form, or has the resurrection hope also been included in his sentimental mourning of its lost significance? Its positioning in Truro Cathedral would support the former; Aitchison's art would support the latter. Again it is left to the viewer to decide.

John Bellany's Works¹⁰⁶

John Bellany's works do not fit comfortably in any of the groups considered here. *Allegory*, *Pourquoi? II* and *Homage to John Knox* all use the iconography of the crucifixion to consider the nature of suffering, but each with a different emphasis. *Allegory* presents humanity as the perpetrator of suffering aquatic life, *Pourquoi? II* is a condemnation of humanity's cruelty to fellow human beings,¹⁰⁷ whilst *Homage to John Knox* presents Christianity (or a particular expression of it) as a source of humanity's suffering. They are included in this group, because overall Bellany appears to have abandoned Christianity, though *Homage to John Knox* could be assigned to the next section.

4 - The Works which Appear to be Antithetical to the Theology of Christianity

In the previous section works were considered in which the central purpose for the use of the iconography of the crucifixion in the conventional works had been abandoned in favour of other agendas. In this section works are considered which not only have abandoned Christian theology but have rejected it.

Robert Henderson Blyth, *In the Image of Man*, 1947¹⁰⁸

Robert Henderson Blyth's *Image of Man* of 1947 is the most pessimistic of the works discussed so far in this chapter. In the light of the horrors of the Second World

¹⁰⁶ Scholarly Edition, 230 – 235.

¹⁰⁷ K. Hartley, *John Bellany*: (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 2013), 28.

¹⁰⁸ Scholarly Edition, 215.

War, Blyth's *Image of Man* appears to question the validity of any Christian belief. His use of the iconography of the crucifixion is centred on the Semiotic Archetype and the viewer is denied any Christian hope. In the destruction of war, the cross as an image of Christian culture is depicted destroyed, and 'the Christ' is revealed to be just a hollow statue, a creation of human ingenuity, just like the gods of Greece.¹⁰⁹ If the broken head is interpreted as resembling the artist, the painting becomes more personal; it marks the destruction of a personal faith in the ruins of Hamburg. The destruction of the image of Christ communicates to the viewer the end of an era. This is reinforced by the broken pillar which suggests the end of a dynasty.¹¹⁰ The dynasty, we may speculate, is the 'family of the Church.' For Blyth, *the Image of Man* appears to be an image of humanity capable of destruction on an apocalyptic scale, but with no hope of redemption.

The Works of Francis Bacon

Francis Bacon's work is even more antithetical to the theology of Christ as Saviour. The works of Francis Bacon which use the iconography of the Crucifixion can be divided into three phases. The earliest surviving works are the three crucifixions of 1933 in which he was still developing his technique and style.¹¹¹ The second phase is the period in which he came to international notice: *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* of 1944, *Painting* of 1946 and *Fragments of a Crucifixion* of 1950 are from this period.¹¹² The remaining three, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* of 1962, *Crucifixion* of 1965 and *Second Version of Triptych 1944* of 1988 were painted in his mature period from 1962 to 1988.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ The broken head of Christ seen in the lower right hand of the work is bearded. In Greek 'Hellenistic' sculpture this was associated with the older 'heroes' such as Menelaus, Laocoön or Odysseus, inferring perhaps the place of Christ in the generations of the past. See: J. Boardman, [The Oxford history of Classical Art](#), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), 197-201.

¹¹⁰ Scholarly Edition, 216.

¹¹¹ All three are entitled *Crucifixion* and all are in private collections. See Scholarly Edition, 167-172.

¹¹² See Scholarly Edition, pages 173-178.

¹¹³ See Scholarly Edition, pages 179-182.

A distinct development can be discerned theologically between the first and second group. In the three works entitled *Crucifixion* of 1933, there are still iconographical references to the crucifixion of Jesus; in those produced in the 1940s they are more difficult to discern. In the Black *Crucifixion* the influence of the nails and diaphanous veil are present, whilst in the Brown version it is possible to make reference to the three victims; and in the Yellow version Bacon has included a skull, which again may refer back to the traditions of Golgotha. In these three works the Artistic Archetype is predominant; they are decorative. If any of these works were hung on a church wall, they might create puzzlement, but not hostility.

In his second phase the direct relationships between Calvary and his paintings are minimised. The dominant archetype is the Semiotic and the Sacred Archetype is eliminated. The shock that accompanied the first showing of *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* can be understood as it is realised that the title brings an expectation from the viewer of a sacred piece of artwork, which is confounded by its contents.¹¹⁴ A comparison can be made between this work and its contemporary, Graham Sutherland's *The Crucifixion* of 1946. In Sutherland's work the image of the suffering Christ is as horrific as Bacon's bio morphs, but the Northampton work refers the viewer back to the conventional imagery of the crucifixion and the sacredness of the tradition, whilst *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* abandons those traditions and only directs the viewer to its brutality. Related to this move away from any reference to the sacred is Bacon's move away from the specificity of the image as 'The' crucifixion. In *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* and *Fragments of a Crucifixion* Bacon chose to use the indefinite article in the titles instead of the definite article. By this use, Bacon has directed the viewer away from the particular crucifixion of Jesus. By using the term 'a crucifixion' he implies 'we are

¹¹⁴ For the response to the first exhibition, see J. Russell, *Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1993), 10-11.

looking at a generic unspecified crucifixion; there could be many crucifixions.’¹¹⁵ If the interpretation of the two figures in *Fragments of a Crucifixion* is of a cat-like creature and a bird, Francis Bacon’s use of the term crucifixion can be seen to have become generalised as an indication of the suffering and death of prey by predator. Similarly in *Painting*, Francis Bacon has combined the psychological histories of the crucifixion with those of the slaughter of an animal. In these works the artist has secularised the Semiotic Archetype and has begun a process of syncretism in which the iconography of the crucifixion is integrated with other forms of suffering and death. For Bacon, the stories, the metaphors and the images of Christ’s crucifixion are the inspiration or, as Bacon called it, the armature for his crucifixion paintings in which he has attempted to remove from them any religious significance.¹¹⁶

In the third period of Francis Bacon’s work in which he used the iconography of the crucifixion, the secularisation is even more evident. Bacon’s work reveals a shift from a disinterest in a religious element in his work to a more active anti-religious concern.¹¹⁷ In both his works of 1962 and 1965 a victim with links to Christ’s crucifixion can be identified in the body which seems to be sliding down a chute or tube. According to the artist, this figure is related to an inverted image of Christ crucified from Cimabue’s *St Croce Crucifix* of Florence.¹¹⁸ The effect of the inversion

¹¹⁵ R. Arya and F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 67. It also appears in the later work.1944, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, 1962.

¹¹⁶ When Francis Bacon was asked why he had kept returning to the crucifixion during his artistic career he remarked that ‘there have been so many great pictures in European art of the crucifixion that it’s a magnificent armature on which you can hang all types of feeling and sensation.’ D. Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), 44.

¹¹⁷ It is important to re-iterate that this thesis has not been concerned to research the central purposes of Francis Bacon’s work (or for that matter any other work of art in the Scholarly Edition), but to focus on the theological inferences which may be discerned from a study of his works. Bacon’s antireligious expression at this time may be more a symptom of the more pressing concern he had with issues over homosexuality, which were the subject of public debate in the period from 1957 to 1967 in Britain. 1957 saw the publication of *The Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution* (better known as the Wolfenden report), but it was not until 1967 that much of its proposals became law. During this time the Churches in Britain for the most part took a conservative approach to this issue.

¹¹⁸ See, Scholarly Edition, 181.

is to demean the dignity of the figure. This is emphasised by the move in its slide from the vertical to the horizontal.¹¹⁹

It is also possible to postulate a further extension in the development of Bacon's syncretism of the iconography with other forms of suffering and death. Already in his earlier period, Francis Bacon had combined elements from the slaughterhouse with those from the crucifixion, but in *Crucifixion* of 1965 the cleaving of the central figure could be seen to refer back to the medieval custom of the violent execution of traitors, known as being 'hung, drawn, and quartered.' The victim in this work appears to be suffering at the central stage of being 'drawn' so that the intestines are exposed. Theologically the significance of this is that Francis Bacon has extracted the event of the crucifixion from its sacred basis to the extent that it could be combined with other aspects of suffering and death. Finally in his 1965 work, by placing his crucifixion in what appears to be a museum Bacon has relegated the Sacred Archetype and possibly even the Semiotic Archetype to the past, with no relevance to the present.¹²⁰

Conclusions from the Analysis - Diversification and Diffusion

In this chapter, a selection of individual works from the Scholarly Edition have been examined to assess whether changes in theology could be discerned in these works created in the twentieth century as compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century. These analyses show a diversity of theological approaches across the works discussed and a theological diffusion within individual works.

Two further works provide illustrative examples of diversity and diffusion: James Dickson Innes' *Crucifixion* of 1913 and Craigie Aitchison's *Calvary* of 1998. They have similarities: they both contain three crucified victims and both have the

¹¹⁹ Rina Arya discussed the significance of the change from the vertical to the horizontal axis as change from 'an air of solemnity' to rendering it 'abject'. See R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, 79.

¹²⁰ See Scholarly Edition, 181.

crosses set in a place of isolation. As would be expected their styles are different, but what marks the diversification in these two works are the differences in their foci. Innes has used the iconography to reveal something of his inner torment. He has used the crucifixion to express personal feelings of a dying man in relation to his two friends, his lover and the countryside he loved.¹²¹ In Aitchison's work he is more concerned with universal concepts: life, death, abandonment, faithfulness and hope. These two works illustrate the basic observation that the twentieth century artists felt free to use the iconography of the crucifixion in diverse ways, opening up a variety of opportunities for theological reflection.¹²²

This diversification is not restricted to comparisons between artists, but can be seen within the works of a single artist. So if Aitchison's *Calvary* of 1998 is compared to his early work, *Crucifixion in a Landscape*, of 1967-70, the earlier work can be interpreted as exploring Aitchison's sense of sentimental yearning for the past, pictured through his childhood memories of the Scottish islands and the loss of his religious heritage; whilst the later work, though still maintaining a sense of loss and alienation has begun to view them in the context of the Christian hope.

James Dickson Innes's picture allows a wide range of interpretations, without directing the viewer to any one interpretation. If Jonty Claypole's understanding is accepted that the three figures in the work are James Dickson Innes at the centre, flanked by Augustus John and Derwent Lees, different readings of the work can be made. If the picture is interpreted in the context of the Semiotic Archetype, three different cries of Jesus from the cross will give a different construction to its meaning. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" could direct reflection upon Innes's broken relationship with Euphemia Lamb, whilst "My God, my God why have

¹²¹ For details of these relationships see James Dickson Innes, *Crucifixion*, in the Scholarly Edition, 138.

¹²² Both these works take the term theological reflection close to its limits in that their concerns are with the human condition. But by the use of the iconography of the crucifixion they invite the viewer to reflect upon these conditions in the context of the traditions of Christ's crucifixion.

you forsaken me” would direct the viewer to a more general sense of alienation Innes may have felt at the break-up of the Arenig School. Finally, if the words “Into your hands I commit my spirit” are placed upon the crucified artist’s mouth, his terminal illness could be seen as significant in interpreting this work. No attempt can be made then of a comprehensive understanding of this work as it invites a multiplicity of inferences and possible meanings.

This example highlights what appears to be a self-conscious decision by many of the artists to leave an open meaning in particular works of art - which is defined in this thesis as diffusion. In theological terminology this may be seen as reluctance by the artists to produce works as doctrinal statements, but rather as sources for theological reflection. These findings confirm the hypothesis that changes in theology could be discerned in these works, as compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century.

Implications of Diversification and Diffusion for the Study of Secularisation

The concept of secularisation in Britain has been a major topic of discussion since the 1960s.¹²³ Sociologists proposed a theory that with the development of a modern industrial society secularisation was inevitable,¹²⁴ but there is intense disagreement around this theory.¹²⁵ There is also discussion on the definition of secularisation and how it relates to organised religion or to a sense of spirituality.¹²⁶ It is

¹²³ E.g. B.R. Wilson, Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological Comment, (London, Watts, 1966).

¹²⁴ E.g. S. Bruce, Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), Chapter Two.

¹²⁵ E.g. C. G. Brown, The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000, Second Edition (London, Routledge, 2009), 9-12.

¹²⁶ Steve Bruce has described secularisation in terms of a move by society from a concern with supernatural beliefs to more impersonal drives in society.

This is what is at the heart of the paradigm. What is required in the contrast between the past and the present is that there be an identifiable difference in the popularity and salience of beliefs, actions and institutions that assume the existence of supernatural entities with powers of action, or impersonal powers or processes possessed of moral purpose. As Wilson put it: ‘All that needs be asserted is that society was much more preoccupied with supernatural beliefs and practices,

not the intention of this thesis to enter these debates, but to offer the evidence from this research which may enrich the discussions.

Rosemary Crumlin, at the end of the twentieth century suggested that there was a change in spirituality from a Christian teleological perspective to an emphasis on a more humanistic spirituality.¹²⁷ To test this theory from the perspective of the visual arts would require a more comprehensive analysis of art in the twentieth century than just an analysis on the iconography of the crucifixion. However, no such development has been discerned in the theological ideas expressed in the works contained in the Scholarly Edition. No evidence for a chronological development from a teleological to a humanistic theology has been observed in these works of art. The analyses in this chapter indicate that the earliest painting, that of James Innes, *Crucifixion* of 1913 is unconventional in its theology and Gilbert Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1915 is almost agnostic. In contrast, David Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1922-3 is virtually conventional. Similarly John Armstrong's *Crucifixion* of 1958 carries a conventional theology whilst Carel Weight's *Crucifixion* of 1959 is more difficult to read. No evidence was revealed of a simple development from a conventional view of the crucifixion in the early years of the century to a more secular view towards the end. Rather there appears to be a diversification of theological approaches already established among artists and this

and accorded them more significance than it does now'. If, instead of thinking in terms of dominant ideologies, we think of pervasive worldviews, it seems quite proper to describe the 'world we have lost' and our world as respectively 'religious' and 'secular'. S. Bruce, God is Dead, (Oxford, Blackwell, 2002), 58.

However, Van Austen Harvey traced the beginning of this change further back to the eighteenth century and the move from belief to truth as the centre of intellectual endeavour.

From the standpoint of the twentieth century, it requires an act of historical imagination to conceive of the magnitude of the revolution Kant called for and that was finally realized. It required nothing less than a transformation of the intellectual ideal that had possessed the heart of Christendom for centuries, the ideal of belief. Kant celebrated the will-to-truth more than the will-to-believe, investigation more than certainty, autonomy more than obedience to authority.

V. A. Harvey, The Historian and the Believer, (London, SCM, 1967), 40.

¹²⁷ 'By the beginning of the century, the iconography of religion and spirituality was usually Judaeo-Christian, narrative and figurative. By the close of the century, the interest is not so much narrative and scriptural as diffusely spiritual, and focused less on a life after death than on a spirit that swells within the body, the earth, and - more rarely - society.' R. Crumlin, M. Woodward, et al. Beyond Belief: Modern Art and the Religious Imagination, (Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 1998). P9-10.

would indicate that this diversification was already apparent from early in the twentieth century.

However, caution is needed on this. Though the results of this research are indicative, the breadth of this research is too narrow to justify over confidence in this observation and further research is required. First, why there are no examples of unconventional uses of the iconography of the crucifixion before 1913 in Britain. This may relate to the importation of artistic and theological ideas from Europe through the Post-Impressionist Exhibitions in 1910¹²⁸ and 1912.¹²⁹ Second, this theological diversity may only be representative of an avant-garde artistic circle in Britain. Throughout the research it has become clear that there was a close interaction between artists through contacts at Art Schools,¹³⁰ The Royal Academy¹³¹ and small social elites.¹³² Given this caution, it is argued here that the results of this research indicate that secularisation is not necessarily the major drive in the twentieth century, but a symptom of diversification and diffusion in society which includes the re-appraisal of Christian theology. The evidence from this work is that if the artists reflect, however imperfectly, British culture in the twentieth century, the claim that Britain is just becoming more secular is too simplistic; it is more accurate to say that it is becoming theologically more diverse.

¹²⁸ 'Manet and Post Impressionists Exhibition', Curator – Roger Fry, (London, The Grafton Galleries, 8 November 1910-15 January 1911).

¹²⁹ 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition', Curator – Roger Fry, (London, The Grafton Centre, 5 October – 31 December 1912) at which Paul Gauguin's *Portrait of Paul Gauguin with Yellow Crucifixion* of 1889 was exhibited.

¹³⁰ For example Stanley Spencer, Gilbert Spencer, William Roberts, Thomas Saunders Nash, Craigie Aitchison, Tristram Hillier, David Theyre Lee-Elliott, all studied at the Slade. See individual biographies including the article, F. MacCarthy, 'Sir Stanley Spencer' in [Oxford Dictionary of National Biography](http://www.oxforddnb.com), at www.oxforddnb.com. - Accessed 25 March 2014.

¹³¹ Stanley Spencer, Carel Weight, William Roberts, Craigie Aitchison were members of the Royal Academy.

¹³² For example, Graham Sutherland, Francis Bacon and Roy de Maistre worked and exhibited together. The Carline family had close relationships with the Spencer brothers and William Roberts.

Summary

In this chapter analyses of selected works from the Scholarly Edition have been made. The hypothesis that changes in theology are evident in the works featuring the iconography of the crucifixion created in Britain in the twentieth century, compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century, has been tested and confirmed. Through the analyses it has been proposed that there is a diversification and diffusion of theology in these works and that this diversification has significance for a wider debate on secularisation. In the next chapter the root of this diversity is explored in the context of changes in the symbolic meaning of the crucifixion.

CHAPTER THREE

The Unity of the Works - The Symbolic Meaning of the Iconography of the Crucifixion

Introduction

Underlying the two hypotheses explored in this thesis are two questions; was there a diversification in the theology of the works which used the iconography of the crucifixion and was there a unifying factor?¹ In Chapter Two of this Commentary it was established that there was a wide variation of theology implicit in the works in the Scholarly Edition. These ranged from affirming Christian theology to rejecting it. Across the works, a diversity of meanings are evident, and also a multiplicity of possible meanings within individual works. This latter observation was termed diffusion. These findings confirmed the first hypothesis. In Chapter Two the meanings and purposes of the works were discussed. In this chapter the process of theological reflection will be taken further, the meaning and purpose of the iconography itself will be considered and the question of a unifying factor considered.

Symbolic Meaning

Initially the possibility of a unifying element within the works in the Scholarly Edition was explored through the second hypothesis, but the great variation in the theology of the works in the Scholarly Edition excluded the probability of the existence of a definable group of people with a shared theology.² However, the process of researching this hypothesis led to the realisation that a change in the symbolic meaning

¹ The two hypotheses are: Changes in theology can be discerned in the twentieth century works as compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century, and these works of art can identify the theological reflections of an unstructured group which was neither part of the institutional Christian Churches nor of any specific secular community, but formed a bridge between them.

² This does not exclude the possibility of the existence of people with alternative views on the crucifixion of Jesus, but that insufficient evidence was found to describe them as a coherent group.

of the iconography of the crucifixion could be discerned in most of these works. The proposal in this chapter is that the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion moved from that of Christ as Saviour (as seen in pre-seventeenth century crucifixion paintings) to a symbolic meaning centred on the visual image of the crucified man as the personification of suffering and alienation. It is proposed that this change in symbolic meaning has been the unifying factor and the foundation, that has enabled the diversification of meanings and purposes of the works in the Scholarly Edition.

Although the term symbolic meaning is used extensively in art and semiotics, its definition is rarely made. In the context of this thesis, it is defined as that which a cultural group implicitly assumes significant about a particular image or artefact. So for example the symbolic meaning for road users (cultural group) of a red circle with a horizontal line (image) is that it is illegal to enter the road from that direction (assumed significance). In the British Museum is a Roman silver plate with a swastika decoration at its centre.³ For the modern viewer the plate invokes a sense of discomfort, because of its decoration. At the time of its production, the swastika on that plate had no connection with twentieth century Nazism. In Europe today its original connection with good living or good luck is no longer recognised, but is interpreted as a symbol of militant racism. Its symbolic meaning has changed and this change creates the discomfort in the modern viewer. In art, symbolic meaning is an integral element in iconography.

The iconography of the crucifixion carries with it meaning and purpose. In the conventional works the purpose was the proclamation of God in Christ and the symbolic meaning, Saviour of the World. That is, wherever a crucifix appeared in a work of art it

³ Roman Swastika plate - Museum No-1889, 1019.19, (London, British Museum, 33, silver, produced in Gaul, 260-170) Appendix A - Fig. xxviii.

was presumed to be Jesus, the Saviour of the World.⁴ In these conventional works this statement is obvious because the meaning of the iconography had been placed upon it from its original use in Christian art. Within this overall meaning there were secondary meanings, often implied by subtleties within the iconography. Some of these have been discussed earlier, such as *Christus Victor*, emphasising the victory of the Cross, and *Christus Patiens*, emphasising its suffering. Alternative emphases are also displayed in the physicality of Jesus's body. So in Grünewald's Isenheim *Crucifixion*, the suffering of Christ is revealed through the brokenness of his body;⁵ whilst in Velazquez's *Crucifixion*, the perfection of his body stresses the divinity of Christ.⁶

The analyses of the Works in the Scholarly Edition indicate that the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion as Saviour of the World is no longer dominant. Evidence for this includes the observation that none contain any of the secondary or tertiary iconography associated with the work of Christ in redemption. The images of Adam's bones at the base of the cross, which indicate Christ as the second Adam, do not appear; in the case of Sutherland's Northampton *Crucifixion* they are deliberately excluded.⁷ In addition, the image of John the Baptist proclaiming Jesus as the 'lamb of God' is absent and only one of the images of Christ appears to be depicted as *Christus Victor*.⁸ The images which relate to Christ's saving power in the Eucharist or Mass, like the collection of the outpouring of Christ's blood, are also absent.

A further iconographical change which relates to the absence of the outpouring of Christ's blood is the move from depicting Christ's wound from his right breast to his left breast. In conventional works it was necessary to depict the wound on his right so that its 'outpouring' could be seen to be collected either by the Virgin Mary or angels

⁴ Note there were other images of crucifixions such as those of the two thieves, or St Peter or St. Andrew, but these all had distinctive iconographical features which distinguished them from the crucifix of Christ.

⁵ See Appendix B - Fig. 36.

⁶ See Appendix B - Fig. 34.

⁷ R. Berthoud, *Graham Sutherland: A Biography*, (London, Faber, 1982), 128.

⁸ Craigie Aitchison, *Calvary*, 1998, Scholarly Edition, 253.

on the side of the image traditionally associated with the community of Christ – the Church. However, approximately half the paintings, that include the wound place it on the left side under Christ’s heart.⁹ In an article published in 1957 Vladimar Gurewich described how this change from the right-hand side to the left may have developed. Though there is evidence that a small minority of works placed the wound on the left side of Jesus before the mid- seventeenth century, the impetus occurred with the growth of the Sacred Heart movement, following visions by the Blessed Margaret Mary Aloccoque from 1671 to 1673.¹⁰ The positioning of the wound under the heart directed the emotional impact to the bleeding of ‘The Sacred Heart.’ However, there remained a strong tradition to continue to place the wound on the right side of Jesus’s body. An example of this continued conservatism was seen in the responses to Édouard Manet’s *The Dead Christ with Angels* painted in 1864.¹¹ It is recorded that by mistake he positioned the lancer’s wound on Christ’s left. After the painting was already on its way to the 1864 Salon, Manet decided that he had made a mistake and wrote to Baudelaire about it. Baudelaire suggested that he correct it before the exhibition opened, with the warning "take care not to give the malicious something to laugh at." Manet did not repaint the wound, and he did receive some mockery because of it.¹² Manet’s ‘accident’ may have given licence to other painters to adopt this position of the wound. Its theological significance is that it moves the emphasis from Christ’s atoning work to his emotional state; a change from the outpouring of his blood for the sanctification of his people to the wounding of his heart. That the wound (where it is shown) is evenly

⁹ E.g. Craigie Aitchison *Crucifixion*, (Cambridge, Kings College Chapel, 1994) – Scholarly Edition, 249.

¹⁰ V. Gurewich, “Observations on the Iconography of the Wound in Christ’s Side, With Special Reference to its Position,” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 20 No3/4, (London, Warburg Institute, July-December, 1957), 358-362.

¹¹ Eduard Manet, *The Dead Christ with Angels*, (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art 179x150, oil on canvas, 1864), Appendix A - Fig. xxix.

¹² Information from the display board accompanying, Edouard Manet, *The Dead Christ with Angels*, (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 179x150, oil on canvas, 1864).

<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/436950?rpp=20&pg=1&ao=on&ft=manet%2c+%C3%A9douard&pos=3> - Accessed 29 January 2014. There is also full discussion of the wound in Manet’s work in V. Gurewich, “Observations,” 358-362.

divided between left and right in the works in the Scholarly Edition would indicate that its association with the Eucharist is no longer assumed.

Another indication of the decline in the visual depiction of the theology of the saving Christ is in the position of Christ's head. In the pre-seventeenth century pictures of the crucifixion of Christ where his head was turned, the overwhelming majority of works depicted Jesus's head as looking down to his right; that is to the people of God.¹³ In the few cases where Jesus looked to his left there were specific theological purposes for it.¹⁴ In the paintings contained in the Scholarly Edition this convention was only maintained completely in one work indicating that the theology surrounding this pose had ceased to be of major concern.¹⁵

These findings do not imply that all artists rejected a belief in the atoning work of Christ on the Cross. Within the corpus of works in the Scholarly Edition there are some which focus on the worship of Jesus. The most conventional is Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1922-23;¹⁶ similarly John Armstrong's *Crucifixion* of 1958 can also be read conventionally.¹⁷ However, across the range of works studied, the theological focus for using the iconography of the crucifixion seems to have changed. There has been a shift away from a teleological theology to an existential theology. In the conventional use of the iconography the concern was with the final destiny of humanity (judgement and salvation). In the works in the Scholarly Edition the iconography of the crucifixion is used to explore the universal aspect of suffering. Where Jesus is portrayed on the cross, there are few works which offer any depiction of hope, and more significantly in

¹³ E.g. Rogier van der Weyden. *Crucifixion* Triptych (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, oil on panel, c.1445), Scholarly Edition, Appendix B - Fig. 19 or Andrea Mantegna, *Calvary*, (Paris, Louvre, 75x96, oil on wood, 1457-9), Appendix A - Fig. xxx.

¹⁴ So for example in Titian's work, the skull of Adam is placed to the left of Jesus, to which 'the second Adam' looks in his sacrificial death. Titian, *Solitary Crucified Christ*, (Spain, Monasterio del Escorial Sacristy, 216x111, 1565), Appendix A - Fig. xxxi.

¹⁵ David Jones, *Crucifixion* of 1922 is the only work in which Jesus looks down to his right at Mary, but in David Jones, *Sanctus Christus de Capel y ffin*, 1925 the head is turned to the left. Graham Sutherland also favours the traditional pose of the head, but there are no secondary iconographical figures in his crucifixion pictures.

¹⁶ David Jones, *Crucifixion*, (1922-23), see Scholarly Edition, 146.

¹⁷ John Armstrong, *Crucifixion*, (1958), see Scholarly Edition, 221.

many works Jesus is replaced as the central victim. The decision by the artists to replace Jesus on the cross indicates that it is the event (the innocent suffering) which is significant for them, rather than the person (Jesus) in the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the cross. This is a major finding in this thesis and leads to a further proposal that the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion has been redefined by artists in the twentieth century.

In 1967 Dillistone's seminal work, The Christian Understanding of Atonement, was published. In an attempt to re-establish a theology of Atonement, he attempted to relate atonement to the concept of alienation, tracing the appearance of the term alienation from Hegel through to Marx and Freud. "Within a specifically religious context, atonement means to deal with man's alienation in such a way that a general restoration of harmony becomes possible."¹⁸ The works in the Scholarly Edition reveal a reversal of Dillistone's concept. For some artists, the Cross is the vision of ultimate alienation, not its solution.¹⁹ In Aitchison's *Crucifixion* of 1994 it is Jesus who is revealed as alienated. The figure hangs alone and abandoned. In John Bellamy's *Pourquoi? II*, it is the Holocaust victims who are strung up on three crosses. In Green's *Crucifixion*, though painted in a lighter vein, it is the husband who experiences alienation through marriage. In many of the works in the Scholarly Edition, the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion has been transformed from that

¹⁸ F. W. Dillistone, The Christian Understanding of the Atonement, (London, SCM, 1984, first published, 1967), 27.

¹⁹ Dillistone does not contradict this symbolic meaning, of the crucifixion. In his final chapter he writes: "We are convinced that whenever, in limited and imperfect fashion, man submits himself to the pressure and onslaughts of powers obviously greater than his own, with the object of a fuller freedom, somehow, somewhere, this action is of superlative value, even if on the plane of history it ends in apparent disaster. In our own imperfect and limited fashion we are prepared to commit ourselves to this pattern of action as alone worthy of emulation and ultimate praise. What the Christian evangelist has ever been concerned to proclaim is that such an event in space and time received its altogether definitive and final enactment when the Son of God willingly exposed Himself to the hosts of evil on Golgotha – cosmic and social, personal and psychological....." This is Dillistone's equivalent of Christ's alienation. But unlike the twentieth century artists he goes on to qualify this with hope "...further that the necessary sequel of Golgotha, expressed in the Resurrection event, has opened the gate of everlasting life to those who receive His Spirit and walk His ways." Ibid, 415

associated with the saving work of the crucified Jesus to an attribute of a personification of idealised humanity – suffering innocence.²⁰

The terms attribute and personification have technical meanings in art history. So for example in the work, *Allegory of Theological Virtues*, the three Christian virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity are given human characteristics (personified). Each virtue can be identified through their various attributes; so the attributes of Faith are the cross and the chalice, Hope is a crown of flowers alluding to future fruit and an attribute of Charity is given as the pelican feeding its young from its own breast.²¹

The evidence for this change can be inferred from the analyses of the works. Returning to the first work discussed in Chapter Two; in David Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1919 if one tries to impose the symbolic value of Christ as Saviour of the World onto the iconography of the work, the viewer is left confused as to the identity of the three victims. However, if each is allowed to be viewed as a personification of suffering and alienation the questions raised in Chapter Two about this work can be recognised. Jones, through the use of this symbolic value, is able to raise the question, who is the innocent victim?

For the full impact of a new symbolic meaning to be understood, it requires a link to the original crucifixion to be maintained. It is insufficient to simply define the symbolic meaning as the personification of suffering. Its impact still requires a link to be made to the traditions surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus. A full definition of this symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion in twentieth century works by arts based in Britain is therefore proposed as: the personification of humanity as

²⁰This definition is close to Jennifer Swan's archetype: "The image functions as a visual metaphor to establish or support the nature of an individual's suffering rather than providing a direct visual reference to organised religion." J. Swan, *The Archetypal Nature of Crucifixion*, in N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes – Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood, Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 25.

²¹School of Annibale Carracci, *Allegory of Theological Virtues*, (Rome, Palazzo di Montecitorio, seventeenth century.), Appendix A - Fig. xxxii. Discussion in M. Battistini, *Symbols of Allegories in Art*, trans. S. Sartarelli, (Los Angeles, Getty Publication, 2005), 295.

alienated, innocent and suffering, whose prototype is the crucified Jesus Christ. In Gilbert Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1915, in order to be able to substitute Jesus for Gilbert's father and maintain significance, this change in the symbolic meaning is necessary. With this symbolic meaning in mind, the viewer can identify Gilbert's father as a personification of suffering through a comparison with its prototype Jesus. This change is the foundation for those works which substitute Jesus with another victim.

This analysis of the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion has revealed a change from that of the person of Jesus as Saviour to the personification of suffering. A major significance of this change is that whilst the original meaning was religious and specifically Christian, the twentieth century meaning has become non-religious. The iconography of the crucifixion has become applicable for use in religious, nonreligious or even antireligious pictures. Whilst the original symbolic meaning tied the iconography to a specifically Christian purpose, its change of focus to the personification of human suffering has enabled artists to use it for the diversity of purposes revealed in the Scholarly Edition. Robert Henderson Blyth's *Image of Man* can be considered as a visual 'conversation' between the two symbolic meanings.²² Through the Semiotic Archetype, the viewer is reminded of the Christian tradition of the crucifixion as a symbol of hope. But with the depiction of the crucifix as a broken cross on which is a smashed statue, the symbolic meaning of hope in the saving Christ is revealed as destroyed and by association Christianity. The new symbolic meaning as the image of alienated suffering innocence complements this by integrating the whole work in which human optimism has been destroyed by the tragedy of total war.

It needs to be emphasised that this image of the crucifixion as suffering innocence, alienated in a sinful world is not in competition with the Christian theology of the crucifixion of Christ. It is found in the writings of the New Testament where

²² See Scholarly Edition, 215.

Jesus is proclaimed as taking upon himself the sins of the world.²³ In the medieval period this was expressed through the mysticism of the cross.²⁴ As Moltmann has stated, it was believed that meditation upon the ‘the sacred head sore wounded’ could bring about an assurance of salvation. By taking upon themselves the suffering of Christ, an inward fellowship with him could be obtained.²⁵ The change in the twentieth century is that a group of artists have chosen to focus on this aspect of its tradition, with the effect of diminishing or excluding the theology of Christ as Saviour and allowing the iconography of the crucifixion to be used beyond the traditions of Christianity.²⁶

By transforming the meaning of the image of the crucifixion, both Christian and atheist artists have used this iconographic symbol for their own purposes. In Bacon’s comment that ‘...there have been so very many great pictures in European art of the crucifixion that it’s a magnificent armature on which you can hang all types of feeling and sensation...’²⁷ it is the image of suffering innocence which is critical for him, not that of the crucified Son of God; which he had already rejected.²⁸ Similarly Bacon’s remark that working on the theme of the crucifixion could be compared to a self-portrait becomes meaningful.²⁹ Through the iconography of the crucifixion as symbolic, Bacon was able to explore his own emotions of alienation as a man who had rejected religion and its ethics and who had a conscientious belief in an atheistic liberal way of life.³⁰ It

²³ E.g. ‘For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’ – 2. Corinthian 5:21; or: ‘He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed’ – 1 Peter 3:24.

²⁴ G. Schiller, discusses the artistic evidence for the mystical piety in this period. G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, vol, 2, trans. J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 138-9.

²⁵ J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1974), 45.

²⁶ The most common artistic tradition where Jesus is visualised as abandoned is in the genre of *Ecce Homo* (Behold the Man) taken from the Gospel of John 1:5 in the Latin version, but it is seen as a precursor to the crucifixion and resurrection.

²⁷ D. Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1993), 44.

²⁸ Francis Bacon, *Crucifixion*, 1965. See Scholarly Edition, 181.

²⁹ “David Sylvester: In painting a Crucifixion, do you find you approach the problem in a radically different way from working on other paintings. Francis Bacon: Well. Of course, you’re working then about your own feelings and sensations, really. You might say it’s almost nearer to a self-portrait. You are working on all sorts of very private feelings about behaviour and about the way life is.” Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 46.

³⁰ Rina Arya has summarised the relationship of Bacon’s life to his work. See R. Arya, and F. Bacon *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), Chapter One – Setting

can also explain why Bacon and Sutherland found mutual support while they were exploring the artistic use of the crucifixion.³¹ Although Sutherland's Northampton *Crucifixion* was intended as a piece of Christian art, he approached the subject through the symbol of suffering innocence. The references within it to the poor and/or the Holocaust as well as the Grünewald *Crucifixion* direct the viewer to universal suffering as part of its invitation to reflect upon the crucifixion of Jesus. This change in symbolic meaning accounts for the diversity of theological concerns expressed in most of the works in the Scholarly Edition, from the most religious artists, such as Jones and Sutherland to the agnostic or atheistic approaches of Blyth and Bacon.

The work which conveys most fully the sense of this change in symbolic meaning is Tristram Hillier's *The Crucifixion*. The central figure refers the viewer to Christ's crucifixion particularly with the sign of INRI above the figure; but the modernising of his only garment into a pair of black trunks universalises the image. The height the victim hangs above the ground accentuates the sense of isolation which runs throughout the work. Hillier has removed any antagonists to the crucifixion; the only reference to the imposition of cruelty is in the tools which are strewn about the base of the cross. Hillier has painted only witnesses to the crucifixion who are innocent of creating the victim's situation. But each figure stands, kneels or sits independent of their fellow witnesses; all the characters emphasise the sense of alienation. This alienation is set in the beauty of the Somerset countryside. The symbolism of suffering innocence is set in the normality of country life amongst normal people. The figures of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, who both can be interpreted as symbolic, give the work a

the Scene, 18-35. Bacon refers to it obliquely in his conversations with Michel Archimbaud, 'My relationship with Surrealism is a little complicated. I think that I've been influenced by what the movement represents in terms of revolt against the establishment, in politics, religion and the arts, but my pictures haven't really shown any direct influence, well, perhaps a little in my early works.' See F. Bacon and M. Archimbaud, *Francis Bacon: In Conversation with Michael Archimbaud*, (London, Phaidon, 1993), 128.

³¹ M. Hammer and F. Bacon, *Bacon and Sutherland*, (New Haven, published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press 2005), 14.

timeless quality. This work epitomises the concept of the idealised human being as a figure of suffering and alienation.

In Maggie Hambling's *Good Friday* of 1990 the use of the iconography in the image is less obvious. Its direction is given by its title. So for example if its title had been *Homage to Amelia Earhart*, the knowledgeable viewer could have seen connections to Amelia Earhart in the pose of the body and flight, its feminine form, the deep blue relating to sky and sea as well as relating it to the crucified Jesus.³² But the title, as iconography, directs the viewer to interpret the suffering alienated victim as Jesus. The iconography of the body remains as that of suffering innocence, but its context directs its theological significance.

This thesis has shown two contrasting findings. In Chapter Two it was indicated that in the works there is a wide range of implicit theological standpoints, termed diversification and diffusion; but by contrast there has developed a common focus of symbolic meaning to the iconography from Christ as Saviour to the personification of humanity as alienated, innocent and suffering, whose prototype is the crucified Jesus Christ. The implications of these findings are that the image of the crucifixion still remained appealing and relevant to artists in the twentieth century, but that as a piece of iconography its power lay in its relationship to humanity rather than its relationship to God. The effect of this is what George Pattison considered, in a different context, that in these twentieth century paintings, there is not just an interpretation of old myths, but creations of fresh allegories. Whereas the conventional works concerned themselves with interpreting the Christian teleology of Christ as redeemer of the world (mythic paintings),³³ the works in the Scholarly Edition present an image to which the viewer is invited to make their own interpretation (allegorical paintings).³⁴

³² Amelia Earhart was a pioneer aviator who disappeared during a flight in July 1937.

³³ Note the term myth in this context makes no judgement on the historicity of the Passion of Jesus, but is concerned with revealing symbolic truths through the telling of the narrative.

³⁴ G. Pattison, *Art, Modernity and Faith: Restoring the Image*, (London, Macmillan, 1991), 90.

Exceptions to the Symbolic Meaning

Up to this point it has been argued that a common symbolic meaning can be found in the works in the Scholarly Edition. In David Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1922-3 for example, whilst the symbolic meaning of Christ the Saviour is still of major significance that of suffering humanity is still present. In Sutherland's Northampton *Crucifixion* the symbolic meaning is predominantly that of suffering humanity, but is used to direct the viewer toward reflecting upon the relationship between suffering humanity and Jesus Christ. In Blyth's *In the Image of Man* the symbolic meaning as suffering humanity is used to challenge the viability of Christianity and in Bacon's *Crucifixion*, he has used it positively to attack Christianity.

In this discussion, no consideration has been made of works which do not relate comfortably with the interpretation of the symbolic meaning as suffering innocence. In the nature of the diversity of the works in the Scholarly Edition it is not surprising that there are exceptions. The most important are the works of Stanley Spencer. Though his work is often included in publications on Christian art, his theology is more complex.³⁵ As has already been stated, his works show influences from Christian Science and Eastern Religions as well as Christianity. However, he is probably closest to William Blake; not necessarily in theological details, where both are difficult to interpret, but in their belief in the sanctity of desire. In Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, he writes critically of the division between Good and Evil. He sees them not as antagonists, but complementary, "Good is the passive that obeys Reason, Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven. Evil is Hell ...Energy is Eternal Delight ...Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained; and

³⁵ For examples where his work is cited see: H. de Borchgrave, *A Journey Into Christian Art*, (Oxford, Lion Publishing, 1999); T. Devonshire Jones and J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al. *Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art*. (Northampton, St. Matthew's (Northampton) Centenary Art Committee, 1993); R. Harries, *The Image of Christ in Modern Art*, (Farnham, Ashgate, 2013).

the restrainer or reason usurps its place and governs the unwilling.”³⁶ Blake (like Milton) presents Satan or the devil as a sympathetic figure in that he represents passion, what he calls energy as against reason. This poem by Blake sets out a theological case for an acceptance of both elements in the human psyche, reason and passion (or desire), whilst attacking his understanding of institutional Christianity as a way of suppressing all desire. Glew contains an abstract from Spencer’s notes in 1952, where he reflects upon the tensions in his mind between his concept of God, derived from his understanding of the Old Testament and William Blake, with that of the New Testament and as he calls it, ‘with the coming of Christ a colossal attack on personal conduct.’³⁷

That Spencer, like Blake, never achieved a systematic description of his theology makes analyses of his works more difficult, in particular the symbolic meaning he accords to the iconography of the crucifixion. However, Blake’s use of dichotomy may provide a clue. Blake, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, contends that evil can be considered good, and good, evil. At times he fuses the Messiah with Satan and he argues that Jesus could only be the Messiah through his breaking of the Ten Commandments.³⁸ In Spencer’s 1958 *Crucifixion*, it is possible to see a similar dichotomy. Jesus, as passive, and consistent with Christian Scientist’s non suffering Jesus, can be viewed as an image of Blake’s institutional Christ, rational, but all constraining. It can then be contended that the placing of the ranting thief on Jesus’s right (the place of the righteous thief) in *Crucifixion* of 1958, represents Spencer’s equivalent of Blake’s passionate humanity screaming for acceptance from the disengaged Christ of institutional religion. Whilst, therefore, Spencer’s use of the iconography of the crucifixion may not assume a symbolic meaning of suffering humanity, it also does not use it in the context of Saviour of the World. Rather the

³⁶ See: W. Blake and M. Plowman, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, (London, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. 1927), plates, 3-5.

³⁷ A. Glew, ed. Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings, (London, Tate Publishing, (2001), 237.

³⁸ W. Blake and M. Plowman, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 23.

image is used to convey a sense of inclusion by passivity, whilst the thief is used as a contrast of exclusion and passion. In this work, alienation, which is an integral part of the modern symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion, has been transposed to the thief.

The Context of the Change in Symbolic Meaning

The general context for the change in symbolic meaning can be considered as coming from a weakening of the conventional interpretation of the crucifixion while maintaining the powerful impact of the image. That is the theological heritage of the symbolic meaning as Christ as Saviour has become less important for artists, but the crucifixion has remained important for them, because the image of the crucified Christ symbolised the suffering of humanity in general. This research has not attempted a comprehensive enquiry into why this happened. Internationally a change seems to have become apparent in the work of the artists around the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, following a gradual change over the previous thirty years.³⁹ So for example, a change in style and purpose can be seen in Gauguin's *Yellow Christ* of 1889 in which the Cross is set in Brittany and is concerned to reflect upon the spiritual life of the peasants of that region.⁴⁰ The iconography maintains the traditional symbolic meaning of Christ as Saviour, but indicates some dislocation of purpose of the work from conventional works in that Gauguin is recording the prays or vision of Breton

³⁹ It is possible to trace changes to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Goya's *Execution of the Defenders of Madrid*, the central figure is portrayed standing in a cruciform position. This use of the iconography of the crucifixion, however, does not imply any change in the symbolic meaning of the iconography. In this emotional history painting the pose is used simply as a visual simile. The victim is dying for his country as Jesus died for the world. Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *Execution of the Defenders of Madrid, Third of May, 1808*, (Madrid, Prado, 266x345, oil on canvas, 1814). Appendix A – Fig. xxxiii.

⁴⁰ Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*, (Buffalo, NY. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 75x96, oil on canvas, 1889), Scholarly Edition, Appendix B - Fig. 8

peasants.⁴¹ Nikolaevich's *Crucifixion* of 1893 maintains the traditional symbolic meaning of the iconography, but focuses upon presenting to the viewer the emotional impact of the crucifixion of Jesus,⁴² and in Edvard Munch's *Golgotha* of 1900, though it still maintains the underlying symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion, the emotional content of the work dominates the scene. Even Oskar Kokoschka's *Crucifixion* of 1912, which uses a modern expressionist approach to the work, still remains consistent with the conventional symbolic meaning as Christ as Saviour.⁴³

The first instance where Jesus may have been replaced in a crucifixion is in 1912, when Marc Chagall painted his first crucifixion picture in which the victim is depicted as a child⁴⁴ - although it is usually identified as an infant Jesus.⁴⁵ However, this work was not seen publically for some twenty years after its completion and therefore could not have been influential in Britain.⁴⁶ There is no evidence so far discovered of any other examples outside Britain of the replacement of Jesus in a representation of the crucifixion during this decade. The origin of this replacement of Jesus by another probably relates to the influence of the Post-Impressionists, particularly Gauguin and van Gogh, both of whom used features of themselves in their interpretation of other Biblical scenes prior to 1913. Walther and Metzger have noted that Van Gogh replaced the face of Jesus with himself in his two *Pietà* paintings of 1889.⁴⁷ In these works Walther and Metzger suggest that the artist may have compared his suffering with that

⁴¹ See the article, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 'Gauguin, Yellow Christ,' at <http://www.albrightknox.org/collection/collection-highlights/piece:gauguin-yellow-christ/> - Accessed 20 April 2014.

⁴² Nikolai Nikolaevich, *Crucifixion or Golgotha*, (Paris, Museum D'Orsay, 278x223, oil on canvas, 1893), Appendix A - Fig. xxxiv.

⁴³ Oskar Kokoschka, *Crucifixion [Golgotha]*, (Private Collection, 55x68, oil on canvas, 1912), Appendix A - Fig. xxxv.

⁴⁴ Marc Chagall, *Golgotha*, (New York, Museum of Modern Art, The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection, 47x59, Gouache, watercolour and pencil on paper, 1912).

⁴⁵ F. Meyer, et al, *Marc Chagall*. (London, Thames and Hudson, 1964), 173-74.

⁴⁶ See The Museum of Modern Art press release, "Special Marc Chagall Exhibition on View", 18 December 1957, at http://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/2312/releases/MOMA_1957_0170_145_a.pdf?2010 - Accessed 20 May 2014.

⁴⁷ Vincent Van Gogh, *Pietà (After Delacroix)*, (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 73x60, oil on canvas, 1889), Appendix A, Fig. xxxvi.

of Jesus.⁴⁸ At least one of Van Gogh's *Pietà* paintings was displayed at the 'Manet and Post Impressionists Exhibition', at the Grafton Galleries in London from 8 November 1910-15 January 1911.⁴⁹ Gauguin's *Christ on the Mount of Olives* which was also displayed at this exhibition also portrayed Jesus as Van Gogh.⁵⁰ Replacing Jesus in the iconography of the crucifixion, seems to have come from within Britain, with works by James Innes, Gilbert Spencer and David Jones all adding ambiguity to the identity of the crucifixion victim.⁵¹

James Dickson Innes *Crucifixion* of 1913 indicates that the process of diversification of theology and change in the symbolic meaning of the iconography had begun before the First World War and that this process was not therefore a product of that war. A report on the religious commitment of soldiers in the First World War indicated that the ordinary soldier whilst maintaining a belief in God had little or no understanding or attachment to the doctrines of the established Churches.⁵² But there was some evidence that a modified form of salvation was believed in.⁵³ Stanley Spencer's use of the iconography of the crucifixion may then have been influenced by his contact with these ordinary soldiers, but it is unlikely that he was directly influenced by the First World War poets.

⁴⁸ I. F. Walther and R. Metzger, Van Gogh: The Complete Paintings, trans. M. Hulse, vol. two, (Cologne, Benedikt Taschen, 1993), 542.

⁴⁹ B. Altshuler, Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History, vol. 1, (London, Phaidon, 2008),

⁵⁰ A. G. Robins, "Manet and the Post-Impressionists: A Checklist of Exhibits", *The Burlington Magazine*, December 2010, vol. 152, 786.

⁵¹ Over 2000 images using the iconography of the crucifixion were explored before coming to this conclusion; mainly through Bridgeman Education, but also through the other sources used throughout this research. However, it is accepted that this proposal remains provisional in the light of the extensive use of the iconography of the crucifixion internationally.

⁵² M. Moyinhan, God on our side, (London, Secker & Warburg, 1983), 212-3. The author reporting extracts from D.S. Cairns, The Army and Religion: An Enquiry and its Bearing Upon the Religious Life of the Nation, (London, Macmillan, 1919).

⁵³ An RAMC captain: 'The life beyond the grave is very widely believed in, though in vague way. It is apparently taken for granted by many that all "good fellows" who die for their country will go to heaven, but there is a future judgement for the cruel, and specially for the German War Lords...' *Ibid*, 217.

Symbolic Meaning and Issues of Theology in the Twentieth Century

The majority of the works of art considered here indicate that the use of the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion has changed from Christ as Saviour to crucifixion as a personification of suffering. As has been considered earlier, this development in the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion does not exclude its use with conventional theology. In the Scholarly Edition examples of twentieth century Roman Catholic theology can be seen in works by Jones, De Maistre and Sutherland. It is also consistent with some modern Jewish perspectives upon the place and role of Jesus in their traditions and beliefs.⁵⁴ However, unlike Catholic theology it does not presuppose any Resurrection or Ascension, but sees in Jesus a Jew who could be described as ministering within the prophetic and/or pharisaic tradition.⁵⁵ There remains, however, the question of whether this re-focusing of the symbolic meaning can be connected to a more radical approach to theology. Have twentieth century theologians in Britain considered the possibility of a secular understanding of Jesus and how have they developed this theology?

In the twentieth century a number of influential British Anglican theologians addressed this understanding of the crucifixion. The philosopher, R. B. Braithwaite considered the possibility of a secular Christianity in 1955.⁵⁶ Later, John Robinson in 1963 created a major debate with his book Honest to God.⁵⁷ Although Daniel Jenkins had written on the subject the year before,⁵⁸ it was Robinson's work which brought it to wide public attention. In his book Robinson, who acknowledged his indebtedness to

⁵⁴ See for example G. Vermes, Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels, (London, SCM Press, 1994). For an extensive survey of the reclamation of Jesus within modern Jewish culture see M. Hoffman, From Rebel to Rabbi: Reclaiming Jesus and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture, (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁵⁵ The most important works by a Jewish artist using the iconography of the crucifixion are by Marc Chagall. The complex relationship of Emmanuel Levy's *Crucifixion* to Judaism is discussed in the Scholarly Edition, 193 and Chapter Two, 67.

⁵⁶ For a brief summary of Braithwaite's contribution, See A. Kee, The Way of Transcendence: Christian Faith Without Belief in God, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971).

⁵⁷ J.A.T. Robinson, Honest To God, (London, SCM, 1963).

⁵⁸ D. T. Jenkins, Beyond Religion: The Truth and Error in 'Religionless Christianity', (London, S.C.M. Press, 1962).

Paul Tillich, suggested that we may understand God not in a supernatural way or as an extension of our own humanity, but in a third way as the Ground of our being.⁵⁹ In an attempt to clarify this Robinson quotes Paul Tillich ‘The depth is what the word God means. And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation.’⁶⁰ Robinson goes on to suggest that the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus is not in a revelation that the Son of God has emptied himself of those attributes which we associate with the supernatural being of God, for example his omnipotence or omniscience. The revelation of Christ on the Cross is of the Son of Man laying aside himself as a person with status to reveal the ultimate nature of humanity. ‘For it is in making himself nothing, in his utter self-surrender to others in love, that he discloses and lays bare the Ground of man’s being as love.’⁶¹ Like Tillich, Robinson has re-defined God. God is no longer a supernatural creator, but that which is within, the Ground of our being. For Robinson ‘Jesus is ‘the man for others’, the one in whom Love has completely taken over, the one who is utterly open to, and united with, the Ground of his being.’⁶² The apparent absence of God could be restored as we recognised God as that which is our ultimate concern.⁶³ Christianity is then to be seen as to align one’s self with this suffering of God, which is the Ground of our being.⁶⁴ It is possible to interpret Anthony Green’s *Crucifixion* in the context of Robinson’s theology, where perhaps the artist is suggesting that his old self has to die in order that the Ground of his being may be disclosed in his love for his wife.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ The capitalisation of ‘Ground of our being’ is used in this thesis in the manner Robinson used it in Honest to God.

⁶⁰ Robinson, 22.

⁶¹ Ibid, 74.

⁶² Ibid, 76.

⁶³ Ibid, 46.

⁶⁴ Ibid 82-83.

⁶⁵ Scholarly Edition, 236.

The contributors to The Myth of God Incarnate also came near to developing a secular theology of Christianity.⁶⁶ However one of its contributors, Don Cupitt is probably the best known British contributor to the debate. Cupitt's ideas developed over some five decades of reflection, finally confirming in 2012 his description of himself as a 'Secular Christian.'⁶⁷ In Taking Leave of God (1980) he wrote that the central principle of spirituality is to attain the highest level of self-knowledge and self-transcendence.⁶⁸ God in his theology is the 'religious ideal,' a symbol of the believer's common values in which love is the highest value.⁶⁹ For him the traditional doctrines of Christianity are no longer viable, considering the term doctrine to be synonymous with mythology.

'Granted these general features of mythical thinking, we can begin to see why Christian mythology (or doctrine, as it is often called) takes the form it does. God the Father represents to us the religious requirement itself, eternal, unchangeable and all-powerful. He creates us as beings who can become spirit. Union with him who is pure transcendent consciousness, universal and sovereign over nature, is our destiny. Jesus the brilliant Jewish teacher of the religious requirement is made in Christian mythology into its exemplary fulfiller. He becomes a heavenly figure who moves in a great mythic circle out from God...'⁷⁰

Christianity itself is mythical and the person of Christ as passed down through this tradition is also mythical.

⁶⁶ J. Hick, The Myth of God Incarnate, (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1977).

⁶⁷ See Stephen Batchelor and Don Cupitt – The Future of Religion: A Dialogue, at <http://secularbuddhism.org/2012/08/02/batchelor-cupitt/>. Accessed, 5 February 2015.

⁶⁸ D. Cupitt, Taking Leave of God, (London, SCM, 1980), 9.

⁶⁹ Don Cupitt wrote, 'So it is fairest to say that on my own account faith is a freely undertaken commitment to live by certain values and subject to a particular standard....' Ibid, 113.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 153-4.

In his later works, Sea of Faith of 1984 and After God of 1997, he developed his theology more fully.⁷¹ In one passage Don Cupitt describes Christ as our own ideal *alter ego*, our true self, and that the Cross as the image is a reminder that this *alter ego* is tragic.⁷² In another passage he describes Jesus as love taking human form.⁷³ Cupitt shows little interest in a Christology of the Cross and hardly mentions it even in his description of traditional Christian theology.⁷⁴ For Cupitt there is no metaphysics and in particular no metaphysics of the Cross. It can only be surmised that the crucifixion of Jesus is for Cupitt the supreme example of faithfulness to those common values (God) which reveals Jesus as the archetype of the whole and complete human. In 2012 in Cupitt summarised his relationship to Jesus when he wrote:

In a short book called *Solar Ethics* (1995), I put forward a philosophical defence of ethical emotivism and expressivism, so that it can stand independently of Jesus. I don't need him as an authority; I just point him out as the first teacher who just happened to get it right.⁷⁵

This research has discovered that consciously or unconsciously the artists who created the works in the Scholarly Edition have revealed a more diverse and secular understanding of the significance of Jesus on the Cross. Through the change in symbolic meaning of the iconography, the crucifixion has in many of the works been detached from its traditional place as a precursor to the resurrection and ascension of Christ. This is consistent with Robinson's and Cupitt's questioning of the supernatural. Cupitt's approach eliminates all Christian beliefs in the person of God and replaces it

⁷¹ He became a national figure in 1984 through a series of television broadcasts under the title 'Sea of Faith' and a subsequent book under the same name. D. Cupitt, The Sea of Faith, (London, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1984).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 271.

⁷³ D. Cupitt, After God, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997). 127

⁷⁴ In 2012 Cupitt described the crucifixion as 'the catastrophe of Jesus' ugly death' and suggested that Institutional Christianity, the Church, arose out of power struggles between the apostles, Peter, James and Paul. A Secular Christian, a statement as a precursor to Stephen Bachelor and Don Cupitt - The Future of Religion: A Dialogue, 4. http://www.londoninsight.org/images/uploads/DC_A_Secular_Christian.pdf Accessed 5 February 2015.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*.

with a philosophical set of ethics.⁷⁶ The difference though in Cupitt's theology in relation to this thesis is that it has little connection with the tragedy of human life which is revealed time and again in the works in the Scholarly Edition and perhaps most poignantly in Aitchison's *Crucifixion* of 1994. However, Robinson's and Cupitt's proposals complement the works of art in this thesis in revealing the diversity of theological understanding of the crucifixion of Jesus in the twentieth century. In both theology and art, the understanding of the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus has diversified substantially in the twentieth century. This research invites the use of the works in the Scholarly Edition to be a source for further theological reflection on the nature of faith in Jesus in an increasingly diverse society and perhaps a re-appraisal of the proponents of radical Christian theology in the twentieth century.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This research has been founded on 'an investigation of the theological questions raised by twentieth century works of art which make use of the iconography of the crucifixion.'⁷⁷ The Scholarly Edition is offered as a contribution to learning, bringing together sixty works which share the iconography of the crucifixion, but revealing a wide diversity in the use of that iconography. This unique collection of twentieth century works by artists based in Britain, demonstrates the freedom exhibited by these artists in their use of the iconography within and beyond the traditions of the Christian Churches. As an aid to further research, within the Scholarly Edition, the entry for each work contains a breakdown of its iconography and a summary of current scholarship relating to the implicit theology in the work, which is supported by footnotes and an extensive bibliography.

⁷⁶ In the early 1990s Cupitt stopped officiating at public worship, and in 2008 he finally ceased to be a communicant member of the church. Don Cupitt official website. <http://www.doncupitt.com/don-cupitt>. Accessed 5 February 2015.

⁷⁷ Title of this thesis.

The Commentary is a complement to the Scholarly Edition and contains the methodology used in the research including a discussion of the relationship of art to theology in which an original approach was introduced: the division into theology of art, theology in art and theology as art of which the latter has been the primary approach to this thesis. Panofsky's threefold process of iconographical analysis was reviewed and adapted for the particular needs of this research with the use of the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary iconography. The purpose of the iconography was also clarified through the introduction of the concepts of Sacred, Semiotic and Artistic Archetypes. It is proposed here that these methodological tools can make a contribution to learning in the field of iconography which use religious images.

In Chapter Two of the Commentary, as an original contribution to theology as art, the hypothesis was examined that changes in theology are evident in the works featuring the iconography of the crucifixion created in Britain in the twentieth century, compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century. Theological analyses were made of individual works in the context of theology as art. The conclusion drawn from the analyses is that the iconography of the crucifixion has been used to present a range of concepts, ideas and questions from within Christian theology and beyond it. There is a diversification in the theology related to that iconography as compared to those created before the end of the sixteenth century. This diversification is complex and does not exhibit a simple process of development from a religious to a secular use. The argument presented in this thesis is that there is no clarity of theological ideas overall, but rather diffusion, upon which the viewer is invited to reflect and this may be seen as a reluctance by artists to produce works as doctrinal statements. This thesis lends weight to the concern among some scholars that the use of religious iconography has become fragmented without an overarching purpose behind it.⁷⁸ These analyses

⁷⁸ For example A.C. Moore wrote in 1977:

have demonstrated the need for further research into theology as art and the Scholarly Edition is offered as a resource for this research.

In this chapter of the Commentary a change in symbolic meaning implicit in these works was proposed from that of Christ as Saviour to the personification of humanity as alienated, innocent and suffering, and whose prototype is the crucified Jesus Christ. The relationship between twentieth century theology (Christian and Jewish) and the symbolic meaning of the iconography of the crucifixion was then explored, with a focus on the radical trends in British Anglican theology.

“When we look at the modern Western world. . . . It is not that religious activities and movements are lacking; it is rather that these are not harnessed to a commonly accepted cosmic symbolism or to political and economic power. In the realm of the visual arts representational art is not commonly favoured and traditional iconography is now obscure and archaic in the view of the majority; on the other hand modern art presents such a wide spectrum of styles that no one style is able to satisfy. The situation is confused and chaotic, providing little basis for a meaningful religious iconography.” A.C. Moore, Iconography of Religions: An Introduction, (London, SCM, 1977), 280.

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APPENDIX A

Illustrations Not Contained in the Scholarly Edition



Fig. i

R. Hamilton, *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?* (Kunsthalle, Tübingen, Germany, 26x25, collage, 1956).

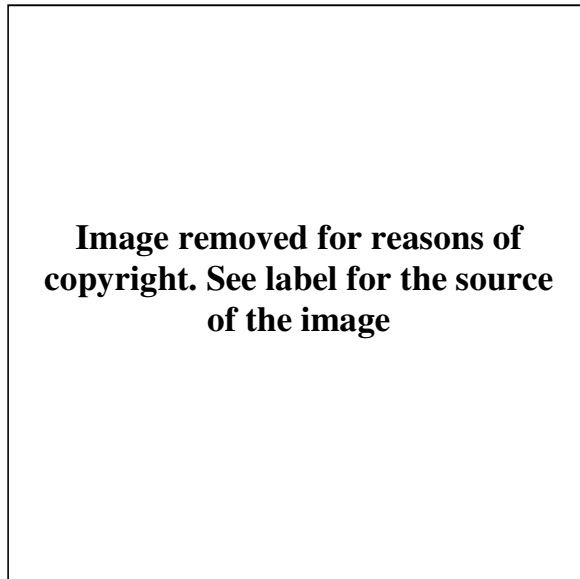


Fig. ii

Gregor Erhart, *Mary Magdalene*, Sculpture, (Paris, Louvre, 177x44x43, polychrome on lime wood, 1515-1520).

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Fig. iii
Grant Wood, *Spring Turning*,
(Winston-Salem USA, Reynolda House, Museum of American Art, 1936).

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of the image**

Fig. iv
Christ on the Cross between Two Thieves, (Rome, St. Sabina, wood relief, 432).

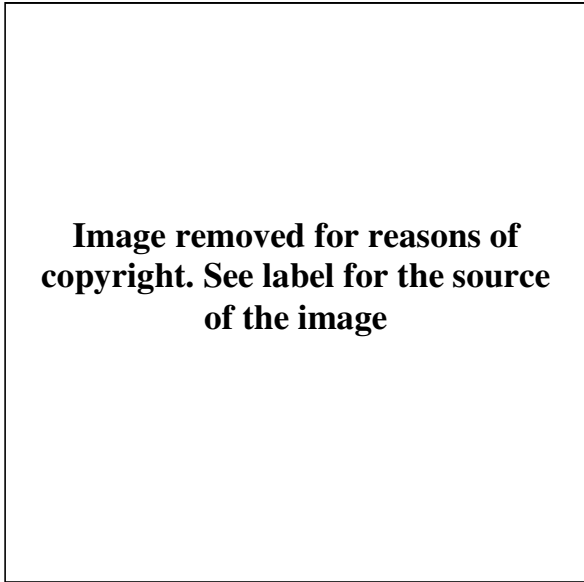


Fig. v

The Crucifixion of Christ, (Studenica, The Church of the Holy Virgin, Fresco, 1202).

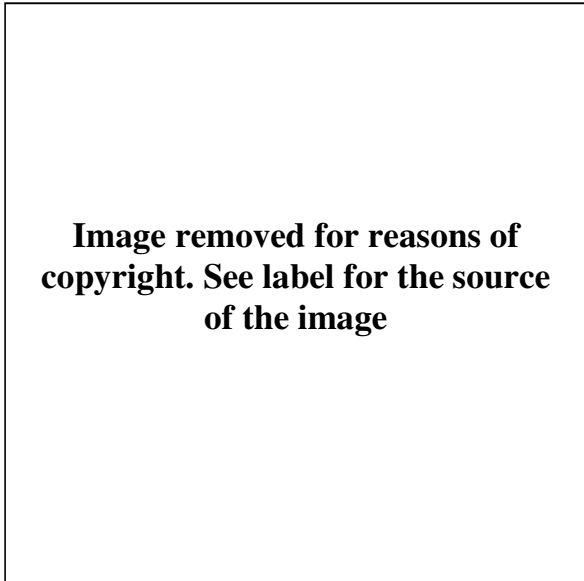


Fig. vi

Rabula Gospels, *Crucifixion*,
(Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo Laurenziana, Manuscript Illustration, 586).

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of the image**

Fig. vii

Hans Memling, *Passion*, from the Greverade Altarpiece
(Lübeck, St. Annen Museum, 205x150, oil on panel, 1491).

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Fig. viii

Hieronymus Bosch, *Crucifixion with Donor*, (Musée Royaux des Beaux Arts, Brussels,
75x61, oil on oak, 1480-85).

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Fig. ix

Christ Crucified by the Virtues, Ecclesia and Synagogue, Caritas,
(Besancon, Manuscript, Upper Rhine Psalter, 1275).

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of the image**

Fig. x

Giovanni Antonio Pordenone, *Golgotha*, (Cathedral of Cremona, fresco, 1520-21).

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of the image**

Fig. xi

Duccio de Buoninsegna, *Crucifixion*, (Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, formerly behind the high altar of Siena Cathedral, 100x76, tempera on wood, 1308—11).

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of the image**

Fig. xii

Simon Vouet, *Crucifixion*,
(Lyon, Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon, 216x146, oil on canvas, 1636).

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of the image**

Fig. xiii
Kazimir Malevich, *Black Cross*,
(St. Petersburg, State Russian Museum, oil on canvas, c 1920-23).

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copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Fig. xiv
George Stubbs, *The Lincolnshire Ox*, (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1790).

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Fig. xv
Martin de Vos, *Rape of Europa*,
(Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, 134x175, oil on oak panel, late 16 century).

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Fig. xvi
Giuliano Bugiardini, *Virgin and Child with the Infant St John the Baptist*,
(Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia, 118x91, oil on panel, 1520).

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Fig. xvii

Graham Sutherland, *Palm Palisade*, (Private Collection, 50x40, Oil on canvas, 1947).

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of the image**

Fig. xviii

John Biggers, *Crucifixion*,
(Hampton Virginia, Hampton University Museum, 128x88, oil on Masonite, 1942).

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of the image**

Fig. xix

Stanley Spencer, *The Deposition and Rolling Away of the Stone*,
(York, York Museum, 110x57, oil on canvas, 1956).

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Fig. xx

Marc Chagall, *The Martyr*, (Zurich, Kunsthaus, 231x165, oil on canvas, 1940).

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Fig. xxi

Ivan Bevzenko, *Young Steel Workers*, (Private Collection, 80x156, oil on canvas, 1961).

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of the image**

Fig. xxii

Vera Mukhina, *Industrial Worker and Collective Farm Girl*,
(St Petersburg, State Russian Museum, 158x106x112, bronze, 1935).

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Fig. xxiii

Arno Breker, *Prometheus*, (Photographed outside Reich Chancellery, Sculpture, 1939).

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of the image**

Fig. xxiv

Ivo Saliger, *Diana's Rest*,
(Federal Republic of Germany, 200x190, oil on canvas, 1939-40).

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of the image**

Fig. xxv

An Anti-Semitic depiction of Jews.

http://blockyourid.com/~gbpprorg/judicial-inc/88meet_the_president_of_poland.htm

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of the image**

Fig. xxvi

Stanley Spencer, *The Resurrection of the Soldiers*,
(Burghclere, Sandham Memorial Chapel, 425x371 [estimated], oil on canvas, 1933).

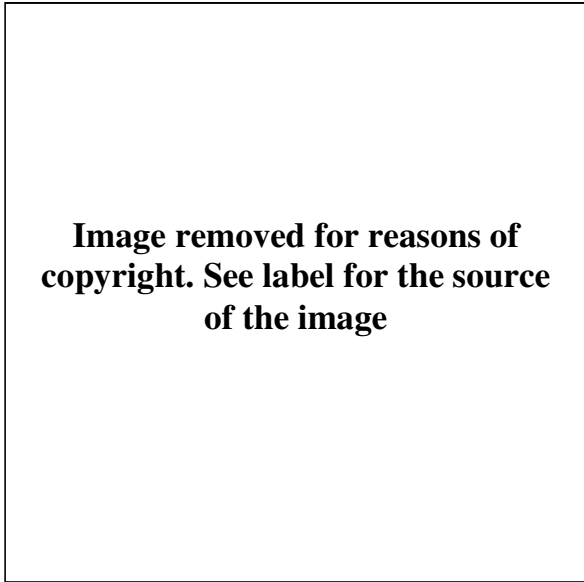


Fig. xxvii

Antonello de Messina, *Crucifixion*, (Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, c 1475-76).

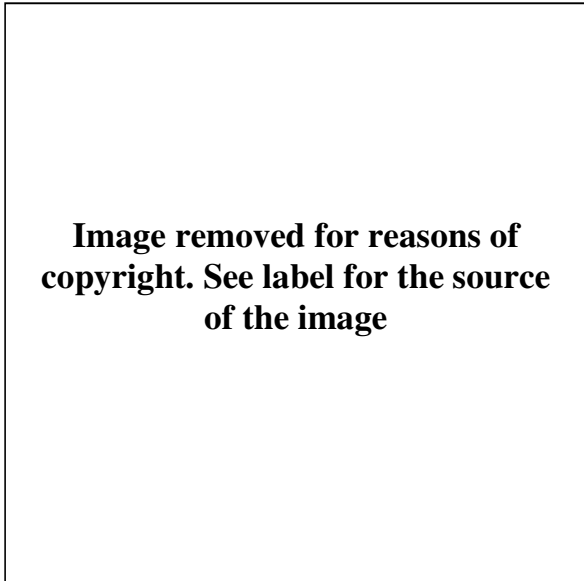


Fig. xxviii

Roman Swastika plate - Museum No-1889, 1019.19,
(London, British Museum, diameter 33, silver, produced in Gaul, 260-270).

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of the image**

Fig. xxix

Eduard Manet *The Dead Christ with Angels*,
(New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art 179x150, oil on canvas, 1864).

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of the image**

Fig. xxx

Andrea Mantegna, *Calvary*, (Paris, Louvre, 75x96, oil on wood, 1457-9).

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of the image**

Fig. xxxi
Titian, *Solitary Crucified Christ*,
(Spain, Monasterio del Escorial Sacristy, 216x111, 1565).

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of the image**

Fig. xxxii
School of Annibale Carracci, *Allegory of Theological Virtues*,
(Rome, Palazzo di Montecitorio, seventeenth century).

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of the image**

Fig. xxxiii
Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes,
Execution of the Defenders of Madrid, Third of May, 1808,
(Madrid, Prado, 266x345, oil on canvas, 1814).

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Fig. xxxiv
Nikolai Nikolaevich, *Crucifixion or Golgotha*,
(Paris, Museum D'Orsay, 278x223, oil on canvas, 1893).

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of the image**

Fig. xxxv

Oskar Kokoschka *Crucifixion [Golgotha]*,
(Private Collection, 55x68, oil on canvas, 1912).

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of the image**

Fig. xxxvi

Vincent Van Gogh, *Pietà (After Delacroix)*,
(Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 73x60, oil on canvas, 1889)

THE SCHOLARLY EDITION

A collection of sixty works of art containing iconography of the crucifixion produced by thirty three artists between 1913 and 2000, who have worked predominantly in Great Britain.

March 2015

Index to the Scholarly Edition

Conventions used in the Scholarly Edition

Page 137

The Works of Art

<u>Date</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Work of Art</u>	<u>Page</u>
1913	James Dickson Innes	<i>Crucifixion</i>	138
1915	Gilbert Spencer	<i>Crucifixion</i>	140
1919	David Jones	<i>Crucifixion</i>	142
1922/23	David Jones	<i>Crucifixion</i>	146
1925	David Jones	<i>Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-ffin</i>	148
1947/48	David Jones	<i>Vexilla Regis</i>	150
1921	Stanley Spencer	<i>Crucifixion</i>	153
1934	Stanley Spencer	<i>Crucifixion</i>	156
1958	Stanley Spencer	<i>Crucifixion</i>	159
1922	William Roberts	<i>Crucifixion</i>	162
1932	Thomas Saunders Nash	<i>Crucifixion</i>	165
1933	Francis Bacon	<i>The Crucifixion (Black)</i>	167
1933	Francis Bacon	<i>The Crucifixion (Brown)</i>	169
1933	Francis Bacon	<i>The Crucifixion (Yellow)</i>	171
1944	Francis Bacon	<i>Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion</i>	173
1946	Francis Bacon	<i>Painting</i>	175
1950	Francis Bacon	<i>Fragment of a Crucifixion</i>	177
1962	Francis Bacon	<i>Three Studies for a Crucifixion</i>	179
1965	Francis Bacon	<i>Crucifixion</i>	181
1932/34	Alfred Wallis	<i>Crucifixion</i>	183
1937	Michael Rothenstein	<i>The Crucifixion</i>	185
1940	John Harris Valda	<i>The Crucifixion of Europe</i>	187
1940	Michael Ayrton	<i>Dressing the Vine</i>	189
1943	Michael Ayrton	<i>Golgotha</i>	191
1942	Emmanuel Levy	<i>Crucifixion</i>	193
1945	Merlyn Oliver Evans	<i>Crucifixion (Nottingham)</i>	195
1945	Roy de Maistre	<i>The Crucifixion</i>	198
1962	Roy de Maistre	<i>Crucifixion</i>	200
1946	Graham Sutherland	<i>The Crucifixion (Northampton)</i>	202
1946	Graham Sutherland	<i>The Crucifixion (Tate)</i>	206
1947	Graham Sutherland	<i>Thorn Head</i>	208
1947	Graham Sutherland	<i>The Crucifixion (Chichester)</i>	210
1963	Graham Sutherland	<i>Crucifixion (St. Aidan East Acton)</i>	213
1947	Robert Henderson Blyth	<i>The Image of Man</i>	215
1954	Tristram Hillier	<i>The Crucifixion</i>	217
1955/56	Jack Smith	<i>Creation and Crucifixion</i>	219
1958	John Armstrong	<i>Crucifixion</i>	221
1959	Theyre Lee-Elliott	<i>Crucified Tree Form</i>	223
1959	Carel Weight	<i>Crucifixion</i>	225
1981	Carel Weight	<i>Crucifixion – II</i>	228
1964	John Bellany	<i>Allegory</i>	230

<u>Date</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Work of Art</u>	<u>Page</u>
1967	John Bellany	<i>Pourqoui? II</i>	232
1969	John Bellany	<i>Homage to John Knox</i>	234
1965	Anthony Green	<i>Golden Crucifix</i>	236
1965	John Bratby	<i>Golgotha</i>	238
1967/70	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Crucifixion in a Landscape</i>	240
1970/75	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Crucifixion</i>	242
1984/86	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Crucifixion</i>	244
1988/89	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Crucifixion</i>	247
1994	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Crucifixion</i>	249
1997	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Calvary</i>	251
1998	Craigie Aitchison	<i>Calvary</i>	253
1974	Betty Swanwick	<i>Lost Wilderness</i>	256
1989	Moira Doggett	<i>Gospel According to John</i>	259
1990	Maggi Hambling	<i>Good Friday</i>	261
1990	Albert Herbert	<i>Eve and Jesus</i>	263
1992	Alexander Guy	<i>Crucifixion</i>	265
1993	Norman Adams	<i>Golden Crucifixion</i>	267
1993	Roger Wagner	<i>Menorah</i>	269
1999	Peter Howson	<i>Crucifixion</i>	271

Appendix B Illustrations Referred to in the Scholarly Edition **Page 273**

Appendix C A Selection of First World War Poems **Page 309**

Conventions and Terminology used in The Scholarly Edition

Purpose of the Information Given for each Work of Art

The information given in the Scholarly Edition is designed to be a resource for theological reflection.

The Image

The images are reproduced from electronic images with the best quality available. Effort has been made to reproduce colours as close as possible to the original.

Dimensions

All dimensions are indicated in centimetres, height preceding width.

Location

Its purpose is to direct the reader to the latest information on the work's location.

Sources of Information

The information on the name of the artist, the date of the work, the medium, its size and location have been confirmed as the most reliable source of information available. If possible the source of this information was obtained from its location. If this was not sufficient, Bridgeman Education or other major publications were used. By identifying the source, the reader is able to assess the reliability of the information.

References

Three conventions have been used for all references.

Where a published work is used the convention is to use the form:

Author, Title, (City or town of publication, publisher, date published).

Where an artistic work is identified the convention is to use the form:

Artist, *Title*, (Location, dimensions, medium, date of work).

Where an electronic source has been used the convention is to use the form:

Web site or other electronic site. Latest date accessed.

To maintain the integrity of information, each work is individually referenced and numbered.

The Term 'Crucifixion'

The term *crucifixion* has a certain diversity of meaning. Customarily it refers to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, but the use of this term may encourage the reader to assume this includes an historical meaning, a theological meaning and possibly an artistic statement. By adopting a convention of avoiding the use of the capital letter except in the titles of books or works of art etc. it is intended that the author and reader will be kept aware of this diversity.

James Dickson Innes,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1913

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size - 51x41

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason For Inclusion – This appears to be a simple crucifixion picture, but the inclusion of contemporary characters on the crosses in place of the traditional figures adds an unconventional element.

General Description:

Jonty Claypole wrote of this work:

By the winter of 1913, the Arenig School was all but over. In one of his final paintings, Innes shows three men – presumably John, Lees and himself – crucified beneath Arenig Fawr. A few months later, he was dying at a nursing home in Kent. John visited him one last time, taking Euphemia along. "The meeting of these two was painful," John recalled. "We left them alone together: it was the last time I saw him."²

¹ Born 27 February 1887, Llanelli, Wales – died 1914.

² The Arenig School was a group of three painters (James Dickson Innes, Augustus John and Derwent Lees) who painted in North Wales between 1911 and 1913. They took their name from one of its mountains, Arenig Fawr. Euphemia Lamb was the wife of the artist Henry Lamb who was known to be highly promiscuous. From an article by Jonty Claypole, 'Painters at their Peak: The Forgotten wild men of Arenig,' <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2011/may/18/arenig-painters-north-wales> - Accessed 30 April 2013.

This is an isolated 'religious' work by an artist who was primarily a landscape painter. As Claypole has noted, at the time of its painting the artist was close to dying of tuberculosis and this work may reflect upon the personal histories of the three friends.

Primary Iconography

The significance of this work is dependent upon Claypole's suggestion that the three victims are the three members of the Arenig School.³ Without this information the central crucifixion appears conventional except for the replacement of the traditional white loincloth with a red one.⁴

Secondary Iconography

The two secondary crucifixes appear to be conventional portrayals of the two thieves, but identification of them with Innes's friends transforms their purpose. This interpretation of the work is strengthened by the absence of any witnesses to the crucifixions.

Tertiary Iconography

The major characteristic of the landscape is Arenig Fawr in the background. Claypole recalled that James Innes may have buried letters from Euphemia Lamb at the peak of the mountain. If so, this may have some significance in the choice of the location.

Comments

If Claypole's understanding of this work is correct, its importance for this thesis is that it is the earliest work in which the iconography of the crucifixion was used in a manner which did not directly relate it to a worshipping community, but was used as a metaphor for the suffering (perhaps by their love of Euphemia) of James Innes and his friends.⁵ It is also significant in that this use of the iconography of the crucifixion can be identified as pre-dating the First World War and the emotions that were engendered both in the painters and poets who lived through that war.

³ There is a painting by one of Innes's friends, Ian Strang. This reveals Innes as being gaunt with the black hair shown in the Innes *Crucifixion*, but the hair is shorter. See Ian Strang, *James Dickson Innes*, (National Museum of Wales, 40x33, oil on board, 1913).

⁴ See also Gilbert Spencer, *Crucifixion*, of 1915, page 133 and Stanley Spencer, *Crucifixion*, 1958, page 151.

⁵ J. Hoole, M. Simons, *James Dickson Innes, 1887-1914*, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2013).

Gilbert Spencer,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1915²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 86x99

Location – Tate Galleries

Source of Information - Tate Galleries

Reason For inclusion – This is a work which includes the iconography of the crucifixion, but replaces Jesus with a modern counterpart.

General Description

Gerald Spencer was the younger brother of Stanley Spencer. The style is similar to that of his older brother, though both were influenced by the advent of post-impressionism, which had become known in England through Roger Fry.³ The setting according to the artist is Cookham Meadow.⁴

¹ Born, Cookham, Berkshire, 4 August 1892, died 1979.

² In the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (C. Martineau, 'Gilbert Spencer', <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31708> - Accessed 22 April 2014), this painting is dated as 1920s. This is probably a mistake. Tate Gallery dates it as 1915 on the basis of a conversation with the artist.

'The following entry, based upon two conversations with the artist (2 October 1975 and 27 November 1975), has been approved by him. This painting was made early in 1915, while Gilbert Spencer was still a student at the Slade and shortly before he enlisted for war service with the Royal Army Medical Corps.' Tate Gallery, The Tate Gallery 1974-6: Illustrated Catalogue of Acquisitions, (London, Tate Gallery Publications, 1978).

³ Roger Fry curated the exhibitions 'Manet and the Post Impressionists,' (London, The Grafton Galleries, 1910) and 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition,' (London, The Grafton Galleries, 1912).

⁴ The Tate Gallery Display Caption at <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/spencer-the-crucifixion-t01903> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

Primary Iconography

The victim is portrayed alive, with eyes open looking at the viewer; the head is surrounded by a halo. The only direct link to Jesus is the INRA sign above the victim's head. According to the artist, the main figure is based upon Gilbert's father, William.⁵ The red trunks are an odd departure from the conventional depictions, particularly as they were repeated in modified forms by Stanley in two of his crucifixion pictures and may have some significance in linking the crucified one with William Spencer.⁶

Secondary Iconography

The five figures lifting the cross look similar to the Spencer brothers.⁷

Tertiary Iconography

The background is neutral, but as already stated has been identified as Cookham Meadow.

Comments

The significance of this work is its amalgamation of modern figures with the traditional subject matter. This was not uncommon with the witnesses to the crucifixion in previous centuries, but the replacement of Christ in so many works is peculiar to the twentieth century. The dating of this work to 1915 is early evidence of the loosening of the theological constraints on the iconography of the crucifixion in Britain.⁸ This is discussed more fully in the Commentary. This work was painted in the First World War, but it does not seem to reflect the emotional agenda which appears in David Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1919 or of his brother's (Stanley Spencer) work of 1921. Its only connection with these and the First World War poets may be seen as Gilbert's work is interpreted to be a reflection upon the destruction of the culture of his father's generation.

⁵ T.A. Cross and Fine Art Society, The Slade Tradition. 1871-1921: A Centenary Contribution. [Exhibition] 11th October-5th November 1971, (London, Fine Art, 1971), 6-7.

⁶ Stanley Spencer, *Crucifixion*, (1934) and (1958) – see 145 and 148

⁷ See photograph of Lady Ottoline Morrell, Sydney, William, Stanley and Gilbert Spencer, (National Portrait Gallery, 6x10, photograph, 1914), Appendix B – Fig. 1.

⁸ Note James Dickson's Innes's *Crucifixion* of 1913 may precede this if the identity of the three crucifixion victims can be confirmed as the artist with Ian Strang and Augustus John – See Scholarly Edition.

David Jones,¹ Crucifixion, 1919

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Squared up drawing, pen, ink and colour wash on paper

Size – 77x46

Location – Tate Gallery Archive

Source of Information – J. Miles and D. Shiel, David Jones: The Maker Unmade, (Bridgend, Seren, 1995)

Reason for Inclusion – Though this work is only an initial sketch, it is included because of the ambiguity in its iconography which raises significant theological questions.

General Description

This preliminary drawing is one of only a few surviving works from the period that David Jones spent studying art at the Westminster School of Art from 1919.² Jones had gone there after serving in the army during the First World War. Although this is the work of the young Jones who was still developing his vocation, it carries in it something of the distinctive idiosyncrasies which mark the mature Jones's style, both as artist and poet. Jones uses ambiguity and multiple meanings to transform a work from a simple view or narrative into something much deeper and complex. These elements in this

¹ Born, 1 November 1895 in Brockley, Kent of a Welsh father – died 1974.

² J. Miles and D. Shiel, David Jones: The Maker Unmade, (Bridgend, Poetry Wales, 1995), 30.

work indicate a change in emphasis from a conventional crucifixion scene, (calling the viewer to worship the Son of Man in his hour of sacrifice) to a window into Jones's mind.

Primary Iconography

The work consists of three crucifixions, with the viewer placed behind one of the three of them.³ The first elements of ambiguity surround these three victims. Which one is Jesus? The crucified figure on the far right, in which Jones only affords a view of his legs and feet, lays claim to be the central figure of the crucifixion through the penitent kneeling figure (Stephaton?) on the lower far left of the work offering up a bowl (possibly of vinegar) with a stance reminiscent of the priest offering the host at Mass.⁴ This claim is re-enforced by an allusion to the figure of Longinus leaning against the crosses upright and the dice players at the foot of the cross.

However, the central figure has strong iconographical reasons to be considered as that of Jesus; first because Christ is traditionally set in the middle of the three victims and secondly because of the grieving figures at the foot of this cross, but primarily because it displays a plaque at the top of the cross where tradition has it that Pilate had written 'King of the Jews.' The seated figure in the right middle ground of the work appears to be in prayer before this central crucified figure and again indicates the prominence of this image as that of Jesus Christ. However, this figure could also be praying before the third crucified figure.

The third crucified figure towards the background and at the extreme left of the group is normally associated with the non-penitent thief, but he too has a mourner at his feet and what appears to be a figure standing in a pose of prayerful adoration behind him.

It would seem then from this analysis of the picture that Jones is consciously creating confusion in the status of the three victims of crucifixion, all three are mourned, all three are elevated.

Secondary Iconography

Although almost all the figures are dressed as soldiers, allusions are made to traditional Christian figures. As suggested earlier, the soldier leaning against the right hand cross carries a pole or 'lance' reminiscent of Longinus and the kneeling figure offering a bowl can be compared to Stephaton. Similarly the dice players have a Biblical equivalent. At the base of the central cross stand the only figures which can be identified as civilian, they are a woman who stands embracing a child. If the central cross is that of Jesus, the position of the woman is normally associated with Mary Magdalene, but the child is original to Jones. The figure at the base of the third cross and the figure in adoration behind this cross are also original to Jones.

Beneath the victims, Jones has placed soldiers in modern dress. A major element is the construction of the work. Through the positioning of the crosses and the dice players,

³ Miles and Shiel have compared it to Tintoretto's *Crucifixion*, which is in the Scuola San Rocco in Venice, because of the soldiers playing dice and a copy of the central portion was known to Jones, (See *Ibid*, 30), but the lay out of the three victims is closer to Lucas Cranach (The Elder), *Lamentation beneath the Cross*, (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, 1503), Appendix B - Fig. 2.

⁴ Miles and Shiel have attempted to minimise the significance of this figure by suggesting that he may just be a dice player praying to the thief for good luck in his game of dice. However, this explanation is unconvincing, in the light of the other figure of Stephaton and the standing figure praying behind the third crucifixion victim. *Ibid*, 31.

the eye is led around the work and invited to settle upon the young soldier about to play the dice. All the soldiers are dressed in a style consistent with those of the First World War ‘Tommies,’⁵ but this one appears to be a self-portrait.⁶ The significance of this is left to the viewer to decide.

Tertiary Iconography

The general scenery is that of a Mediterranean settlement most likely that of Calvary and Jerusalem. In the background a walled city can be seen – presumed Jerusalem. The roots of the scene are therefore quite traditional, even the use of modern dress has its precedence in medieval works.⁷

Comments

Jones’s work may be interpreted in the context of the responses of artists and poets to the First World War. Appendix C includes a selection of well-known poems written between 1914 and 1918. Lehmann has proposed that the mood of the poems of the First World War poets can be divided into two parts.⁸ Those written before the Battle of the Somme in 1916 were altruistic with a simple heroic vision of noble sacrifice and patriotism,⁹ whilst those written after that date tended to be darker, reflecting the disenchantment with the war and its sponsors as the suffering and death escalated without hope of an end.¹⁰ Jones’s 1919 *Crucifixion* reflects this later phase. Absolute obedience was called for from British troops during the conflict, which was fought as a righteous war. Similar demands were made on German troops from their leaders. The conflict of how to relate to the vanquished German soldier as enemy, victim or companion was also personalised by the poet Wilfred Owen in the poem ‘Strange Meeting.’ In the last lines of the poem Owen converses in Hell with his former enemy, who Owen had killed in battle:

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.¹¹

The godly, the ungodly and the penitent (who hours before existed in a kind of expectant limbo) were swept away with equal ferocity at the hands of Allied or German armament. This crucifixion drawing invites the viewer into the ethical confusion of war. Who were the righteous victims sacrificing their lives and who were those for whom the destruction was justified? All three who are impaled enjoy the adoration of someone, yet all three also suffer the ultimate ignominy of the disinterest and boredom exhibited by the soldiers who are immediately responsible for their situation. The viewer is left unsure as to which victim is to be worshipped, which is to be venerated and which is to be rejected. Jones expressed, in this confusion, a deep sense of sympathy with those suffering, whether in righteous sacrifice or in penal punishment. This small work gives

⁵ The dress appears to be that for desert warfare and not the dress of the soldiers Jones would have known on the Western Front. This would be consistent with the setting of the work in the Middle East, but, unlike Stanley Spencer’s *Crucifixion* of 1922, not in a landscape visited by Jones.

⁶ Jones’s distinctive hair cut can be seen in a photograph with Eric Gill. See J. Miles and D. Shiel, *David Jones: The Maker Unmade*, 51.

⁷ E.g. Barna da Siena, *Crucifixion*, (San Gimignano, wall painting, 1350-5). Appendix B – Fig. 3.

⁸ J. Lehmann, *The English Poets of the First World War*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1981), 8-10.

⁹ See for example Rupert Brooke’s *The Soldier* and John McCrae’s *In Flanders Fields* – Appendix C.

¹⁰ See for example Siegfried Sassoon, *They* and Wilfred Owen’s *Strange Meeting* – Appendix C.

¹¹ C. Day-Lewis and W. Owen, *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1963), p35. The complete poem is contained in Appendix C.

a powerful visual image of theological questions which arose out of the First World War. Who was righteous and who was unrighteous? Where was God in such a disaster?¹²

¹² This is discussed more fully in Chapter Two of the Commentary particularly in relation to D. Jones, In Parenthesis, (London, Faber, 1978 - First published 1937).

David Jones,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1922-23

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on Wooden Boards

Size – 71x43

Location – National Museum of Wales – previously in Chapel Ditchling

Source of Information - J. Miles, and D. Shiel, David Jones: The Maker Unmade, (Bridgend, Seren, 1995)

Reason for Inclusion – This work is close to the traditional approach to the painting of the crucifixion and contrasts with his 1919 *Crucifixion* and 1947-8 *Vexilla Regis*.

General Description

This is an example of Jones's conventional approach to the crucifixion which David Jones painted as part of the decorations in the tiny chapel at Ditchling where he had joined a community lead by Eric Gill.² When Gill left to set up a new community at Capel-y-ffin, Jones painted another *Crucifixion* relating to that chapel.³

¹ Born, 1 November 1895 in Brockley, Kent of a Welsh father – died 1974.

² J. Miles, and D. Shiel, David Jones: The Maker Unmade, (Bridgend, Seren, 1995), 54

³ *Sanctus Christus de Capel y ffyn*, (1925), 140.

Primary Iconography

Painted in a Byzantine style, Christ hangs from the cross, but with some unorthodox iconography. Christ's eyes are open looking down at his mother indicating that he was still alive, whilst he exhibits the lance wound which was inflicted only after his death. This image is of *Christus Victor*; Christ though pictured on the cross is already resurrected and ascended. The wound like many other works in the Scholarly Edition is on his left side instead of the traditional right.⁴

Secondary Iconography

Mary, Christ's mother stands in prayer to the right of Jesus, whilst a second figure kneels to his left. This is Mary Magdalene, portrayed in red with long flowing hair.⁵ It is just possible that David Jones intended it to be John the Evangelist who at times was given feminine youthful features.

Tertiary Iconography

In the background to the right of the work is an image of Ditchling Chapel where the work was originally located.

Comments

This is Jones's most conventional work, with the Sacred Archetype as most prominent.⁶ It is not a narrative work and does not represent the historic crucifixion of Jesus; like many medieval crucifixions it is symbolic. The hills and buildings symbolise where the worship takes place. The two women intercede for the viewer; the Virgin Mary as the sinless mother of the Church and Mary Magdalene as the repentant sinner who was privileged to be the first to meet the risen Christ. Christ's wound on his left side places the worship in the emotions of the sacred heart rather than in the sacramental sacrifice of the Eucharist.

⁴ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary.

⁵ There are two accounts in the New Testament where a woman washed Jesus's feet and wiped them with her hair; both have subsequently been associated with Mary Magdalene. In art this has been reflected in her portrayal with long hair. See – the Gospels of Luke 7:36-39 and John 12:1-6.

⁶ For a discussion on the term Sacred Archetype see the Commentary Chapter One, 32.

David Jones,¹ *Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-ffin*, 1925



**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, gouache and graphite on paper.

Size – 19x13

Location – Tate Gallery London

Source of Information - Tate Gallery London

Reason for Inclusion - This work is close to a traditional approach to the painting of the crucifixion and contrasts with his 1919 *Crucifixion* and 1947-8 *Vexilla Regis*.

General Description

David Jones visited Capel-y-ffin regularly during 1924-25. Eric Gill had moved there with his family in 1924 from Ditchling.² The chapel of the former monastery can be seen in the bottom left hand corner of the work.

¹ Born, 1 November 1895, Brockley, Kent of a Welsh father – died 1974.

² N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 29.

Primary Iconography

The style of the crucifixion is a twentieth century interpretation of late Romanesque such as the *Crucifixion* at The Church of the Theodotus Daphni.³ In contrast to his Ditchling *Crucifixion* Christ appears as *Christus Patiens*. Its pose reverses some of Christ's features as compared to the medieval tradition;⁴ the head looks to the left;⁵ and his wound is also on the left.⁶

Tertiary Iconography

The background reflects the Black Mountains in which Capel-y-ffin is set. The horse on the left may be an early example of Jones's use of placid horses to indicate the end of conflict.⁷

Comments

Overall this work falls within the parameters of a conventional crucifixion work. The structure of the work integrates the crucifix into the natural world of the Welsh hills. Whatever variations in iconography can be discerned in this work, including the positioning of the chest wound, this work's intention is to bring the viewer to a position of meditation and worship. The focus of the work is not upon the agony of the crucifixion ('My God why have you forsaken me'),⁸ but upon the significance of its completion ('It is finished').⁹

In the context of the First World War, this and *Crucifixion* of 1922/3 appear strangely peaceful. The black horse may be indicative of Jones's attempt to put the First World War behind him. There was in the early years after the war an attempt by the returning fighters to suppress their painful memories. From the anecdotes of their descendants many seem to have succeeded in this. There is evidence from both artists and poets that this was only temporary for some, and from around 1928 a wave of publications appeared. This is discussed more fully in Stanley Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1921.

³ *The Crucifixion*, (Daphni, The Church of the Theolokos, fresco, 1100), Appendix B – Fig. 4

⁴ *Crucifixion*, (Rome, Chapel of Theodotus in the Church of St Maria Antiqua, Fresco, 741-752), Appendix B - Fig. 5.

⁵ The head hanging to the left is relatively unusual in medieval paintings, but this pose can be seen in William Roberts' *Crucifixion*, (1922) and Thomas Nash, *Crucifixion* (1932). It can also be seen in Chagall's *White Crucifixion* of 1938. [Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion* (Art Institute of Chicago, 154x140, oil on canvas, 1938)], Appendix B - Fig. 6. Gauguin has it apparently in his work Paul Gauguin, *Portrait of Paul Gauguin with Yellow Crucifixion*, (Paris, Musee D'Orsay, 30x46, oil on canvas 1889), Appendix B - Fig. 7. However, it is clear that Gauguin has painted his own mirror image and that of his original work Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*, (Buffalo, NY. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 75x96, oil on canvas, 1889), Appendix B - Fig. 8. This painting has Jesus's head bowed to his right. The answer to this may be that a common early work with this iconography has still to be identified. Its significance is in the theological implications which are discussed in Chapter Three of the Commentary, 81.

⁶ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Three of the Commentary, 79-81.

⁷ See *Vexilla Regis*, 140.

⁸ Gospel of Mark 15:34.

⁹ Gospel of John 19:30.

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, pencil, watercolour and body colour on paper.

Size – 76x55

Location - Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge

Source of Information – M. P. Hills, D. Jones, et al, David Jones, (London, Tate Gallery, 1981)

Reason for Inclusion – This work contains both iconography relating to the crucifixion of Jesus, and a wealth of Jones's personal iconography; the synthesis of which may infer some radical developments in Jones's understanding of the place of the crucifixion in Christian theology.

General Description

The title of the work is taken from a hymn attributed to Fortunatus, and calls the informed viewer to the words of this hymn and their conventional theology of an atoning Christ.³⁵⁸ Although the picture centres on 'the triumph of the tree' it is not a

³⁵⁶ Born, 1 November 1895 in Brockley, Kent of a Welsh father – died 1974.

³⁵⁷ Translation - Royal Banner.

³⁵⁸ Tradition says that on November 19, 568, St. Radegund presented to the town of Poitiers a fragment believed to be the true Cross. Fortunatus was the one chosen to receive the relic on its arrival at Poitiers.

simple reflection on this hymn, but visually places it in the context of legend and history.³⁵⁹

Primary Iconography

At first sight the work looks like a landscape with peculiar additions. The focus of the work is a tall tree occupying virtually all the vertical centre of the painting.³⁶⁰ In the tree the nails of Christ's crucifixion can be seen.

Secondary Iconography

The central tree is flanked by a smaller tree on the observer's left and a dead tree on the right. Jones wrote of the latter, "it is partly tree and partly triumphal column and partly imperial standard – a power symbol; it is not rooted to the ground but is partly supported by wedges."³⁶¹ These three trees represent the crosses of Calvary. However, none of the trees contain a body. At the foot of the tree the crown of thorns can be discerned hanging in a briar patch. The tree on the left is that of the penitent thief; it is alive, but with few leaves. In its upper branches is a nest with a pelican feeding her young.³⁶² It is a tree in early spring, not yet fully renewed, but full of expectation. In contrast, the dead trunk on the right is that of the unrepentant thief. It is full of symbols. At its feet, the wedges which keep it upright, hint that its continued existence depends upon human effort as compared to the other two which are maintained by their living roots. Halfway up the trunk signs of a triumphal column are found, including a victor's laurel wreath carved into it. At the top stands the Roman Eagle; a sign of military might.³⁶³

When the bearers of the holy fragment were two miles distant from the town, Fortunatus, with a great gathering of believers and enthusiasts, some carrying banners, crosses and other sacred emblems, went forth to meet them. As they marched, they sang this hymn.

The words of the first three verses may be translated as:

The royal banners forward go,
The cross shines forth in mystic glow;
Where He in flesh, our flesh who made,
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

Where deep for us the spear was dyed,
Life's torrent rushing from His side,
To wash us in that precious flood,
Where mingled water flowed, and blood.

Fulfilled is all that David told
In true prophetic song of old,
Amidst the nations, God, saith he,
Hath reigned and triumphed from the tree.

The translation from The Hymnal of the English Ecclesiological Society, (London, Novello, Ewer and Co., 1851).

³⁵⁹ Many of the details in this analysis can be found in a letter David Jones wrote to his friend and at the time owner of the work, Mrs Edes. Parts of the iconography referred to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* some to Roman army culture and others to ancient British traditions. Even the central tree was compared to the Nordic mythological *Yggdrasil*. The letter is reproduced in M. P. Hills, D. Jones, et al, David Jones, (London, Tate Gallery, 1981), 113.

³⁶⁰ The actual tree stood outside Jones's home in Harrow on the Hill.

³⁶¹ R. Hague, and D. M. Jones, Dai Greatcoat: A Self-Portrait of David Jones in his Letters, (London, Faber and Faber, 1980), 149-50.

³⁶² The pelican was considered to be a model of piety in that it was believed that the mother fed her young by piercing her own breast. It is used at times as a symbol of the crucifixion.

³⁶³ David Jones related this work to the collapse of the Roman World. M. P. Hills, D. Jones, et al, David Jones, 113.

Tertiary Iconography

A clue to the intention of this work lies in the background. In traditional crucifixion scenes, Jerusalem and /or a synagogue would be portrayed behind Jesus's left, to indicate the order of things before the crucifixion, whilst on his right could be 'Mary's Tower.'³⁶⁴ Jones, however, has preferred a pagan temple to Jesus' left and grave stones to his right. *Vexilla Regis* is technically not a picture of the crucifixion but an existential symbol of Holy Saturday. The cross is empty; the Christ is buried. The pagan Temple still stands and the powers and dominions symbolised by the thief's column seem to be all powerful, yet in the crucifixion they have died. The faithful lie in their graves, but new life is immanent as the eggs in the nest prepare to hatch.

This can all be related to Easter Eve, but additional images in the work indicate a more general interpretation. Parts of the iconography refer to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*,³⁶⁵ some to Roman army culture,³⁶⁶ and another to ancient British traditions.³⁶⁷ Even the central tree can be compared to the Nordic mythological *Yggdrasil*.³⁶⁸ In addition to those mentioned by Jones a Fleur-de-Lys can be identified in the tree of the righteous robber above a butterfly.

The Fleur-de-Lys, this tiny image in Jones's work, gives a visual summary of his approach to this painting. It can be read as a symbol of France – the place of unimaginable horror endured by Jones and his colleagues in the 1st World War;³⁶⁹ but also the place where he came across a group of Roman Catholic soldiers gathered for the celebration of the Mass – a revelatory experience which began his journey to Roman Catholicism.³⁷⁰ Complementing that, the Fleur-de-Lys was also part of his Regiment's cap badge.³⁷¹ In Christian iconography it is also associated with the Trinity, through its triplet of leaves and to the Virgin Mary through its association with the lily. As an attribute of the Archangel Gabriel it refers again to Mary but also to the angels which are part of many classical crucifixion pictures. This latter interpretation may be reinforced by the way Jones has painted one of the right hand boughs of the central tree to reflect the shape of a large bird or angel's wing.

Comments

In this work Jones has moved his theological priority from questions of righteousness raised in his 1919 sketch and the call to worship seen in *Crucifixion* of 1922 and *Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-ffin* of 1925 to questions upon the nature of sacred and sacramental history. David Jones's thoughts on the concept of sacred history are discussed more fully in the Commentary Chapter Two.

³⁶⁴ The tower, also known as 'the tower of David' (Turrus David) refers to the identification of St Mary with the maiden of the Song of Songs 4.4. 'Your neck is like the tower of David built for an armoury.' See for example Antonello de Messina, *Crucifixion*, (Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, c 1475-76), Appendix B - Fig. 9.

³⁶⁵ In Jones's letter to Mrs Ede he compared the grazing horses to those set free by the Roman armies and those at the end of *Morte d'Arthur*; as their knights had no need of them. M. P. Hills, 113.

³⁶⁶ J. Miles and D. Shiel, *David Jones: The Maker Unmade*. (Bridgend, Seren, 1995), 196.

³⁶⁷ A 'Stonehenge' can be identified in the background next to the 'Roman' Eagle.

³⁶⁸ The *Yggdrasil* was a mythical Nordic tree which symbolised both the vastness of the Universe and the concept of immortality. All living things would ultimately be destroyed; even the Gods, yet the *Yggdrasil* would remain firm and unaltered from age to age. F. S. Levine, *The Apocalyptic Vision*, (New York, Harper and Row 1979), 96.

³⁶⁹ D. Jones, *In Parenthesis*, (London, Faber, 1978 - First pub. 1937), ix.

³⁷⁰ Letter to René Hague in R. Hague, and D. M. Jones, *Dai Greatcoat*, 249.

³⁷¹ The Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

Stanley Spencer,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1921

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on paper mounted on canvas.

Size – 71x112

Location - City of Aberdeen Art Gallery

Source of Information - City of Aberdeen Art Gallery

Reason for Inclusion – This unconventional work is the first of Spencer's series of three pictures entitled *Crucifixion*; its iconography hints at a crisis in his understanding of good and evil.

General Description

The painting, executed on various sheets of paper, is a study for a much larger composition which was never executed. Since the picture was based on Spencer's wartime experiences, it may have been intended as a war memorial.² The setting of this work is not Calvary but the ravines of Macedonia where Stanley Spencer spent part of his First World War army service as a medical orderly and later as an infantry man.³

Primary Iconography

Three crucifixions are shown; all three are painted towards the top of the work with Jesus to the left of centre. The face of Christ in this work is less developed than in later works, but already shows evidence of Spencer's characteristic treatment of Christ as showing no signs of suffering.

Secondary Iconography

At each crucifixion, men in white are engaged in fixing the victims to their respective crosses. Between Jesus and the crucifixion on the right sit a group of witnesses. In the foreground to the left a lancer (Longinus) appears, and partially hidden by a ravine a horseman is pictured in the right foreground (probably the Centurion). At the foot of the

¹ Born, 30 June 1891 at Cookham-on-Thames, died 1959.

² Display board of the painting in the City of Aberdeen Art Gallery.

³ Stanley Spencer wrote about his experiences in letters which have been published in A. Glew, ed. *Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings*, (London, Tate Publishing, 2001), 60-92.

cross Mary Magdalene kisses Jesus's feet,⁴ whilst Stephaton dressed in traditional tunic waits with the other witnesses, his sponge held on the top of a pole to minister to Jesus.⁵ The Marys of John's gospel all dressed in blue complete the gathering of witnesses to Jesus's left.

Tertiary Iconography

As noted above the incident is set in three Macedonia valleys.

Comments

Care needs to be taken not to assume too much in this work. Keith Bell has suggested that it may have been a preliminary sketch for a more extensive work.⁶ If one accepts that many medieval crucifixion pictures show the event in a contemporary setting of its time this picture appears to be quite conventional.⁷ However, questions can be raised about this work. The first is the apparent peacefulness of Jesus's expression; this will become more obvious in later works and reveals a possible theological concept that Christ never actually suffered.⁸ The second element is its location. The scenery is close to a description given of an incident recorded by Spencer in 1918 after he had volunteered to join the infantry. It records his experience of being alone with an officer on a hillside in which they came under enemy fire and the captain was shot in the neck. This was the only occasion when Spencer experienced war at its most imminent.⁹ Thirdly, through their dress, the soldiers engaged in the task of nailing the three victims to their crosses are seen as members of the medical corps. Spencer pictures them in modern medical gowns with which he was familiar from his war service.¹⁰ The traditional figure of Longinus with his lance in the bottom left hand corner of the work also carries a white gown inviting the viewer to compare his 'medical task' of testing whether Jesus was alive or dead with the medical work of the medical orderlies from the First World War.

These variations by Spencer have the effect of transforming the interpretation of this work. In the heat of war, the most peaceful members of the armed forces are depicted as killing the Prince of Peace. The 'saviours' of the injured are still the destroyers. In his use of this unconventional iconography Spencer may have been offering a disturbing message, a few medical gowns may reveal Spencer's agony and guilt of his role in the First World War and symbolising the psychological inheritance of legions of men who fought from 1914 to 1918.

This work, with David Jones's *Crucifixion* of 1919 raises the question of how these works relate to the First World War poets. With the exception of Rupert Brooke, there appears to be no evidence that Stanley Spencer knew these poets.¹¹ According to

⁴ E.g. Giotto, *Crucifixion* (Padua, Arena Chapel, fresco, 1305), Appendix B - Fig. 10.

⁵ Stephaton was the traditional name given to the sponge bearer; see G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art Volume 2*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 89.

⁶ K. Bell and S. Spencer, *Stanley Spencer*. (London, Phaidon, 1999), 56.

⁷ E.g. Hans Baldung (Grien), *The Crucifixion*, (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Gemaldegalerie, 152x104, oil on wood, 1512), Appendix B - Fig. 11.

⁸ See Stanley Spencer, *Crucifixion* 1958, 148.

⁹ A Glew, 95.

¹⁰ E.g. the figure in the centre of *Ablutions*, (Burghclere, Hampshire, Burghclere Memorial Chapel, 214x185, oil on canvas, 1928), Appendix B - Fig. 12.

¹¹ Spencer mentions a letter from Rupert Brooke (who died in 1915) at the outbreak of the First World War. That is the last reference to Brooke or any other First World War poets to be found in Glew's collection of Spencer's writings. It is possible that there may be other references to other poets in the

Constantine the War poets were hardly published in the war years.¹² All the indications are that during the First World War Spencer's reading was restricted to significant literature of the past.¹³ What is more likely is that the experience of war felt by thousands of soldiers was reflected both by the painters (such as Spencer and Jones) and by the War poets like Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owens. The themes which the War poets developed can also be seen in other contemporary art works. For example the pathos of John Singer Sargent's *Gassed* reflects Charles Sorley's When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead.¹⁴ Mark Gertler's cynicism of the war leaders in *Merry-Go-Round*, of 1916,¹⁵ can also be read in Siegfried Sassoon's The General, of 1918.¹⁶

Spencer's 1921 *Crucifixion* appears to be exploring his emotions concerning the First World War, contained in a work offered as a War Memorial. Constantine has noted that for a decade from 1918 there was a movement from family to nation to build war memorials in virtually every city, town and village. This movement may be seen to reflect the feelings of patriotism expressed in Rupert Brooke's poems which had sold extensively since 1915.¹⁷ Spencer's 1921 work may be seen to be related to the unease which became more public toward the end of the 1920s.

John Lehmann, in his review of the English First World War poets, has indicated that in the late twenties the memories of the First World War were re-visited and assessed. In 1928, the War Poet, Edmund Blunden's account of the First World War was published.¹⁸ Robert Graves's autobiography was published in 1929¹⁹ and Sassoon's Memories of an Infantry Officer appeared in 1930.²⁰ Although some of Owen's work had been published during and shortly after the First World War an expanded volume of his poems was published 1931.²¹ Finally David Jones's epic poem In Parenthesis was begun in 1928 but not published until 1937. It is this unease with the First World War that Jones and Spencer seem to share in their respective 1919 and 1921 works.

extensive collection of Spencer's writings held by the Tate Galleries. A. Glew, ed. Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings, (London: Tate Publishing, 2001), 55.

¹² S. Constantine, M. W. Kirby, and Mary B. Rose, The First World War in British History, (London, Edward Arnold, 1995), 176. The exception was of course Rupert Brooke.

¹³ See *ibid*, 10 and 87.

¹⁴ John Singer Sargent, *Gassed*, (London, Imperial War Museum, 231x611, oil on canvas, 1919). For Sorley's poem see Appendix C.

¹⁵ Mark Gertler, *Merry -G o-Round*, (London, Tate Galleries, 189x142, oil on canvas, 1916).

¹⁶ S. Sassoon, The General, - See Appendix C.

¹⁷ According to Stallworthy between Brooke's 1914 and Other Poems, published in 1915 and his Collected Poems 300,000 copies were sold by 1925. J. Stallworthy, J. Purkis, Anthem for Doomed Youth: Twelve Soldier Poets of the First World War, (London, Constable, Imperial War Museum, 2002),

14.

¹⁸ J. Lehmann, The English Poets of the First World War, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1981), 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 67.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 50.

²¹ W. Owen and E. Blunden, The Poems of Wilfred Owen. A New Edition - Including Many Pieces now First Published, and Notices of his Life and Work by Edmund Blunden, (London, Chatto & Windus, 1931).

Stanley Spencer,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1934

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 92x77

Location - Private collection

Source of Information - T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, Images of Christ Northampton, (Northampton, St. Matthew's, Centenary Art Committee, 1993)

Reason for Inclusion - This is the second of Stanley Spencer's paintings titled *Crucifixion* and which uses the iconography in an unconventional way.

General Description

The picture was commissioned by John Hobday, who specified that it should be set in the Berkshire countryside with the figures based upon his memories of local people he had known. This was more typical of Stanley Spencer's religious works than his *Crucifixion* of 1921.

Unlike conventional crucifixion scenes the viewer stands behind the cross. A possible source of inspiration for this work was William Blake's *Crucifixion* of 1800.² Blake's picture is subtitled *The Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments*. In the construction

¹ Born, 30 June 1891 at Cookham-on-Thames, died 1959.

² William Blake, *Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments*, (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 42x31, watercolour, 1800), Appendix B - Fig. 13.

of the work by Blake, he has placed the soldiers behind the cross in order to distance them emotionally from the dying victims. They are detached from the event, only interested in the roll of a dice to determine the ownership of Christ's robe. Spencer uses this view for a similar purpose. However, this time it is the viewer and/or the artist who is detached from the drama. The viewer is no longer a mourner, but a voyeur, an observer. Like *Crucifixion* of 1921 and 1958 there is little to indicate any sense of suffering by Christ.³

Primary Iconography

Christ is at the centre of the picture with his back to the viewer. Kennedy has noted that Stanley Spencer based it on a work he painted in the same year, *The Scarecrow – Cookham*.⁴ The crucifixion is placed in the same spot as the scarecrow.⁵ Jesus's body is virtually a copy of the torso depicted in *The Scarecrow* and through it gives a distorted impression, emphasising his upper body. His crown of thorns is composed of wild roses. The treatment of the cross is again based upon *The Scarecrow*; the upright is a pole still with its bark on it, its dimensions too small to support a body. The cross member again is too thin, but this time is roughhewn into a shape reminiscent of a bow. Jesus is not nailed to it but is partly tied to it. Whilst not critical to the whole work, it is interesting that Spencer chose to use the English wild rose as the crown of thorns. These roses are pink, unlike the roses of conventional iconography which may be white for purity or red for martyrdom. It is an example of Spencer's preference to place his religious works in a typical English setting.

Secondary Iconography

To the right of the picture a workman in modern dress prepares to nail Jesus's hand. In the left foreground two labourers walk past the cross, one carries a fork, the other a spade. In front of Jesus a group stand or bow before him. Next to them stand a group of observers, all of whom wear multi-coloured breastplates. These may be interpreted as symbolic of Jewish priests with their bejewelled breastplates.⁶ To Jesus's left a man bends over in the process of cutting a white robe, which is related to the soldiers beginning to cut up Jesus's garment.⁷

Just as Spencer merged the figure of Christ and the scarecrow so he merged other characters in his picture. The left of the two workmen at the base of the picture could be seen as a soldier in chainmail with the broken fork covering his face hinting at imprisonment. The heavily pregnant griever to the bottom right of the picture may have been a Cookham local, but may also be Mary, Jesus's mother accompanied by her husband and other children.⁸ Kennedy has identified the bowing figure as possibly John the Evangelist with Mary Magdalene kneeling beside him.⁹

³ For a discussion on this, see Stanley Spencer *Crucifixion*, 1958, 148.

⁴ B. Kennedy, 'Stanley Spencer; A Recently Discovered Crucifixion', in *The Burlington Magazine*, 1981, vol. 123, no. 944, 672, 675.

⁵ Stanley Spencer, *The Scarecrow Cookham*, (Cookham, Stanley Spencer Gallery, 70x76, oil on canvas, 1934), Appendix B - Fig. 14.

⁶ The description of the breastplates is given in Exodus 28:15-29.

⁷ Gospel of John 19:23-24.

⁸ Patricia Prentice, Spencer's second wife, in her reminiscences of him, claimed that in 1939 he visited Campion Hall Oxford to discuss with the Jesuits the possibility of him painting *The Assumption of the Virgin*. However, when he insisted that the model for Mary had to be one of his lovers, because he could not subscribe to a religion which regarded sex as a sinful activity, the project was never taken up by the Jesuits. The inclusion of a pregnant Mary would be consistent with this theology. L. Collis, *A Private View of Stanley Spencer*, (London, Heinemann, 1972), 127-128.

⁹ Kennedy, 'Stanley Spencer; A Recently Discovered Crucifixion,' 672.

Tertiary Iconography

In the background, the river Thames flows across the canvas; behind it is the village of Cookham with its distinctive church and war memorial. The colours are subdued, browns, olive and red ochre being prominent.

Comments

In Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1934, there seems to be no reference back to his First World War experiences and no connection with the poets of that time. *Crucifixion* of 1934 does not appear to reflect his wartime experiences, but perhaps was concerned with Spencer's personal life. Spencer's war experiences were expressed in the decoration of the Sandham Memorial Chapel at Burclere in Hampshire, which was begun in 1928 and completed in 1932. Contemporaneous with the publications of the War poets discussed in Spencer's 1921 *Crucifixion*.

Spencer's connection of scarecrow and Christ raises questions of iconographical interpretation. There is little doubt that Spencer would have enjoyed the visual similarity and this could be the major stimulation for this treatment of Christ. His ongoing belief that God can be found everywhere is also likely to have contributed to this comparison.¹ Deeper significance can also be suggested, however, in the comparison of role; both were engaged in a 'job.'² The job in the case of the scarecrow was removing or scaring off the unwanted birds, in the case of Christ perhaps 'the unsaved'. The 'job' also involved saving; in the case of the scarecrow the physical harvest, in the case of Christ the spiritual harvest.

This work is difficult to interpret. Whilst *The Crucifixion* of 1921 relates to Spencer's war experiences and *The Crucifixion* of 1958 can perhaps be identified with Spencer's feelings as an old man facing death within a year, this work was made at a time of crisis in his mid-life. This period in his life is steeped in controversy. According to Patricia Prentice they had begun an intimate relationship, but according to others the relationship was platonic and Patricia was cruelly manipulating Stanley Spencer.³ However, what is clear is that Stanley Spencer was at the centre of a scandal in Cookham with some supporting him and others vilifying him. This work may reflect his emotions at this time.

¹ See for example his feelings for Cookham in his 'Sermon by Artists' contained in A. Glew, ed. *Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings*, (London, Tate Publishing, 2001), 164.

² For a discussion of Spencer's view of 'the job' see Stanley Spencer, *Crucifixion*, 1958, 148.

³ *A Private View of Stanley Spencer* is a strange work. In the Introduction, which is the work of the author she denigrates Patricia Spencer (nee Prentice) claiming that the relationship with Stanley Spencer had never been consummated (see L. Collis, 7-8); but the main body of the work is attributed by Louis Collis to Patricia in which she asserts that there had been an affair before their marriage. See L. Collis 75-87.

Stanley Spencer,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1958

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 216x216

Location - Private collection

Source of Information - K. Bell, S. Spencer, Stanley Spencer, (London, Phaidon, 1999)

Reason for Inclusion - This is the third of Stanley Spencer's paintings entitled *Crucifixion*, which uses the iconography in an unconventional way. The focus of the work appears to have moved from Jesus to the crucified thief.

General Description

Like many of Spencer's works the crucifixion is placed at Cookham High Street. In Spencer's mind this painting was intended to hang together with *In Church*² as lunette and predella for his 'Church House Project.'³ In the event it was commissioned by J. E. Martineau, a brewer, for a new chapel extension at Aldenham School.

Primary Iconography

Like *Crucifixion* of 1934, Spencer has chosen to view the crucifixion from the rear of Christ. In this picture the face is modelled on his father.⁴ Christ wears a crown of thorns and what could be mistaken for red swimming trunks or pants similar to those worn in

¹ Born, 30 June 1891 at Cookham-on-Thames, died 1959.

² Stanley Spencer, *In Church*, (The Letchmore Trust, 61x216, oil on canvas, 1958), Appendix B - Fig. 15.

³ Much of Spencer's output was part of a scheme he had imagined would consist of a chapel with several side chapels or rooms, which he believed would justly integrate his visionary and secular works into a unified holy place. A. Glew, ed. Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings, (London, Tate Publishing, 2001), 248.

⁴ The crucifixion picture by his brother Gilbert Spencer *Crucifixion* 1915 (see Page 131) is also based upon 'Par' Spencer. See the picture of 'Par' Spencer in Ibid, 56.

Gilbert Spencer's *Crucifixion* of 1915. The cross like that of the 1934 work is quite flimsy and would not have borne Jesus's weight. Jesus's expression is peaceful, again like that of his *Crucifixion* of 1934. All the emotion is seen in the expressions of the secondary images, and it is debatable whether or not Christ is the primary image or whether it is his antagonist who faces him.

Secondary Iconography

The most dominant figure in this work is the thief who faces Jesus in the act of screaming at his fellow victim. There is a question whether this thief is the righteous or non-righteous thief. By convention the non-penitent thief should hang to the left of Jesus. When Jesus faced the viewer this was normally on the right side of the picture. However in this work, convention is left ambiguous - is the angry thief the penitent or non-penitent thief? The second thief hangs in a pose normal for the penitent thief, but to the left of Jesus.

A workman stands on Jesus's left hammering a nail into that hand. The second workman like the first wears a beret and appears to be hammering, though his position makes this act symbolic rather than real.⁵ A third workman stands behind him. The Virgin Mary is depicted at the feet of Jesus in a posture reminiscent of those Spencer witnessed as a child in the Wesleyan Chapel in Cookham when members of the congregation 'flopped' onto a small patch of linoleum and were 'received into everlasting habitations.'⁶

Tertiary Iconography

The crucifixion takes place on a pile of gravel.⁷ Surrounding it are houses from Cookham with a group of observers looking on from a building in the right hand background.

Comment

To discover why Spencer pictured Jesus without any sign of suffering is to consider Stanley Spencer's complex spirituality in relation to the work. Hilda, his first wife, was a Christian Scientist. In June of 1930 Spencer wrote to Hilda how his works had been influenced by her Christian Science views.⁸ Christian Scientists believe that suffering is an illusion; as you turn to God (The Perfect Mind), you discover that the only true reality is God, and that suffering and evil are unreal. Salvation (release from all suffering), occurs as the mortal mind is altered through the true reality of God, which is love. Christian Scientists believe that Christ had this mind of God in its fullness.⁹ The logic of this is that the crucifixion, though an event, was the ultimate testimony to the overcoming of pain, suffering and death. Jesus did not suffer – by his act, he showed the world *the way*. This is also consistent with Spencer's interest in Eastern religions and particularly Buddhism which again emphasises the illusory nature of suffering. It is also consistent with Spencer's view of the nature of the passion. In a letter, quoted by Rothenstein, Stanley Spencer compared Jesus carrying the cross with the two workmen

⁵ At a talk about the picture at Aldenham School, Spencer explained that he had shown the carpenters wearing brewer's caps because "it is your Governors, and you, who are still nailing Christ to the cross." N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 51.

⁶ A. Glew, *Stanley Spencer Letters and Writings*, 28.

⁷ Hepburn, *Cross Purposes*, 51.

⁸ S. Spencer, and J. S. Rothenstein, *Stanley Spencer, The Man: Correspondence and Reminiscences*, (Athens, USA, Ohio University Press, 1979), 37.

⁹ See - M.B. Eddy, *No and Yes*, (Boston, the Christian Science Board of Directors, the First Church of Christ, Scientist), 33-38. Electronic book on www.ChristianScience.com - Accessed 8 January 2014.

following him in his picture of that name.¹⁰ He was adamant that what Christ did was like those two workmen - a job. His only compromise was to describe the passion as **the** job.¹¹ This non-suffering Jesus was just engaged in completing **the** job.

The pleasure of the workmen in *The Crucifixion* now becomes intelligible; they are doing their job, and doing it well. Like the brewers and the governors referred to above in their 'spiritual ignorance' they continued to crucify Christ. However, the agony of the non-penitent thief was real because in Christian Scientist terms he had yet to learn to have the mind of God.

Whilst the placid expression in this work sets the foundation for the work, it is the eyes which define it. Jesus looks away from the scene into heaven; the first workman concentrates on his nail, the second workman seems to be distracted. While the third workman looks toward his victim - the robber who faces Jesus. It is the eyes of this robber which dominate the scene. He looks directly at Jesus, his hair swept back as if a personal hurricane is blowing toward him and his mouth expressing the anger which fills his eyes. The uniqueness of this anger hints at something personal to the painter. By using his father's face as Jesus, it increases the possibility that this angry victim expressed Spencer's agenda.

The contrasts between the peaceful face of Jesus and the anger of the thief leaves the viewer with a dilemma; does Spencer want the viewer to empathise with the figure of Christ or with his accuser?

¹⁰ Stanley Spencer, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, (London, Tate Gallery, 153x143, oil on canvas, 1920), Appendix B – Fig. 16.

¹¹ S. Spencer and J.S. Rothenstein, Stanley Spencer, The Man, 80.

William Roberts,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1922

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size - 76x92

Location – Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art

Source of Information - Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art

Reason for Inclusion – Though this work contains a comprehensive selection of the iconography of the crucifixion, its style and form reveal it as an example of the dominant use of the artistic archetype.²

General Description

This work was originally intended to be part of a pair (the second of which was never completed) with the object of entering it for the Prix de Rome, but was purchased by Augustus John.³ Williams described its style as cubist.⁴ Though a Léger style of cubism can be detected it has much in common with a distinctive Slade School style of Roberts's contemporaries such as William Nevinson, or Nora Carrington.⁵ Its impact is predominantly as a visual experience of the relationships between the different forms in the work rather than leading the viewer into a reflection of its inner meaning. The space in the work is squeezed by foreshortening the perspective which gives an enhanced

¹ Born in Hackney, London, on 5 June 1895, died 1980.

² For a discussion of the artistic archetype see Commentary Chapter One.

³ A.G. Williams and W. Roberts, William Roberts: An English Cubist, (Aldershot, Lund Humphries, 2004), 49.

⁴ Ibid page 49.

⁵ E.g. C. R. W. Nevinson, *French Troops Resting*, (London, Imperial War Museum, 71 x 91, oil on canvas, 1916), Appendix B - Fig. 17.

sense of activity in the work. The formal iconography can be recognised but the overall impression is that form and balance in the work have overridden the iconographical conventions.

Primary Iconography

Christ is approximately centred in the work with the two robbers forming a triangle. Jesus is identifiable by his position slightly higher than his fellow victims and by Mary at his feet,⁶ but no INRI Inscription is present.

Secondary Iconography

The unrepentant thief hangs in the traditional position to the left of Jesus,⁷ but the placing of the three victims is dominated by their visual impact rather than any theological concern. The dress of all the participants is stylised, the mockers to the right appear in modern dress, whilst the soldiers are clothed in their traditional pteruges. In a reference back to medieval traditions a monk, presumably St Francis, stands in prayer behind Jesus.⁸ To the right of the crucifixion, religious leaders hurl abuse.⁹ To the left foreground a group throws dice for Jesus's garments, while behind them a crowd is restrained.

Tertiary Iconography

The major tertiary image in the work is the zigzag city wall behind which stands Jerusalem.¹⁰

Comments

Unlike David Jones's Crucifixion of 1919 or Stanley Spencer's of 1921, this work contains no reference to the First World War. There is no indication of the issues which Jones and Spencer raised or the wider issues of the War poets. The unconventionality of this work is not in its rejection or re-interpretation of the theology of the crucifixion, but in its marginalisation. As stated earlier Roberts painted this work as part of a competition. Its subject matter is almost irrelevant; it is a work which displays some of the remnants of Robert's Vorticism period: an English art movement influenced by the Italian Futurists which looked to celebrate the dynamism of the modern mechanised world.¹¹ This work shows some of the tension and anxiety of that movement, particularly in the crowds, but fails to display any concern for the crucifixion itself. It could easily be replaced by an alternative centre such as one of Robert's sporting scenes without any loss to the quality of the work.¹² This is in contrast to his later work

⁶ There is an ambiguity about Roberts's placing of Mary at the feet of Jesus. On the one hand the male figure behind her can be interpreted as John the Evangelist comforting the Virgin Mary (see Gospel of John 19:25-27), On the other hand her positioning is most associated with Mary Magdalene. E.g. Giotto, *Crucifixion*, (Padua, Arena Chapel, Fresco, c1305), (Appendix B - Fig. 10).

⁷ The tradition of the unrepentant thief looking down to hell and the repentant thief looking to heaven identifies them in this work.

⁸ Pesellino, *The Crucifixion with Saint Jerome and Saint Francis*, (Washington, National Gallery of Art, tempera on panel, c. 1445-50), Appendix B - Fig. 18.

⁹ Gospel of Mark, 15:29-32.

¹⁰ Though the Bible does not state specifically that Christ was crucified outside the city walls (it can be inferred from Matthew's Gospel 2:11) it has been a long tradition in crucifixion works. See - Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion Triptych*. (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, oil on panel, c.1445), Appendix B - Fig. 19.

¹¹ F. Spalding, *British Art since 1900*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1986), 50-57.

¹² E.g. William Roberts, *The Interval before Round 10* (Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 92x122, oil on canvas, 1919) where Roberts has successfully transferred his earlier experiences into creating a work with energy and excitement in its form, Appendix B - Fig. 20.

Descent From the Cross, which does convey a deeper sense of concern and loss.¹³ The unconventional nature of this work in relation to the religious works covered by Schiller is that despite its conventional iconography it has nothing to say theologically, its attraction is purely visual.¹⁴

¹³ William Roberts, *Descent From the Cross*, (London, Tate, 50x59, oil on canvas, 1926).

¹⁴ G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971).

Thomas Saunders Nash,¹ *Crucifixion*, c1932

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 122x107

Location – Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Laing Art Gallery

Source of Information - Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Laing Art Gallery

Reason for Inclusion – Whilst this work includes a significant amount of iconography of the crucifixion, it lacks a cohesive theological content to raise it to an example of the use of the Sacred Archetype.

General Description

Nash was a contemporary of Stanley Spencer at the Slade and similarities in their work can be seen.² This work in a post-impressionist manner, at first sight looks conventional in its iconography, but it does contain some deviations. The setting is within an English country scenery identified by the parish church in the left background.

Primary Iconography

Jesus hangs on the cross, with his arms horizontal, his eyes closed at peace, but with no signs of wounds to the hands, feet or side. His loincloth has been minimalized.

Secondary Iconography

¹ Born 1891, died 1968 (No more information available at present).

² See 'John Saunders Nash.' At J.H.W. Fine Art, http://www.jhwfineart.com/content/artistbiography/5199/thomas_s._nash.html - Accessed 16 January 2014.

The two thieves maintain their traditional pose with the repentant thief on Jesus's right with his face turned to his Saviour whilst the unrepentant thief hangs head down to Jesus's left. Longinus is pictured on the right of the picture with the inference that Jesus's wound would appear on the left side.³

In the other figures, which make up the secondary iconography, Nash has included some unusual treatments. A woman is depicted grieving in the traditional blue of the Virgin Mary to the right of Jesus, but unusually she is comforted by an older man not the young John the Evangelist. It could be Joseph her husband, though it is normally assumed that he had died before Christ's crucifixion, or it could be Joseph of Arimathea who claimed Jesus's body after the crucifixion. Even more surprising is that her looks are of a younger woman, younger than her son. The two 'workmen' on the ladders are in modern dress, but the soldiers are dressed in a uniform indicative of a Roman past, whilst the women are in flowing robes which could be of several different eras.

Tertiary Iconography

The landscape could be any rural part of England.

Comment

Overall there is some confusion in the interpretation of the work. The lack of wounds and blood sanitises the crucifixion; there is apparently no suffering on the part of Jesus. The main centre of emotion in the work surrounds the grieving woman contrasted with the anger of the mocking soldiers. All this diminishes the theological significance of the work; little importance seems to have been placed on the sacred iconography of the crucifixion and whilst there is some focusing upon the Semiotic Archetype,⁴ the overall impression is that the main use of the iconography of the crucifixion has been artistic in that the impact of the work is close to a domestic scene of grief and conflict. The replacement of the cross with some other symbol such as the death of Socrates would have had little impact on the viewer's response.

³ For a discussion on the positioning of the lance wound see, Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (1994), 237.

⁴ For a discussion of the Semiotic Archetype: see Chapter One of the Commentary, 32.

Francis Bacon,¹ *The Crucifixion (Black Version), 1933*²

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 62x48

Location – Private collection

Source of Information - R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012)

Reason for Inclusion – Like all Bacon’s works which use the iconography of the crucifixion, this early work is not intended as an image for use in worship or to invite the viewer to reflect upon the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus, but it is the only instance where he explicitly used the cruciform shape.³

General Description

This painting is the first of three crucifixion images painted by Francis Bacon in 1933. All three should be considered as tentative attempts by the artist in his early years of development. Most of Bacon’s work from this period was destroyed by the artist as

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

² There are three 1933 paintings by Francis Bacon all titled *The Crucifixion*. For the purposes of this work they have been identified as the Black Version, Yellow Version and Brown Version.

³ R. Arya, and F. Bacon Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 63.

inadequate.⁴ In this work one can see the influence of Pablo Picasso, particularly with his experiments in form of the period 1925 -1936. It would be misleading to assign a particular work, but the sparse black and white sculptor like image of Bacon's *Crucifixion* has echoes of Picasso's Marquette's for a Memorial to Apollinaire.⁵ The form can also be seen in Picasso's *Crucifixion* of 1930.⁶

Primary Iconography

The painting is predominately white with a black background. The style of the work can be compared to Picasso's *Memorial to Apollinaire*, with the body simplified, and the arms, legs and head reduced to pins or possibly more pertinently nails. The white body hangs from a simple brown beam, the arms forming a semi-circle. The neck is extended whilst the head is reduced to a nail head. The pose of the body is ambiguous. One interpretation recalls Picasso's central figure in the *Three Dancers*, the arms are uplifted and one leg is bent.⁷ Alternatively the bent form can be disregarded and a more stable pose can be seen with the two nail-like lower limbs. To the lower right three diagonal forms, may remind the viewer of a rib cage.

Rina Arya describes the large white form, which curves around the body, as the victim's robe or diaphanous veil.⁸ This interpretation relates it to the flying loincloths of medieval tradition.⁹ An alternative is to understand the left side as a secondary figure.

Secondary Iconography

The form on the left side of the body can be inferred to represent a figure embracing the victim. One of the enigmas of this work is the image of a tiny man apparently climbing up the right shoulder of this figure. If it is noticed by the viewer it turns the image into gigantic proportions.

Comments

This work is essentially concerned with the Artistic Archetype; whilst attractive, like its contemporaries,¹⁰ it lacks the psychological impact of his later works and remains essentially a decorative object.¹¹

⁴ D. Sylvester, and F. Bacon, *Looking back at Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames & Hudson, 2000), 16.

⁵ They are illustrated in C. Warncke and P. Picasso, *Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973*, (London, Taschen, 2002), 324-325.

⁶ P. Picasso, *Crucifixion*, (Paris, Museum Picasso, 50x65, oil on wood, 1930), Appendix B - Fig. 21.

⁷ P. Picasso, *Three Dancers*, (London, Tate Galleries, 215x142, oil on canvas, 1925), Appendix B - Fig. 22.

Similarities can also be seen in another of Bacon's early works *Crucifixion* of 1933 (Brown version), 160

⁸ Arya, *Francis Bacon*, 63.

⁹ E.g. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Centurion Under the Cross*, (Aschaffenburg, Bayerische Staatsgemaltesammlungen Aschaffenburg, 52x34, oil on board, 1539), Appendix B - Fig. 23.

¹⁰ 'Brown' and 'Yellow' *Crucifixions* of 1933, pages 157 and 159.

¹¹ W. Schmied, and F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict*, (London, Prestel, 2006), 69.

Francis Bacon,¹ *The Crucifixion*, (Brown version), 1933²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, chalk, gouache and pencil on paper

Size – 64x48

Location – Private collection

Source of Information - R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012)

Reason For Inclusion - This early work by Bacon is not intended as an image for use in worship or to invite the viewer to reflect upon the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus, it is essentially decorative.³

General Description

This is the second of three crucifixion pictures completed by Francis Bacon in 1933. It is quite distinctive and more complex than its contemporaries. Like the other two Picasso's influence can be discerned. There are three figures, the central one painted in brown, and the other two in white. All three are similar in style to Picasso's metamorphic figures, though they lack the fullness of many of Picasso's constructions.

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

² There are three 1933 paintings all titled *Crucifixion*. For the purposes of this work they have been identified as the Black Version, Yellow Version and Brown Version.

³ A conclusion also made by Schmied. See - W. Schmied, and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict, (London, Prestel, 2006), 69.

In contradiction to its title, the figures in the work have a sense of movement comparable to Picasso's *The Three Dancers* of 1925.⁴

Iconography

The iconography is complex and like much of Bacon's work it is difficult to analyse. One reading of the work would be to understand the three figures as those of the three victims at the crucifixion of Jesus. This would make the larger central figure that of Jesus. But are there three crucifixions? Or is the foreground figure on the right of the picture a woman, perhaps Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross? Is the central figure not a person, but the cross itself, indicated by its colour and yet dislocated from the central character on the left; a white victim whose heart has been cut out?⁵

The vertical stripes give the impression for the viewer of observing the image through the bars of a prison or cage, a technique which Bacon would return to in his more mature works.

Comments

Though this and the other two versions of this time are not the most significant of Francis Bacon's works which use the iconography of the crucifixion they have importance in tracing implicit changes in theology contained in Francis Bacon's later works.⁶

⁴ Pablo Picasso, *The Three Dancers*, (London, Tate Galleries, 215x142, oil on canvas, 1925), Appendix B - Fig. 22.

⁵ The left hand figure in *The Three Dancers* also contains a void.

⁶ See Commentary Chapter Two, 68-71.

Francis Bacon,¹ *The Crucifixion, (Yellow Version), 1933*²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 112x86

Location – Private collection

Source of Information - R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012)

Reason for Inclusion – This is the largest of the three early crucifixion pictures by Bacon. It does not include a cross, but the figure and skull refer back to conventional crucifixion works, whilst the style looks forward to Bacon's mature works.

General Description: There is little available information on this picture. It is one of the few surviving pictures created by Bacon before 1946. According to Arya, this is the third of the *Crucifixion* pictures to be produced by Bacon in 1933 and has moved close

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

² There are three 1933 paintings by Francis Bacon all titled *Crucifixion*. For the purposes of this work they have been identified as the Black Version, Yellow Version and Brown Version.

to his 'man as meat' interpretations.³ Unlike the Black Version and the Brown Version its use of colour predicts Bacon's later development.

Primary Iconography

The apparently crucified figure in this painting which stands in the absence of a cross is reminiscent of a flayed animal, which Arya recognised as Francis Bacon's first recorded example of his "instantiation of 'man as meat.'" It pre-empted his 1946 'crucifixion' work, *Painting*.⁴ Whether deliberately or accidentally, the inclusion of the vibrant orange stripe down the right side of the victim can be read as contrasting with the gaunt left side as between death and resurrected life.

Tertiary Iconography

The background is simple, divided up into a yellow upper portion with the base painted black. The work contains a translucent skull, again an early indication of later developments.⁵ Arya has reported that it is based upon the x-ray of the skull of Sir Michael Sadler a major British art collector who requested that it be included in a Bacon work.⁶ The skull was often used in earlier conventional crucifixion paintings. It was associated with the place Golgotha, which meant place of the skull. It was also associated with Adam, whose bones were supposed to have been buried beneath the place of the cross. The skull was also a symbol of death.

Comments

Arya has considered this and its contemporary works to be essentially experimental works in which Bacon was working out the artistic relationships 'between the body and its articulation on the cross.'⁷

³ R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 66.

⁴ Francis Bacon, *Painting*, (1946), 163.

⁵ E.g. Francis Bacon, *Study for Portrait II [After the Life Mask of William Blake]*, (London, Tate Galleries, 61x51, oil on canvas, 1955), Appendix B - Fig. 24.

⁶ Arya, Francis Bacon, 63.

⁷ *Ibid*, 66.

Francis Bacon,¹ *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, 1944

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on board.

Size – Each panel - 94x74

Location - Tate Gallery

Source of Information - Tate Gallery

Reason For Inclusion - This is a central work in Bacon's development on the theme of the crucifixion. Like all Bacon's works which use the iconography of the crucifixion, this work is not intended as an image for use in worship or to invite the viewer to reflect upon the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus, but to confront the viewer with the bleakness of reality.

General Description

The work consists of a triptych of equal size, a form traditionally associated with the Christian tradition and one to which he would constantly return.² The iconography of the paintings is not obvious; its title refers to the tradition of including in an altar piece narrative works relating to the saints or other religious events. Rina Arya considered that the figures in the triptych related to the figures traditionally pictured surrounding the cross, such as the Virgin Mary, John the Evangelist and/or Mary Magdalene,³ but they could also be related to an alternative tradition of placing small pictures below the main altar piece depicting incidents in the life of Jesus or saints.⁴ It is dated as 1944, but there is evidence that it was the product of several years of experimenting by the artist.⁵

Whilst it was not the first by Bacon to refer to a religious theme, it was the most important of his early works. It was this work in particular which established Francis Bacon as an international artist.⁶ From an art historical view it can be considered as a fulcrum work, with some references to his earlier work, but also introducing elements characteristic of his later works. This triptych may be seen then as the last of his series of works indebted to Picasso's metamorphic forms.⁷ However, the triptych construction

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

² R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 66.

³ Arya, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, 68.

⁴ E.g. Francesco Pesellino and Fra Lippi, *The Holy Trinity with Saints*, Altarpiece, (London, National Gallery, 184x182, egg and oil on wood, 1455-60). Appendix B - Fig. 25.

⁵ E. van Alphen, Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self, (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1993), 67.

⁶ M. Hammer and F. Bacon, Bacon and Sutherland, (New Haven, published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2005), 14.

⁷ D. Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), 1.

and the use of a plain and in particular orange background looked forward to his later works. In 1988 Bacon produced a larger modified version of this work.⁸

Primary Iconography

Though it does not contain any primary iconography of the crucifixion, Francis Bacon had originally intended to paint a large crucifixion scene to stand above the work.⁹ The effect of this absence is to minimise the event of the crucifixion of Jesus and to emphasise the impact of the three panels of the triptych on the viewer.

Secondary Iconography

On each panel is a figure, part human and part monster. The origins of the three forms are complex. In conversation, Bacon acknowledged his appreciation of similar biomorphic works by Picasso from the late 1920s and early 30s.¹⁰ Bacon named the three forms as the *Eumenides* of Greek mythology.¹¹ The Eumenides are best known through the work of the Greek dramatist Aeschylus whose trilogy the *Oresteria* was known to Bacon.¹² Alley has said that the bandaged central figure had been inspired by Grunewald's *The Mocking of Christ*.¹³ The screaming mouth noticeable particularly in the right hand panel would become a major iconographical tool for Bacon. It was based partly upon the image of the screaming nurse from Sergei Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* of 1925 which Bacon knew well.¹⁴

Comments

A significant element in the interpretation of this work is to be found in the use of the indefinite article in the title. Francis Bacon described it as *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, not ...of *the Crucifixion*, which gives it a more general application related to humanity as a whole.¹⁵ Arya has suggested that the three figures can be interpreted as reflections of the viewer.¹⁶ Bacon gave an indication why he used these strange forms in a conversation with Michael Archimaud. Bacon likened his approach to painting as the Greeks viewed theatre - 'It's the old idea of Greek theatre; the public came to experience feelings of terror and thereby purge their passions.'¹⁷

This work produced a wave of shock on its first appearance in 1944 at the Lefevre Gallery.¹⁸ This shock can be understood if one accepts that what the viewer was expecting was some acknowledgement of the Sacred Archetype or at least a respectful use of the Semiotic Archetype. Bacon's triptych shows no such respect; rather it uses the expectations of the viewer as part of its psychological impact.

⁸ Francis Bacon, *Second Version of Triptych 1944*, (London, Tate Galleries, 198 x 147, oil and acrylic on canvas, 1988), Appendix B - Fig. 26. This second version was not included in the Scholarly Edition.

⁹ Excerpts from a letter contained in the Catalogue. *Francis Bacon*. (London, Tate, Prestel, 1962)

¹⁰ F. Bacon and M. Archimaud, *Francis Bacon: In Conversation with Michael Archimaud*, (London, Phaidon, 1993), 35.

¹¹ D. Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 44.

¹² F. Bacon and M. Archimaud, *Francis Bacon: In Conversation*, 112.

¹³ R. Alley, and J. S. Rothenstein, *Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1964), 35.

Matthias Grünewald, *The Mocking of Christ*, (Munich, Alte Pinakothek, 109x74, oil on wood, 1503-1505), Appendix B – Fig. 27.

¹⁴ Sergei Eisenstein, *Nurse*, Still from the film *Battleship Potemkin* 1928, Appendix B - Fig. 28. See W. Schmied, and F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict*, (London, Prestel, 2006), 14.

¹⁵ Arya, *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, 67. This observation has been discussed more fully in the Commentary Chapter Two, 70.

¹⁶ Arya *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, 69.

¹⁷ F. Bacon and M. Archimaud, *Francis Bacon: In Conversation*, 78.

¹⁸ Arya, *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, 70.

Francis Bacon,¹⁹ *Painting*, 1946

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copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil and pastel on linen

Size – 198x132

Location – Museum of Modern Art New York.

Source of Information - Museum of Modern Art New York

Reason for Inclusion – The iconography of the crucifixion in this work is not obvious but can still be discerned and contributes to Bacon’s atheistic approach to the iconography of the crucifixion.

General Description

There are accounts by Bacon on how this painting developed accidentally from an image of a bird while he was in a drunken stupor;²⁰ but its finished form raises questions about this. However much spontaneity Bacon may have claimed for this work, it is clear that he was drawing from a library of other works. The man and umbrella can be seen in *Study for Man with Microphones* of 1946,²¹ which probably preceded *Painting*,²² and

¹⁹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

²⁰ D. Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), 14.

²¹ Illustrated in M. Harrison, *Francis Bacon: New Studies: Centenary Essays*, (Göttingen, Steidl, 2009), Fig. 58.

²² *Ibid*, 216.

also in *Figure Studies II* of 1945-46.²³ The scream of the umbrella man, which would become so characteristic of many of Bacon's later works, can be traced back both to earlier works by other artists and the artist himself.²⁴

Primary Iconography

In painting a flayed animal, Francis Bacon has continued a long tradition in art.²⁵ The flayed animal at the rear of the work is reminiscent of a crucifixion and may be 'read' in this context. This primary iconography visually articulates Bacon's view that life and death are essentially concerned with man as animal.²⁶

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

The only figure in the work is the man seated under an umbrella. The small white marks on the frame in front of the man can be traced to the microphones in *Study for Man with Microphones*.²⁷ This would place the man as witness. His scream contrasting with his black-suited respectability and contrasting with the life affirming yellow rose which Bacon had added to the figure, also derived from *Study for Man with Microphones*.²⁸ This brutalism is emphasised by the two smaller pieces of meat in front and to the left and right of the main carcass, perhaps relating to the two thieves in the traditional crucifixion pictures.

Comments

There have been various interpretations of this work; Schmied has pointed out that in *Painting* there is no attempt to harmonise the incongruity of the carcass with the screaming man under his umbrella and that during this period Bacon could be described as a Surrealist.²⁹ Arya has emphasised the connection between the man and the carcass as part of Bacon's ongoing reference to humanity as essentially animal.³⁰ Harrison has used Deleuze and Artaud to suggest that Bacon's paintings are not 'illustrative' in the sense that he is recording by a visual media the cruelty in the world, but that he is attempting to reveal 'the spiritual' which is communicated as we interact.³¹ From the standpoint of the present study, it would appear that Bacon has used the Semiotic Archetype in the 'crucifixion of the carcass' to reject the hope implicit in the Sacred Archetype. Perhaps the scream of the man in the work is the equivalent response when suffering and death is revealed as placing humanity with the animal world and not, as the Sacred Archetype would suggest, with the spiritual world.

²³ Francis Bacon, *Figure Studies II*, (Huddersfield Art Gallery, 164x150, oil on canvas, 1945-46), Appendix B - Fig. 29.

²⁴ An early renaissance example is Leonardo da Vinci's *Study of the Head of a Man Shouting*, (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, drawing, c1505). The most famous are Munch's *Scream*, and the screaming men in Picasso's *Guernica*, (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado 1937).

See also, Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for the Base of a Crucifixion 1944*, (Page 161).

²⁵ E.g. Rembrandt, *The Slaughtered Ox*, (Paris, Louvre, 94x68, oil on canvas, 1655), Appendix B - Fig. 30.

²⁶ Francis Bacon said, 'I've been very moved by pictures about slaughterhouses and meat, and they belong very much to the whole thing of the Crucifixion.' Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 23.

²⁷ The original work is lost, but it is illustrated in Jennifer Mundy's article for the on-line exhibition 'The Gallery of Lost Art.' See <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/gallery-lost-art-francis-bacon> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

²⁸ This figure may be based upon Eric Hall, his patron and lover at the time.

²⁹ W. Schmied, and F. Bacon, *Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict*, (London, Prestel, 2006), 86.

³⁰ R. Arya, and F. Bacon *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 135.

³¹ M. Harrison, *Francis Bacon: New Studies*, (2009), 24-34.

Francis Bacon,¹ *Fragment of a Crucifixion*, 1950

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Note: In the original painting there is a stronger red colouration.

Medium – Painting, oil and cotton wool on canvas

Size – 158x127

Location - Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

Source of Information - Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

Reason for Inclusion – An unconventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion, in which abstract biomorphic figures are used.

General Description

This large work was completed some six years after *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*. Its setting is ambiguous; the background appears to be an interior wall, whilst the upper figure seems to be sitting on a shelf or the top of the cross.

Primary Iconography

Bacon has replaced the body of Christ in this work with two biomorphic animals. On the top of the Cross a beast which looks like a ‘cat’ crouches in readiness to attack a bird-like creature whose beak has been replaced with Bacon’s personal iconography:

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

that of the screaming mouth.² Rina Arya has suggested that the screaming figure could be compared to the Biblical crucifixion whilst the figure above could relate to the Ascension.³ The cross forms part of the background which is formalised by Bacon to give the impression of the action happening on the wall of a gallery or museum. This is re-enforced by the guidelines which surround the cross and infer that the whole work is an image of an image painted on the wall.

Secondary or Tertiary Iconography

An anomalous inclusion in this picture is the apparent graffiti of a street scene complete with pedestrians and cars. The viewer may interpret these as ‘the witnesses’ to the scene, or as graffiti which accentuates the tension within the observer of horror at the imminent destruction of the victim, yet divorced from it by the hint of the image as an inanimate object rather than being an image of a living creature. This device was used by Bacon in many of his works.⁴

Comments

Francis Bacon has used the indefinite article *a* in the title of this work implying that there could be many crucifixions.⁵ That is that there is an element of particularity in this work. He has also entitled it a *Fragment*. This term indicates either that this image is part of a greater drama over time and/or that there is more to the drama than has been painted. The viewer is left to extend the particularity, chronology and context within their imagination. Bacon by its title is indicating a universal context for this work. This is consistent with his earlier works of this period in which he has abandoned the concept of the crucifixion as a unique sacred event and has used it as an image of natural suffering. This is consistent with Russell’s understanding of Bacon’s interest in the crucifixion, suggesting that crucifixion for Bacon is ‘a generic name for an environment in which bodily harm is done to one or more persons and one or more other persons gather to watch.’⁶ It is also consistent with Bacon’s admiration for Greek theatre in which terror is perceived as a necessary need for human beings.⁷

² The identification of the nature of the primary iconography is not universally agreed. Arya describes the figures in terms of the upper figure looming over the lower, whilst Darren Ambrose describes the upper figure as a ‘dog-spirit.’ See R. Arya, and F. Bacon Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World. (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 70 and D. Ambrose, essay, Bacon’s Spiritual Realism – The Spirit in the Body in M. Harrison, Francis Bacon: New Studies: Centenary Essays, (Göttingen, Steidl, 2009), 38.

³ R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon, 73.

⁴ For a discussion on Wieland Schmied’s analysis of that work: See Francis Bacon, *Crucifixion* (1965), 173.

⁵ See Francis Bacon, *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, (1962), 170.

⁶ J. Russell, *Francis Bacon* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1993), 113.

⁷ “It’s the old idea of Greek theatre; the public came to experience feelings of terror and thereby purge their passions.” Francis Bacon. F. Bacon and M. Archimbaud, Francis Bacon: In Conversation with Michael Archimbaud, (London, Phaidon, 1993), 78.

Francis Bacon,¹ *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, 1962

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, triptych, oil with sand on canvas

Size – Each panel 198x145

Location - Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Source of Information - Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Reason for Inclusion - Francis Bacon's use of the iconography of the crucifixion is highly unconventional and pre-figures his 1965 *Crucifixion*.

General Description

Whilst this work has a similar title to *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944), the iconography of this triptych has closer similarities with the triptych *Crucifixion* (1965), though the dynamics of the works differ. In the 1965 work there is an integration of the three panels by the background where-as in *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1962) each panel has its own integrity. In addition the movement in the 1962 work is from left to right, with the crucifixion appearing in the right hand panel, whilst in the 1965 work the crucifixion appears in the central panel.

Primary Iconography

In an interview with David Sylvester, Francis Bacon suggested that the figure in the right hand panel had developed from Cimabue's *Great Crucifixion*.² Bacon described the Italian's image of Christ as 'as a worm crawling down the cross.'³ This becomes clearer if Cimabue's work is viewed upside down.⁴ The image whilst unique can also be seen to relate to Bacon's image of a carcass in *Painting* (1946) and thus to the abattoir and 'the sense of imminent slaughter.'⁵

Secondary Iconography

The theme of slaughter can be discerned in the left hand and central panels. The joints of meat and the distorted treatment of the two figures evoke a sense of inevitable connection between the two pairs. This is developed in the central panel where the

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, died 1992.

² Cimabue, *Crucifix*, (Firenze, Museo dell'Opera di Santa Croce, c1280).

³ D. Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), 14.

⁴ There is no documentary evidence that Francis Bacon was influenced by the tradition that St. Peter the Apostle was crucified upside down. See J. de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints – Volume 1*, trans. by W.G. Ryan, (Chichester, Princeton University Press, 1995), 345.

⁵ R. Arya and F. Bacon *Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World*, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 73-74. For *Painting* (1946), see 163.

figure on the bed (an important psychological place for Francis Bacon, highlighted in *Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe* [1963]) is both portrayed erotically and in extreme suffering;⁶ the scene having been scattered with blood red paint and white dots, described by Deleuze as ‘Ejaculatory gestures.’⁷

Comments

Other issues relating to this work are discussed more fully in this Scholarly Edition in *Crucifixion* (1965), 175

⁶ See Arya, *Francis Bacon*, 61.

⁷ G. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, (London, Continuum, 2003), 23.

Francis Bacon,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1965

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, triptych, oil on canvas

Size –Triptych each 198x147

Location - Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich

Source of Information - R. Arya, and F. Bacon Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World. (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012)

Reason for Inclusion - Francis Bacon's use of the iconography of the crucifixion is highly unconventional, indicating a rejection of the Christian tradition of the crucifixion.

General Description

Schmied has placed this work in a museum or art gallery. '*The Crucifixion* has become an image of the crucifixion, appearing, in this case, in the guise of a sculpture, which has been banished to the sedate and mildly stuffy atmosphere of a museum.'²

Primary Iconography

The central figure of *Crucifixion* is based upon an inverted image of Cimabue's *Great Crucifix*, which Bacon described '– as a worm crawling down the cross.'³ The details of the figure, though, are closer in form to a carcass than a human being. The splayed upper legs and the bisected body could be seen in any slaughter house, whilst the lower limbs are wrapped in gauze, which can also be seen on carcasses.⁴ The placing of part of the victim in a horizontal position has been interpreted by Arya as a visual technique to reduce the dignity of a vertical image.⁵

Secondary Iconography

In the right hand panel Schmied described the two men as two visitors, with a degree of ambiguity introduced by Bacon of an altar rail.⁶ He also described two of the other

¹ Born, 28 October 1909, Dublin, Died 1992.

² W. Schmied and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict, (London, Prestel, 2006), 74.

³ D. Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1980), 14. See also *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1965), 172.

⁴ Francis Bacon had a close interest in the appearance of meat. See Sylvester, Interviews with Francis Bacon, 23.

⁵ R. Arya and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Painting in a Godless World, (Farnham, Lund Humphries, 2012), 79.

⁶Schmied, Commitment and Conflict, 74.

images as perhaps additional sculptures, but failed to mention the nude woman in the left hand panel. An alternative interpretation is to assign to the images some aspects of traditional Christian iconography. The nude woman can then be related to Mary Magdalene; the figure at the far right of the right hand panel wearing a Nazi armband may be identified as one of the soldiers, perhaps the centurion, and the two respectable observers as being associated with the priests at Christ's crucifixion.

Tertiary Iconography

The most difficult image is the major one on the right of the left hand panel. From the perspective of the work this appears at the base of the cross. With its blood and gore, a weak link can be made to Adam's bones, traditionally displayed there. Or its horizontal form can be linked to the grieving Mary and also to the pieta. Its form offers other interpretations. It appears to be based upon a figure or figures on a bed, possibly a camp bed onto which have been laid cushions. Across this is stretched out a biomorphic form. The head appears to be that of a dead dog complete with collar and rosette; its mouth open and exuding blood. Its distorted spotted body can be identified below its head, but attached to it is an athletic man's arm. It is difficult not to associate it with Bacon's sadomasochistic homosexuality. The origin can be found in *Two Figures* of 1953 in which two male lovers are pictured on a bed. This image is developed and rotated by 90 degrees in the central panel of *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* of 1962. This then leads to a further alternative reading of the work, by following the two visitors' eye-line across the painting to the nude and to the other image in the left hand panel. These visitors then become witnesses to a series of carnal events, the seductive nude, the animal acts on the bed, the inversed destruction on the cross and the implications of a Nazi monster.

Comments

Whilst Schmied's and these other observations contribute to the reading of the work, it reveals the tendency of interpreting the painting as a narrative. Ernest van Alphen has convincingly argued that Francis Bacon's work uses the genre of narrative painting, but with the intention of confusing and provoking the viewer as the narrative breaks down. 'The narrative is not the content of perception, but defines the structure of perception itself.'⁷ Francis Bacon put it another way. When asked by David Sylvester about how he approached the painting of a *Crucifixion*, he replied "you're working then about your own feelings and sensations, really. You might say it's almost nearer to a self-portrait. You are working on all sorts of very private feelings about behaviour and about the way life is."⁸ Francis Bacon's use of the iconography of the crucifixion is not directly concerned with any particular religious insight, but to reflect upon his own inner life. It is, perhaps, a psychological self-portrait. In Chapter Two of the Commentary a more speculative interpretation is offered, based upon Schmied's suggestion of the work being based in a museum.

⁷ E. van Alphen, *Francis Bacon and the Loss of Self*, (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press 1993), 30. This is discussed more fully in the Commentary Chapter Two.

⁸ Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 46.

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on cardboard

Size – 25x17

Location – Kettle’s Yard, Cambridge

Source of Information - Kettle’s Yard Cambridge

Reason for Inclusion - This ‘primitive’ artist has produced a work which is unusual and remains to be interpreted, but its significance in this collection is that as an artist from a Christian working class background, born in the mid-nineteenth century, he did not feel constrained to use the iconography in a conventional manner.

General Description

Wallis was a self-taught artist who lived in St Ives. He only began painting in 1925 after the death of his wife. He was admired by Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood, who came across his work when visiting St. Ives in 1928. He is best known for his seascapes and pictures of boats.² In this work he has explored a series of visual relationships with the suggestion in the title that there may be deeper meanings in the work.

¹ Born, 8 August 1855, Devonport, Devon, died 1942.

² P. Carter, ‘Alfred Wallis’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/57077> - Accessed 20 Jan 2014.

Iconography

The setting for this scene is a grey/black hillside, which could be Calvary. At the top of the work and in its centre is an outstretched figure of a person wearing a halo. Immediately below him is a slightly larger image of a second victim. By the inclusion of only two crucifixion victims, the viewer could be drawn to infer that the man at the bottom of the work is the third member of the traditional crucifixion scene. However, this figure dressed in a smock and fisherman's cap stands before an opening which can be interpreted as Jesus's tomb. The two dogs who roam on either side of the figures are positioned in such a way with the three figures to produce a cross.

Comments

Alfred Wallis was almost uneducated, his writing is barely readable. His lifelong reading matter according to Ben Nicholson was just a large Black Bible and a copy of A Life of Christ.³ There is then a danger of making a too sophisticated interpretation of this work, but the three figures could indicate the three states of life: material life at the base, death and resurrection. This interpretation focuses upon Wallis's primary title of *Crucifixion*, but his secondary title of *Allegory* gives permission to the viewer to interpret it as they wish.

³ Ben Nicholson, 'Alfred Wallis', in Horizon, Vol. VII, No. 37, 1943, see www.alfredwallis.org.uk - Accessed 24 October 2012.

Michael Rothenstein,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1937

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on board

Size – 102x76

Location – Tate Galleries

Source of Information – Tate Galleries

Reason for Inclusion - Although Rothenstein used a substantial amount of the iconography of the crucifixion, the use of modern dress for ‘Jesus’ indicates an unconventional theology.

General Description

This work is untypical of Rothenstein’s paintings at this time, which were mainly landscapes.² Gooding has suggested that its origin may have been Rothenstein’s outrage at the suffering of ordinary people, particularly at the time of the Spanish Civil War.³ However, there is very little to associate this image with those events in Spain.

¹ Born, Hampstead, London, 19 March 1908, died 1993.

² Even a Biblical work completed in 1938 has a different style: closer to that of Stanley Spencer. Michael Rothenstein, *Journey to the Promised Land*, (Sheffield, Sheffield Museum, 121x121, oil and tempera on canvas, 1938).

³ Commentary on the painting by M Gooding, in N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 33.

According to the Tate Gallery this work was one of several pictures of Biblical themes painted by Rothenstein which appeared at his first one-person show at the Matthiessen Gallery in 1938.⁴

Primary Iconography

The central figure is identified as Jesus by the INRA displayed above his head. Its primary iconography depicts Jesus as a young man in modern dress stripped to the waist. The arms are stretched down indicative of a mood comparable to *Christus Patiens* rather than *Christus Victor*. Almost unique to Rothenstein is that Christ is dressed in trousers as are his fellow victims. Whilst in many medieval paintings the bystanders were depicted in contemporary dress of the time the work was produced, Christ (as *Christus Patiens*) remained painted with a loincloth of varying complexity. Here Michael Rothenstein has consciously rooted the central figure in the 1930s.⁵

Secondary Iconography

The secondary figures are reminiscent of traditional figures, though a degree of ambiguity remains. The woman at the foot of the cross occupies the place traditionally associated with Mary Magdalene, her dress of green and pink/red re-enforcing this interpretation. In front of her, placing flowers, the man might be connected to the evangelist John, the flowers a reminder of Jesus's mother, Mary. The victim to the right of Jesus is labelled as a thief and hangs in similar style to Jesus, affording some kind of association. However, the victim to Jesus's left, normally associated with the non-penitent thief is more complex. His stance dissociates him from the central victim and the gag reminds the viewer of the non-penitent thief's outbursts, but the white torn trousers hint at the iconography of purity and martyrdom; which gives this work its ambiguous nature.

The three remaining figures too are open to interpretation. The figure in green to the bottom right would appear to be representative of those who have physically hung the three victims. However, the other two could be included as part of that group or seen as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who the evangelist John recorded came to remove Jesus's body.⁶ The clothes would hint at the former interpretation, their sympathetic expressions indicate the latter interpretation.

Tertiary Iconography

The appearance of the ladder in the foreground is not uncommon in crucifixion pictures and adds weight to the possibility that this figure is based upon Joseph of Arimathea.

Comments

If the figures in the painting are based upon real people, a more satisfactory analysis of this work could be achieved if the identity of these individuals was known. What is significant is that all the figures in this work appear to be of the same social group, whether the two workers who have crucified the victims, or the concerned woman or those who seem to be recovering his body. As it stands it would appear that the work has used the iconography of the crucifixion to comment upon modern society, but without disclosing any central concern – unless the state of the victim's clothes indicates a contemporary sexual victimisation.

⁴ From the display caption of the work in Tate Britain. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rothenstein-the-crucifixion-n05046> - Accessed 14 April 2013.

⁵ Stanley and Gerald Spencer also moved away from a traditional dress for Jesus, but Rothenstein's Jesus is more contemporary.

⁶ Gospel of John 19: 38-39.

John Harris Valda,¹ *The Crucifixion of Europe*, 1940

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Drawing, pen and ink on Bristol board

Size – 48x37

Location – Museum of Croydon

Source of Information- Museum of Croydon

Reason for Inclusion – Though the artist is not of international significance, this drawing reflects a mood of its time and pre-empted the major works of Graham Sutherland and Emmanuel Levy.

General Description

This small work is part of a collection held by the Museum of Croydon in which the artist explored the horrors of war.² The image creates impact through the simple use of just black and white and a style consistent with Valda's main focus as an illustrator.

Primary Iconography

In this work the cross has been replaced by a Swastika and Jesus by a figure representing Europe. As already stated it pre-empted the work of major British artists in

¹ Born Marylebone 1874, died 1942.

² <http://www.20thcenturylondon.org.uk/cmhs-m-1993-1465> - Accessed 20th January 2014.

commenting upon the Second World War, but may well have been influenced by Chagall's earlier work in which Jesus was replaced by a representative Jew.³

Tertiary Iconography

There is no secondary iconography, but the background produced by simple cross hatching creates a sense of imminent threat. This is complemented by the barren hilltop on which the crucifix stands.

Comments

This simple but disturbing work has re-interpreted the conventions of the Christian iconography into a metaphor which has transformed the use of the iconography of the crucifixion from a sacred image to a powerful piece of propaganda against the destruction of Europe by Nazi Germany.

³ See Marc Chagall, *The Martyr* (Zurich, Kunsthaus, 165x231, oil on canvas, 1940), Appendix B - Fig. 31.

Michael Ayrton,¹ *Dressing the Vine*, c.1940

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil and acrylic on canvas

Size – 74x84

Location –Manchester City Art Galleries.

Source of Information – Manchester City Art Galleries

Reason for Inclusion – One of a group of works by Michael Ayrton on the theme of the vine and the crucifixion.² In this work, the iconography of the crucifixion is implied in the vines.

General Description

This work was produced by Michael Ayrton whilst he was in Italy.³ Its origins are in Ayrton's reflections after observing peasants pruning and tying up vines, which reminded him of Christ on the Cross and the Spartans hung on the Appian Way.⁴ At this time Michael Ayrton was influenced by the Occult in the context of the Neo-Romantic Movement which saw in nature a dark and mysterious world.⁵ The three vines can be read as the three crosses of Golgotha.

¹ Born on 20 February 1921, died 1976.

² The date accorded by the Manchester City Art Galleries is c1940, but its subject matter links it to his visits to Italy from 1946 and its style to another of his works, *Good Friday*, which is dated 1949, Appendix B - Fig. 32.

³ T.G. Rosenthal, *Word and Image 1&2: Wyndham Lewis 1882-1957, Michael Ayrton b 1921*, (London, The National Book League, 1971), 38.

⁴ J. Hopkins, *Michael Ayrton: A Biography*, (London, Deutsch, 1994), 149-150.

⁵ See - M. Bracewell, 'Something Supernatural Comes This Way - On Magic and Modernity in British Art', in *Tate Etc.* (Issue 17, autumn 2009).

Iconography⁶

The primary iconography is the three vines set in a hillside. References to the passion of Christ are the two circles made by vines on the tops of the central and left hand vine. They can then be read as haloes relating to Christ and the penitent thief. These two symbolically share a common vine through a linking tendril. The 'unrepentant thief's vine is un-affirmed with no halo or vine winding around the trunk. Against the right hand vine is a ladder.

Comment

The title signifies the pruning of the vines, and may refer to Jesus's words in the Gospel of John in which Jesus describes himself as the true vine and his disciples as the branches.⁷ This would relate to his personification of trees. Malcolm Yorke has noted that during this period Ayrton was influenced by Paul Nash's 'habit of regarding trees as people.'⁸ However, it would be too strong an association to consider in this a reference to the idea of resurrection; Ayrton was not a narrative painter.⁹ It would be better to relate the painting to the theme of suffering for righteousness, which had been close to him in his portrayals of St Anthony.¹⁰

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/something-supernatural-way-comes> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

⁶ Because of the nature of the work, it was not appropriate to differentiate the discussion of this work into the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary iconography.

⁷ Gospel of John 16:1-8.

⁸ M. Yorke, *The Spirit of the Place: Nine Romantic Artists and their Times*, (London, Constable, 1988), 203.

⁹ "Ayrton's pictures never have stories, but they always have themes, and as themes are as inexhaustible as symbols...." J. Laver, *Paintings by Michael Ayrton*, (London, The Grey Walls Press, 1948), 11.

¹⁰ P. Cannon-Brookes, *Michael Ayrton: An Illustrated Commentary*, (Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, 1978), 11-15.

Michael Ayrton,¹ Golgotha, 1943

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Watercolour, gouache, ink and charcoal on paper

Size – 38x56

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - The title indicates a reference to the crucifixion, but its contents refer both to the crucifixion and to the myth of Prometheus.

General Description

Golgotha was painted, during the Second World War, by Michael Ayrton when he was only 22.² It has its own uniqueness, but influences can be seen from Surrealism, Henry Moore and perhaps Graham Sutherland.³ Its title infers the crucifixion but its images seem to refer more to the hill itself – ‘The Hill of the Skull’. Hopkins wrote of Ayrton’s work at this time - ‘...he had become obsessed with the darker facets of the Christian religion; with Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, and with an evolving identification of Jesus Christ with Prometheus, whereby the latter, crucified upon his rock to be torn by eagles, prefigured and authenticated the sufferings of the former, providing a unifying link between the Christian and pagan worlds.’⁴

¹ Born on 20 February 1921, died 1976.

² Malcolm Yorke mentions the existence of contemporary work by Ayrton titled *Crucifixion: A Gethsemane* (1944), but this has yet to be identified. See M. Yorke, *The Spirit of the Place: Nine Romantic Artists and their Times*, (London, Constable, 1988), 200.

³ Michael Ayrton stayed with Graham Sutherland while he began preparations for this work and whilst Sutherland was working on the Northampton *Crucifixion*. J. Hopkins, *Michael Ayrton: A Biography*, (London, Deutsch, 1994), 115- 116.

⁴ *Ibid*, 86.

The iconography goes beyond the crucifixion. Its mood is set by its background and white leafless trees; the viewer feels the cold blast of a northern winter. Whether this conveys the end or a beginning is left with the viewer. The central image could be a skull, or a cave, or a womb; again an image of end or beginning. These images are placed in the context of its title, *Golgotha*.

Iconography⁵

In *Golgotha* the artist has invited the viewer to look at Golgotha as an amalgam of hill, Promethean rock and skull. Absorbed into this are images of the eagles which attacked Prometheus, whilst within the skeletal cavity lies a body. The viewer is left to identify it as Christ, Prometheus or Adam as they wish. This visual ambiguity is continued with the distorted foot and ankle which lies in the centre of the work, which could refer to the impaled foot of Jesus or to Achilles's heel.

No cross can be identified at this Golgotha; only a windswept tree placed on the edge of the central imagery hints at the holy tree. This tree however is stripped; leaving the question as to whether it is dead or in the winter before its spring resurrection. Again the viewer is left to absorb this, and make their own decision. The only hint of hope in this work is the shape and structure of the central image. Enclosed as it is by its own parameters and surrounded by the ether of red and blue (blood and the water?) it is reminiscent of a womb. Within this iconography of suffering and death its form may give hope of new life.

Comments

During the time of his production of *Golgotha*, Ayrton appeared to be struggling with traditional Christian concepts and tried to re-interpret them. Julian Hopkins commenting upon an earlier work *Dark Trinity*⁶ described it as 'a reinterpretation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the new age, and an anxiously secular generation.'⁷ Like *Dark Trinity*, *Golgotha* was completed during the Second World War and perhaps reveals an attempt at a syncretism of different images of suffering; suffering which brought with it the faintest hope of redemption. This work is rooted in its time, during the darkness of war, yet a war which was just beginning to turn towards the victory of those who were suffering death at the hands of unbridled evil. Prometheus and Christ in Ayrton's imagination may have reflected this hope.

⁵ Because of the nature of the work, it was not appropriate to differentiate the discussion of this work into the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary iconography.

⁶ Michael Ayrton, *The Dark Trinity*, (46x35, Gouache, 1942). Illustrated in the catalogue M. Ayrton, J. Hopkins, et al, *Michael Ayrton: Sculpture, Paintings, Drawings, Prints*, (London, Austin/Desmond Fine Art, 1990).

⁷ *Ibid*, 16.

Emmanuel Levy,¹ Crucifixion, 1942

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 102x78

Location – Ben Uri Gallery London

Source of Information - Ben Uri Gallery London

Reason for Inclusion - The inclusion of ‘Jesus’ as a modern Jewish victim indicates a radically unconventional theology.

General Description

This work was painted during the Second World War, but before the full extent of the massacre of Jews and others in the concentration camps was revealed in 1945. It shows a crucified Jew hanging over a Christian graveyard.

Primary Iconography

In this work Christ is replaced by a modern European Jew, complete with prayer shawl, phylacteries and clothes of an artisan. ‘Jude’ (German for Jew) is written in blood above

¹ Born Manchester 1900, died 1986.

his head. The victim is still alive, with his eyes open looking to heaven. His ritual dress would indicate that he is in prayer.

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

There is no secondary iconography, but the Christian graves act as witnesses to the Jewish victim. The stylised clouds, replace the angels found in a traditional work. In the background is a town with a church on the horizon.

Comments

David Breuer-Weil has interpreted the work as a memorial of and protest about the persecution of Jews throughout the centuries and in particular at the time of its painting. 'He is painted as Christ the victim of Rome and idolatry, as one of the countless victims of the Nazi genocide then raging in Europe.' This view he reinforces with a quotation from Emmanuel Levy:

The thought 'we are being crucified' kept recurring to my mind over and over again until I was finally impelled to put the thought down on canvas. The initials INRI – a piece of Roman cynicism – have been replaced by the word Jude (German for Jew) written in blood, a truer and more terrifying fact thus bringing my conception into the twentieth century.²

Whilst the replacement of Jesus by a modern Jew would support the anti-Christian interpretation of this work by Breuer-Weil, the inclusion of a Christian graveyard implies a more complex theological understanding in which some sympathy is expressed with the Christian dead. This is discussed in Chapter Two.

² N. Hepburn, Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 35.

Merlyn Oliver Evans,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1945

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium - Painting, tempera on canvas

Size - 116x71

Location - Nottingham City Museums and Art Gallery

Source of Information - Nottingham City Museums and Art Gallery

Reason for Inclusion - The title and contents contain some of the iconography of the crucifixion but integrated with biomorphic forms creating a highly unconventional work of art.

General Description

This work was painted by Merlyn Evans at the end of the Second World War, whilst he was in the army in Venice, having spent several gruelling years with a South African Regiment attached to the Eighth Army.² There is a very similar work painted shortly

¹ Born in Llandaff, Cardiff, on 13 March 1910, died 1973.

² See quotation from Mel Gooding in Peter Nahum, At Leicester Galleries, Archive and Image Library, Merlyn Evans, *Crucifixion*, 1945, <http://www.leicestergalleries.com/19th-20th-century-paintings/d/merlyn-evans/10589> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

after this, but including more intense colours of red and yellow.³ They were produced in the year before Sutherland's *Northampton Crucifixion* and Bacon's *Painting*.⁴

The painting's style is based upon a biomorphic abstract approach. Hieronymus Bosch⁵ (1450-1516) and Pablo Picasso⁶ among many explored the imaginative world of the synthesis of human, animal and vegetable; often the forms have symbolic meaning. It has also a close association with Surrealism. Its style though quite distinctive has similarities with Pablo Picasso's pen and ink drawing *The Crucifixion (After Grunewald)* of 1932, though Evans' style is more luxuriant and his forms closer to real vegetation and insects.⁷

Primary Iconography

The cross and victim in the centre of the work are absorbed into one another and are barely discernable from the rest of the work. The vegetation which coils around the crucifix gives the work a sense of overpowering stifling of movement.

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

To the viewer's left a second crucifixion can be discerned, below which a horrific insect with the head of a horse prowls. On the right just visible along the edge of the work a biomorphic soldier can be discerned. Other forms invade the picture space to give an impression of a crowded almost jungle-like imagery.

Comments

In 1985 the Tate Gallery held an exhibition under the title *The Political Paintings of Merlyn Evans 1930-1950*. The second of Evans' Crucifixion works was included in it and that seems to have confirmed a particular interpretation of the work. Mel Gooding summarised this interpretation in his biography of Merlyn Evans in 2010:

As virulent and vehement as Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (which Evans could not have seen) and painted only months after, it gives imaginative expression to a similarly appalled response to the disasters of war, and to the full horrors of the camps, revealed just weeks earlier, as the European war came at last to a bitter end in early May....

As with Bacon's stupendous and horrific versions of the theme, it is as if only through a radically ironic distortion of this, the central image of sacrifice and suffering in European art, appropriating its centuries of accumulated power, and subverting its ubiquitous familiarity, could the terrible truth of the time be adequately conveyed. This is indeed the Tree of Knowledge, revived by

³ Merlyn Evans, *Crucifixion*, (Private Collection, 127x74, oil on canvas, 1945), illustrated in M. G. Evans, Tate, et al, *The Political Paintings of Merlyn Evans: 1930-1950*, (London, The Tate Gallery, 1985), 33.

⁴ See pages 190, 163.

⁵ E.g. Hieronymus Bosch, *Triptych of Garden of Earthly Delights*, (Madrid, Museo del Prado, central panel - 220x195, wings - 220x97, oil on panel, c.1500).

⁶ David Hughes in his commentary on another of Evan's works, *Distressed Areas*, observed that Evans had seen Picasso's *Guernica* in Paris in the summer of 1937 and had been highly influenced by it. See M. Evans, G. Tate, et al, *The Political Paintings of Merlyn Evans: 1930-1950*, (London, The Tate Gallery, 1985), 33.

⁷ Pablo Picasso, *The Crucifixion [after Grunewald]*, (Paris, Picasso Museum, 34x52, Ink and Indian ink on paper, 1932), Appendix B - Fig. 33.

sacrificial blood, which, by means of the central symbol, directly links the human fall from grace with the dreadful human Sacrifice.⁸

There is however a question about this interpretation. As already stated the style of this work is biomorphic. Gooding's interpretation relates this work to its immediate history, the Second World War and the Holocaust; however, the imagery seems to refer more to Evans' personal experiences, its colours and 'vegetation' have links with Evans' past in South Africa, as do the insects. Though, Evans' experience of war must have been influential in this work, its style roots the crucifixion in nature. Its jungle-like form suggests that the inhumanity of humanity epitomised in the crucifixion of Jesus, is not something distinct from nature, but an integral part of its existence. Evans has given an image of 'crucifixion' as totally integrated into the natural world. In this work he perhaps raises the question: are the richness and brutality of human and animal life comparable to the richness and brutality of the Messiah? In this sense it has connections with Graham Sutherland's use of biomorphic forms in his 'Chichester' *Crucifixion* of 1947.⁹

⁸ M. Gooding and M. Evans, Merlyn Evans, (Moffat, Cameron & Hollis, 2009), 79.

⁹ See page 201.

Roy de Maistre,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1945²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 130x92

Location – New Walk Museum, Leicester City Museum Service

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - The artist developed a conventional crucifixion scene in a modern style, which influenced both Graham Sutherland and Francis Bacon.

General Description

Although the artist was Australian he lived permanently in England and France from 1928 until his death in 1968. The large canvas is of a crucifix, which focuses upon the beauty of the dead Christ's body. Except for the body the rest of the painting is simplified and contains no secondary iconography.

¹ Born 27 March 1894, Bowral Australia - died 1968. During his life the artist varied his name, including the forenames Leroy, Leveson, Joseph and, Laurent. For simplicity Roy de Maistre has been used throughout this work.

² Note: There are other versions of this work including two in New South Wales Art Gallery, Sydney, Australia and one in the Iona Abbey Scotland. The 1945 version in NSW Art Gallery is attributed by the gallery to have been begun in 1930 see <http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/8538/> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

Iconography

Christ is depicted in a modified cubist style. In this work none of the wounds are shown, but the positioning of Christ's head implies that he has already died. The crown of thorns indicates his status as king. This is complemented by the triangle of purple signifying a royal robe. By the use of a series of triangles the artist integrates the body into a unified piece of visual beauty.

Comments

This work precedes Graham Sutherland's Northampton *Crucifixion* of 1946 and probably influenced the later artist's style as they were known to have worked together.³ However, whilst Sutherland's work shows signs of influence by Grünewald and emphasises the physical suffering of Christ, de Maistre's *Crucifixion* reflects the quiet calm of Velazquez's, *Christ Crucified* of 1632.⁴ But whilst Velazquez used the idealised classical body of Greek art to indicate the divinity of Christ, de Maistre used geometric forms to create a body of equivalent transcendence.

³ See catalogue entry for Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, 1946, (Catalogue no: NO 5774), Tate Galleries, at <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sutherland-crucifixion-n05774/text-catalogue-entry> - Accessed 14 January 2014.

⁴⁴ Diego Velazquez, *Christ Crucified* (Madrid, Museo del Prado, 248x169, oil on canvas, 1632), Appendix B - Fig. 34.

Roy de Maistre,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1962

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 130x92

Location – Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral

Source of Information – Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral

Reason for Inclusion - This is an example of a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion, but in a modern style.

General Description

This is the last of the crucifixion pictures painted by Roy de Maistre.² The style is more traditional with the abandonment of his earlier cubist style and is influenced by Rogier van der Weyden's *Crucifixion* diptych in the use of a formal red background, the loincloth and the depiction of Christ.³ Contrasts of mood are achieved by the stillness of the two figures in the foreground with the movement produced by the angularity of the crosses and limbs in the background.

Primary Iconography

¹ Born 27 March 1894, Bowral Australia - died 1968. During his life the artist varied his name, including the forenames Leroy, Leveson, Joseph and, Laurent. For simplicity Roy de Maistre has been used throughout this work.

² See Roy de Maistre, *Crucifixion*, 1945, 186.

³ Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion*, Diptych, (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 180x186, oil on panel, 1460), Appendix B - Fig. 35.

A young athletic Christ hangs in the style of *Christus Patiens* from a stylised red cross. His eyes are closed and he appears to be at peace. There is no wound in his side. His status is revealed by his halo and crown of thorns.

Secondary Iconography

The red robed figure of Mary Magdalene embraces the cross in her traditional position.⁴ In the background two other crosses are depicted with the victims facing away from the viewer, leaving the appearance of two pairs of limbs to indicate the presence of the two robbers.

Tertiary Iconography

The main piece of tertiary iconography is the ladder which forms the right hand edge of the picture. It can be considered either as the ladder used to attach Christ to the cross or to remove him. It is the only piece of imagery which hints that there could be a past or future beyond the moment of Mary's adoration of Jesus.

Comment

In this work the Sacred Archetype is the most prominent. The work calls the viewer into worship along with Mary Magdalene. The Artistic Archetype draws the viewer to the relationship between Christ and Mary. The Semiotic Archetype is kept to a minimum, with the secondary and tertiary iconography reminding the viewer of the context of the spiritual encounter between the repentant sinner and saviour.⁵

⁴ E.g. Giotto, *Crucifixion* (Padua, Arena Chapel, Fresco, 1305), Appendix B - Fig. 10.

⁵ Though there is a long artistic tradition of Mary kneeling at the foot of the cross, the encounter is symbolic of sinner and saviour. There is no Biblical evidence for Mary Magdalene kneeling at the foot of the cross. In the references to Mary Magdalene witnessing the crucifixion, she is placed close to the crucifixion in John's Gospel, but in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels she is placed at a distance from the scene. See Gospels of John 19:25, Matthew 27:56 and Mark 13:40.

Graham Sutherland,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1946

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard

Size – 244x228

Location – St Matthew's Church, Northampton

Source of Information - T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art, (Northampton, St. Matthew's (Northampton) Centenary Art Committee, 1993).

Reason for Inclusion - This work is of importance as a major religious work and contains some unusual aspects in its iconography.

General Description

This work was the fruit of Graham Sutherland's first major venture into Religious art.² He was best known as a landscape artist, though he had also worked as a designer and war artist.³ In 1943, the Revd. Walter Hussey, then vicar of St Matthew's Northampton, asked him to paint a picture to complement Henry Moore's sculpture of the Madonna

¹ Born Streatham, London, 24 August 1903, died 1980.

² His first religious pictures were for the Priz de Rome in 1925. The subjects he attempted then were *The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden* and *Cain and Abel*. See J. Hayes, The Art of Graham Sutherland, (Oxford, Phaidon, 1980), 24.

³ These early years are summarised in M. Hammer, Graham Sutherland: Landscapes, War Scenes, Portraits, 1924-1950, (London, Scala, 2005), 21-22.

and Child.⁴ Sutherland experimented with different approaches to the work, but this final version is a balance between Sutherland's original concept and the demands imposed by its sighting in St Matthew's Church. In Sutherland's interview on Radio Three, reproduced in *The Listener*, Sutherland said:

I would have liked to paint the crucifixion against a blue sky – a blue background.....crucifixion under warmth – and blue skies are, in a sense, more powerfully horrifying.....The colour in which I did in fact use – a bluish royal purple, traditionally a death colour – was partly dictated by certain factors already in the church.⁵

This is confirmed in a preliminary painting with a blue background executed by Graham Sutherland which is now in the Tate Galleries collection.⁶

The picture is large and almost square, and contains a complex background, a small foreground and the central image of the crucifixion between the two. The distorted figure of Christ hangs from a stylised cross. Blood pours from hands and feet, but no wound in the side is evident. Christ is viewed in his death throws.

Primary Iconography

The traditional iconography of this work is quite simple: the cross, the victim, the crown of thorns and the wounds on the limbs. The contorted Christ is very similar to Grünewald's Isenheim altar-piece. From the hips up, the comparison is close.⁷ The position of Christ's head, the stylised crown of thorns, the treatment of the muscles across the shoulders and the distortion of chest and waist are virtual copies of the Isenheim altar-piece. There is evidence that Sutherland was familiar with both reproductions of Grünewald's work and Picasso's interpretation of it.⁸ Only in the treatment of the legs is there a difference. Sutherland may have been influenced by pictures of the emaciated victims of the Nazi Concentration Camps. Sutherland had seen photographs of the concentration camp victims from a booklet published by the United States Information Service which had been sent to him.⁹ However, the bowed legs are more reminiscent of the London and Welsh poor, many of whom suffered from rickets and who Sutherland would have seen during his time as a war artist.¹⁰ This possibility is strengthened by comparison with the Tate *Crucifixion*, in which the legs are straight, as in Grünewald's Isenheim altar-piece, indicating that in the final work Sutherland made a conscious decision to modify his earlier vision of the crucifixion victim. This incorporation of contemporary images into a traditional format can also be observed in the cross which supports the suffering Christ. Its shape is unusual and may have connections with Sutherland's experience as a war artist. In his painting *Devastation*

⁴ T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, *Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art*, (Northampton, St. Matthew's (Northampton) Centenary Art Committee, 1993), 57.

⁵ Graham Sutherland, *Thoughts on Painting*, *The Listener*, (London, BBC, 6 September, 1951), 376-8, reproduced in M. Hammer, F. Bacon, et al, *Bacon and Sutherland*, (New Haven, Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2005), 145.

⁶ See Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (1946), page 194.

⁷ Matthias Grünewald, *Crucifixion*, Central Panel, Isenheim altarpiece, (Colmar, Alsace, France, Unterlinden Museum, 270x310, oil on panel, 1512-1516), Appendix B - Fig. 36.

⁸ G.V. and D. Cooper, *The Work of Graham Sutherland*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1961). Page 31

⁹ Letter from Graham Sutherland to the art critic Edwin Mullins in *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, (10th September 1971).

¹⁰ M. Hammer, *Graham Sutherland: Landscapes, War Scenes, Portraits, 1924-1950*, (London, Scala, 2005), 194.

*House in Wales 6 September 1940*¹¹ planks of wood radiate out from the ruin, and in *Devastation, 1941 East End, Wrecked Public House*¹² the ruins form a stylised cruciform similar to that in the Northampton work.¹³

Secondary Iconography

With the exception of a small set of crosses, which reminds one of 'The Stations of the Cross' seen in many churches, none of the iconography of Calvary or the holy witnesses are present. Except for the cross, it contains none of the iconography normally associated with the pictures of the crucifixion, it is virtually neutral. In Martin Hammer's *Bacon and Sutherland* there is a photograph of a large scale preliminary study for Sutherland's *Northampton Crucifixion*.¹⁴ Whilst it is very close to the final work, it contains images of vegetation and a skull and cross-bones at the foot of the cross. Both these images have symbolic significance. The bones represent those of Adam and signify in conventional Christian iconography that Christ is the New Adam and the hope for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. The vegetation can also be interpreted in this vein '...unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.'¹⁵ In removing these symbols, Sutherland removed the last vestiges of hope from the picture. Similarly, if it is compared to its precursor, *The Isenheim Altarpiece*, that work whilst containing an equally horrific image of Christ also contained to his left an image of John the Baptist proclaiming the hope of the crucifixion – 'Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World'.¹⁶

Tertiary Iconography

The background is unique; there is no Calvary, no distant Jerusalem, but a complex panelled backdrop, painted in distinctive colours of blue and purple, with a small orange/brown platform. As noted above, the background was, according to Sutherland, created to be in keeping with St Matthew's Church, which is a large stone Victorian Gothic Anglo-Catholic building.

In the foreground is a semi-circular rail; this gives the whole work a distinctive feel, as if the image of the crucifixion is placed in a church or even art gallery. The rail distances the viewer and de-personalises the image, giving it the impression of a picture of a crucifix.¹⁷

¹¹ Graham Sutherland, *Devastation House in Wales 6 September 1940*, (Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, 127x80, oil on canvas, 1940), Appendix B - Fig. 37.

¹² Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941 East End, Wrecked Public House 1941*, (London, Tate Galleries, 67x48, crayon, ink, pastel and gouache on paper on plywood, 1941), Appendix B - Fig. 38.

¹³ The influence of Siegfried Sassoon's First World War poem, *The Redeemer*, may also be discerned in the cross in this picture. In the poem Sassoon recalls his meeting in a trench with of a fellow soldier carrying a load of planks, who the poet compares with the crucified Christ:

He faced me, reeling in his weari-ness,
Shouldering his load of planks, so hard to bear.
I say that He was Christ who wrought to bless
All groping things with freedom bright as air...

(Sassoon's first front-line poem, written November 1915)

S. Sassoon and R. Hart-Davis, *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (Faber and Faber, London 1983), 17. (The original version was published in 1919). The complete text can be found in Appendix C.

¹⁴ M. Hammer, *Bacon and Sutherland*, 125, Fig. 49.

¹⁵ Gospel of John Chapter 12 verse 24.

¹⁶ Gospel of John Chapter 1 verse 29.

¹⁷ There is a similar rail in Sutherland's 1945 work *Study for Staring Tree Form*, Appendix B - Fig. 39 and Francis Bacon's *Painting* of 1946, page 163.

Comments

If this work is studied with care it is clear that it is not a picture of 'the Crucifixion'. However distorted the image may be, it is intended to be an image of an image of the crucifixion. That is not a picture of 'the Crucifixion' but a painting of an image of that event. To the worshipper in St Matthew's Church this painting is then a 20th century version of the traditional Crucifix. However, the history of its production offers a more unorthodox understanding of its significance.

Sutherland was not only an admirer of Grünewald but also of Velazquez.¹⁸ He would therefore have known the latter's painting of Christ Crucified housed in the Museo del Prado in Madrid.¹⁹ There are significant similarities; the cross is of planed wood and the background neutral. However, Velazquez's Christ has the traditional 'perfect' body given to the Gods in classical painting. So whilst Grunewald pictures a distorted human Jesus, but proclaims his saving act through the witnesses, Velazquez indicates this through the image as Christ 'Son of God'. Sutherland's has neither. In the final form of Sutherland's *Crucifixion*, hope appears to have been erased, but empathy with human suffering is proclaimed.

¹⁸ Hammer reported that Francis Bacon was corresponding to Graham Sutherland about Velázquez in late 1946. See Hammer, *Bacon and Sutherland*, 51.

¹⁹ Diego Velazquez, *Christ Crucified*, (Madrid, Museo del Prado, 248x169, oil on canvas, 1632), Appendix B - Fig. 34.

Graham Sutherland,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1946

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on board

Size – 91x102

Location – Tate Galleries

Source of Information - Tate Galleries

Reason for Inclusion - This work has been included because of its importance in relation to the Northampton *Crucifixion*.

General Description

This work was one of a series of works produced by Sutherland as preliminaries for his work on the Northampton *Crucifixion*.² Its significance is in its differences with the final work.

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography is close to the *Northampton Crucifixion* and the main discussion is to be found with that work in this Scholarly Edition. The main differences are first the lack of detail to be found in this work, suggesting that it was a preliminary work. The second major difference can be observed in the legs, where they are straighter in this work and closer to the victim in Grunewald's altar piece.

Secondary Iconography

Like the final work there are no secondary images.

Tertiary Iconography

The major differences between this and the final work is the blue background and the lack of the semi-circular rail in the foreground.³

¹ Born Streatham, London, on 24 August 1903, died 1980.

² See Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (1946), 190.

³ Sutherland's preferred choice of a blue background is noted by Hayes:

Comment

Whilst this work has to be considered as a preliminary work to the Northampton *Crucifixion* the use of the blue background and its simplicity gives the work a more ethereal quality, but at the expense of the emotional impact of its successor. By allowing the pale blue background to ‘leak’ into the body of Christ, it has the effect of dissolving the body into the sky and the heavenly realm, whilst in the Northampton *Crucifixion* the use of black and white in the body of Christ roots it in this world of suffering and death.

“For Sutherland the Crucifixion symbolized “a duality which has always fascinated me. It is the most tragic of all themes yet inherent in it is the promise of salvation. It is the symbol of the precarious balanced moment...It is that moment when the sky seems superbly blue – and, when one feels it is only blue in that superb way because at any moment it could be black . . . and on that point of balance one may fall into great gloom or rise to great happiness.” This duality was, of course, especially relevant in 1944.” J. Hayes, *The Art of Graham Sutherland*, (Oxford, Phaidon, 1980), 24 - including a quotation from G. Sutherland, “Thoughts on Painting”, *The Listener*, (London, BBC, 6 September 1951), 367-8.

Graham Sutherland,¹ *The Thorn Head*, 1947

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 130x80

Location – Private collection

Source of Information - G.V. and D. Cooper, *The Work of Graham Sutherland*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1961)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is on the boundary for inclusion, it is included because of its connection with the other Sutherland paintings included in this Scholarly Edition and its unusual iconography.

General Description

Graham Sutherland in 1951 described how from 1945 he came to paint the series of works associated with thorns and Christ's head.² In the spring of 1945 after he had been commissioned by Walter Hussey to paint a Crucifixion for St Matthew's Church in Northampton, he was in the country and noticed the thorn bushes. 'I made some drawings and as I made them a curious change developed. As the thorns rearranged

¹ Born Streatham, London, 24 August 1903, died 1980.

² Graham Sutherland, "Thoughts on Painting," *The Listener*, (London, BBC, 6 September 1951), 376-78.

themselves, they became, whilst retaining their own pricking space-encompassing life, something else – a kind of “stand-in” for a Crucifixion and a crucified head.’³ This resulted in a series of paintings from 1945 onwards which reflected Sutherland’s observations. The earliest identified is *Thorn Trees* now in the British Council Collection. However, this painting is not typical of his main output on this theme.⁴ The work *Thorn Head* of 1947 was chosen for discussion as it is more typical of the series.⁵

Primary and Secondary Iconography

It is best to consider this work in its entirety. The painting is almost abstract and consists of a green background onto which is painted a metamorphic form. Like many of Sutherland’s works it is based upon a fusing of organic forms into images which became part botanical, part human and part megalith.⁶ The style has been influenced by Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica* which Sutherland saw in London in 1938. The head consists of a crescent shaped form probably influenced by the screaming mouth of the horse in Picasso’s *Guernica*, which was familiar to Graham Sutherland.⁷ The hair is more animal than human, the crescent partially encloses an arrangement of thorns which both draw the viewer into the head and give a sense of movement.

The overriding effect is to create dark emotions of unease in the viewer. In this work the main colour is green, emphasising the botanical foundation of the work. The blue is a remnant of Sutherland’s iconographic use of blue.⁸ The golden yellow is perhaps, a reminder of the sun and the gold of a crown.

Comments

It is the iconography of the thorns which relate this work to the crucifixion, but in a unique way. By the use of the thorns as the primary iconography, Sutherland has introduced a new dimension into the theology of the crucifixion. This series of thorn works invites the theologically enquiring viewer to reflect upon the nature of the crucifixion in the context, not just of the suffering humanity, which Graham Sutherland had experienced in the Second World War, but also in the suffering and destruction in nature. This would be made more explicit in his small crucifixion picture described in this thesis as *The Chichester Crucifixion*.⁹ This naturalism of the thorn crown can then be reflected upon in relation to it as a primary symbol of Christ’s kingship.

³ Ibid, 377.

⁴ Graham Sutherland, *Thorn Tree*, (British Council, 127x101, oil on canvas, 1945).

⁵ There is an extensive collection of black and white photographs of works from this series in G.V. and D. Cooper, *The Work of Graham Sutherland*, (London, Lund Humphries, 1961). Figs. 78a-85b.

⁶ Again, Sutherland gave some explanation of this in G. Sutherland, “Thoughts on Painting”, 376-378.

⁷ A discussion of the influence of Picasso on Sutherland and in particular *Guernica* is contained in M. Hammer, F. Bacon, et al, *Bacon and Sutherland*, (New Haven, Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2005), 18-20.

⁸ G Sutherland, “Thoughts on Painting”, 377.

⁹ Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (1947), 198.

Graham Sutherland,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1947

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard

Size – 65x40

Location – Pallant House, Chichester

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - This work was produced around the time of his commission to paint the Northampton *Crucifixion*. The similarities and contrasts with that work have theological implications.

General Description

This work was one of a series of works produced by Sutherland as spin-offs of his work on the *Northampton Crucifixion*.² It was brought by the commissioning vicar of St Matthew's Northampton, Walter Hussey, and is now in the Pallant House Collection in

¹ Born Streatham, London, on 24 August 1903, died 1980.

² Graham Sutherland *Crucifixion*, (1946), 190.

Chichester to which it was bequeathed.³ This work is related to Sutherland's preliminary sketches for the *Northampton Crucifixion*,⁴ but has a distinctive form of its own. The picture is almost symmetrical with a distorted and abstracted image of Christ running down the centre of the work complemented on either side by two grotesque pieces of vegetation. The background is a dark green which reveals an underlay of a pale green/blue.

Primary Iconography

Whilst a connection can be made with the Northampton Crucifixion, its interest lies in its distinctiveness. Christ hangs with arms distended vertically from a cross, with a distinguishing joint at its apex. The shape of the crossbar of the cross is unusual and shows the influence of a work by Odilon Redon⁵ which is discussed more fully in Sutherland's *Crucifixion* of 1963.⁶ The vertical stretch of the arms is also unusual. There is a pen and ink sketch by Raoult entitled '*Jesus Will be in Agony to the End of the World*' and a seventeenth century work by Peter Paul Rubens which also uses this form, both of which may have been known to Sutherland.⁷

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

It is the images of the two 'plants' on either side of the cross which make this small work so unusual. In Cooper's book on Sutherland's works there are photographs of forms by Sutherland of similar design.⁸ All the works have the word 'palm' in their title. Graham Sutherland began visiting the South of France in the spring of 1947 and it is from that time that these 'palms' appear. The question arises why did Sutherland add two palms to this work?

In the analysis of *Thorn Head* Sutherland's vision of the thorns' transformation into a head was discussed.⁹ Hammer has commented how deeply Sutherland was influenced by Picasso's *Guernica* and its accompanying sketches which were displayed at the Burlington Art Gallery in 1938.¹⁰ The biomorphic forms used extensively in that work revealed the deep sense of menace which was felt in Europe before the Second World War and which was reflected in Sutherland's biomorphic works from that time.¹¹ The vital element was Sutherland's awareness that both a place and the vegetation could create visual emotional characteristics of humanity. In this work, the palms stand alongside the cross, their spikes complementing the crown of thorns. Their positioning

³ T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, *Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art*, (Northampton, St. Matthew's (Northampton) Centenary Art Committee, 1993), 30.

⁴ Graham Sutherland *Two studies for a Crucifixion*, (Present whereabouts unknown, 65x40, Black Chalk, 1946) – Fig.76 in G.V. and D. Cooper, *The Work of Graham Sutherland*, (London, Percy Lund, Humphries and Co Ltd.1961).

⁵ Odilon Redon, *The Crucifixion*, (Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, 46x27, oil on canvas, 1904), Appendix B - Fig. 40.

⁶ It has also been compared to the packing cases in the garage Sutherland used as a studio at this time. B. Nicolson, "Graham Sutherland's Crucifixion", *Magazine of Art*, (vol.40, no.7, Nov. 1947), 280.

⁷ Georges Rouault, *Jesus Will be in Agony until the end of the World*, (Studio of Georges Rouault, 58x42, India ink, wash, paper, 1930-38). Appendix B - Fig. 41.

Peter Paul Rubens, *Crucifixion*, (London, Wallace Collection, 105x69, oil on canvas, 17thC), Appendix B - Fig. 42.

⁸ Cooper, *The Work of Graham Sutherland*, Fig. 92a-94c. Fig. 93c is particularly reminiscent of those in the *Chichester Crucifixion*.

⁹ See page, 199.

¹⁰ Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 349x777, oil on canvas, 1937). M.

Hammer, *Graham Sutherland: Landscapes, War Scenes, Portraits, 1924-1950*, (London, Scala, 2005), 18.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 20.

has iconographic significance. In medieval crucifixion paintings, cups were placed under the wounds of Jesus to collect 'the blood of Christ'.¹² In the *Chichester Crucifixion*, the blood drips onto the palm leaves. Additionally these palms stand where the holy witnesses, such as St Mary and St John the Evangelist would normally be placed.

Comment

This work, by Sutherland and owned by Water Hussey, until his death, raises profound theological issues. In the introduction and positioning of the 'palms' the relationship between the crucifixion of Jesus and the natural world is raised.¹³

¹² E.g. Giotto, *Crucifixion*, (Padua, Arena Chapel, Fresco, 1305), Appendix B - Fig. 10, or Gaudenzio Ferrari, *Crucifixion*, (Varallo Sesia, S. Maria delle Grazie, fresco, 1513).

¹³ This is discussed in the Commentary in Chapter Two, 51-52.

Graham Sutherland,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1963

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size –546x303

Location – Roman Catholic Church of St Aidan of Lindisfarne East Acton

Source of Information – The Roman Catholic Church of St Aidan of Lindisfarne East Acton.

Reason for Inclusion - This work has been included because of its importance as a religious work. Though it contains some unusual aspects in its iconography it is the most conventional of Sutherland's crucifixion paintings.

General Description

The work is the largest of his religious paintings; it was produced in the year following the opening of Coventry Cathedral in which the artist's great tapestry was displayed,² and sixteen years after the *Northampton Crucifixion*.³ Although it is partly based upon these works, a major influence would also seem to be Rogier van der Weyden's *Crucifixion* diptych and/or his *Escorial Crucifixion*.⁴

Primary Iconography

The cross is similar to the work by Redon, which was also used in the Chichester *Crucifixion*,⁵ but they reveal its origin in Grünewald's *Crucifixion* paintings.⁶

¹ Born Streatham, London, 24 August 1903, died 1980.

² Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, from *Christ in Glory*, (Coventry Cathedral, tapestry, 1962), Appendix B - Fig. 43.

³ Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (1946), 190.

⁴ Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion*, Diptych, (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 180x186, oil on panel) 1460), Appendix B - Fig. 35.

⁵ Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, (1947), 198.

Tertiary Iconography

The crosses to the left and right of the cross bar of the cross can be discerned in the *Northampton Crucifixion*. The background, a rich red, reveals the influence of van der Weyden and Odilon Redon and gives the work a dramatic feel. The barriers used by Sutherland in this work are more ambiguous than in the Northampton work, a yellow line which runs horizontally across the work places the barriers behind it but the cross in front of it. A curtain at the back has a similar effect of informing the viewer that the crucifix is not the image of the historical event but of the image of an image.

Comment

Although the work contains unconventional elements, like its near contemporary, Roy De Maistre's *Crucifixion* of 1962, it remains predominantly within the Christian tradition of a crucifix.⁷

⁶ Although Sutherland's *Northampton Crucifixion* is generally acknowledged to have been influenced by Grünewald's *Isenheim Crucifixion* Appendix B - Fig. 36, this work shows a greater dependence upon Grünewald's later *Crucifixion* of 1525, particularly in the form of the cross. Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*, (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, oil on panel, c.1525), Appendix B - Fig. 44.

⁷ De Maistre and Sutherland had worked closely together in the 1940s and these two works suggest that they were still mutually influenced.

Robert Henderson Blyth,¹ *In the Image of Man*, 1947



**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 127x102

Location – Imperial War Museum

Source of Information - Imperial War Museum

Reason for Inclusion - Blyth has used the iconography of the crucifixion in an unconventional way which suggests a pessimistic theology.

General Description

Robert Henderson Blyth painted this work two years after the end of the Second World War and the iconography reveals elements of his experience of that war. It is located in a bombed and broken urban setting. It has been suggested that it may be Hamburg where Blyth served as a soldier, but it has too many surrealist elements to consider it as a narrative work, depicting a real place.² The broken crucifix towers totally out of proportion with its background, so too the bedstead and broken pillar which supports the bedstead.

¹ Born Glasgow 1919, died 1970.

² Display Board, Imperial War Museum, London <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/2587> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

Primary Iconography

The broken crucifix by its construction gives the impression of a hollow bronze statue, placing it in a classical Greco/Roman setting rather than a Christian setting. This is complemented by the broken Greek column which has a traditional meaning in iconography as representing death and the broken family line, often being included in a portrait where a relative had died.³ It has a similar meaning in Masonic symbolism.⁴ An additional anomaly is the golden mask pictured to the bottom left of the crucifix. It is unclear whether the face has been broken from the crucifix or whether it is a separate face. Its style is not a traditional face of Jesus; it has a darker expression than that normally associated with Jesus. It does however have some similarities with the artist's face depicted in another wartime painting *Self-portrait as Soldier in Trenches* of 1946.⁵

Secondary and tertiary Iconography

The general scene is of a destroyed city set in a green wilderness. There is no life, animal or vegetable, visible in the city. The ambulance just visible in the background reveals a connection with Blyth. The double seven painted on the ambulance connects it to his army unit, the 157 Ambulance.⁶ The bedstead has no iconographic tradition, but is an item often seen in pictures of bombed buildings.⁷

Comments

A significant contribution to the interpretation of this work is its title. Whilst the iconography of the crucifixion contained within the painting directs the viewer to the crucifixion of Christ, the title, the secondary and tertiary iconography re-direct the viewer into questioning the nature of humanity and its religion.

³ Jacopo Bassano, *Adoration of the Kings*, (Scottish National Gallery, c1540), Appendix B - Fig. 45.

⁴ W.K. MacNulty, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1991), 55.

⁵ Robert Henderson Blyth, *Self-portrait as Soldier in Trenches*, (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 65x80, oil on hardboard panel, 1946), Appendix B - Fig. 46.

⁶ Information from the Display Board for the painting, Imperial War Museum, London The full title is Royal Army Medical Corps, (157 Field Ambulance).

⁷ Photograph from, 'Blitz on Britain Continues', *World War II Today: 4 June 1941*, www.ww2today.com/4th-june-1941 - Accessed 22 March 2014. Appendix B - Fig. 47.

Tristram Hillier,¹ *The Crucifixion*, 1954

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 149x107

Location - Private Collection

Source of Information - Jenny Pery, *Painter Pilgrim: The Art and Life of Tristram Hillier*, (London, Royal Academy Publications, 2008)

Reason for Inclusion - This work comes close to a conventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion, but, has unconventional elements in it and highlights the change in emphasis in the modern works away from Christ as Saviour.²

General Description

The construction of the painting has the look of a traditional crucifixion with a single cross and witnesses before a landscape and city below a blue sky.³ The style of Hillier is however almost unique; familiar scenes are rendered unreal by the use of his surrealist heritage in a realist scene.⁴ In *The Crucifixion* he has used this style to create a scene which evokes a sense of threat and death. Jenny Pery has suggested that the setting is in

¹ Born in Beijing, China, 11 April 1905 – died 1983.

² See Commentary Chapter Three, 86-87.

³ Pery has seen connections in this work with Rogier van der Weyden's *Crucifixion Triptych* of 1445 in Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, (Appendix B - Fig. 19). Hillier was known to be an admirer of this artist – see J. Pery, *Painter Pilgrim: The Art and Life of Tristram Hillier*, (London, Royal Academy Publications, 2008), 105.

⁴ E.g. Tristram Hillier, *Whitstable Oystermen*, (Leeds City Art Gallery, 81x61, oil on canvas, 1948), Appendix B - Fig. 48.

Somerset where Tristram Hillier was living when the picture was painted.⁵ The church in the background to the right of the cross appears to be Bath Abbey. The atmosphere of the painting is achieved through the use of black against the skyline and the elongation of the cross and individual characters in the work.

Primary Iconography

The massive cross divides the picture into two equal halves; Jesus hangs from it in an approximate pose of *Christus Patiens*. His head hangs vertically down, his eyes closed.⁶ Like several other modern works the spear wound is pictured below Jesus's heart.⁷ More in keeping is the posing of his hands, each formed with two figures folded down, as if in blessing. Christ neither wears the colobium of early crucifixion paintings nor the perizoma, but a pair of modern black trunks.⁸

Secondary Iconography

To the right of Jesus stands a woman in black. Her positioning and Hillier's adoption of a medieval convention of enlarging major figures indicate that she is Jesus's mother. In front of her a second woman in black kneeling in prayer could be Mary Magdalene. To the right of Jesus are a small group of mourners facing Jesus. In contrast, to Jesus's left, another group stand with their backs to him looking from the hill-top to the city, except for one youth, who sits facing the cross but slightly to its rear.⁹ By excluding the two robbers from the scene of the crucifixion, Tristram Hillier has accentuated the isolation of Jesus.

Tertiary Iconography

The tertiary iconography used by Hillier is quite extensive. In the foreground abandoned tools are depicted, each indicating some part of the process of crucifixion. Next to them lie modern clothes, a homburg hat, a blue garment and a black garment. The viewer is left to interpret these pieces of clothing. The hat which was a common headgear, particularly with orthodox Jews, could be assigned to Jesus or to the workman or to an absent Jewish Rabbi. Similarly the blue garment could be related to the traditional garment of Jesus for which the soldiers drew lots, or could have been discarded by a workman.

Comments

In this work the significance of the Semiotic Archetype is most prominent. Though the cross dominates the painting, the work does not invoke a sense of worship; the overriding emotion is one of grief. This work uses the iconography of the crucifixion to explore the darkness of grief. Through the combination of modern and traditional dress the viewer is faced with a scene of deep mourning. The tradition of the crucifixion is used to create an archetypal scene of grief. This is not a painting centred on the saving sacrifice of Christ, nor as a vehicle for reflecting on the inhumanity of humanity, but of the communality of grief. Its impact would remain if the viewer knew little of the traditions surrounding the crucifixion of Christ, but knowledge of it enhances its impact.

⁵ Pery, *Painter Pilgrim*, 119.

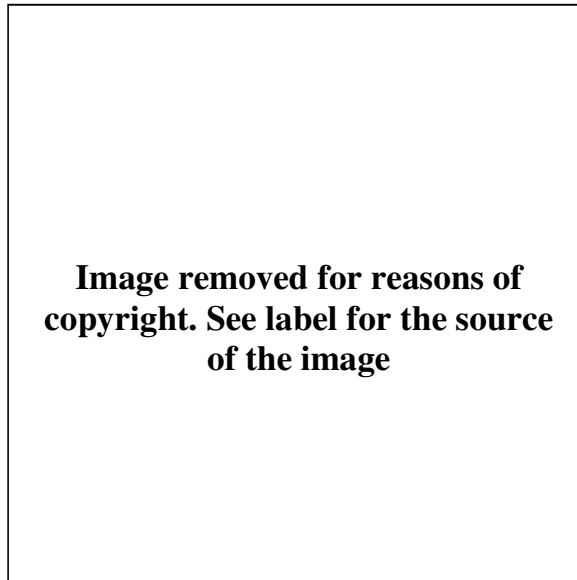
⁶ The elongation of form and pose are reminiscent of El Greco's work. E.g. El Greco, *Crucifixion*, (Madrid, Prado, 312x169, oil on canvas, 1597-1600). Appendix B - Fig. 49.

⁷ Pery includes a sketch by Hillier of the crucifixion in a more pastoral scenery with the spear wound appearing on Jesus left breast, confirming the artist's conscious decision to abandon its 'Ecclesial Eucharistic' position to a psychological position. The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary. Pery, *Painter Pilgrim*, 120.

⁸ Compare with - the red trunks in Gilbert Spencer's *Crucifixion* (1915), 131.

⁹ It is possible to interpret this figure as the young John the Evangelist.

Jack Smith,¹ *Creation and Crucifixion, 1955-56*



Medium – Painting, oil on board

Size – 244x304

Location – Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Source of Information - Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Reason for Inclusion - The only indication of a connection with the crucifixion of Jesus is in the title; its inclusion is based upon the questions this title raises for theology.

General Description

This was the last major work Smith produced in this style, which was described as ‘Kitchen Sink’ by David Sylvester - though this description was hotly denied by Jack Smith. After 1959 Smith moved to a more abstract approach to his art. The picture, which is very large, has a monumental quality even though its scene is domestic. It was painted while Jack Smith was living in London. In 1949 he had moved to West Kensington and shared a house with the artists Derek Greaves, George Fullard and his wife, the sculptor Geoffrey Dudley and Smith’s brother and family.² The picture relates to that domestic scene.³

The Iconography

Visually it gives few clues to the nature of its title. The scene is a working class home and the title may refer to the restricted life of a wife and mother in that environment.

¹ Born in Sheffield, 18 June 1928, died 2011.

² N. Lynton and J. Smith, Jack Smith: A Painter in Pursuit of Marvels, (London, Momentum, 2000), 17.

³ From a conversation by the artist with Alan Bowness recorded in J. Smith, C. Carrell, et al, Jack Smith, Paintings and Drawings, 1949-1976, (Sunderland, Ceolfrith Press, 1977), 7.

The iconographical connection with the crucifixion is the shirt hanging on the washing line. Norbett Lynton described its relationship to the title as

“Clothes on chairs, a washing line and objects on a table: all of them full of life. Several of the objects seem active, cutlery, glasses and two plates spilling out from under a cloth: this arrangement, suggested by a chance juxtaposition of things, indicates ‘creation’. The ‘Crucifixion’ theme relates to the shirts. He had earlier painted a shirt left hanging over a chair and called it *Crucifixion*.⁴ He wanted to ‘make the ordinary miraculous.’”⁵

Comment

For the theologian the use of the term crucifixion to a domestic scene raises the question as to how far the concept of self-sacrifice observed in the crucifixion of Jesus can be extended to ordinary life. The statement attributed to Jesus “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24), can be considered the text to explore this theological question. This text implies that taking up the cross is about a life-style of personal self-sacrifice. Usually this has been applied to the disciples to accept the need to live a life similar to Jesus.⁶ Smith, by entitling this work *Creation and Crucifixion* transfers the activities traditionally associated with God, to the housewife. The role of the housewife in the 1950s as creator of the home and family, but potentially stifling the intellectual and cultural development of the woman can be explored as a crucifixion.

⁴ Whereabouts unknown.

⁵ Smith had used these words in his conversation with Alan Bowness. See Smith and Carrell, 8. Lynton quotation in Lynton and J. Smith, *Jack Smith*, 42.

⁶ D. Hill, *New Century Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, (London, Oliphants, 1975), 264-5.

John Armstrong,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1958²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 112x82

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010)

Reason for Inclusion – This work shows some continuity with religious art of the nineteenth century.

General Description

This work is a modern version of a conventional painting of the crucifixion.

Primary Iconography

Jesus as *Christus Patiens* hangs upon a Y shaped cross.³ He has died; the lance wound, which confirmed this, is depicted on the traditional right hand side of Jesus.⁴ His only clothing is similar in style to that in Velazquez's *Christ Crucified*.⁵

¹ Born Hastings, Sussex, 1893, died 1973.

² Note there is some evidence that there are several versions of this work.

³ According to Schiller, this Y shaped cross was a development in Germany around 1300, in order to heighten the emotional impact of the event. G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol. 2, trans. by J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 147.

⁴ The significance of the placing of the wound is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 79-81.

⁵ Diego Velazquez, *Christ Crucified*, (Madrid, Museo del Prado, 248x169, oil on canvas, 1632), Appendix B - Fig. 34.

Secondary Iconography

There are three figures at the base of the cross. They have no halos or formal attributes, but the woman in blue at the base can be identified with the Virgin Mary and the youthful appearance of the figure in yellow may be John, the Evangelist. The third figure is more difficult to identify. The simple modelling of these figures accentuates the contrast with Jesus. He appears more human than they are.

Tertiary Iconography

The dark background is common in traditional crucifixion pictures such as Velazquez's *Christ Crucified*.

Comment

This work though modern in style reflects a nineteenth century approach to the crucifixion where the theology remains conventional, but where there is a high degree of emotion in the scene. Examples of this include Pierre Prud'hon's *Crucifixion* of 1822 in the Louvre Paris and Delacroix's *Christ on the Cross* of 1853 in the National Gallery London.

Theyre Lee-Elliott,¹ Crucified Tree Form - The Agony, 1959

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, tempera and gouache

Size – 85x65

Location – Methodist Collection of Modern Art, Oxford

Source of Information - Methodist Collection of Modern Art, Oxford

Reason for Inclusion - This is an example of a work in which the three Archetypes are balanced and the theology could be interpreted differently depending upon its location.

General Description

This work was one of a series completed by Theyre Lee-Elliott after he had a vision of the crucifixion during his treatment and recovery from cancer.² As his nephew wrote – “Once, near death, he famously started his ‘Crucified Tree Form’ period, claiming that he had ‘died’ whilst in an Amsterdam hospital and had witnessed Christ’s Crucifixion.”³

¹ Born, 28 May 1903 at the Rectory, Southover in Lewes – died 1988.

² Two of the series are illustrated in R. A. Wollen, Catalogue of the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art: With an Account of the Collection’s History, (Oxford, Trustees of the Methodist Collection of Modern Christian Art, 2003), plates 48 and 49.

³ At present most of the biographical information on Lee-Elliott has been gleaned from internet correspondence, where snippets of his life have been shared by his relatives (mainly his nieces and nephews). The details of his visionary experience were given by Tony Lee-Elliott on the Blog: Things. In Archives, by Crownfolio, published 4 February 2011 with Tony Lee-Elliott’s comments added on 3 March 2011. See: <http://vintageposterblog.com/2011/02/04/things-in-archives> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography is a biomorphic amalgam of a tree and a Christ like figure. The tree element has three broken boughs which serve as arms and neck and head of the victim. The trunk could be viewed as silver birch, with the characteristic black markings breaking up the silver/white bark, or it can be seen as the scars of lashings upon the tortured Christ. On the end of one of the branches a nail can be discerned and trailing from the head, barbed wire, which makes a 'crown of thorns' on the head itself.

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

There are no other images in the work. The background is predominantly yellow and has been compared by some viewers to the appearance of mustard gas in the First World War.⁴

Comments

The use of the imagery of a tree by Lee-Elliott can refer to the iconography of the Tree of Life.⁵ It may also relate to the images of broken trees from the World Wars. This would be consistent with the use of barbed wire. Probably both were in the artist's mind when he painted it. The Artistic Archetype sets the mood of the painting, gaunt and isolated. The Semiotic Archetype along with the tertiary iconography places it both within the context of the crucifixion and a war situation. The Sacred Archetype can then be inferred from the other two, but most strongly if this work was not placed in a gallery, but in a church or other sacred place.

⁴ From a discussion with Dr Peter Forsaith (Research Fellow in the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University with oversight of the Methodist Art Collection).

⁵ For a discussion on the Tree of Life see G. Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2, trans. by J. Seligman, (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 13-14.

Carel Weight,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1959

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard

Size – 244x152

Location – Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston

Source of Information- Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - The use of the iconography of the crucifixion is unconventional in this work with its focus on the crowd.

General Description

The origin of the picture was as a preliminary for a large mural to be installed in Malmesbury Abbey.² The work was then intended to be a major public work in an historic building having theological significance, but no longer a regular place of worship. Its setting is the terrace in Crystal Palace Park Sydenham, the same as an

¹ Born Paddington, London, 10 September 1908, died 1997.

² From a conversation with Norman Rosenthal in October 1981; an edited printed version is recorded in R. Spear, C. Weight, et al, Carel Weight, R.A., (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1982), 16.

earlier work, *The Betrayal of Christ*.³ The localisation of the religious experience is characteristic of Weight's work and can be seen as well in *The Return of the Prodigal Son* of 1947⁴ and in *Departing Angel*, of 1961.⁵

Primary Iconography

There is in this work a minimum of conventional iconography. In this work its title informs the viewer of something of the artist's intentions, which is confirmed by the three crosses at the centre of the work. Both Spencer and Munch were admired by Carel Weight and their influence can be seen in the painting.⁶ The placing of the event in a local setting and the view of the crucifixion from the rear could be compared to Stanley Spencer's 1934 *Crucifixion*. In both paintings, the effect is to detach the viewer from the drama.⁷ The darkness of the foreground also enhances this mood; the viewer stands almost hidden, like a Peeping Tom - disengaged but curious to observe. By hiding the body of Christ, Weight centres his iconography not on the nature of the victim but on the crowd's response.

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography.

In this work the terrace is dominated by the rock of Golgotha, its red hue and knurled extensions invite the viewer to see it as a giant demonic hand, though Weight himself gave it a more benign interpretation.⁸ Helen Roeder considered it reminiscent of a cavernous pyx.⁹

The amorphous crowd can be related to Edvard Munch's *Golgotha* of 1900.¹⁰ In this work the heritage of Munch's expressionism can be observed and felt; the red of the sky and rock giving a sense of emotional crisis observed by a passive crowd apparently lit up by a source from the crucifixion.

Weight has only hinted at any other traditional iconography. The distraught woman at the top of the steps in the right foreground could be associated with Mary, Jesus's mother, or Mary Magdalene. Similarly the young woman in front of a group of youths on the steps could have these associations. Similarly, the sky may be interpreted in an apocalyptic way, but overall there is an absence of conventional iconography. This in itself is significant.

Comments

In the use of unconventional iconography Weight creates a tension which is not resolved. Individual members of this crowd invite a sympathetic response. In particular the two girls at the top of the steps invite the viewer to enter into grief for the occasion.

³ Carel Weight, *The Betrayal of Christ*, (York City Art Gallery, 122x135, oil on canvas, 1954), Appendix B - Fig. 50.

See R.V. Weight, *Carel Weight - A Haunted Imagination*, (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1994), 50.

⁴ Carel Weight, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, (John Brandler Collection, 68x91, oil on canvas, 1947), Appendix B - Fig. 51.

⁵ Carel Weight, *Departing Angel*, (London, Geffrye Museum, 91x91, oil on canvas, 1961), Appendix B - Fig. 52.

⁶ R. Spear, C. Weight, et al, *Carel Weight, R.A.*, 6-7.

⁷ See Stanley Spencer, *The Crucifixion*, 1934 (page 148) where the influence of William Blake's work on Spencer is discussed and may have direct or indirect influence on this work.

⁸ Carel Weight said, 'In one of my Crucifixions a great claw-like hand gradually materialised as if the whole composition were held in its safe, omnipotent grasp.' R.V. Weight, *Carel Weight*, 14.

⁹ A fellow artist and friend of Carel Weight who he first met as a student at Goldsmith's College. Ibid 52

¹⁰ Edvard Munch, *Golgotha*, (Oslo, Munch Museum, 80x120, oil on canvas, 1900). Appendix B - Fig. 53.

But using Panofsky's third process a case may be made for Weight's use of iconography associated with the culture of his time. Comparison with two archive pictures of Nazi rallies suggests a more sinister conscious or unconscious source for the overall form of this work.¹¹ These photographs, not necessarily known directly by Weight but indicative of the images which flooded out from Germany between 1933 and 1945 have uncomfortable similarities to Weight's *Crucifixion*. The positioning of the viewer in the first photograph and the balustrade in the second relates to Weight's work and creates in the viewer a sense of unease. In *Crucifixion* this unease is re-enforced by Weight through the introduction of the 'red hand of Calvary' and the black and red sky; both colours of the Swastika banners have long been associated with the Nazi rallies.¹²

In Weight's borrowing of the imagery of Nazi Germany, the picture raises an irresolvable dialectic. There is in this work a longing to be part of the community of the crucified one, but an acceptance of the inability to do so. That inability is related visually to a deep unease with the risk it poses for unconditional membership - to belong risks de-personalisation - not to belong risks isolation. In this disturbing work Weight may reveal a wistful acceptance that in his post-Christian life he can only stand at a distance and reflect upon this dilemma.

¹¹ Photographs of Nazi rallies to be found in http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_QqrpFId3zyI/S9SvdUZAqPI/AAAAAAAAAbA/-RiyKWrIdLO/s1600/nazi_rally.jpg and

<http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/viewer/wlc/photo.php?RefId=44203> - Accessed 12 March 2011
See Appendix B - Figs. 54 and 55.

¹² The case for the possible influence of a Nazi setting is strengthened by the inclusion of a German soldier in his later work *Crucifixion II* (1981), 216

Carel Weight,¹ *Crucifixion II*, 1981

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on board

Size – 213x111

Location – Private collection

Source of Information - R. Spear, C. Weight, et al, Carel Weight, R.A., (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 1982)

Reason for Inclusion - The use of the iconography of the crucifixion in this work indicates a progression from the artist's concerns in *Crucifixion* of 1959.

General Description

This work repeats the theme of Weight's 1959 *Crucifixion*. Like the 1959 version, the event is viewed from behind the cross and the main characters are the onlookers. There are however major differences. There is only one cross which is of a much frailer construction and supports no body. The painting can be described as consisting of three parts overlaid with a cross. The upperpart contains the main crowd and the lower

¹ Born Paddington, London, 10 September 1908, died 1997.

section forms a triangle within which the major witnesses are placed. These two sections are separated by a stylised river which runs across and down the work, exiting the painting as a waterfall. The shape of the painting is tall and narrow accentuating the shape of the cross and giving the viewer the sense of watching the scene from an upstairs window. Its style is light; more like the style of a book illustration, and lacks the emotional depth of Weight's earlier painting of this theme.

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography is restricted to a stylised cross and the title of the work. When considering this work the absence of Christ's body is significant. The lack of a figure would hint at the reduced importance of the man; only the cross, the symbol or sign remains.

Secondary Iconography

The form does not hint at the Nazi rallies of the 1959 version, but does contain a soldier in German uniform in the same way as Weight's *Betrayal of Christ* used this same imagery.² This is a significant detail in the light of the dating of this work some 36 years after the end of World War II.³ R.V. Weight has suggested that this figure can be identified with Longinus, though he could equally be related to the centurion. R.V. Weight has also suggested that the Virgin Mary can be identified with the woman with grey hair at the foot of the cross, and that the anguished woman in red may be Mary Magdalene.⁴ If one accepts R.V. Weight's identification of traditional witnesses to the cross then Carel Weight has directed the viewer to the crucifixion event, but not in terms of an historical painting but in terms of its significance for contemporary society. These may be correct but the importance of the group around the cross may be in contrast to the remaining observers.

Tertiary Iconography

The appearance of the river acts as a barrier between these observers. Whereas the 1959 *Crucifixion* depicted the crowd as involved in the 'Crucifixion event,' in the 1981 version the crowd though still showing interest is now isolated and only a rump of the faithful remain.

Comments

In this version Weight's concerns appear to have moved from the potential dangers of a mass belief movement indicated in the 1959 version. In this version, the viewer, like the crowd, now observes the events with a level of detachment or antipathy.⁵

² Carel Weight, *The Betrayal of Christ*, (York City Art Gallery, 122x135, oil on canvas, 1954), Appendix B - Fig. 50.

³ The inclusion of the German soldier is significant from an art historical perspective, in that this archetype of 'enemy and oppressor' remained so long after the Second World War.

⁴ R.V. Weight, *Carel Weight - A Haunted Imagination*, (Newton Abbot, David and Charles, 1994), 105.

⁵ This is discussed further in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 53-54.

John Bellany,¹ *Allegory*, 1964

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard

Size – Triptych - Sides 212x122, centre 213x 160

Location – Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

Source of Information – Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland

Reason for Inclusion – Bellany has used iconography based upon fish and the crucifixion, relating to his interest with the culture of his Scottish upbringing.

General Description

This large triptych was painted by John Bellany while he was still a student.² It reflects his background of growing up in Port Seton on the southern bank of the Firth of Forth in East Scotland. His upbringing was as a member of a fishing family committed to Calvinist Christianity.³ This work uses the brutality of the processing of fish and the death of Jesus to explore the nature of the human condition. Its title invites the viewer to interpret it symbolically. The use of the triptych format reinforces the references to Christian art in the work. During the 1960s, Bellany would return to this theme, using an increasing array of iconography.⁴

Primary Iconography

The foreground of each panel of the triptych is dominated by the images of three gutted fish pinned to crosses.⁵ Except for their positions, there are no other indications to a differing status for any of the three crosses.

Secondary Iconography

The figures in the painting have no iconographic equivalents in works which use a conventional iconography of the crucifixion. As a group they are representative of the fisherman known to John Bellany from his childhood in Port Seton on the south bank of

¹ Born Port Seaton, Scotland, 1942, died 2013.

² K. Hartley, A. Moffat, A. Bold, J. Bellany, and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, [John Bellany: Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings, 1964-86](#), (Edinburgh, Trustees of the National Gallery of Scotland, 1986), 87.

³ J. McEwen, and J. Bellany, [John Bellany](#), (Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1994), 21.

⁴ E.g. John Bellany, *Scottish Family*, (244x160, oil on board,). Illustrated in Ibid 67.

⁵ This reflected the practice observed by John Bellany of gutted haddock being pinned up to dry in a cruciform in his home town. See Ibid, 50.

the Firth of Forth.⁶ Their expressions may refer the viewer to Bellany's perception of the guilt-ridden attitude of Calvinist Christians he knew and which he would express more fully in his later work *Homage to John Knox*.⁷ It is likely that the child observing the scene to the far left is the artist.

Tertiary Iconography

Fishing boats, nets, various tools and fish all contribute to setting the scene, but have no formal symbolic significance except to underline the innate cruelty in the practice of fishing. The great rock in the background is probably Bass Rock which rises out of the sea some three miles off the coast east of North Berwick and was known to Bellany.⁸

Comments

The reference to Christ and fish goes back to the earliest Christian communities where it was used as a symbol for Christ.⁹ Bold and Moffat in commenting upon this work suggested that it followed on in that tradition of using the fish as a metaphor for Christ's suffering.¹⁰ However, it is possible to interpret this work as an indictment of humanity in the inevitable dilemma it faces in the imposition of cruelty and sin upon the rest of creation in order to survive.

⁶ Local people, who visited the exhibition, 'John Bellany: A Passion for Life,' (Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery, 17 November 2012 to 27 January 2013) were able to identify individual fishermen in the painting. From a conversation with the Security Manager, August 2014.

⁷ John Bellany, *Homage to John Knox*, 222.

⁸ *Ibid*, 33.

⁹ J. Speake, *The Dent Dictionary of Symbols in Christian Art*, (London, Dent, 1994), 54-55.

¹⁰ K. Hartley, A. Moffat, A. Bold, J. Bellany, and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, *John Bellany: Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings, 1964-86*, (Edinburgh, Trustees of the National Gallery of Scotland, 1986), 50.

John Bellany,¹ *Pourquoi? II* 1967²

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard.

Size – 174x180

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – K. Hartley, John Bellany: (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 2013)

Reason for Inclusion - The unconventional use of the iconography of the crucifixion through the title, raises theological questions about the Holocaust.

General Description

John Bellany painted this work after a visit to the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp in East Germany in 1967.³ It was one of several works on the theme of the Holocaust completed by him in that year.⁴

Primary Iconography

The cross and the hands of the central figure are adapted from Grünewald's Isenheim *Crucifixion*,⁵ but the rest of the torso is that of a female victim of the holocaust, identified by the striped garment. She reveals a bare breast linking the suffering of the victims to a sadistic eroticism. The impact of this image is enhanced by the absence of any legs. Above the central figure is a label with the question in French 'Pourquoi?' (Why?).

¹ Born Port Seaton, Scotland, 1942, died 2013.

² Bellany painted an earlier version of *Pourquoi?* which does not include a reference to crucifixion.

³ J. McEwen, and J. Bellany, John Bellany, (Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1994), 63.

⁴ See *Ibid*, 70-73.

⁵ Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*, - Central Panel, Isenheim altarpiece, (Colmar, Alsace, Isenheim altarpiece, Musée d'Unterlinden, 270x310, oil on panel, 1512-15), Appendix B - Fig. 36.

Secondary Iconography

The accompanying victims are both headless. These visual atrocities are symbolic in that the figure to the central figure's right is posed as if looking to Heaven and the one to her left as if looking to Hell; but without their heads this is denied to them. This reinforces the skeptical question of 'Why?' which Bellany has placed on the cross where Christ's title of King of the Jews or INRA is normally placed. In the very act of destruction the possibility of an answer from heaven or hell has been eliminated.

Tertiary Iconography

The impact of the work is achieved through a minimum of additional iconography. The camp is only indicated by lengths of barbed wire and a German soldier's helmet. The horizon is kept low to leave the three victims exposed in front of a blue sky.⁶

Comments

By a different approach this work raises the same question about the validity of Christianity as that of Robert Henderson Blyth's, *In the Image of Man*, of 1947. In the light of this evil is belief in the loving God of Christianity viable? By removing from a crucifixion scene any signals of salvation or any possibility of this act pre-empting a transformation of humanity, it leaves the question 'Pourquoi' as unanswered and unanswerable.

⁶ Bellany may have been influenced in this work by Graham Sutherland's *Crucifixion* pictures; particularly the one in the Tate Gallery of 1946. See page 197.

John Bellany,¹ *Homage to John Knox, 1969*

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on hardboard

Size –Triptych. Each panel - 245x160

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion – Using his own iconography and that of the crucifixion, the artist has expressed his cynicism of Calvinist Christianity.

General Description

Like most of his works, this painting is large. Its title is rhetorical in that ‘homage’ in the visual arts usually refers to an act of acceptance and praise of the status of the subject, whereas in this instance John Bellany has presented John Knox as the holy one who has brought misery to those influenced by his teaching.² John Knox is considered to be the founding father of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, which through him was heavily influenced by John Calvin.

Primary Iconography

The central panel displays Bellany’s unusual reference to the crucifixion theme; the central figure as a skate is a metaphor for suffering and Christ.³ The attended figures are fishermen. Following convention, the one to ‘Christ’s’ right looks to heaven and the one to his left to Hell. These figures relate to the outer panels.

Secondary Iconography

The figures in the right hand panel represent the life of the unredeemed in John Knox’s Christian ethics based upon Calvin. The figures in the left hand panel represent Calvinist Christian living.

The paradox inferred by Bellany is that both groups are pictured as suffering in the light of Knox’s influence. In particular the righteous husband and wife in the left panel are chained together in a mutual slavery. This is re-enforced by the triple images of

¹ Born Port Seaton, Scotland, 1942, died 2013.

² J. McEwen, and J. Bellany, *John Bellany*, (Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1994), 79.

³ This reflected the practice observed by John Bellany of gutted haddock being pinned up to dry in a cruciform in his home town. See *Ibid*, 50.

destruction through childbearing, Church (or Bible) and suffering (the fish – Bellany's icon of suffering). In the right hand panel these are balanced by the passions of drink, lust and superstition.

Tertiary Iconography

The fishing boat in the central panel was a symbol of life used by Bellany.⁴ The bat replaced the dove as a dark sign of the Holy Spirit.

Comments

This work reveals John Bellany's growing antipathy towards Calvinist Christianity, but which continued to hold a strong influence upon his inner life of insecurity and guilt.⁵ Whilst Bellany's *Allegory* of 1964 explored the inevitability of humanity's cruelty to other members of the natural world and *Pourquoi? II* of 1967 expressed pessimism about humanity itself, this work implies that neither the states of godliness nor ungodliness can offer hope to humanity. Their alternatives merely offer a different form of suffering.

⁴ The boat and net indicate that Bellany was influenced by Max Beckmann's *Departure* of 1932 which he saw at an exhibition of the artist's work in 1965 at the Tate Gallery. Ibid, 58.

⁵ Ibid, 79

Anthony Green,¹ *Golden Crucifix*, 1965

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil and gold leaf on board.

Size – 183x122

Location – The artist

Source of Information - T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, *Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art*, (Northampton, St. Matthew's [Northampton] Centenary Art Committee, 1993)

Reason for Inclusion - This work allows humour to be introduced into the use of the iconography of the crucifixion.

General Description

This is typical of Anthony Green's work. Since 1960 he has chronicled his relationship with his wife Mary and their family through his art.² Although the shape of the work is a crucifix and it does have significance to the content of the work, the use of unusual shapes was a particular characteristic of his work.³ Anthony Green has 'borrowed' its

¹ Born 30 September 1939, Luton, Bedfordshire.

² A. Green, *Anthony Green 1960-86*, (Tokyo, The Japan Association of Art Museums / Yomiuri Shinbun, 1988), 9.

³ E.g. Anthony Green, *Breakfast in Bed, 27th Wedding Anniversary*, (Private collection, 198x180, oil on board, 1988), Appendix B - Fig. 56.

iconography from conventional crucifixes and then replaced the traditional holy figures with himself and his wife.⁴

Primary and Secondary Iconography

The form of the painting is based on the Italian painted crosses of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries where the crucifixion was surrounded by scenes of the holy narrative.⁵ Jesus is replaced by the artist and the 'saints and angels' by his wife. The picture is full of iconography surrounding the crucifixion. The crucified artist is shown symbolically at the point of death with a flying loincloth traditionally associated with that moment. Above the cross he is pictured in heaven as *Christus Victor*. This is complemented by an image of Green, dressed in a woman's petticoat languishing among the dead in hell.

Mary Green, the artist's wife fulfils all the remaining roles, of St Veronica, Mary Magdalene, the angels, and at the top of the picture as the Virgin Mary holding the dead victim in a form associated with the piéta.

Tertiary Iconography

The settings of the various incidents surrounding the crucifixion are described by the artist:

Heaven...is situated in the congregation chapel at Pound Square, Highgate Village, London, N6. St Veronica holds her cloth bearing Christ's image outside Lissendon Mansions, and Man is cast into a Hell situated near the railway bridge at Gospel Oak station, North London. Mary Magdalene can be identified by her dark red underwear – Mary Green wore similar knickers during the 1960's winters).⁶

Green's neighbourhood is transformed into a holy setting for his personal crucifixion.

Comments

This treatment of the major Christian subject is with humour, and reflects the freedom Green felt in recording his own neurosis through the iconography of the crucifixion. Any offence created by this work is the result of the viewer imposing upon it the Sacred Archetype. Green uses the Semiotic Archetype to playfully record his relationship with his wife, in the context of his personal psychology. Marriage has perhaps brought about the sacrifice of his individual identity, yet in the context of his wife who acted like a saint or angel to him.⁷

⁴ T. Devonshire Jones, J. Huntington-Whiteley, et al, Images of Christ: Religious Iconography in Twentieth Century British Art, (Northampton, St. Matthew's (Northampton) Centenary Art Committee, 1993), 47.

⁵ See G. Schiller, trans. by J. Seligman, Iconography of Christian Art, Vol. 2 (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 149-151 and Figs. 499-501.

⁶ Anthony Green, Anthony Green 1960-86, 64.

⁷ Green painted other crucifixion works at this time; the only one to be identified at present is a small illustration of *Black Crucifixion*, (Artist's Collection, 182x121, 1965) in M. Bailey and A. Green, A Green Part of the World: Paintings by Anthony Green, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1984), 11.

John Bratby,¹ *Golgotha*, 1965

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – estimate 304x760

Location – St Martin’s Chapel University of Cumbria

Source of Information – At present there is no reliable source of information. Image and some details from <http://mikepeat.blogspot.co.uk/2008/06/john-bratby.html> - Accessed 15 March 2014

Reason for Inclusion - The location of the work would anticipate that the Sacred Archetype would be most prominent, but the overall form of the work is unconventional.

General Description:

The massive painting had a complex development. The work grew out of a commission from St. Anselm’s Hall, University of Manchester for a work of a different title. When eventually *Golgotha* was produced a dispute between the artist and the commissioners led to the work being withdrawn and taken up by St Martin’s College Lancaster, after it had been shown at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition of 1965. All the figures are in modern dress and many if not all can be identified as individuals known to the artist.² It has been recorded that according to John Bratby his original intention was not to paint a crucifixion scene, but ‘a design of standing figures.’³

Primary Iconography

The central character of Jesus, who was modelled by the artist, stands almost nude in front of the cross with his upright arms nailed by the wrists to the cross. He wears a crown of thorns, his eyes are open and a shaft of wood wounds his left side.⁴

¹ Born Wimbledon, 19 July 1928, died 1992.

² J. R. Bratby, R. Gibson, and National Portrait Gallery, [John Bratby: Portraits](#), (London, National Portrait Gallery, 1991), 13.

³ M. Yacowar, [The Great Bratby: A Portrait of John Bratby RA](#), (London, Middlesex University Press, 2008), 123.

⁴ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary.

Secondary Iconography

In all, there are eleven additional figures in the composition. Two are positioned as the two thieves, one of whom was modelled after John Ryden and inexplicably identified as Barabbas by Maurice Jacowar. Bratby again appears for a second time next to this victim. His wife Jean also appears twice, once in the far left hand panel and again next to John Ryden.⁵ The second minor victim on Jesus's left is almost obscured by competing figures on the panel as well as a set of steps. The rest of the individuals remain unidentified both as models and as characters from the Biblical crucifixion scene.⁶

Tertiary Iconography

All the figures stand isolated against a neutral white background. The left-hand side of the work is virtually devoid of tertiary iconography in contrast to the right hand side which contains ladders, steps, spade, pushchair, petrol can, chair and bed.

Comments

It is difficult to see any significant theology, except for the sense of apathy of the witnesses, in this work and it may be better to accept that its original intention as a study of individuals has persisted. Because of the shortage of information on this work and its apparent marginality as a study of the use of the iconography of the crucifixion, it was seriously considered to be excluded from this collection. However, it has been retained because of its potential as a resource for the study of theology, through its placement in a sacred space.

⁵ "Bratby crucifies *The Daily Express's* unsympathetic art critic, John Ryden, as Barabbas." Yacowar, *The Great Bratby*, 123.

⁶ It is possible that the dark haired female figure is Angela Heskett who was briefly Bratby's lover.

Craigie Aitchison,⁷ *Crucifixion in a Landscape*, 1967-70

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 130x96

Location - Private collection - Susannah York

Source of Information - A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is one of the earliest of a series of works by Aitchison which uses the iconography of the crucifixion alongside the artist's personal iconography.

General Description

Aitchison's output of works containing the iconography of the crucifixion was prolific; this early work exhibits the essentials of the iconography which became synonymous with Aitchison. He had produced works previously which showed the crucifixion,⁸ the earliest being painted whilst he was a student, but these are not characteristic of his mature work.⁹ *Crucifixion in a Landscape* took Aitchison three years to complete. Aitchison was meticulous with the form of his works and it took this long to find the

⁷ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

⁸ E.g. Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion and Angels*, (Private collection, 113x90, oil on canvas, 1960), Appendix B - Fig. 57.

Craigie Aitchison, *Landscape from Inside a Cathedral*, (Anthony Fry, 92x76, oil on canvas, 1957), Appendix B - Fig. 58.

Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private collection, 34x26, oil on canvas, 1963), Appendix B - Fig. 59.

⁹ See A Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003), 9.

balance for which he was looking.¹⁰ As we receive it, it is reminiscent of Casper David Friedrich's romantic landscapes with crucifixions, such as the Tetschen Altar piece.¹¹ The simplicity of form and use of colour can also be compared to Giotto's work which Aitchison admired;¹² Giotto's *Resurrection* fresco in the Arena Chapel in Padua may be seen as a typical example.¹³

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography of the crucifixion is highly stylised and simple; the figure of Jesus faces the viewer, approximating to *Christus Patiens*. This image would be simplified even further in later works.¹⁴

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

Crucifixion in a Landscape is dominated by the simplified landscape based upon Aitchison's childhood holiday haunts of the Isle of Arran and particularly Holy Island.¹⁵ A view of Holy Island¹⁶ is painted in the background and in the foreground Goat Fell Mountain on the Isle of Arran.¹⁷ A goat or sheep, tree and crucifix are given small but significant places in this work. It is as if animal, vegetable and spiritual are all absorbed by the power of the landscape. This balanced insularity of images would become the hallmark of much of Aitchison's work and these and other objects his foundation iconography.¹⁸

Comments

Of the three Archetypes, in this work the Semiotic and Artistic vie for prominence. The Artistic Archetype is achieved through the balance of form with detail kept to a minimum; whilst the Semiotic Archetype assumes knowledge of its significance by the viewer. Like all of Aitchison's crucifixion paintings, the element of Sacred Archetype is left ambiguous. The devout viewer may interpret the tree, hill and 'sheep' as religious symbols and the isolation as indicative; but the fully informed viewer will recognise the synthesis Aitchison has made between Calvary and his personal local memories. This synthesis of the 'myth' of the crucifixion and the artist's own story creates a unique place on canvas which is neither sacred nor secular, but rests in a mythical space; inviting the viewer to explore and reflect upon this.¹⁹

¹⁰ Ibid, 16.

¹¹ Caspar David Friedrich, *Tetschen Altar or Cross in the Mountains*, (Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Gemaldegalerie, 115x110, oil on canvas, 1807-8), Appendix B - Fig. 60.

¹² This was confirmed by Craigie Aitchison in an interview with Andrew Lambeth recorded in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, *Craigie Aitchison*, (London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1998), Section 4

¹³ Giotto, *The Resurrection*, (Padua, Arena Chapel, Fresco, 1301), Appendix B - Fig. 61.

¹⁴ For example, C. Aitchison, *Crucifixion* (1970-75), Page 231.

¹⁵ Interview with Andrew Lambeth recorded in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, 1998, section 3.

¹⁶ Holy Island See – <http://www.holyisland.org/pix/gallery/islandisland-2.jpg> – Accessed 27 January 2014, Appendix B - Fig. 62.

¹⁷ Goat Fell Mountain Isle of Arran See -

http://www.panoramio.com/photo_explorer#view=photo&position=9&with_photo_id=31574347&order=date_desc&user=123953 – Accessed 27 January 2014. Appendix B - Fig. 63.

¹⁸ The use of the religious and secular in paintings of the crucifixion is not peculiar to Aitchison, but Stanley Spencer, Gilbert Spencer, Anthony Green, Perry Grayson, Roger Wagner and Carel Weight all in their own way combine traditional iconography with a personal visual agenda. Even the disturbing pictures entitled *Crucifixion* by Francis Bacon share this approach to religious works.

¹⁹ Lambirth articulated this mystical sense in a complementary way: 'It is of fundamental importance to recognise that Aitchison's Crucifixions.....are not intended as a confession of faith. They do, however, embody a revelation of personal truth, a belief in the power of painting to impress the mind and move the spirit. And as such they make excellent images for contemplation, for they are utterly sincere statements of imaginative discovery. As Aitchison always says, it is art that is religious, not him.' A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, *Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary*, 2003, 11.

Craigie Aitchison,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1970-75

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 221x188

Location - Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales Australia

Source of Information - A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is one of a series of works produced by the artist which use the iconography of the crucifixion with his personal iconography and is illustrative of variations used on the theme.

General Description

Like *Crucifixion in a Landscape* this work took Aitchison several years to complete.² It is however characteristic of an alternative approach to the crucifixion by Craigie Aitchison. It is almost an abstract in style. It is not a visual rendition of the event, the cross casts no shadow, depth is only hinted at through the complementary colouring of the two uprights.

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

² C. Aitchison and A. G. Williams, Craigie: The Art of Craigie Aitchison, (Edinburgh, Canongate, 1996), 112.

Primary Iconography

Though the victim is based upon the gothic *Christus Patiens*, the body is more elongated; it has no arms and only one eye. There are no witnesses or bystanders.

Tertiary Iconography

In the background is a stylised image of the Isle of Arran painted in green over the orange background. Originally the painting contained an arch, which can still be discerned at the top of the picture, having similarities with an earlier work by Craigie Aitchison *Nude Standing in front of a Picture*.³ With the removal of the arch the work is given the feel of looking through a gateway at the crucifixion.

Comments

In this work the Artistic Archetype is important to its success; its balance of colour and abstract form create an atmosphere of mystery, but the Semiotic Archetype is most prominent since the viewer needs to have some understanding of the mystique of the crucifixion of Jesus to fully appreciate the painting. In this work the viewer observes the symbol of Christianity through an entrance from the real world into an unknowable land of complete isolation. This work may be seen as an intermediate stage in Aitchison's development of style, moving from *Landscape from inside a Cathedral* of 1957⁴ to Aitchison's mature style which may be observed in *Crucifixion* (1984-86).⁵

³ Craigie Aitchison, *Nude Standing in Front of a Picture*, (Nottingham Castle, Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, 65x54, oil on canvas, 1963), Appendix B - Fig. 64.

⁴ Craigie Aitchison, *Landscape from Inside a Cathedral*, (Anthony Fry, 92x76, oil on canvas, 1957), Appendix B - Fig.58.

⁵ Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion* (1984-86), 232.

Craigie Aitchison,¹ Crucifixion, 1984-86

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 221x188

Location – Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Source of Information - Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Reason for Inclusion - This is one of a series produced by the artist which uses the iconography of the crucifixion alongside his personal iconography. By the inclusion of the Bedlington Terrier, it places the crucifixion within the memories of his lost past.

General Description

This work is characteristic of Craigie Aitchison's mature style at least up until the end of the nineteen eighties. It is minimalist in content and abstract in the original meaning of that word in art history.² Aitchison has abstracted the most basic forms of his subjects until they are almost hieroglyphs.

Primary Iconography

Both the figure of Christ and the cross are paired down to a minimum detail, the luminous crucified figure of Christ seems to float in a dreamlike landscape, his halo

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

² *Abstract* in the early part of the twentieth century referred to the concept of abstracting the form from nature. Cubism is a typical example.

highlighting the top of the cross on which two birds observe the scene. The crucified figure has no arms, no face or wounds.

Secondary Iconography

No other human figures appear in this work, animals replace them. The central character is abandoned by humanity, he is watched over by a solitary dog and the pair of birds perched on the arm of the cross. The dog looks into the absent eyes of the armless Christ. Williams has observed that Aitchison began including a dog in some of his works after the death of the second of his beloved Bedlington Terriers, Wayney, in 1986. According to Williams he painted a series of works which were intended not for sale but as personal elegies to the dead dog.³ Rapidly the Bedlington Terrier or modifications of it became part of Aitchison's personal iconography.

Tertiary Iconography

Aitchison is even more minimalistic in the content of this work than in the earlier works; the foreground is limited to an orange section whilst the background consists of a truncated triangle for a hill surrounded by a blue black sky.⁴

Comments

Throughout Aitchison's long career he has accumulated a collection of images which became his personal symbols. The crucifixion itself first appeared in his work in 1955. The other symbol, to appear in this work, the dog, appeared later and is part of his personal life, his love of the Bedlington Terrier. It is this apparent idiosyncrasy which characterises Aitchison's work, his combining of traditional religious forms with objects from his personal life. The cross, the lily, the star, the moon and sun, all objects linked with traditional religious iconography appear alongside his dogs, clothes lines, his beloved Isle of Arran and local boats; all painted very carefully in an apparently simplistic style with echoes of the early renaissance Italian works and pop art. Craigie Aitchison suggested that his reason for adding a dog or other animals to his crucifixion pictures was to add to the horror of the scene.⁵ If this is the case then the artist has failed badly, for there is no sense of horror in this or any of his *Crucifixions*.

Aitchison is neither an illustrator nor a narrative painter; this work does not convey the image of the crucifixion event or its story or its classical theology. Aitchison through his simplicity of form and subject matter has conveyed a sense of stillness, isolation and loss. The stillness of his work comes from the minimal content which has been balanced by Aitchison's concentration on form rather than content. Each item, each colour has been carefully sited to give an overall impression of stillness and isolation. The sense of loss is achieved through the content. The hill – the Isle of Arran and the dog both refer back to elements of Aitchison's life and loves. This puts the crucifixion into Aitchison's own context; it conveys something of his own past and its loss. Its power is in its emotional impact; although its title is crucifixion and it contains an image of it, it does not address that theme but uses the Semiotic Archetype of the crucifixion with its

³ C. Aitchison, and A. G. Williams, Craigie: The Art of Craigie Aitchison, (Edinburgh, Canongate, 1996), 17.

⁴ The triangular hill is an abstract form of the Isle of Arran. It may be significant in the interpretation of Aitchison's works to recall that in the traditions of the construction of the icon of the Crucifixion, the cross is placed theologically at the centre of the world (the *omphalis* or navel of the world). In Aitchison's iconography this could indicate its placing at the centre of his world of memories. See - M. Quenot, The Icon, (Crestwood New York, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1991), 135.

⁵ Craigie Aitchison in an interview with Andrew Lambeth recorded in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, Craigie Aitchison, (London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1998), Section 3 (no pages given).

supporting iconography to engender the emotions of stillness, isolation and loss. Its theological significance is placing it alongside other elements of Aitchison's past life.⁶

This interpretation is dependent partly upon comparison with his other works. However, if taken in isolation the presence of both birds and dog in the work could be considered to refer to W.B. Yeats's short story The Crucifixion of the Outcast, whose final two sentences read: 'And presently the birds lighted all at once upon his head and arms and shoulders, and began to peck at him, and the wolves began to eat his feet. 'Outcasts,' he moaned, 'have you also turned against the outcast?''⁷

⁶ This is discussed in Chapters Two and Three of the Commentary.

⁷ W. B. Yeats, "The Crucifixion of the Outcast," in The Secret Rose, (London, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1982), 156.

Craigie Aitchison,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1988-89

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on Canvas.

Size – 61x48

Location- Royal Academy of Arts, London

Source of Information - A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is one of a series of works produced by the artist which use the iconography of the crucifixion alongside his personal iconography, but unlike its predecessors shows some signs of hope in its iconography.

General Description

This work extends the style which can be seen in *Crucifixion* of 1984-86. Essentially Craigie Aitchison painted what he liked. His major pieces of iconography were animals (particularly his Bedlington Terriers), the Isle of Arran (his childhood holiday home), birds, a tree and colour. This work is sparse, a bare tree in the foreground and a crucifix

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

in the background, illuminated only by a ray of light. The colours are darker than in many of Aitchison's works but maintain his simplicity of form; a dark green foreground, a night blue sky and a band of lighter green linking the two.

Primary Iconography

Like his 1984-86 Crucifixion, the image of Christ is highly stylised. The victim is painted without arms, he has no wounds, but unlike the earlier version there is an indication of eyes, though it is difficult to discern whether they are open or closed. Again the consistency in Aitchison's work does not reveal any sign of suffering in the crucified body; the viewer has to look carefully to find any hints of it. There is no discomfort in his crucifixions.

Tertiary Iconography

Like nearly all his crucifixion pictures, Aitchison includes no other human beings.² There is no secondary iconography although some of his animals fulfil the same role. The strength of this work is in its composition; the balance of form and colour create a sense of comfortable isolation, comparable to his earlier works. There are in this work some developments from his earlier works. The use of the dead tree in the foreground and the ray of light direct the viewer to the possible divinity of the victim. This work then gives some hint of hope: the tree relating to a 'spiritual winter' with the hope of 'spring' and the ray of light re-enforcing this interpretation that God had not totally abandoned the dying Christ. However, this is still projected with a sense of comfortable isolation.

Comments

Aitchison's landscapes and crucifixions have a consistency in their call to a place of comfortable isolation stored deep in the psyche of both the artist and appreciative viewer. Their popularity as ecclesiastical works of art particularly in Anglican places of worship then raises theological questions about the spiritual ethos both within the Christian tradition and beyond in the twenty first century.³

² In his later works he did at times include the two thieves who were crucified alongside Jesus and in an early work he included a nude – see *Nude Standing in front of a picture*, 1959, Appendix B - Fig. 64.

³ Paintings by Craigie Aitchison may be seen in Liverpool, Cathedral, Truro Cathedral and Kings College Chapel.

Craigie Aitchison,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1994

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 105x96

Location– Kings College Chapel, Cambridge

Source of Information - A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is one of a series of works produced by the artist which use the iconography of the crucifixion alongside his personal iconography.

General Description

This work was not commissioned for Kings College, Cambridge, but was presented on loan to that institution by the Jerwood Foundation.² It is representative of a long series of Crucifixions by Craigie Aitchison nearly all of which only include an isolated crucifixion.³

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

² See – Rabley Gallery, Craigie Aitchison R A, at <http://www.rableydrawingcentre.com/drawingsandprints/artist/cv/1/craigie-aitchison-ra> - Accessed 14 January 2014.

³ E.g. Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private collection, 34x26, oil on canvas, 1963), Appendix B - Fig. 59 to Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private collection, 142x112, oil on canvas, 2001), Appendix B - Fig. 65.

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography shows a stylised dead Christ, painted in white, close to *Christus Patiens*. His head hangs down and a single arm is hung over the cross, with the wound from the spear on his left hand side. Three white lines suggest that he wears the crown of thorns. This is the first example in the Scholarly Edition in which Aitchison includes the wound and crown.⁴ The position of the wound away from the traditional right side to the heart invites a move of meaning from a sacramentary reading of the wound (the blood representing the Eucharist and the water, baptism) to an emotional response - the wounding of the heart.⁵

Secondary Iconography

The only secondary iconography is a small bird, the lone witness to the event.

Tertiary Iconography

The tertiary iconography is again sparse; Craigie Aitchison indicates a flat landscape through the use of two shades of blue, with the horizon suggested by a line of pink, which the viewer can interpret as sunset or sunrise.

Comments

In contrast to his earlier works on this theme there is a stronger sense of the horror and suffering of the crucifixion in this work;⁶ but like his earlier works this picture gives no hint of hope. With the wound on the left side an extrapolation of this image towards the Eucharist is excluded.

⁴ It is the earliest example found of the use of the crown and wound by Aitchison in this research, but with the large number of works by Craigie Aitchison this finding needs to be received with caution.

⁵ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 79-81.

⁶ Craigie Aitchison in an interview with Andrew Lambeth in 1998, talked of the agony and horror of the crucifixion; this work may identify the time he began to include these emotions in his crucifixion paintings. See - J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, Craigie Aitchison, (London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1998), (No pages are given).

Craigie Aitchison,¹ *Calvary*, 1997

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on board

Size – Four panels - 76x61 (each panel)

Location - Chapel of St Margaret, Truro Cathedral

Source of Information - Truro Cathedral

Reason for Inclusion - This commissioned work produced by the artist uses the iconography of the crucifixion alongside his personal iconography which suggests a hope of the resurrection.

General Description The work was the first Craigie Aitchison painting to be commissioned by a Church authority. It consists of four panels which sit within four arches in the cathedral. The first three appear to be spatially linked to one another. The second panel contains an image of Jesus on the cross below the peak of the mountain behind him. The first and third panels represent the other two victims at the crucifixion respectively. The fourth panel contains a stylised barren tree or cross.

Primary Iconography

Jesus faces the viewer below the peak of the mountain, with his eyes visible, his arms outstretched with the lance wound in his left side.² He wears a halo and the lines, which characterised a crown of thorns in *The Crucifixion* in Kings College, Cambridge,³ are ambiguously extended. They could be indicative of a crown of thorns or of holy rays emanating from the Son of God or both.

Secondary Iconography

For the first time in this collection, Jesus is accompanied by the two thieves. Each has their own space within an arch and a certain independence from the central panel, by the use of repeating the background mountain in each panel. But there is also a degree of integration: both look toward Jesus in the central panel and are positioned to the left and right of the mountain peak. Typical of Aitchison's works is the Bedlington Terrier which observes Jesus with two birds sitting on the cross beam.

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

² The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 79-81.

³ Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (1994), 237.

Tertiary Iconography

Complementing the spatial aspect of the panels, there is also a sense of time. A shaft of light lies along the left side of the hill in the left hand panel, whilst it moves down from heaven in the second panel and then moves to the right side of the hill in the third and returns to the left in the fourth panel as if the viewer observes a cycle of the sunbeam in the four panels. This is re-enforced with an empty cross or tree which centres the fourth panel accompanied by a full moon. The panel containing the crucified Christ also has a single star hinting at a different layer of time; calling the viewer back to the nativity.

Comments

The style and colours in these panels make it clear that they are not a narrative or story telling series, but an invitation to the viewer to reflect upon them as paintings. Their colour and simplicity draw the viewer back to the late medieval times of Giotto and Cimabue, whilst their style comes close to twentieth century abstract works.

Aitchison's use of the iconography of the crucifixion even in this setting is still not conventional. His inclusion of the Bedlington Terrier and the Island of Arran in the background still calls the viewer to Aitchison's personal memories. However, the mood is more reverential with the three crosses and Jesus's halo indicative of the use of the Sacred Archetype. With the movement of time across the arches the work does allow some hope within its interpretation, but it still does not emphasise the act of salvation. The third panel does hint at something beyond the death of Christ, but the overall sense is one of isolation.

Craigie Aitchison,¹ *Calvary*, 1998

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 196x192

Location – Anglican Cathedral Liverpool

Source of Information - A. Lambirth, C. Aitchison, et al, Craigie Aitchison: Out of the Ordinary, (London, Royal Academy of Arts, 2003)

Reason for Inclusion - This work is one of a series of works produced by the artist which use the iconography of the crucifixion alongside his personal iconography. This example has the most developed iconography of the crucifixion.

General Description

This work was commissioned by the Dean and Chapter of Liverpool Cathedral. Craigie Aitchison had already painted many works on this theme before they came to the interest of Churches in Britain.² Nothing in Aitchison's paintings is there by chance.

¹ Born Edinburgh January 1916, died December 2009.

² Craigie Aitchison began painting crucifixions in 1952 when he was studying at the Slade School of Art. See interview with Andrew Lambirth recorded in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth, Craigie Aitchison, (London, Timothy Taylor Gallery, 1998), section 3, (catalogue contains no page numbers). His earliest work for a Christian denomination is *Calvary* in Truro Cathedral dated 1997, though a crucifixion picture was presented to Kings College Cambridge in 1994.

Everything is carefully measured.³ The background is now horizontal. Christ hangs in the centre of the picture, his form is very simple almost abstract. The only detail of Christ is the hint of a yellow halo, a line for a nose and closed eyes. He is supported by a pale blue stylised cross which occupies almost exactly a third of the height of the picture. The arms form a Y shape with the body. The only other detail is a hint of his wound on his left: approximating to the heart.

Primary Iconography

Aitchison's Christ does not fit comfortably with the traditional iconography. His hanging arms and bent legs are consistent with *Christus Patiens*. However, the rest of the body is more upright, his head is erect, there are no nails visible and his eyes appear to be open, all of which are consistent with *Christus Victor*.⁴ Aitchison portrays this semi abstract Christ as both alive and dead. The position of the wound away from the traditional right side to the heart invites a move of meaning from a sacramentary reading of the wound (the blood representing the Eucharist and the water, baptism) to an emotional response - the wounding of the heart.⁵

Secondary Iconography

On the left of Jesus is portrayed the non-penitent thief and to his right the penitent thief. Both are highly simplified. Their arms are not nailed, consistent with the tradition exemplified by Justus van Gent's Calvary (Triptych) of 1464-68.⁶ The inclusion of their navels in these economical depictions invites the viewer to reflect upon their humanity. Aitchison subtly highlights the navels through the use of yellow, linking them with the bleeding heart of Jesus which too is surrounded by the yellow hue used for Christ's halo.

By the exclusion of other traditional figures such as the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, John the Evangelist, Longinus and Stephaton their theological significance is also excluded.⁷

Tertiary Iconography

Below the cross stands a dog (reminiscent of the artist's Bedlington Terriers) looking up to Jesus.⁸ The only other image is a small waxing moon to the viewer's right of the central character. The background is simple. Three quarters of the space is filled with a strong night blue which overlays a purple base and which forms a small continuous line separating the sky from a sage green ground. The lines are horizontal with no hint of a hill or mountain.⁹

³ See article in J. McEwen and A. Lambirth.

⁴ P. Murray, L. Murray, et al, 'Crucifix,' *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 126.

⁵ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 79-81.

⁶ Justus van Gent, *Calvary – Triptych*, (Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo, 250x216, oil on wood, 1464-68), Appendix B - Fig. 66.

⁷ A concise description of the origins and meanings of the traditional iconography of the crucifixion is included in the Commentary to the Scholarly Edition, Chapter One, but see also G Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol. 2, trans. by J. Seligman (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 88-164.

⁸ For a discussion on the significance of the dog see, Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, 1984-86, page 233.

⁹ It is possible that Aitchison in introducing this schematic background was referring back to the Platonic cosmological tradition of icons, in which the background was divided into layers of existence; though these usually included a series of curved surfaces. See R. Temple, *Icons and the Mystical Origins of Christianity*. (Shaftsbury, Dorset, Element Books Limited, 1992), 42 and 105.

The inclusion of the dog and moon is ambiguous and highlight the changes which have occurred in 20th century treatments of the crucifixion. The dog is at one level a personal symbol of one of the loves of Aitchison's life; however, the dog also has a long history in iconography as representing faithfulness. The watching dog in this work both personalises this work as Aitchison's own vision, but also introduces a symbol of all faithful watchers to the cross. In this sense it is highly traditional encompassing all the saints who have 'sat' at the cross.

The moon too has a long tradition in the iconography of the crucifixion. Usually, however, it was linked with the sun. Both symbolised power; the sun represented the power of the divine nature of Christ and the New Testament, whilst the moon in reflecting the sun's power symbolised the humanity of Christ and the power of the Old Testament.¹⁰

Comments

The theology of Aitchison's works is not simple, but does share with other artists this freedom to personalise the ancient event of the crucifixion into an image which extends its significance from the formularies of the Church into a universal icon. This is reinforced by the placing of this work in Liverpool Cathedral. It is displayed as a traditional reredos behind the altar in the octagonal Chapter House which is sited at the north east corner of the cathedral. The Chapter House, has its own historic theological significance; it is the formal meeting place of the clergy of the cathedral. However, Aitchison's Calvary rests below a memorial window to the First Earl of Lathom, the first Grand Master of the Freemasons of West Lancashire who paid for the building; a powerful visual symbol of the blurring of the religious and secular in 20th century theology.

¹⁰ G. Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, 107-8.

Betty Swanwick,¹ *Lost Wilderness*, 1974

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – Painting, pencil and watercolour on paper

Size – 48x37

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010)

Reason for Inclusion - The pose of the main figure is similar to that of a crucifixion, but the focus of the implied theology is upon the environment.

General Description

Betty Swanwick was known predominantly as an illustrator until around 1970 when she left her post as a senior lecturer at Goldsmiths College, University of London and began to explore a new style of drawing and painting, much of it on Biblical themes. This work is little larger than a book illustration, but has an authority of a larger work. It is

¹ Born on 22 May 1915, Forest Hill, London, died 1989.

one half of a pair of works; its partner is *Wilderness Regained*.² Their titles echo Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. However, whilst the two pictures have some links to John Milton's poems, Swanwick's works are more diffuse, with their iconography suggestive rather than narrative.

Primary Iconography

In this work the central figure stands in front of a tree with her arms wrapped around two branches inviting the viewer to compare her with the crucified Christ.³ The figure is in modern dress and whether male or female, the voluminous shirt visually describes the figure as overfed. The suffering figure looks beyond the viewer with an expression of depression. Her right hand is spread in a pose similar to that in Grünewald's *Crucifixion*, whilst the left hand points down in the manner that John the Baptist points to Jesus in Grünewald's *Crucifixion*.⁴ Her dress is modern, but the mistletoe behind her head gives the impression of a crown.

The tree was an alternative to the cross in earlier crucifixion paintings relating the cross to the tree of life.⁵ The difference however is that unlike those earlier works, in this work, the tree is broken or even dead.

Secondary Iconography

There are three figures asleep in the background; they can be compared to the sleeping apostles in the Garden of Gethsemane, indicating a synthesis of episodes from the life of Christ.⁶

Tertiary Iconography

In *Wilderness Lost* there is a contrasting use of colour; the background is predominantly blue/grey, which is complemented in the main character's shirt; whilst the foreground maintains earth colours of green, and brown. This gives the background a sense of ghostly unreality. The ground is covered in containers, tin cans, bottles, boxes, squeeze tubes and the odd cup, all of which have been abandoned. This detritus even invades the floor of the foreground. In the foreground are two foxes resting at the feet of the central character.⁷ Mistletoe hangs from a dead tree, 'crowning' the woman. Mistletoe can be

² Illustrated in, P. Rossmore, B. Swanwick, et al, *Betty Swanwick: Artist & Visionary*, (London, Chris Beetles Gallery, 2008), 55.

³ The buttoning of the shirt to the left would indicate that it is a woman, though Paddy Rossmore, a friend and biographer of Betty Swanwick, in his commentary on the work, considered the figure to be male. See *ibid* 57.

⁴ Matthias Grünewald, *Crucifixion*, Central Panel, Isenheim altarpiece (Colmar, Alsace, France, Unterlinden Museum, 270x310, oil on panel, 1512-1516), Appendix B - Fig. 36.
The left hand also contrasts with the iconography of Christian works in which holy individuals point to heaven. e.g. Leonardo da Vinci *The Burlington House Cartoon*, (London, Tate Gallery, 142x105, charcoal and paper, 1499-1500), Appendix B - Fig. 67.

⁵ See G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, Vol. 2, trans. by J. Seligman (London, Lund Humphries, 1971), 133-136 and Figs. 442, 443 and 504.

⁶ E.g. Sandro Botticelli, *The Agony in the Garden*, (Spain, Capilla Real, Granada, oil on canvas, c1500), Appendix B - Fig. 68.

⁷ In Christianity the little foxes which spoil the vines in the Song of Songs (Chapter 2, verse 15) have been interpreted as the powers of evil who steal the fruits of the soul. This latter interpretation of the foxes would be consistent with Paddy Rossmore's understanding of the work as 'a depiction of a state of consciousness, that of alienation, where feeling of divine support is no longer experienced.'
N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 57.

linked to paganism as a symbol of fertility. This would then direct the viewer to relate the woman to 'Mother Earth.'⁸

Figures in the background appear to be bereft of life, without defining whether that should be interpreted as physical, psychological or spiritual. In this blue grey land there is no life, neither zoological nor botanical. The only life is found in the foreground.

Comments

This work perhaps typifies the challenges of reflecting theologically upon these modern works which use the iconography of the crucifixion. The artist feels no constraint to conform to traditional expectations of the place of the crucifixion in Christian theology, but uses the imagery to raise agendas relating to modern life, alienation, ecology and suffering.⁹ This is explored more fully in Chapter Two of the Commentary.

⁸ Mistletoe in Greco/Roman mythology is related to the *Golden Bough* in Virgil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas picked the mistletoe before descending to the underworld with the Cumaean Sibyl. See Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. by W. F. J. Knight (London, Penguin, 1958).

⁹ Betty Swanwick's picture could be compared to Paul Fiddes' concept of death in the crucifixion as the loss of relationship. Her picture then can be interpreted as humanity's loss of relationship with nature. See P.S. Fiddes, *The Creative Suffering of God*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992), 201.

Moira Doggett,¹ *Gospel According to John*, 1989

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 75x50

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Imaging the Bible in Wales Database

<http://imagingthebible.llgc.org.uk/object/1309>

Reason for Inclusion - Though the work has many conventional elements, the crucified Christ appears to have both male and female features.

General Description: Moira Doggett painted this work thirteen years after converting from Methodism to Catholicism.² Though the work uses the iconography of the crucifixion it is more correct to view it as *Christus Victor*, the resurrected Christ.³

Primary Iconography

The central figure appears to be androgynous. The body and face are soft and feminine in form, but the upper body lacks breasts and nipples. The five wounds of the cross are visible, but there are no nails. Each hand and the feet are surrounded by a halo affirming the sanctity of their wounds. A further halo surrounds the head which wears a golden crown of King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The navel confirms the humanity of figure as having been born of a woman. The arms are not modelled to indicate the body is hanging from the cross, but rather they suggest a pose of invitation. The cross is a simple stylised backcloth to the main figure who does not hang upon it but stands or

¹ Born, Edmundstown, Rhondda, 1927.

² www.mdoggett.co.uk - Accessed 14 January 2014.

³ For Christus Victor See Commentary Chapter One, 22-23.

floats before it. Though the Christ figure's eyes are closed, it is more consistent with the image to interpret them as closed in prayer, rather than in death.

Secondary Iconography

The two witnesses, Mary and John appear to support the body, but this may be viewed as symbolic in their 'support' of Him in his earthly life.

Tertiary Iconography

Surrounding the central figures are ten scenes from the Gospel of John, which give the work its title. In these scenes Jesus is portrayed as a bearded man, contrasting his pre-crucified state with that of his resurrected form.

Comments

In this painting Moira Doggett has not painted Jesus in his death throws but in his resurrected and ascended heavenly body as *Christus Victor*. By giving Jesus an androgynous appearance, the artist has rejected any sexual bias in his ascended ministry. This work comes closest to a feminist theology in the Scholarly Edition which is marked by its absence. However, internationally there are works which use the iconography of the crucifixion to explore this theme.⁴

⁴ E.g. Mona von Wittlage, *Crucifixion*, (Saatchi Collection, 215x160, Blood on Sanitary Bags, not dated). Appendix B - Fig. 69.

Maggi Hambling,¹ *Good Friday, 1990*

**Image removed for reasons of
copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Medium – oil on canvas

Size – 91x84

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - This is an example of a work in which the three Archetypes are balanced.²

General Description

This work was one of a series completed by Maggi Hambling over a number of years from 1986; each one painted on Good Friday of a particular year.³ The work is almost abstract. It has similarities to Craigie Aitchison's *Crucifixion* of 1963.⁴

Primary Iconography

The primary iconography is of Jesus almost in profile with the lance wound on the left side of the body.⁵ Behind the body a shadow of a cross can be discerned whilst running parallel to the body is a blue and black curve which can be interpreted as a tree form.

¹ Born 1945 Sudbury, Suffolk.

² For a discussion on the Three Archetypes - see Commentary Chapter One.

³ N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010), 65.

⁴ Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private Collection, 34x26, oil on canvas, 1963), Appendix B - Fig. 59.

⁵ The significance of the placing of the wound on the left side is discussed in Chapter Two of the Commentary, 79-81.

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

There are no other images in the work. The background is predominantly blue and black.

Comments

This work skilfully gives a sense both of peace and stillness together with suffering. Although the Artistic Archetype is most prominent in this work, it does not exclude the Sacred Archetype. Because of the stylisation of the figure, it would be possible to misinterpret this work if it were not for the Semiotic Archetype inferred through the title. The work calls the viewer to reflection or meditation upon the Good Friday event with the minimum of visual information. The impact of this work is highly dependent upon the knowledge the viewer brings to the work.

Albert Herbert,¹ *Eve and Jesus*, 1990

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 28x36

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion: An interesting example of a modern approach to relating Adam and Eve to the crucifixion.

General Description

The painting is one of a series of religious paintings completed by Albert Herbert. All these paintings are quite small and none seem to have been purchased by any public gallery, although the artist was Principal Lecturer at the St Martin's School of Art.² The essence of the work is the conjunction of Eve and Jesus 'the new Adam.'

Primary Iconography

Jesus is depicted naked with the five marks of the crucifixion, but with his eyes open, looking towards Eve. The nakedness makes the connection with Adam.³

Secondary Iconography

Eve stands modestly covering herself with the traditional fig leaf eating the forbidden fruit.

Tertiary Iconography

The setting is a garden, presumably the Garden of Eden and not Calvary, since Jesus hangs on a cross at the base of a hill.

¹ Born 10 September 1925 Bow, London, died 2008.

² Robert Macdonald, 'Obituary,' *The Guardian*, (Wednesday 11 June 2008).
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2008/jun/11/art> Accessed 7 April 2012

³ The nakedness may also refer to the Greek tradition of portraying Gods as naked.

Comments

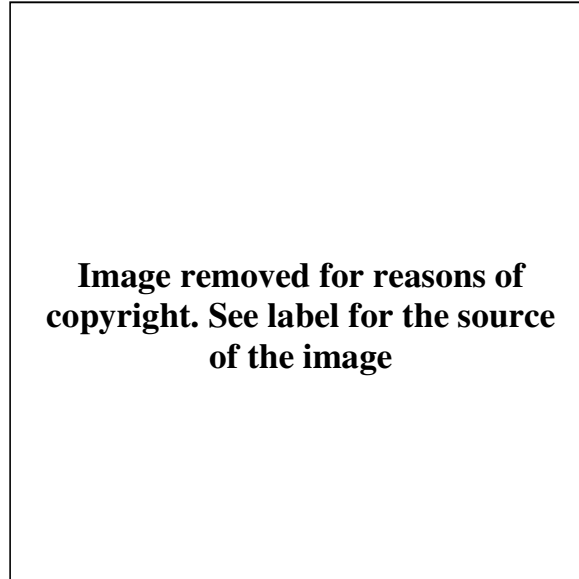
This simple work explores the Pauline theology of Jesus as the second Adam. Paul in 1 Corinthians describes Jesus as the spiritual Adam who was necessary to overcome the consequences of the first Adam who had disobeyed God after following Eve into succumbing to temptation.⁴ In 1 Timothy, Paul claims that the responsibility for sin entering the World lies with Eve, not Adam.⁵ In this work the focus of the theology appears to be to the portrayal of Eve (Women in general?) as the reason why Christ died on the cross. This contrasts with his later work *Eve Gives Birth to Us All* which seems to be concerned with the unity of all races through the image of Eve as the mother of all humanity.⁶

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:20-49.

⁵ 1 Timothy 2:13-15. Note: Many scholars do not recognise Paul as the writer of this Epistle, but of a later Christian who was sympathetic with Paul's theology.

⁶ Albert Herbert, *Eve Gives Birth to Us All*, (Private collection, 25x51, oil on canvas, 1994), Appendix B - Fig. 70.

Alexander (Sandy) Guy,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1992



Medium – Painting, oil on canvas.

Size – 208x175

Location – Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow

Source of Information - Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - This work makes unconventional usage of the iconography of the crucifixion, integrating it with the iconography of Elvis Presley and through it relating the crucifixion to popular culture.

General Description

This very large work is based upon the white "American Eagle" jumpsuit designed by Bill Belew which Elvis Presley used in one of his most famous performances in 1973.²

Primary Iconography

The iconography is clear; Guy has invited the viewer to make connections between the crucified Christ and the dead Presley through one of Presley's most enduring attributes - his jumpsuit.

¹ Born St Andrews, Scotland, in 1962.

² *Aloha from Hawaii* was a concert starring Elvis Presley, broadcast live on January 14, 1973 to a world record audience.

Tertiary Iconography

There is a backcloth which contains some letters at the bottom left side, and blood at the tips of the arms which re-enforces the imagery of crucifixion.

Comments

Alexander Guy visited Elvis Presley's former home, 'Graceland' in Memphis Tennessee in 1992 and produced a series of Elvis paintings during which some of his notes have been recorded:

August 1992: Jesus died for our sins, Elvis died for our 20th century sins. If Jesus is alive today then so is Elvis. The fact is they are both dead and alive so Jesus=Elvis.

November 1992: The Elvis suit is not Elvis. It is the myth. It is astronauts, Klu Klux Klan, Military, God, Rock n' Roll, Burden, Self-protection, Martyrdom, TV Evangelism, Cult, Fashion and Shroud.³

In this quotation Guy identifies the jumpsuit as Presley's Semiotic Archetype, in which all American culture is accessible. Theologically, comparison between Jesus and Presley can infer that both have achieved a comparable status of myth. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

³ Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, Gallery of Modern Art Glasgow: The First Years, (London Scala Books 1996), 57.

Norman Adams,¹ *Golden Crucifixion*, 1993

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, watercolour on paper

Size – 114x168.

Location – Beaux Arts London

Source of Information – N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascall's Gallery, 2010)

Reason for Inclusion - Though this work is modern in style, a traditional theology of salvation can be interpreted from it.²

General Description

Brian Morley in his obituary of Norman Adams observed that whilst he claimed to be agnostic he was committed to painting religious themes.³ *Golden Crucifixion* reflects his approach to these subjects. His style is modern, almost abstract, but the use of its iconography is predominantly conventional. The title *Golden Crucifixion* refers to the appearance of the work, but also refers back to Christian icons in which gold colouring or gold leaf was used as the background, representing heaven.⁴

Primary Iconography

In the centre of the work is the crucifixion of Christ. He hangs in the form of *Christus Patiens*. The rest of the work however does not follow this traditional format.

Secondary Iconography

The secondary iconography consists of stylised mourners and soldiers. Sister Wendy Beckett has identified the figure in blue in the foreground to the right of the cross, with

¹ Born Walthamstow 1927, died 2005.

² A significant event in his life occurred whilst in prison as a conscientious objector. He was impressed by the prison chaplain who though not convincing him of his theology, influenced Norman Adams with the idea that art had to have a spiritual message. See – M. Evans, 'Norman Adams', *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biographies*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/97564> - Accessed 23 April 2014.

³ Brian Morley, 'Obituary to Norman Adams', *The Guardian*, (Tuesday 15 March 2005).

⁴ The use of gold is succinctly described by Peter and Linda Murray – 'The object was to express a celestial and eternal ambiance...' P. Murray and L. Murray, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 202.

hands outstretched in anticipation of the resurrection, as Mary Magdalene.⁵ The positioning is consistent with Mary Magdalene, but the colour suggests the Virgin Mary. If one looks carefully at her fingers they confirm this as Jesus's mother. The thumb and first finger of the left hand is depicted clasping Jesus's navel; a sign affirming her motherhood and his humanity. This would allow the woman in green to be identified with Mary Magdalene.

Tertiary Iconography

The great butterfly forms in the background are symbolic of Christ's resurrection from 'the chrysalis' of his entombment. In *Angels Around the Cross*, an earlier work by Norman Adam, the angels have the same iconography as the eyes in this work. These eyes can then also be interpreted from Norman Adam's own iconography as angels.⁶ Christ's divinity can be inferred from the gold pouring into Christ from above his head and apparently originating from the sun at the top centre of the work. This may be a reference to Origen's theology in comparing the relationship of the Father and Son as that of sun and sunbeam or 'the effulgence of the eternal light'.⁷

Comments

Overall this work though modern in style contains within it a traditional theology of salvation. The iconography is not conventional, but the use of the butterfly imagery gives the work a sense of hope and 'the angels' a sense of Jesus's divinity.

⁵ N. Hepburn, *Cross Purposes - Shock and Contemplation in Images of the Crucifixion*, (Paddock Wood Kent, Mascal's Gallery, 2010), 61.

⁶ Norman Adams, *Angels Around the Cross*, (Manchester, Manchester City Galleries, 173x153, oil on canvas, 1961), Appendix B - Fig. 71.

⁷ Origen, *Homilies on Jeremiah*, IX.4, in J. Stevenson, *New Eusebius. Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*, (London, S.P.C.K. 1975), 218.

Roger Wagner,¹ Menorah, 1993

Image removed for reasons of copyright. See label for the source of the image

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 157x196

Location – St Giles Church, Oxford

Source of Information – Bridgeman Education

Reason for Inclusion - The use of the iconography of the crucifixion by Roger Wagner is highly unconventional and broadens its use as a Christian image.

General Description

The artist himself has given a brief description of this work, the setting is Didcot Power Station in Oxfordshire; its six cooling towers and chimney reminding the artist of the *Menorah*, the seven fold candle stick which stood in the entrance to the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple and removed by the Romans at the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. The imposing sky, he has compared to the magnificence of a cathedral.²

Primary Iconography

In front of the monumental structures Wagner has placed the three crosses of Calvary. The three images are virtually identical, all are naked, all can be described as exhibiting the pose of *Christus Patiens*, but the central crucifix is distinguished by a sign above the body. The only other major visual difference is that the crucifix to the right of the picture (usually associated with the non-repentant thief) is reflected in the standing water.

¹ Born London 1957.

² Roger Wagner gave this description of the work on his website [Roger Wagner.Art](http://www.rogerwagner.co.uk/work/item/17/menorah-1993) at <http://www.rogerwagner.co.uk/work/item/17/menorah-1993> - Accessed 27 January 2014.

Secondary Iconography

Mourners dressed in traditional Hasidic clothes stand in groups in front of the crosses, but their positioning appears to have no traditional iconographic or symbolic significance; Wagner has not referred the viewer back to the holy mourners of conventional crucifixion paintings. However, by placing the mourners in modern conservative Jewish clothing he has referred to twentieth century Jewish suffering; a connection Wagner found also with the power station, which reminded him of a vast crematorium.³

Tertiary Iconography

The major elements in the tertiary iconography are summarised in the General Description. Wagner has brought three themes together in this work. The building itself engages the viewer as a symbol of modern power and ecological destruction; its imposing presence within an awesome cathedral skyline becomes the backdrop of a great religious drama. The Jewish witnesses and Wagner's interpretation of the power station as Menorah invite reflection on the suffering of the Jewish people in the twentieth century. The Menorah, the cathedral and the witnesses all surround the crucifixion which ' - in no other religious event is the absence of God so closely linked with his presence, or the tragedy of human life so intimately linked with its redemption.'⁴

Comments

Wagner's *Menorah* in one sense continues a tradition in English art of placing Christ in the English countryside. This can be traced back to William Blake through Samuel Palmer to Stanley Spencer and Tristram Hillier. However, whilst his predecessors portrayed the English countryside as a spiritual home for the Son of God, Wagner is more circumspect. Roger Wagner's England of power station and flat flooded fields threatens to overpower the Cross; it is only the image of the grieving Jews which bring the viewer back to the uneasy centrality of the Calvary scene in this work. Roger Wagner depends heavily on the Semiotic Archetype of the crucifixion and the memory of the Holocaust to empower this work, which is not narrative or landscape or surreal in genre, but may be described as a late twentieth century Symbolist work.

³ Roger Wagner.Art at <http://www.rogerwagner.co.uk/work/item/17/menorah-1993>, Accessed 13 June 2013.

⁴ Roger Wagner.Art.

Peter Howson,¹ *Crucifixion*, 1999²

**Image removed for reasons of
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of the image**

Medium – Painting, oil on canvas

Size – 183x122

Location – Private collection

Source of Information – Christies On-line auction catalogue. <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/peter-howson-the-crucifixion-5054936-details.aspx> - Accessed 15 January 2014.

Reason for Inclusion - By substituting a naked woman for Jesus, Peter Howson has raised theological questions about the relationship of the image of crucifixion and our human condition.

General Description

Robert Heller quoted Peter Howson in describing this work as ‘a pornographic, almost a blasphemous painting.’³

Primary Iconography

The work is stark; a woman hangs from a cross.⁴ Her body is beautiful, but muscular; it is clear she is a strong woman who projects a powerful sexual attraction. The substitution of Jesus by a woman on the cross makes this picture unconventional, but there are other unconventional elements. She is alive, her eyes are open, but she carries the wound of Longinus in her right side. She wears the crown of thorns associated with Jesus, but she is not nailed to a cross; she is tied to it with thongs⁵ and her pose with her

¹ Born 27 March 1958 in London, grew up in Prestwick Scotland – still working as an artist.

² Peter Howson has produced several large crucifixion pictures since 2000.

³ R. Heller, and P. Howson, *Peter Howson*, (London, Momentum, 2003), 150.

⁴ The model Elaine Johnson - *Ibid*, 150.

⁵ These ties are perhaps reminiscent of bondage thongs.

arms wound around the cross beam are conventionally associated with the thieves who were crucified with Jesus.⁶

Secondary and Tertiary Iconography

Except for the red/black background there is no other iconography in this work.

Comments

Like many of the works in the Scholarly Edition, there is a diversity of interpretations. It can be considered as a visual comment upon the relationship between the sexualisation of the female form and oppression. But it also raises the question how can a work be pornographic without being blasphemous? By his own admission Peter Howson is an alcoholic, with additional addictions to drugs and pornography.⁷ This picture was painted in 1999, the year before he began his painful journey into remission and Christian faith.⁸ It is possible to interpret this painting in the context of traditional Christian Biblical theology. In Paul's letter to the Colossians he wrote:

And when you were dead in trespasses and the circumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, *nailing it to the cross*.⁹

Though in 1999 Howson was yet to commit himself to a Christian life he had been brought up in a religious environment.¹⁰ This picture can then be viewed as Peter Howson's visual interpretation of this extract from Colossians. Howson's pornography is 'nailed' to the cross. The image then has a synthesis of Christ on the cross through the use of the crown of thorns and wound in the side, with the sinner crucified with him through the use of their traditional pose, and personalised to the artist's temptations through the use of a pornographic model. The work can then be characterised as both pornographic and theologically orthodox, but not blasphemous.¹¹

⁶ E.g. Hans Baldung Grien, *The Crucifixion*, (Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemaldegalerie, 152x104, oil on wood, 1512), Appendix B – Fig. 11.

⁷ See Peter Howson's interview with Steven Berkoff in P. Howson, S. Berkoff, et al, Peter Howson, (London, Flowers East, 2005), 11-13.

⁸ Robert Heller has documented this part of Howson's life in Chapter X of his biography of the artist – see R. Heller, and P. Howson, Peter Howson, (Edinburgh, Mainstream Publications, 1993), 157-167.

⁹ Colossians chapter 2, verses.3-15.

¹⁰ Peter Howson confirmed this in his interview with Steven Berkoff - see Howson and Berkoff, Peter Howson, (1993), 7. Pictorially this is also indicated in a remarkable picture the artist painted in 1964 aged around six years old entitled *Christ on the Cross*. Illustrated in Heller, Peter Howson, 10.

¹¹ There is in this work an attraction to interpret it as a piece of feminist theology, but except for the female victim there is no supporting evidence for it.

Appendix B:
Illustrations Referred to in the Scholarly Edition

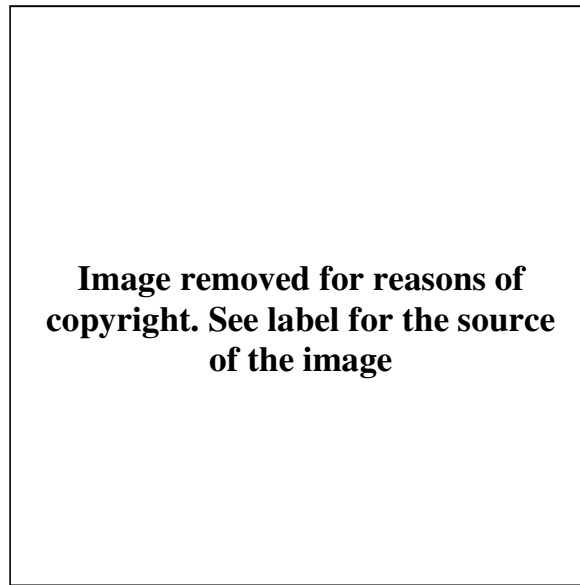


Fig. 1
Lady Ottoline Morrell, Sydney, William, Stanley and Gilbert Spencer,
(National Portrait Gallery, 6x10, photograph, 1914).

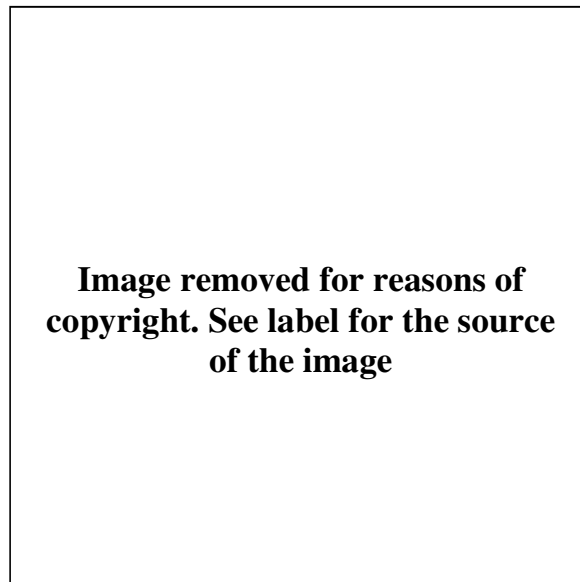


Fig. 2
Lucas Cranach (The Elder), *Lamentation beneath the Cross*,
(Munich, Alte Pinakothek, 138x99, oil on pine, 1503).

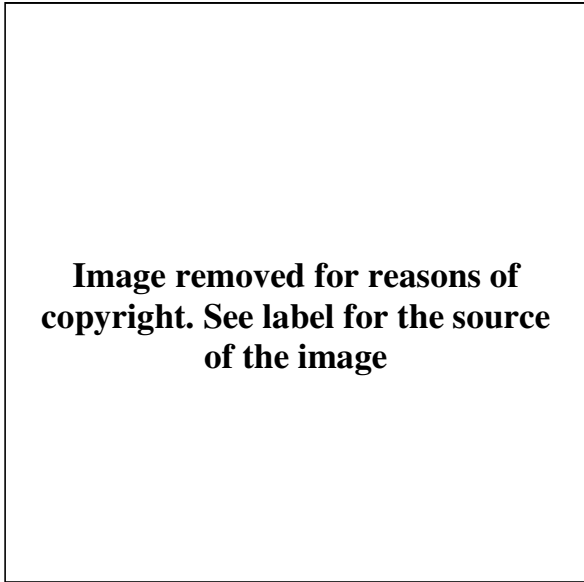


Fig. 3

Barna da Siena, *Crucifixion*, (San Gimignano, wall painting, 1350-5).

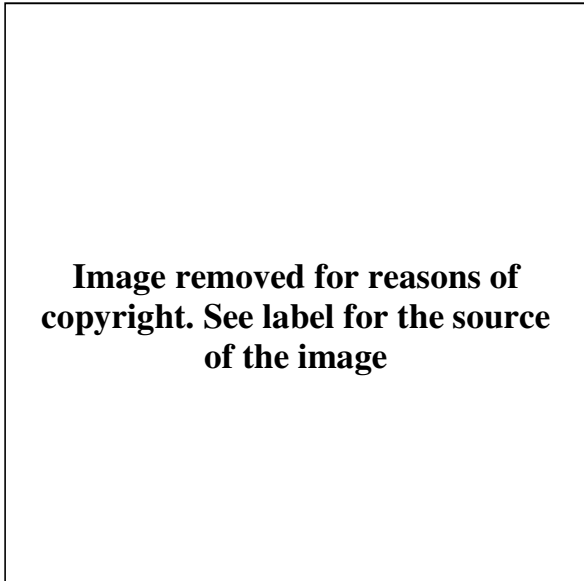


Fig. 4

The Crucifixion, (Daphni, The Church of the Theolokos, fresco, 1100).

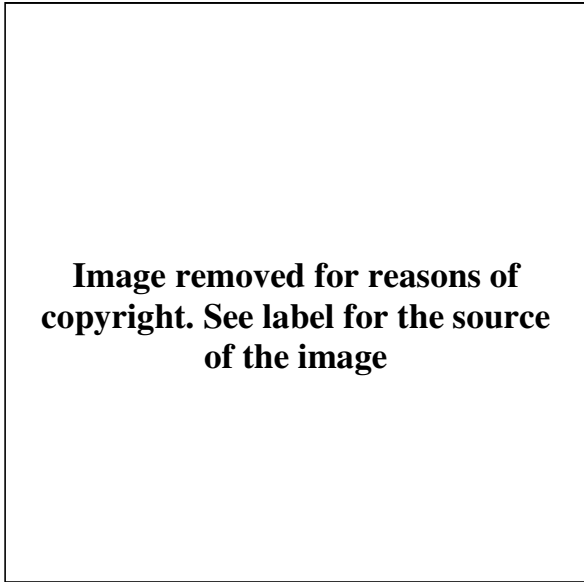


Fig. 5
Crucifixion,
(Rome, Chapel of Theodotus in the Church of St Maria Antiqua, fresco 741-752).

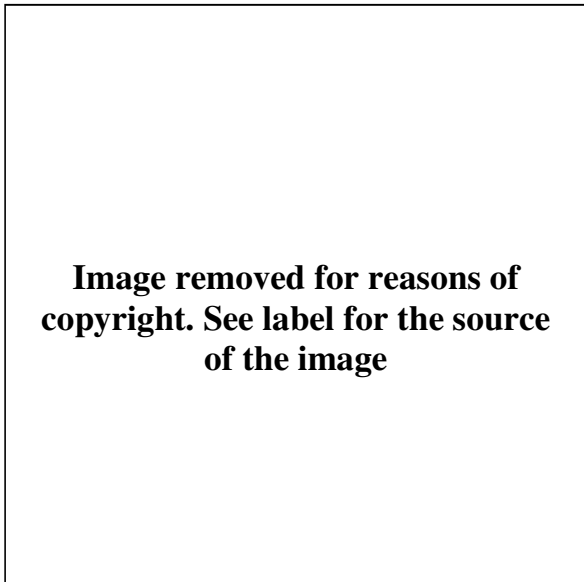


Fig. 6
Marc Chagall, *White Crucifixion*,
(Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 154x140, oil on canvas, 1938).

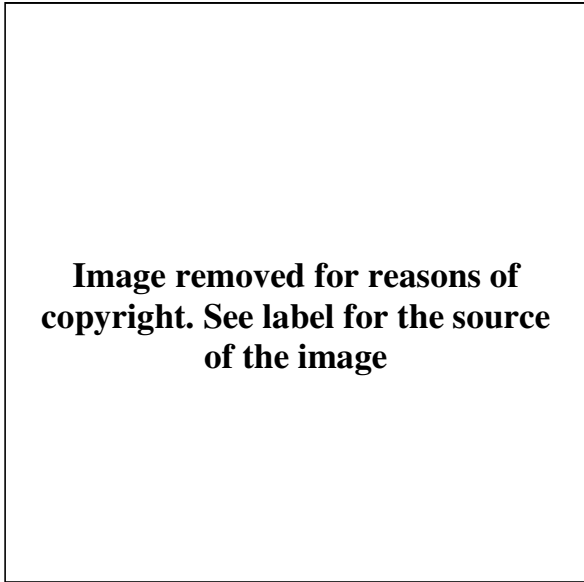


Fig. 7
Paul Gauguin, *Portrait of Paul Gauguin with Yellow Crucifixion*,
(Paris, Musee D'Orsay, 30x46, oil on canvas, 1889).

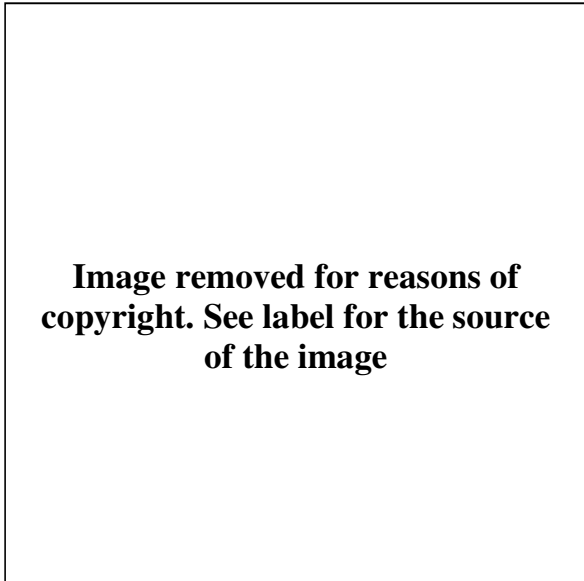


Fig. 8
Paul Gauguin, *The Yellow Christ*,
(Buffalo, NY. Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 96x75, oil on canvas, 1889).

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Fig. 9
Antonello de Messina, *Crucifixion*,
(Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, 59x43, oil on wood, c 1475-76).

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Fig. 10
Giotto, *The Crucifixion*, (Padua, Arena Chapel, fresco, 1305).

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Fig. 11

Hans Baldung (Grien), *The Crucifixion*,
(Berlin, Staatliche Museen Gemaldegalerie, 152x104, oil on wood, 1512).

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Fig. 12

Stanley Spencer, *Ablutions*,
(Burghclere, Hampshire, Burghclere Memorial Chapel, 214x185, oil on canvas, 1928).

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Fig. 13

William Blake *Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments*,
(Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 42x31, watercolour, 1800).

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Fig. 14

Stanley Spencer, *The Scarecrow Cookham*,
(Cookham, Stanley Spencer Gallery, 71 x 76, oil on canvas, 1934).

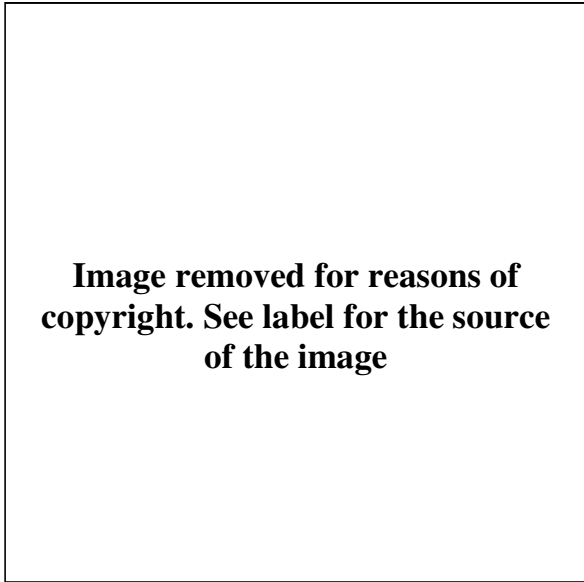


Fig. 15

Stanley Spencer, *In Church*, (The Letchmore Trust, 61x216, oil on canvas, 1958).

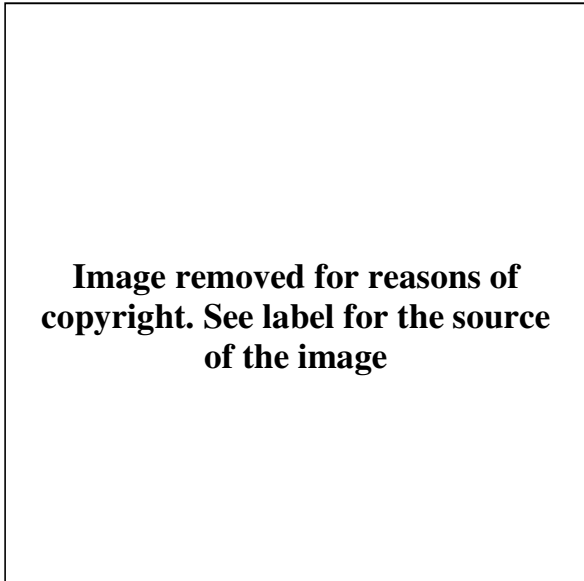


Fig. 16

Stanley Spencer, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, (London, Tate Gallery, 153x143 oil on canvas, 1920).

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Fig. 17

C. R. W. Nevinson, *French Troops Resting*,
(London, Imperial War Museum, 71 x 91, oil on canvas, 1916).

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Fig. 18

Pesellino, *The Crucifixion with Saint Jerome and Saint Francis*,
(Washington, National Gallery of Art, tempera on panel, c. 1445-50).

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Fig. 19

Rogier van der Weyden. *Crucifixion* Triptych.
(Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, oil on oak panel,
101x70 and 101x35(side panels), c.1445).

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Fig. 20

William Roberts, *The interval before Round Ten*,
(London, Contemporary Art Society, 92x122, oil on canvas, 1919-20).

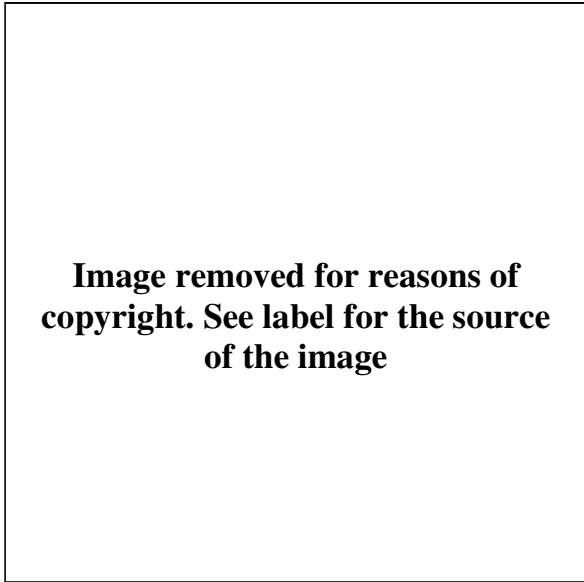


Fig. 21

Pablo Picasso, *Crucifixion*, (Paris, Museum Picasso, 50x65, oil on wood, 1930).

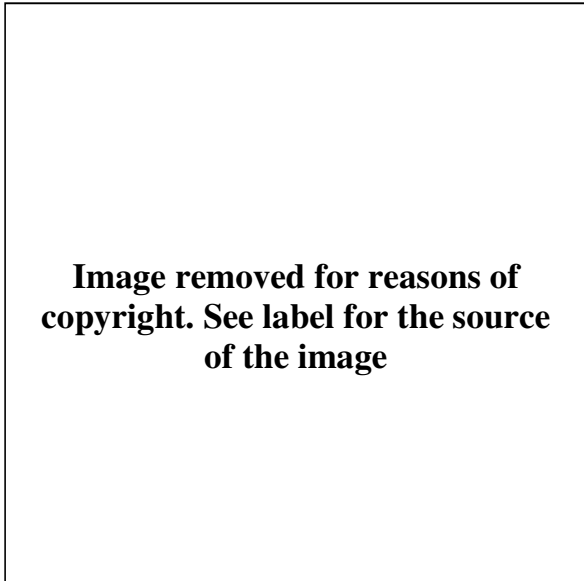


Fig. 22

Pablo Picasso, *Three Dancers*, (London, Tate Galleries, 215x142, oil on canvas, 1925).

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Fig. 23

Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Centurion Under the Cross*,
(Aschaffenburg, Bayerische Staatsgemaldesammlungen Aschaffenburg
52x34, oil on board, 1539).

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Fig. 24

Francis Bacon, *Study for Portrait II [After the Life Mask of William Blake]*,
(London, Tate Galleries, 61x51, oil on canvas, 1955).

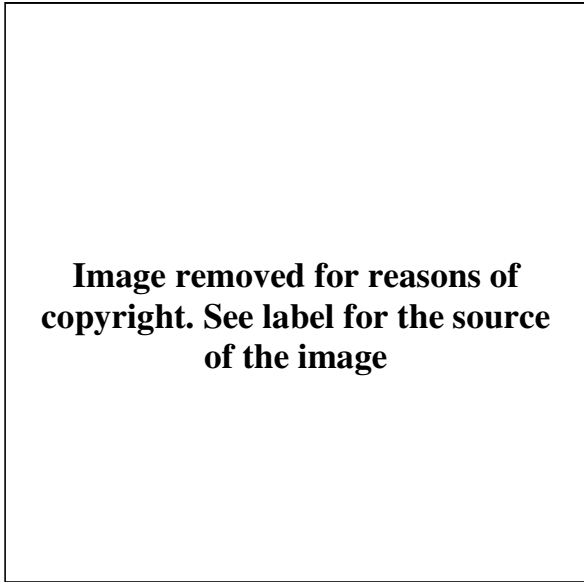


Fig. 25

Francesco Pesellino and Fra Lippi, *The Holy Trinity with Saints*, Altarpiece, (London, National Gallery, 184x182, egg and oil on wood, 1455-60).

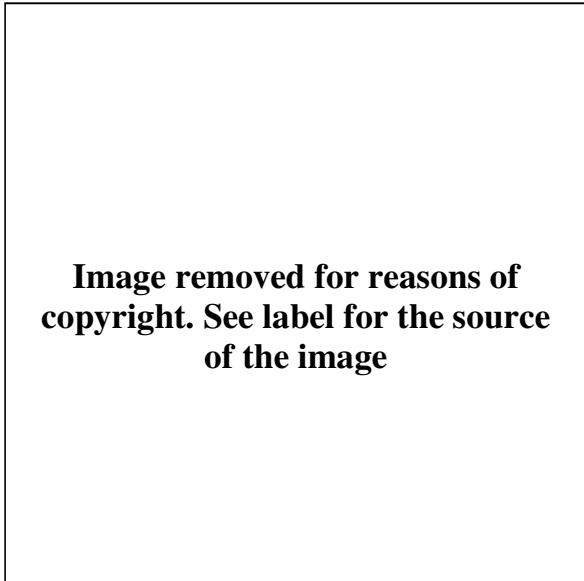


Fig. 26

Francis Bacon, *Second Version of Triptych 1944*, (London, Tate Galleries, 198 x 1471, oil and acrylic on canvas, 1988).

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Fig. 27

Matthias Grünewald, *The Mocking of Christ*,
(Munich, Alte Pinakothek, 109x74, oil on wood, 1503-1505).

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Fig. 28

Sergei Eisenstein, *Nurse*, Still from the film *Battleship Potemkin* 1928.
See W. Schmied, and F. Bacon, Francis Bacon: Commitment and Conflict,
(London, Prestel, 2006), 14.

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Fig. 29

Francis Bacon, *Figure Studies II*,
(Huddersfield Art Gallery, 164x150, oil on canvas, 1945-46).

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Fig. 30

Rembrandt, *The Slaughtered Ox*, (Paris, Louvre, 94x68, oil on canvas.1655).

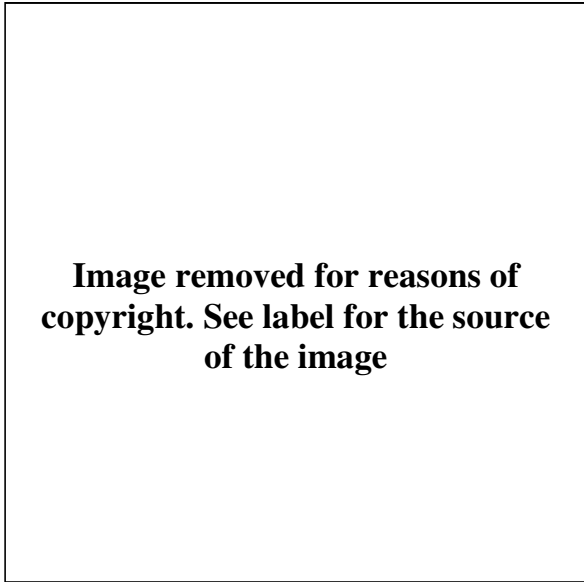


Fig. 31

Marc Chagall, *The Martyr* (Zurich, Kunsthaus, 231x165, oil on canvas, 1940).

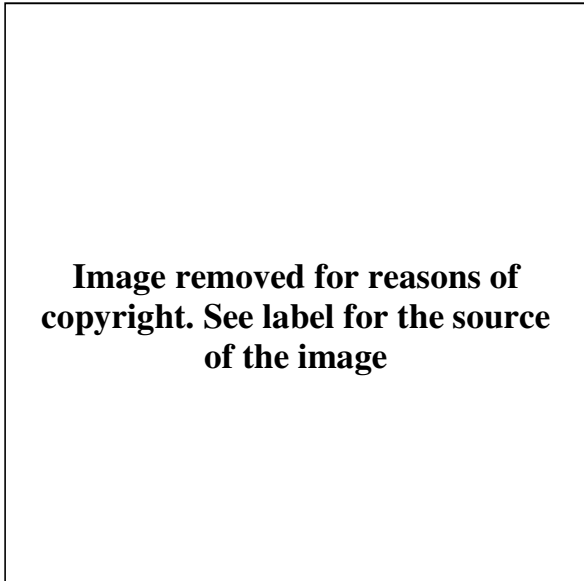


Fig. 32

Michael Ayrton, *Good Friday*,
(Private Collection, 52x44, oil on linen over board, 1949).

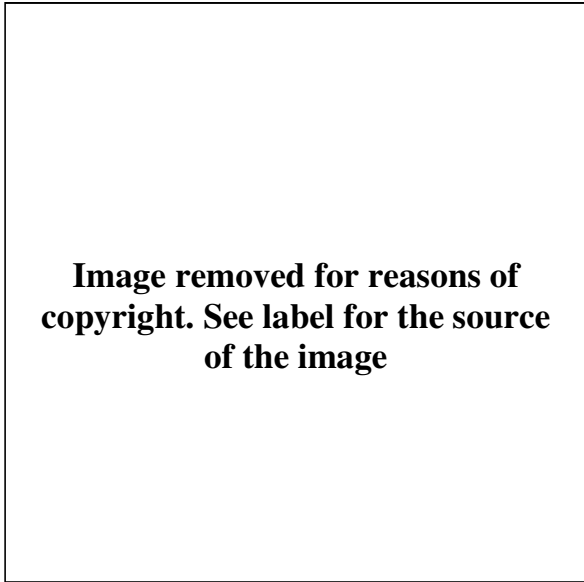


Fig. 33
Pablo Picasso, *The Crucifixion [after Grünewald]*,
(Paris, Picasso Museum, 34x52, ink and Indian ink on paper, 1932).

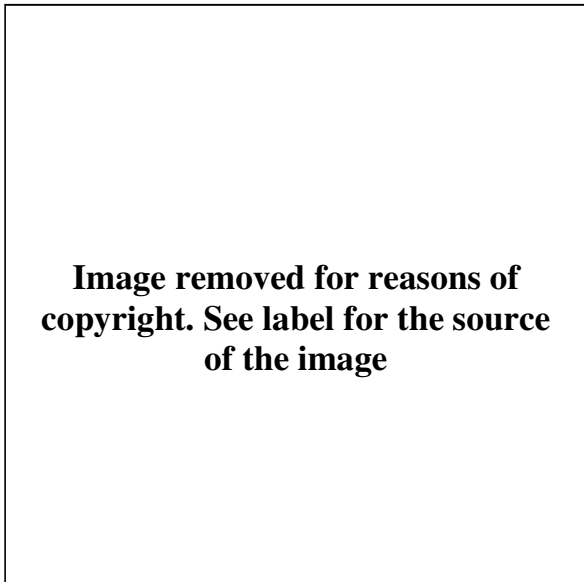


Fig. 34
Diego Velazquez, *Christ Crucified*,
(Madrid, Museo del Prado, 248x169, oil on canvas, 1632).

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Fig. 35

Rogier van der Weyden, *Crucifixion*, Diptych,
(Philadelphia Museum of Art, 180x186, oil on panel, 1460).

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Fig. 36

Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*, - Central Panel, Isenheim Altarpiece,
(Colmar, Alsace, Musée d'Unterlinden, 270x310, oil on panel, 1512-15).

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Fig. 37

Graham Sutherland, *Devastation House in Wales 6 September 1940*,
(Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, 80x127, oil on canvas, 1940).

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Fig. 38

Graham Sutherland, *Devastation, 1941 East End, Wrecked Public House*,
(London, Tate Galleries, 67x48, crayon, ink,
pastel and gouache on paper on plywood, 1941).

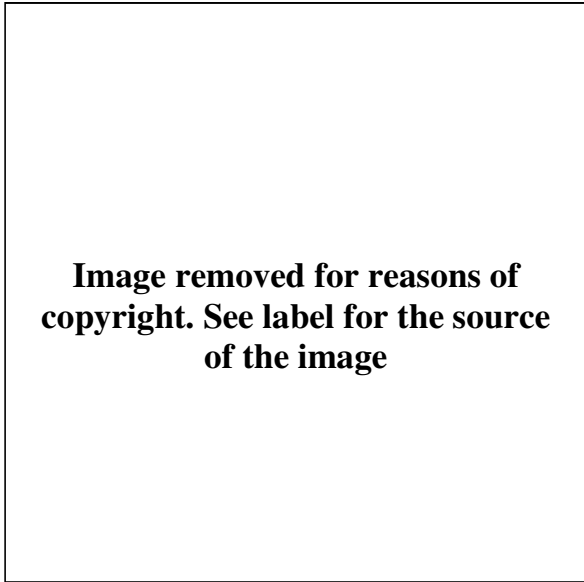


Fig. 39

Graham Sutherland, *Study for Staring Tree Form*, (Private collection, 1945).

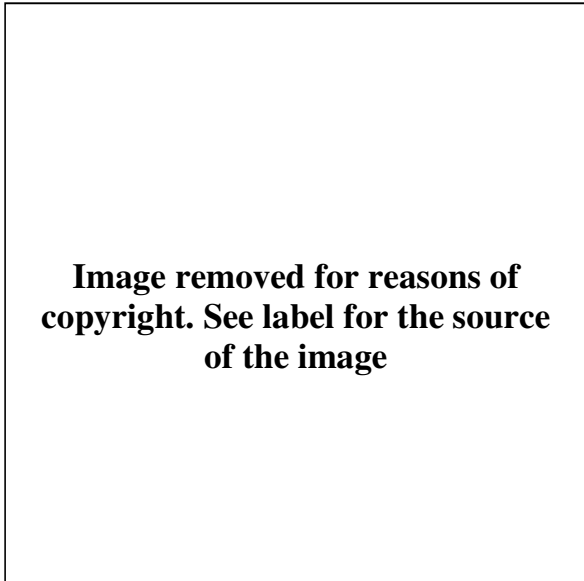


Fig. 40

Odilon Redon, *The Crucifixion*,
(Birmingham, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
University of Birmingham, 46x27, oil on canvas, 1904).

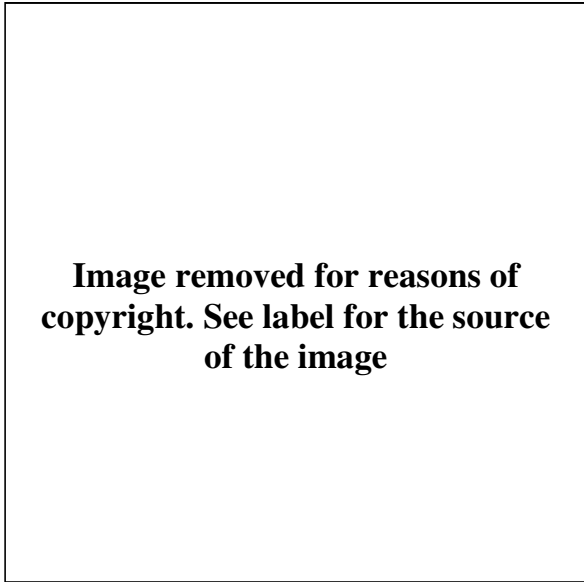


Fig. 41

Georges Rouault, *Jesus Will be in Agony until the end of the World*,
(Studio of Georges Rouault, 58x42, India ink, wash, paper, 1930-38).

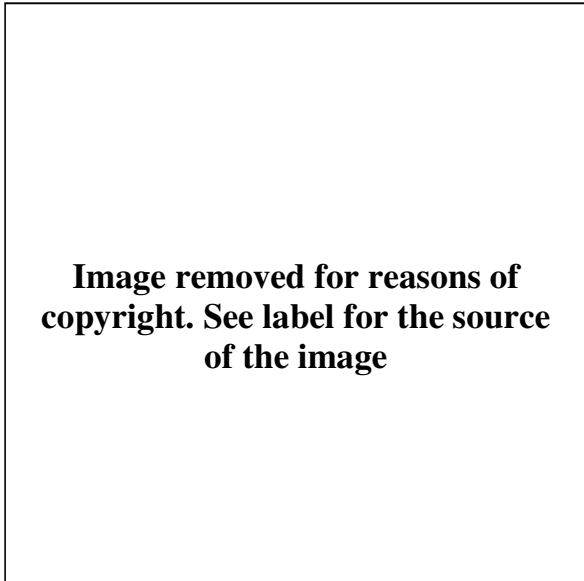


Fig. 42

Peter Paul Rubens, *Crucifixion*,
(London, Wallace Collection, 105x69, oil on canvas, seventeenth century).

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of the image**

Fig. 43

Graham Sutherland, *Crucifixion*, from *Christ in Glory*,
(Coventry Cathedral, tapestry, 1962).

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of the image**

Fig. 44

Matthias Grünewald, *The Crucifixion*,
(Karlsruhe, Staaliche Kunsthalle, oil on panel, c.1525).

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of the image**

Fig. 45

Jacopo Bassano, *Adoration of the Kings*,
(Burghley House Collection, c.17th century).

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Fig. 46

Robert Henderson Blyth, *Self-portrait as Soldier in Trenches*,
(Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, 65x80, oil on hardboard panel, 1946).

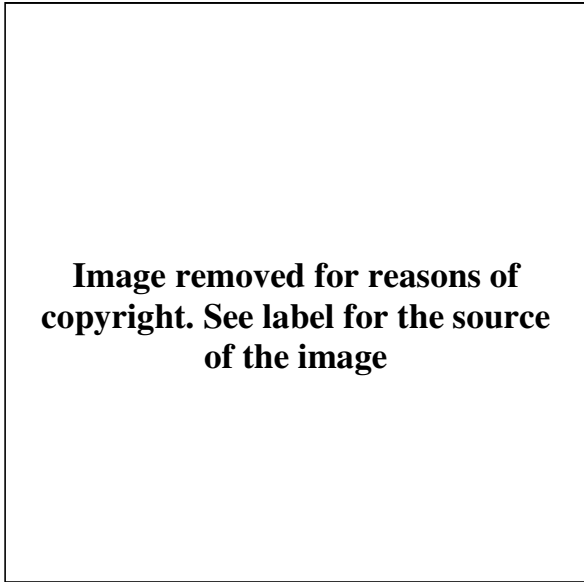


Fig. 47

Photograph from, 'Blitz on Britain Continues', World War II Today: 4 June 1941, www.ww2today.com/4th-june-1941 - Accessed 4 August 2012.

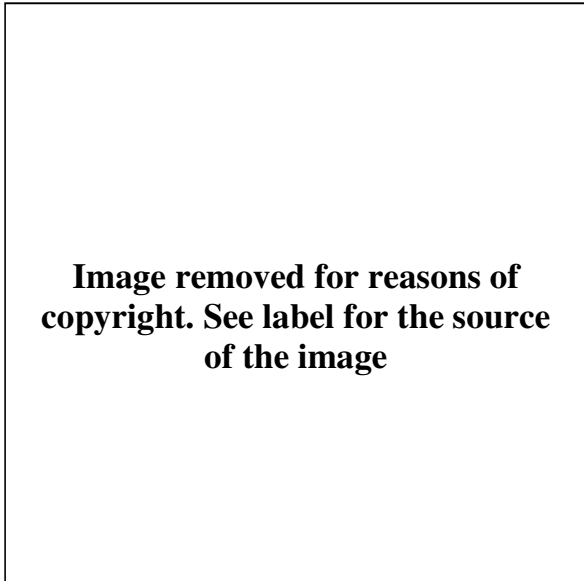


Fig. 48

Tristram Hillier, *Whitstable Oystermen*,
(Leeds City Art Gallery, 81x61, oil on canvas, 1948).

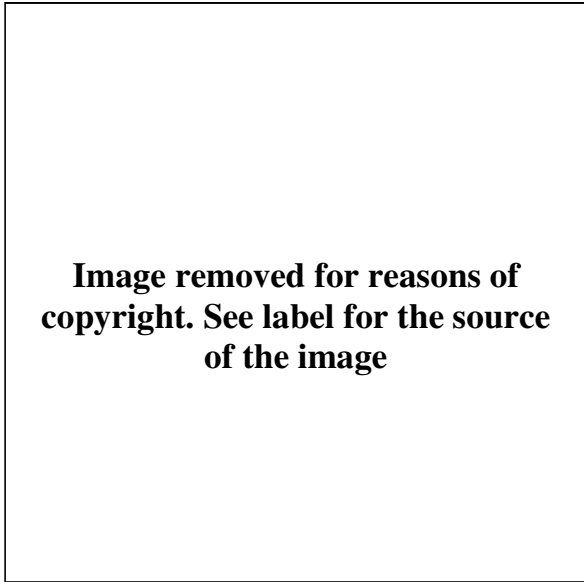


Fig. 49

El Greco, *Crucifixion*, (Madrid, Prado, oil on canvas, 312x169, c.1600-1605).

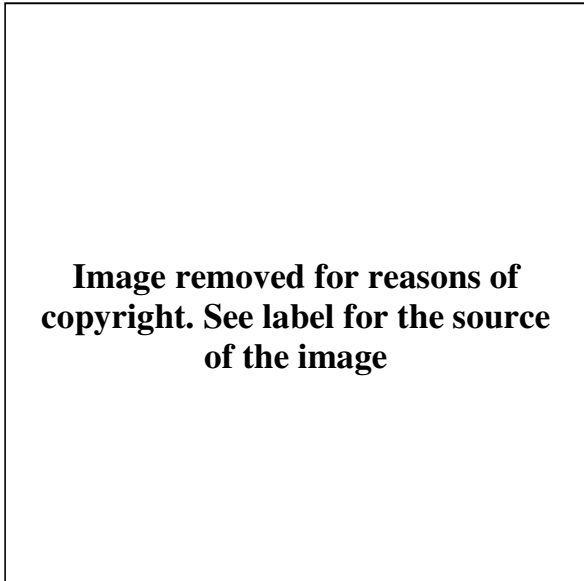


Fig. 50

Carel Weight, *The Betrayal of Christ*, (York City Art Gallery, 122x135, oil on canvas, 1954).

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Fig. 51

Carel Weight, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*,
(John Brandler Collection, 68x91, oil on canvas, 1947).

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of the image**

Fig. 52

Carel Weight, *Departing Angel*,
(London, Geffrye Museum, 91x91, oil on canvas, 1961).

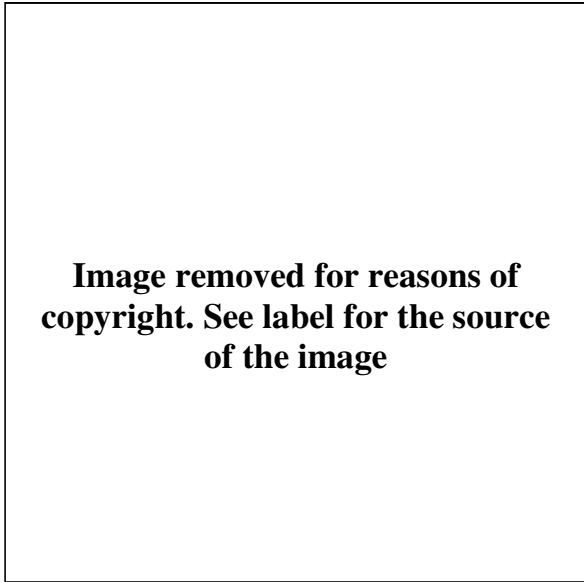


Fig. 53

Edvard Munch, *Golgotha*, (Oslo, Munch Museum, 80x120, oil on canvas, 1900).

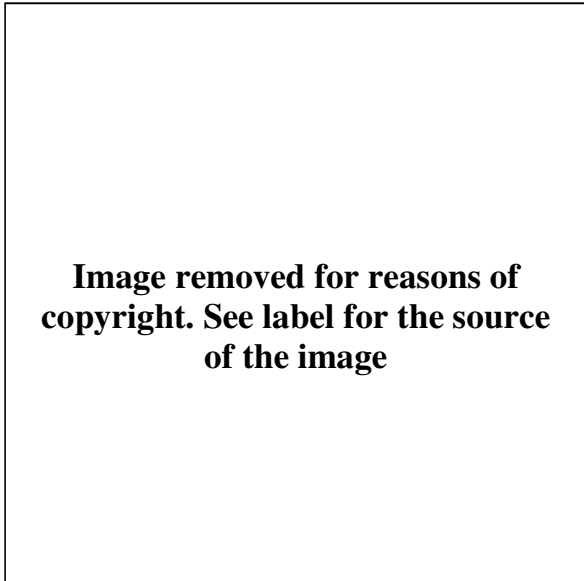


Fig. 54

Nazi Rally

http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_QqrpFId3zyI/S9SvdUZAgPI/AAAAAAAAAbA/-RiyKWridL0/s1600/nazi_rally.jpg - Accessed 12 March 2011.

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of the image**

Fig. 55

Nazi Rally

<http://www.ushmm.org/lcmedia/viewer/wlc/photo.php?RefId=44203>

Accessed 12 March 2011.

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of the image**

Fig. 56

Anthony Green, *Breakfast in Bed, 27th Wedding Anniversary*,
(Private collection, 198x180, oil on board, 1988).

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of the image**

Fig. 57

Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion and Angels*,
(Private collection, 113x90, oil on canvas, 1960).

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of the image**

Fig. 58

Craigie Aitchison, *Landscape from inside a Cathedral*,
(Anthony Fry, 92x76, oil on canvas, 1957).

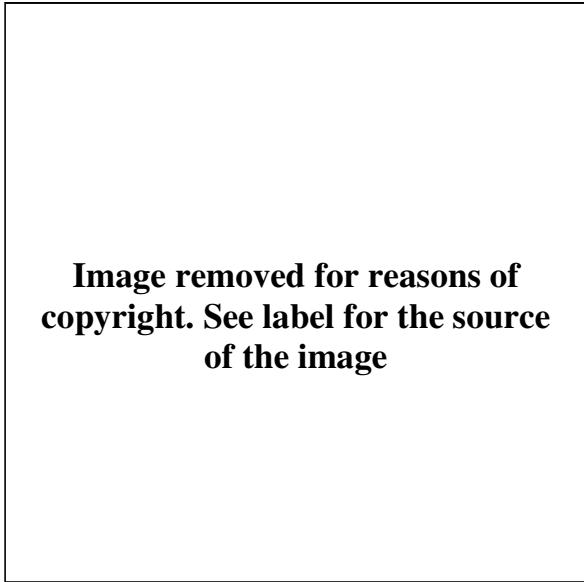


Fig. 59

Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private collection, 34x26, oil on canvas, 1963).

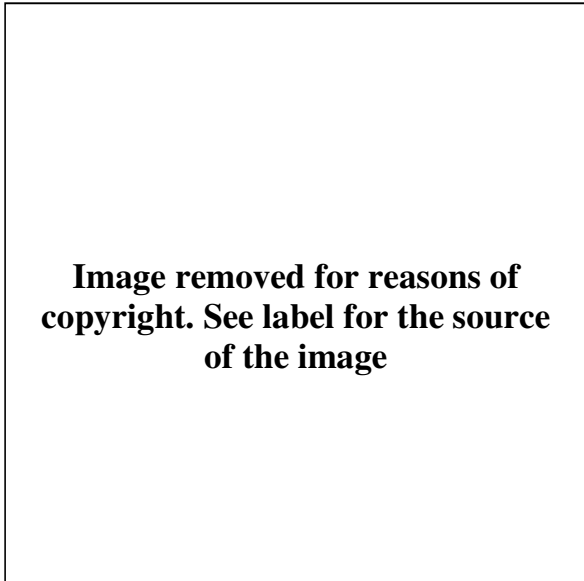


Fig. 60

Caspar David Friedrich, *Tetschen Altar or Cross in the Mountains*,
(Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Gemaldegalerie,
115x110, oil on canvas, 1807-8).

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Fig. 61

Giotto, *The Resurrection*, (Padua, Arena Chapel, fresco, 1301)

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of the image**

Fig. 62

Holy Island

<httpwww.holyisland.orgpixgalleryislandisland-2.jpg> – Accessed 27 January 2014.

**Image removed for reasons of
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of the image**

Fig. 63

Goat Fell Mountain Isle of Arran

http://www.panoramio.com/photo_explorer#view=photo&position=9&with_photo_id=31574347&order=date_desc&user=123953 - Accessed 27 January 2014.

**Image removed for reasons of
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of the image**

Fig. 64

Craigie Aitchison, *Nude Standing in Front of a Picture*,
(Nottingham Castle, Nottingham City Museums and Galleries,
65x54, oil on canvas, 1963).

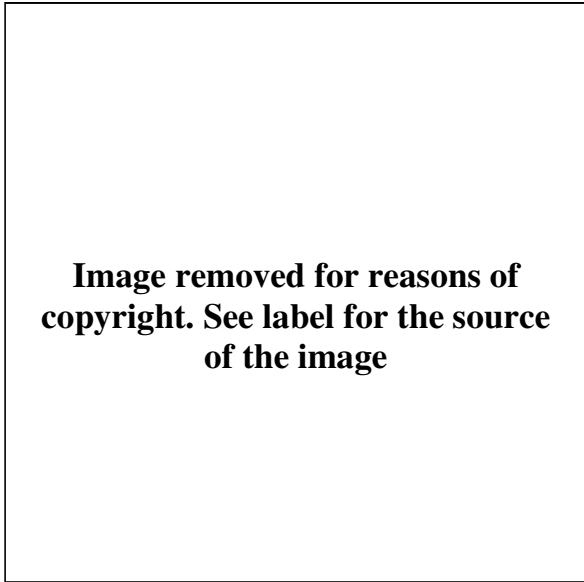


Fig. 65

Craigie Aitchison, *Crucifixion*, (Private collection, 142x112, oil on canvas, 2001).

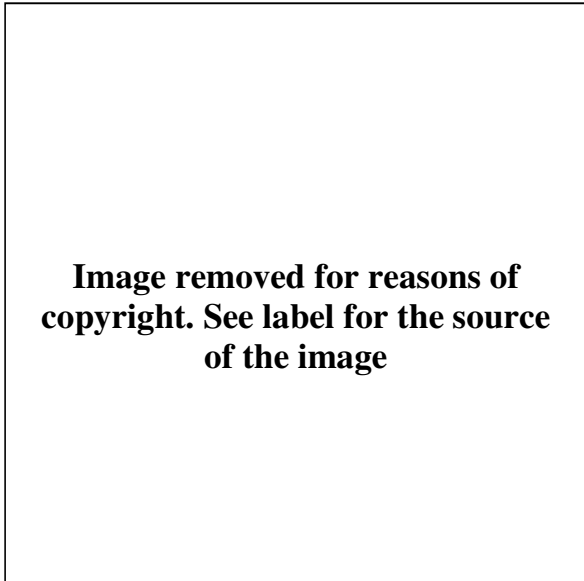


Fig. 66

Justus van Gent, *Calvary*, Triptych,
(Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo, 216x250, oil on wood, 1464-68).

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Fig. 67

Leonardo da Vinci, *The Burlington House Cartoon*,
(London, Tate Gallery, 142x105 charcoal and paper, 1499-1500).

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Fig. 68

Sandro Botticelli, *The Agony in the Garden*,
(Spain, Capilla Real, Granada, oil on canvas, c1500).

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Fig. 69
Mona von Wittlage, *Crucifixion*,
(London, Saatchi Collection, 215x160, blood on sanitary bags, not dated).

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of the image**

Fig. 70
Albert Herbert, *Eve Gives Birth to us all*,
(Private collection, 25x51, oil on canvas, 1994).

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copyright. See label for the source
of the image**

Fig. 71
Norman Adams, *Angels Around the Cross*,
(Manchester, Manchester City Galleries, 173x153, oil on canvas, 1961).

Appendix C

A Selection of First World War Poems –in Chronological Order

Rupert Brooke, (1887-1915)

The Soldier (1914)

IF I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by the suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Original Text: R. Brooke, 1914 and Other Poems, (London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1916).

Julian Grenfell, (1888 - 1915)

Into Battle (1915)

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze;

And life is Colour and Warmth and Light,
And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight,
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run
And with the trees to newer birth;

And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.
All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their bright comradeship,

The Dog star, and the Sisters Seven,
Orion's belt and sworded hip:
The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridges end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him: "Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing,
Sing well, for you may not sing another;
Brother, sing."

In dreary doubtful waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers; --
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,
And only joy of battle takes
Him by the throat and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

Original Text: T. Sturge Moore, Some Soldier Poets, (London, Grant Richards, 1919).

John McCrae, (1872 - 1918)

In Flanders Fields (1915)

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,

In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Original Text: Lieut.-Col. J. McCrae, In Flanders Fields and Other Poems, With an Essay in Character by Sir Andrew Macphail, (London, Hodder, 1919).

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

The Redeemer (November 1915)

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Original Text: S. Sassoon, The Old Huntsman: And Other Poems, (London, W. Heinemann, 1917).

Charles Hamilton Sorley (1895-1915)

When You See Millions of the Mouthless Dead (1915)

When you see millions of the mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
Say not soft things as other men have said,
That you'll remember. For you need not so.
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.
Say only this, "They are dead." Then add thereto,
"Yet many a better one has died before."
Then, scanning all the o'er crowded mass, should you
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.
Great death has made all his for evermore.

Original Text: C. H. Sorley, Marlborough and Other Poems, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1916).

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

They (October 1916)

Image removed for reasons of copyright.

Original Text: S. Sassoon, The Old Huntsman: And Other Poems, (London, W. Heinemann, 1917).

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

The General (1918)

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Original Text: S. Sassoon, The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon, (London, William Heinemann, 1919).

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

Strange Meeting (Spring/early summer 1918)

It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.

Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,
Lifting distressful hands, as if to bless.
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,—
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell.

With a thousand fears that vision's face was grained;
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground,
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.
“Strange friend,” I said, “here is no cause to mourn.”
“None,” said that other, “save the undone years,
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,
Was my life also; I went hunting wild
After the wildest beauty in the world,
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,
But mocks the steady running of the hour,
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.
For by my glee might many men have laughed,
And of my weeping something had been left,
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,
The pity of war, the pity war distilled.
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress.
None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress.

Courage was mine, and I had mystery;
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:
To miss the march of this retreating world
Into vain citadels that are not walled.
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-wheels,
I would go up and wash them from sweet wells,
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.
I would have poured my spirit without stint
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.

“I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . .”

Original Text: W. Owen, Poem, (London, Chato and Windus Ltd., 1920).