Time to Move:

Humanity, Art, & Dance Redeemed

by Marian West
Outline

.Invitation

.A Lost Art

.Christian Realism to the Rescue!

.Establishing an Adequate Anthropology

.Discovering the Truth of Art
  .Artists as Co-Creators
  .Incarnation, Resurrection, and Art
  .Beauty: Objective Truth Beats out Relativism
  .The Power to Transcend, when Embedded in Truth
  .The Role of Right Reason and Morality
  ."Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Freedom" (2 Cor.. 3:17)

.The Church and Art: a Newly-founded Alliance

.Application to Dance

.Conclusion

Dance by Henri Matisse
Invitation

Dance is the movement of life. It is the breath of man moving in and out of the lungs; dance is the swaying of willow tree boughs on a clear day or the pounding of blown rain on a not-so-clear day. Dance is the intensity of the conjugal act and the simplicity of a stroll in the park. It is a jog, a brisk walk to catch a subway, a baby kicking in utero or a mother heaving in labor. Dance is the gyration of the earth’s elements, the clanging and banging, the twittering and falling, the whirling and swirling that tilts the world on its axis as it revolves steadily around a radiating, dancing sun.

The day the sun danced is today, and we are all invited to the celebration. This appealing invitation is manifested in a well-known and loved painting by Henri Matisse entitled Dance. This masterpiece captures the fluid movement of man and woman in their yearning for communion, in the nakedness of their being, revealing the integrity of their bodacious bods and their vibrant souls, hungry for other.

The painting illustrates two men and three women joining hands in a wave-like circle on lush green grass and against a bold blue sky. One man is contorted in a spiral form and firmly grasps the hand of the man next to him. The other hand is earnestly reaching for, but not quite touching the woman’s hand on his right. Ah, the mystery of man and woman, the distance between them, yet the longing for intimacy and union! Keep reaching.

The second figure is of great interest. Its build, face, and hair appear to be that of a man, but for the fact that this figure appears to have breasts, female genitalia, and perhaps even a child within. Perhaps this figure represents the marriage of both male and female within each individual. The three women are soft and curvaceous,
demure-looking and fertile.

Dance, like dance, speaks of community, a never-ending, moving bond of persons, male and female, changing and shifting, departing and returning. Matisse offers a snapshot of a world in motion. He gives us a circle of freedom and rejoicing and reverence – life in the ebb and flow. There is a theme of circularity throughout, seen in the circle of humans, their arms in curves of the landscape, curves of the bodies – musculature and breasts, womb, and buttocks.

These circles symbolize the life cycle – union, communion, and an eternal exchange of love, imaging the Holy Trinity. In the painting itself, there is movement; one almost expects the image to come to life, leaping off the page and into the ionic spring day, everything “flam[ing] out like shining from shook foil” (1)

As Saint Irenaeus’ famous quote expresses, “The glory of God is man fully alive.” (2) What better way to affirm this glory than to dance, to move, to express our soul with the motion of our bodies? It is the most ancient of art forms and as long as humans exist, so will dance. In accordance with an adequate anthropology, expressive movement is an integral part of being human; and whether we know it or not, everyone dances every day, even if it is just movement of the eyes.

Dance is communication. The body is a beautiful instrument created by God to manifest outwardly the inward realities of each and every irreplaceable human being. Without it we could not be human. Dance, in its pure form, affirms our bodily existence and aids in integrating the person, body and soul, visible and invisible realities. Is this not what it means to be human? The communal dance of man and woman’s self-abandoned nakedness in Matisse’s Dance illuminates human existence as a most attractive invitation. Ah, the power of art!
So, I ask you, as famous modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan communicated in her movement: may I have this dance? Live and breathe and move with me as we explore what it means to be human and therefore what it means to be an artist!
A Lost Art

What is it that drives the human person to dance, to express, to engage in artistic activity? Animals do not have the need or even the ability. Even when we speak of animals and trees "dancing," we are merely personifying nature. Non-personal creatures do not and cannot dance; to dance, to make art, requires reason and creativity, sensitivity and imagination – unique gifts and privileges of the human person, the only rational and artistic animal.

Tragically, today we have lost a sense of art. Why? Because we have lost a sense of our own humanity. Our era has lost a sense of reverence for the human person and for the beauty of all of creation. In turn, utility replaces beauty which leads to an ugliness that, while functional, threatens humanity itself. Valuing "productivity" over "being," we have come to view ourselves as mere machines. As we think, so we become. Function! Sadly, we have come to value function over beauty. In turn, we also view art through this utilitarian prism. We seek in it only entertainment and if we are not immediately gratified, art serves no purpose. Where has the sense of human dignity and refinement of artistic expression gone?

The answer is that the human – and therefore art itself – is in the process of being ground up in the garbage disposal of a materialistic, mechanistic world centered on function, commerce, and productivity; and both are rapidly being reduced to a pulpy mess. At this point in history, art breathes frighteningly fatal breaths. Without recognizing what it means to be human, art is lost.

In his essay against superstition, entitled Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition, author Wendell Berry expresses sincere concern for the present reduction of humanity and thus art. Throughout this text, Berry argues the ideas of materialist
scientist, Edward O. Wilson. In Wilson’s book Consilience he reduces the human to mere matter and therefore defines art as a mere outgrowth of neurological synapses in the brain. In this way, Wilson sets the stage for works of art that are replaceable and explainable. Berry argues that works of art, as they are expressions of irreplaceable, unexplainable, unique human beings, cannot be replaced or explained. If art were explainable, its subjects would be reduced. Berry suggests that the “truest tendency of art is toward the exaltation, not the reduction, of its subjects.”(3) He quotes William Blake, "To see a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild Flower"—this is the ability of the highest art.(4)

Wilson’s science is incapable of seeing the world in a grain of sand. To him, it is merely a particle of matter, which he can divide, classify, name, and (somewhat) explain. This confined view sucks dry the miraculous ness of life, leaving humanity eking out a purposeless and eventually despairing existence. In this way, it is clear that art cannot and should not be reduced. Artistic works cannot be “squeezed down to a literal statement without losing at least some of its force.”(5) Art—spoken of here in a broad sense, encompassing fine arts, visual arts, performing arts, etc.—is a unique and irreplaceable revelation and disclosure. To attempt to reduce it, is to obliterate its power.

As Berry states, "A work of art says what it says in the only way it can be said. Beauty cannot be interpreted."(6) In illustration: "When Robert Schumann was asked to explain a difficult étude he had just performed, he sat down and played it a second time. Its meaning could only be grasped in performance."(7) As Paul Tillich writes in The System of Sciences, a counteraction to the "meaninglessness and futility in his own culture: 'The truth of science is correctness; the truth of art is power of expression.'"(8)
Our current culture has yet to tap into the richness of this as it is constrained by brooding thunder clouds of scientism. Unfortunately hard rains are beginning to fall, and art, drenched as it is, cries out for a redemptive hand.
Christian Realism to the Rescue!

Since art is born from the mystery of the human person, we must first restore the view of humanity in order to retrieve true, classical, refined art. And just perhaps, Christianity holds the key to unlocking the mystery of humanity, and therefore art, in their full grandeur and beauty.

The Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar boldly declares that Christians must be the “guardians of a metaphysics of the whole person in an age that has forgotten both Being and God.”(9) In this way, faith and reason must marry and then consummate their union in a deeper understanding and fulfillment of humanity.

In order to answer questions concerning our origins and destiny, in regards to being artists, we must first examine the Creation Doctrine through the clear lens of a Christian Realist. God is the Creator of the world. Out of darkness, came light; out of emptiness, meaning. Like a sculptor, He formed order out of chaos, giving shape to nothingness. His breath of life gave inherent meaning and purpose to things and most of all to man and woman – the crown and glory of His magnificent creation!

It is important to note that God knew all things before they were created. God carried within Himself the ideas of all things and then called them out into existence. In this way, we can see that the Platonic theory of form and matter as separate, is inaccurate. God instilled meaning in the stuff of life; therefore, the form exists in things. Reality, then, carries intrinsic meaning. Truth is inherent in things and in humanity. Through God’s creation, human nature shines with the God-given brilliance of meaning and purpose.

Supposing that life were not jam-packed with meaning and were instead simply matter devoid of any deeper reality, what purpose would art possess? If human beings
(note: human beings, not human doings) were really in fact just highly complex matter, in other words, machines, it is quite probable that the need for art would die. Art simply would not exist. For art seeks to express and reach that which is deeper than the medium. Art in its essence is matter – whether it is the human body or the paint-laden canvas – infused with meaning. Art is the rendezvous of matter and spirit. Does this not clearly manifest and point at a human nature which is an integration of both the visible and invisible, tangible and intangible, material and spiritual?

In his book, The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty, John Saward writes:

Human art is evidence of the spirituality of the intellectual soul, and hence a pointer to the Immaterial God who created the soul in His image. In man's heart there is a restless longing for truth and beauty, for order and harmony, that the satisfaction of the sense appetites cannot quench. In his joy in beauty, whether in nature or art, man receives confirmation of the spiritual dignity of his intellect.(10)

Adopting a Christian realist’s view regarding the majesty of creation and existence, one can gain a more accurate understanding of humanity and therefore artistic endeavors as well.
Establishing an Adequate Anthropology

Before we go any further in exploring the purpose and significance of art in our world today, it is imperative that we explore what it means to be human. Why? Because the object of art is inextricably linked with the subject of the artist, who is a person, unique, irreplaceable and made in the image and likeness of God. The entire person – body and soul – is involved in creativity, whether it is in dance, music composition, visual arts, theater, or poetry. This is the health of art – that it serves to further the integration of our hlyomorphic persons, a mingling of both flesh and spirit.

Furthermore, based on the theory that our perceptions of ourselves feed our actions and shape who we become, it is necessary to constantly reevaluate how we see and understand ourselves as human beings, living and breathing in the modern-day world. This will affect our art; for art is active, and action is based on perception.

Now, we must return to the Creation Doctrine to understand who we are as humans, male and female. When Adam is created, he is at first alone, the only human being, and thus he experiences solitude before God (Genesis 2:18). This experience confirms him as a subject, different from all other living creatures in his own self-knowledge. By way of his consciousness, he is able to see himself as one who possesses a cognitive faculty. In naming the animals, he also discovers his own identity, which differs from the animals. He has freedom. "Adam is not determined by bodily instinct. He is created from 'the dust' like the animals (he is bodily), but he also has the 'breath of life' inspiring his body." He is a person, a subject; Adam has an "'inner life.' " By his freedom, Adam is called to love. "Solitude – the first discovery of personhood and freedom – is something spiritual, but it is experienced bodily. As John Paul II says, the 'body expresses the person.' "
Genesis 2:23 speaks directly of the heart of the anthropological reality – the body – when Adam says of Eve, "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (15) This evocative language manifests the power of the body as revelatory of man in his naked glory – body and soul – because for the Jews, "bones" and "flesh" referred to the whole human person, not just the physical element. Genesis 2:25 states that "the man and his wife were both naked, yet they felt no shame." (16) Why? Because they had not yet fallen.

With the first refusal to obey God's law came shame and the singeing schism between body and soul. Before the fall, the body had been much like the face is today – a revealer of the soul. However, with sin came the possibility and therefore suspicion of lust and impurity; and so Adam and Eve hid themselves, concealing their bodies out of fear.

Thus, sadly, the split between body and soul remains with us today. We must remember, however, that "in the beginning it was not so" (Mt 19:8). (17) We are not destined for this divorce of our persons. Even now, God does not wish this upon us. So He sent His only Son to redeem the world and bring hope and possibility of working towards reintegrating the human person – body and soul. For it is in this hylomorphic, psychosomatic integration that we come to know ourselves in solitude before God and union with other. We find our purpose in freely choosing to love. Truly, "by His wounds we were healed" (Isaiah 53:5). (18)

Now, what significance does this anthropology have on art? In order for us to understand art's place in our world today, we must first understand the human person. For no other animal engages in creative activity as such. It follows then that God bestowed the gift of art solely upon humans. As philosopher and art theorist Etienne Gilson writes, "Man performs different kinds of acts: he is, he knows, he does, and he
makes." (19) With this gift, as with all gifts, comes a mission and responsibility. In order to understand this meaning and purpose of art, it is necessary to first understand the meaning and purpose of human beings, the artists themselves. Being as we have already established our anthropological foundation, we are now adequately prepared to plunge into the deep, embracing, and beautifully dangerous ocean of art.
In 1999, John Paul II wrote a Letter to Artists “to all who are passionately
dedicated to the search for new ‘epiphanies’ of beauty so that through their creative
work as artists they may offer these as gifts to the world.”(20) As a Christian
phenomenologist, John Paul II firmly believed in the supernatural power of art, which he
sees as a central part in his sacramental world view. This paradigm roots itself in the
belief that all of God’s creation is meant to be a glorious, concrete manifestation of
universal reality.

Referring to artists as “ingenious creators of beauty,” John Paul the Great
recognizes the common experience of admiring one’s own work, “sensing in it some
echo of the mystery of creation with which God, the sole creator of all things, has
wished in some way to associate you.” (21)

JP II states that his letter “is not dictated merely by historical accident or practical
need, but is rooted in the very essence of both religious experience and artistic
creativity.”(22) He himself, prior to papacy, was an actor, playwright, and prized orator;
so indeed he knows of what he speaks. He grounds his view of “artists as imagers” on
the book of Genesis, which presents the human craftsman as mirroring the image of the
Creator.(23) He even points out that in the Polish language, there is a clear link
between the two: “stworca” (creator) and “tworca” (craftsman).

Human artists then are called by the divine Artist to be procreators. Of course
there is a distinction between the creator and craftsman. The creator brings something
out of nothing; whereas the craftsman “uses something that already exists, to which he
gives form and meaning.”(24)
Saward writes on the procreative powers bestowed upon artists:

The matter with which the artist works -- the stone beneath the chisel, the palette -- comes from nature. His artistry depends upon its order . . . Now there is no nature without an Author of Nature, the personal and transcendent source of its being and its order. It follows, therefore, that, for St. Thomas [Aquinas] and Fra Angelico, art is a particular kind of cooperation with the Creator. The artist makes his beautiful things by following the Maker's instructions . . . To quote St. Thomas: 'Things done by art and reason must be conformed to those things that are according to nature, which have been instituted by divine reason.' Art in the Middle Ages is always secundum naturam. There is no aesthetic of perversity or disorder . . . [The truest] 'art imitates nature'.(25)

Eighteenth century dance theorist, Jean-Georges Noverre writes, "Poetry, painting and dancing, Sir, are, or should be, no other than a faithful likeness of beautiful nature."(26) In its imitation of nature, art presupposes and bears witness to God, whom religion worships. For the beauty of nature, which is changing, is only a confession of the beauty of its Creator, who is unchanging.(27)

Humans, ordained by God as the crown of nature, have dominion over all the grand earth, a "vast field in which human inventiveness might assert itself," says John Paul II.(28) This is pure gift from a loving God, who wishes to share his creative powers. Should not this vocation as an artist then be taken seriously, as a God-given responsibility? Too often today it is seen not as a gift and responsibility, but as a right.

Nature and creation – the stuff of life – offer a vast field in which we can experience and encounter the living God. Jeremy Begbie, author of Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts stresses art as not primarily subjective, but more as the treasures uncovered in the setting of "dynamic interaction with the created world, society, fellow artists both past and present, and (for the Christian) fellow
believers and the supreme Artist who fashioned all things out of nothing through his Son." (29)

"Nature, says Dante, 'takes her course from the Sublime Intellect and Its Art.' Human art must, therefore, follow Nature, 'like a pupil with his master', and 'we may call/This art of yours God's grandchild, as it were.' Human art, through nature, descends from the Almighty Art of the Father." (30) St. Francis Assisi experienced this deeply. For him, beautiful things were not ends in themselves, but rather the means by which the "'beloved . . . and utterly desirable . . . Supreme Beauty Himself'" was encountered. (31)

Incarnation, Resurrection, and Art

In his letter, John Paul II delves into the unbreakable bonds between the great mystery of the Incarnation – God made man – and art. The Word made Flesh redeemed and illuminated the material world and thus enabled physical beauties to be a source of heavenly dew.

The Incarnation brought a new beauty into the world; it brought Divine Beauty, the Son and Splendour of the Father, into human nature, into the womb of the Virgin. The union of humanity with divinity in the hypostasis of the Word is the elevation of everything human – including human art. The Art of the Father enters into His own handiwork to transfigure it from within. If the world is beautiful through its creation, it is raised to a dignity beyond compare through its re-creation in Christ . . . the cosmic poem finds its fullest meaning, its beginning and its end. The divine Art awakens human art. (32)

God became material too, and so raised up the material world. Matter matters! As St. John Damascene, one of the great apologists of the holy icons and a significant source for the Christology of St. Thomas, stated, "'I do not worship matter, I worship the
God of matter, who became matter for my sake, and deigned to inhabit matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honouring that matter which works my salvation.' "(33) "By assuming and redeeming the material world in Christ, God has conformed it as a proper, meaningful environment for us to enjoy, explore, and develop."(34)

As humans, we are embedded in creation; thus, in upholding art, we must not deny the physicality of artistic creation. Art is rooted in "substance, in the human body, in stone, pigment, in the twanging of gut, the blowing of air on reeds . . . A devaluation of the physical just because of its being physical 'flies in the face of God's affirmation of His creation.' "(35)

Composer Igor Stravinsky corroborates, "The very act of putting my work on paper, of, as we say, kneading the dough, is for me inseparable from the pleasure of creation. So far as I am concerned, I cannot separate the spiritual effort from the psychological and physical effort."(36)

God's entrance into human history set off an explosion of truth, beauty, and goodness, unveiled anew and brought into a new dimension. As Balthasar states, "'God's Word did not come to rob us of speech but to untie our tongues in a manner hitherto unknown.' "(37) All of the arts – poetry, dance, painting, music – are given a new commission. "The Son of God became man in order to elevate and rebeautify our fallen race."(38) For as Saward proclaims:

The Incarnation showers a second spring upon the material world . . . The totality of the material creation has been touched, and is thus objectively and in principle transfigured, by God the Son's taking the flesh from the Virgin and His rising in the flesh from the tomb. Material
substances, which already by their very being show forth the beauty of the Creator, attain a new transparency to Him through His personal entry into the bodily realm. (39)

Art is sanctified and even necessitated by God taking on human flesh. Because of the mystery of the Incarnation, matter truly matters.

Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, a devotional poet of the nineteenth century, writes extensively with "recharged language" and "sprung rhythm" on the "instress" and "inscape" of nature – that is, the created world "charged with the grandeur of God." (40) In his notebook, in May 1870, he writes, "I do not think I have ever seen anything more beautiful than the bluebell I have been looking at... I know the beauty of our Lord by it." (41) W. H. Gardner, Hopkins' biographer, comments that his writing is not "just a poetic fancy,... but a metaphysical reality." (42) Maurice B. McNamee agrees: "The grasp of the marvelous implications of the Incarnation so seeped the very atmosphere of Hopkins' thought that he came to see everything in the world as touched and signed by the Word-made-flesh." (43) In Hopkins' own words, "God's utterance of Himself is God the Word, outside Himself is this world." (44) In his poem The Wreck of the Deutschland, Hopkins "finds Christ radiating through the heavens" (45):

I kiss my hand/ To the stars, lovely-asunder/ Starlight, wafting him out of it; and/ Glow, glory in thunder;/ Kiss my hand to the dappled-with-damson west;/ Since, tho' he is under the world's splendour and wonder,/ His mystery must be instressed, stressed;/ For I greet him the days I meet him, and bless when I understand. (46)

Born forty years after Hopkins, Jesuit and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin strongly corroborates his theory. In the Hymn of the Universe, Teilhard speaks of a "'blood stream or nervous system running throughout the universe.'" (47) He writes, "This
is what I have learnt from my contact with the earth – the diaphony of the divine at the heart of a glowing universe, the divine radiating from the depths of matter-a-flame.'

(48) While Hopkins saw divine splendor in bluebells, Teilhard saw it in his scientific specimens. As few men were able,

"'Teilhard saw and felt the image and . . . face of the Creator shining through the veil of matter.'" (49) In Teilhard's Le Milieu Divin, he writes a hymn-like address to the Christ of matter:

'Christ of glory, hidden power stirring in the heart of matter, glowing centre in which the unnumbered strands of the manifold are knit together; strength inexorable as the world and warm as life; you whose brow is of snow, whose eyes are of fire, whose feet are more dazzling than gold poured from the furnace; you whose hands hold captive the stars; you, the first and the last, the living, the dead, the re-born; you, who gather up in your superabundant oneness every delight, every taste, every energy, every phrase of existence, . . . you indeed are my Lord and my God.' (50)

Hopkins and Teilhard take their incarnational view a step further and elaborate upon the necessity of human response to God in the flesh and bones of creation. This response, or active giving back, to God, Hopkins terms "praxis." Art can be seen as one of humanity's primary methods of praxis, in that it is a respectful receptivity and discovery of nature's elements as well as a creative interplay with them. As Begbie states, "Works of art are first and foremost instruments and objects of action." (51) Art's activity is thus a pouring forth back to God what He has showered upon His beloved creatures. In this process, not only do humans "selve" themselves, but they also cooperate in completing God's universal work. Teilhard writes:
'We may perhaps, imagine that the creation was finished long ago. But that would be quite wrong... we serve to complete it, even by the humblest work of our hands. That is, ultimately, the meaning and value of our acts. Owing to the interrelation between matter, soul and Christ, we bring part of the being which he desires back to God in whatever we do. With each one of our works, we labor – in individual separation, but no less really – to build the Pleroma; that is to say, we bring to Christ a little fulfillment.' (52)

An artist, in his creative work of expression, articulation, choreography, movement, strokes of the brush, sculpting, and designing, serves God and carries on the work of His Son, cooperating in the mysteries of His Incarnation and Resurrection. As Teilhard writes in The Future of Man, "... the whole of the world's industrial, aesthetic, scientific, and moral endeavor serves physically to complete the Body of Christ, whose charity animates and recreates all things." (53) Truly, human endeavors, such as art, are capable of aiding in a great rebirth. In fact, they are quite necessary for the completion of man’s redemption, won by Jesus the Christ.

Beauty: Objective Truth Beats out Relativism

Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead raised human nature "'from the depths of scorn to the most beautiful harmony of glory. Christ... is the canon and ideal of all beauty'... in his risen life, it is displayed in all its splendour... Beauty therefore must now be understood in the light of Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and in whom creation is restored to its intended beauty." (54) Through this transforming Gospel message, "a rich chapter of faith and beauty," evoking the mystery of the Incarnation, blossomed open, according to John Paul II. (55) Thus the arts become a
hot-bed for both harkening back to "the beauty of the world's pre-fallen state" and anticipating "the perfect beauty of the new creation."(56)

On beauty, Jeremy Begbie writes:

"Beauty, moral goodness, and truth are not human inventions, nor merely the expressions of inner preferences, but are built into the very fabric of the created world, and are rooted in God himself. Thus, beauty . . . is not relative to individual taste or cultural inclination; it is something given, something to which the artist must be faithful."(57)

Faithful? This word is not a popular one today, but, oh how it is needed! The reason people do not take a liking to this word is because people do not like recognizing that they belong to something/Someone higher or bigger than themselves. As humans, we like to think we are in control of our world and our lives. We like to think of ourselves as gods, inventing right and wrong, good and bad, beauty and ugliness. It simply is not so. Again, this pride goes back to the first fall of Adam. The evil one tempts Eve to think that God is lying, that, in fact, she would not die if she ate from the forbidden tree. The serpent tempts her to believe that she can invent her own truth, that God has no say in her “personal affairs.” Aha – relativism is born! She takes a bite – crunch – only to find out that God was right all along. She should have been faithful.

As humans, we discover Truth, goodness, and beauty; we do not make it. Even an artist does not make beauty. He reveals beauty which already exists. Through the synergy of his person, his art’s medium, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he comes to discover already-existing truths and riches of the God-given and created world. As St. Thomas Aquinas states,

"‘Human making has no meaning if there is no divine Maker to give man meaning.’ “(58)
As Oliver O'Donovan puts it, "How can creativity function with its eyes closed upon the universe? For man does not encounter reality as an undifferentiated raw material upon which he may impose any shape that pleases him." (59)

If art can provide us with authentic knowledge of what is real beyond the individual human self, and if we are committed to a vision of the way the world is under God, then we are inevitably driven towards the conclusion that there are norms pertaining to the arts which are not wholly relative to our own theoretical frameworks, paradigms, forms of life or whatever.(60)

It is clear then that humans cannot and do not invent Beauty, which is the "splendor of truth," according to classical definition.(61) Truth exists in the mind of God and He has breathed it into the order of His beautiful creatures and all of creation. As Balthasar writes, "... in the person of Christ... the concrete and the universal are joined."(62) God's ownership of beauty further explains why the expression "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" cannot be true. Beauty is bestowed by the Creator. Beauty is an objective reality, not something invented by the viewer and interpreter of reality. We know this in our experience. Certainly we can recognize standards of beauty by which we critique art. These standards point to some objective of art to which we all bow and submit. In our own experience we recognize art's link with something higher.

John Paul II makes firm the point that beauty is indubitably related to goodness. “In a certain sense, beauty is the visible form of the good.” (63) The ancient Greek philosophers had a keen understanding of this. Merging the two concepts, they formed one word, “kalokagathia,” which translates “beauty-goodness.” As Plato writes, “The power of the Good has taken refuge in the nature of the Beautiful.”(64) Balthasar corroborates, "... beauty demands for herself at least as much courage and decision
as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her two sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance.' 

"(65) For as famous philosopher Etienne Gilson writes in The Arts of the Beautiful:

That which is desired is good by definition, since the good is being itself inasmuch as it is desirable. Therefore the beautiful is a kind of good, and, as such, it is an object of the will. Only it is a kind of good so different from the others that it should be held as a distinct transcendental in its own right. Art creates beauty. The beauty is a transcendental of being, and to approach being as such is always to reach the threshold of the sacred.

"In a very real manner, God endows the artist with the responsibility to craft and generously pour out beauty – and therefore Truth and goodness – in humble service of the community. In this way, their created beauty enriches the "cultural heritage of each nation and all humanity," acting as a sort of social service in favor of the common good. (67) John Paul II goes as far as to say that this is the responsibility of the artist – a dedication to cultural renewal through artistic service. This must be the ethic and even "spirituality" of the artist, he says, rather than vain glory, fading popularity, or self profit. The work of an artist is to raise up an eager people.

So, we can see that human life and art, when embedded in Truth, beauty, and goodness – objective reality as opposed to relativism – serves the common good. Is this not the goal?

The Power to Transcend, when Embedded in Truth
The reason art even exists is because with and through the material, it is uniquely capable of transcending, reaching beyond what is material to the ultimate meaning and mysteries of life. John Paul II has a reverence for genuine artists as deep sea divers into the soul, into the inner beings of existence. It is through this honest exploration of human being that we come to know supernatural being. It is through our very human experience that we are able to touch the transcendent.

This is where phenomenology, the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, held by John Paul the Great, plays a significant role. This philosophy is founded upon the idea that objective truth can be corroborated by subjective experience. We are all hungry for Someone to make sense out of our chaotic lives. Artists possess the unique and valuable gift of being able to speak for the hearts of many.

It is clear and refreshing to see such a devout Christian share such an enthusiastic viewpoint on art and its real purpose in the world. John Paul II's dialogue does nothing but uphold the artist's calling and place in society. What is communicated in art, he shares, is not only the dance, song, painting, or basilica, but also an intimate disclosure of the unique artist himself. Through art, the inner life of the person is revealed. Artists, he writes, reach "beneath reality's surface," striving "to interpret its hidden mystery" through creative moments of intense inspiration, in which they receive perhaps just a glimmer of "the abyss of light." (68) John Paul the Great goes on to proclaim:

Every genuine art form in its own way is a path to the inmost reality of man and of the world. It is therefore a wholly valid approach to the realm of faith, which gives human experience its ultimate meaning. That is why the Gospel fullness of truth was bound from the beginning to stir the interest of artists, who by their very nature are alert to the every "epiphany" of the inner beauty of things. (69)
What brilliance! This is true redemption of art - the revelation of its power to search the mysteries of the core of life experience, personal and universal, literally reaching the heart of the matter, bringing it to life in light of Truth.

Sadly today art is rooted not in a Christian DeSalesian humanism, which embraces man made in the image and likeness of God, but a secular humanism, which is marked by the absence of God and often even opposition to God. This is a Petri dish of disaster, a mad experiment that separates the world of art and the world of faith. Today many artists see morality or religiosity (true, free life!) as split from art. It is impossible.

Art is born from the need to express the inner life, and the inner life comes from a God who created us in His image and likeness, a God who gave us an indwelling spirit, made according to his law. Genuine art expresses the truth of the human experience in all of its moments of intense suffering and joy, care and hatred, love and use, strength and frailty; and these life experiences do not cut us off from a loving God. He who reigns over all knows and sees all things. Nothing is hidden from God. Nothing is outside of Him who is the “I AM.”

Artistic expression of what is real inevitably leads us to God, who is the apex of Reality. He who is Truth governs all true human experiences and is not far from them. True art is under His wing, under His law. Should artists then not seek Him who is Truth, or acknowledge Him who is the divine Artist, as they create and mold, sculpt, paint, dance, act, and design? To ignore Him is to ignore the reason for and the purpose of art. Art by nature seeks. If not seeking Truth, why seek at all?
Art cut off from morality is no longer rooted in truth and therefore cannot be life-giving. Art requires as its foundation something eternal and unchanging as it sways and moves, expressing life’s confusions, pains, sorrows, miseries, and joys. The one eternal is the Creator. True art cannot exist outside of Him who is. In its very nature art seeks Him.

St. Thomas Aquinas believed strongly in this truth:

... religion is the virtue that renders due honour to God, One and Triune, the God of infinite beauty. If a man does not exercise that virtue, at least to the extent of recognizing the order of God’s creation, he is incapable of art. An atheistic art is a self-contradiction. Human making has no meaning if there is no divine Maker to give man meaning. If there is no God, there is no truth, beauty, or goodness; nature has no order or harmony, and art has no foundation. (70)

What a wallop of a statement in today’s society, what with “Fear no Art” stickers and wounded, angered people yelling, “What gives you the right to impose your religious beliefs on me?” Today this would be heard as a blatantly politically incorrect statement. As harsh as it may sound, it is marvelous and needed. Why? Because it is down-right true: “The denial of God destroys art’s foundations.” (71) Where there exists no recognition of His presence, thought and creativity cease to be attainable and therefore art fizzes down to a muddy mush. (72)

Saward goes onto write that not every great artist has been religious in the Christian sense, but all great art has been religious in the sense that it “manifests the wonder of being, the beauty of things as they reflect the brilliance of the divine Wisdom that made them.” (73) As John Paul II encourages:

True art has a close affinity with the world of faith, so that, even in situations where culture and the Church are far apart, art remains a kind of bridge to religious experience. In
so far as it seeks the beautiful, fruit of an imagination which rises above the everyday, art is by its nature a kind of appeal to the mystery. Even when they explore the darkest depths of the soul or the most unsettling aspects of evil, artists give voice in a way to the universal desire for redemption. (74)

True art opens itself to exploring the deep mysteries of the inside-out of life in all of its realms. If the artist's work is honest in its excavation of the innards and guts of personal life, it allows for genuine discovery that humanity is in utter need of redemption. This is the beauty of Truth: that it is not confining, but freeing. In the light of Truth, art is allowed to be art in the fullest sense, crawling through the darkest caves and floating in the most celestial realms.

In fact, as Jeremy Begbie points out, "Responsible creativity involves a penetration of disorder." (75) As David Hamed writes, "The man of letters must follow where the man from Nazareth led, through all the twists and crannies and depths of the finite.' " (76) An artist, in order to show the power of redemption, must also show the grime and dirt of disorder in which humanity finds itself and from which we are freed by a loving Savior. Flannery O'Connor comments that the artist has an "'obligation to penetrate concrete reality.' " (77) Like the noble character Andy Dufresne in the film Shawshank Redemption, the artist must crawl through miles of sewage to escape from bondage and bask in the merciful showers of freedom. "In the resurrection too we are reminded that redemption only achieves the exposure and rejection of evil, but the transformation of that which has been distorted, a renewal of what is disordered." (78) Art that exposes this truth will "inevitably resound with an inner joy, even though it may only be a joy won through despair." (79)
There is a stunning dance piece called *Planted Seeds*, performed by the Phoenix Dance Theatre, which expresses the depth of evil committed and pain wrought by the thousands of rapes performed in wartime Bosnia. It is dark, disgusting, and terrorizing. The tormented and shameful movement, which depicts the disembodiment so often experienced by rape victims, is blood-chilling and riveting. *Planted Seeds* is an informative piece that displays darkness. It is well done and it is sincere – a fine piece of art. Even though it is an utterly disturbing piece, it is good because it is real and it recognizes the truth of the experience. In its genuineness, it cries out for saving grace, for an end to violence. It raises awareness of evil in a way that would disgust one with its clutches. In accordance with phenomenology, the honesty of these victims’ experiences is portrayed, which corroborates with the objective evil of rape, lust, and use.

Art does not have to be "pretty" to be good. For as Karl Barth writes, "'God's beauty embraces death as well as life, fear as well as joy, what we might call the ugly as well as what we might call the beautiful.' "(80) Where art goes astray is when it throws itself into the brittle-boned arms of materialism, atheism, and relativism. As previously discussed, relativism destroys art. If there is no objective truth, then why seek, why express? If there is no recognition of being part of something bigger, what is the point? As artist Jean Cocteau states, "I cannot endure a work, even transported far into subjective reality, which is not deeply rooted in the reality of all of us."(81)

There is a growing trend among artists today to throw their subjective, personal darkness out there, spewing it up like vomit for all the world to see – no censorship, no reverence for the body or the human person. It is all the rage to be shockingly blatant
and not say much at all. Shock value without sincere purpose is costly to the soul.

Disturbing and perverted images spit up by the wounds and distortions of an individual, eat away at the mind and heart. Art that proclaims evil as good and vice versa hacks away at the community, instead of serving it. This is a travesty to the dignity of the human being as well as art.

In order for art to be lifted up to its intended purpose, man must recognize objective Truth, thereby living in accordance with his true nature and intellect.

The Role of Right Reason and Morality

Father Bede Jarett, O.P., wrote, "There could be no art in making an idol to be worshipped, for right reason could not approve the purpose of the thing."(82) Aha! The role of reason in art! It is by virtue of our reason that we are able to discover the moral truths of nature’s order, by which art is made and to which all artists are submissive, whether they recognize it or not. As Jacques Maritain writes:

Art resides in the soul and is a certain perfection of the soul. It is what Aristotle called . . . in Latin a habitus, an inner quality or stable and deep-rooted disposition that raises the human subject and his natural powers to a higher degree of vital formation and energy . . . Art is a virtue of the practical intellect . . . which deals with the creation of objects to be made. We see, then, how essential is the relationship between art and reason.(83)

Maritain goes on to illustrate this by recalling the Middle Ages, when the "virtue of the craftsman was not their eyes, strength of muscle or nimbleness of fingers. It was a virtue of the intellect, and endowed the humblest artisan with a certain perfection of the spirit."(84)
As Maritain points out, art as a virtue of the intellect, requires communication with the universal intellect. St. Thomas Aquinas recognizes this when he contrasts the virtue of art with the virtue of the will – prudence or morality. He illustrates that in art, reason aims at a certain specific goal; whereas in morality, reason aims at the "universal goal of all human life." (85)

Aquinas goes on to explain that an artist can "miss the mark, in two ways: first, by failing to achieve his artistic goal; secondly, by producing something bad in order to deceive others. In the first case, he sins as an artist; in the second, as a man." (86) In order for an artist to use his art well, he indeed needs the moral virtues, which perfect his vision and appetites. John Paul II agrees that art does not serve its God-given purpose if it is not used well. In other words, for "good art" to be truly good, it must be linked with the moral virtues. "'The morally good person, all other things being equal, will be a better artist. The moral virtues, while retaining their orientation towards the end of man, can also further the ends of art.'" (87)

Cardinal Newman, in one of his early essays, writes on poetry:

'We do not hesitate to say that poetry is ultimately founded on correct moral perception . . . A right moral state of heart is the formal and scientifical condition of a poetical mind . . . [A] right moral feeling places the mind in the very centre of that circle from which all the rays have their origin and range; whereas minds otherwise placed command but a portion of the whole circuit of poetry.' (88)

An artist who allows himself to be molded by moral virtues and touched by grace allows his art to be transfigured. "Art has its beginning in seeing, in what Josef Pieper calls 'contemplation' and Jacques Maritain 'creative intuition.'" (89) Because humans were made in the image and likeness of Love Himself, we see more clearly in
the light of love – that is, "Charity, the supernatural love of God and neighbour that perfects the will, refines and elevates the natural seeing of the mind. *Ubi amor, ibi oculus.*"[90]

One of John Paul II's favorite Scripture verses was, "The pure of heart shall see God." A man untempered will be "too blinded by his passions to perceive the many-splendoured thing."[91] He will tend to view the body not as a sacrament, "the expressive incarnation of the spiritual soul and thus of the person," but as a utility – "a machine for obtaining pleasure."[92] An artist must have pure vision unclouded by the fog of lust or any other vice. An artist must be as innocent and unjaded as a child who gazes at the world in awe, wonder, and humility, able to be surprised by the freshness of a morning mist or the radiance of a setting sun. In our fallen state, it is better said that to be an artist requires constant rebirth, out of the tomb of our empty experience into the "richness of restored innocence."[93]

Narcissism, a present-day plague, constricts the man/artist in the self-absorbed workings of his reflection; however, charity, which lifts the man/artist up and out of himself, plunges him into the Trinitarian fire, thus illuminating the workings of his mind and therefore his hands as well. Perhaps we Western artists need to glean some wisdom from our Eastern brothers and sisters, who make it their duty to forget themselves in their craft. In this way the medium of their art reaches a level of clear communicability with others.[94]

Art – good art used well by integration with moral virtues and illuminated by the light of love – acts as a bridge to the transcendent, both for participants and spectators. As St. John Damascene expresses, "The beauty of the images moves me to
contemplation, as a meadow delights the eyes and subtly infuses the soul with the glory of God." (95) This is precisely art's purpose – to lift up humanity in its richness of beauty or at least expression of desire and hunger for it. Art that portrays the sickness of humans as being healthy, enables a trembling culture, always on the verge between life and death and falling more and more deeply into a fatal pit of despair; and this is not a beautiful danger of art, but one that is life-threatening. In its genuine essence, art is life affirming. We are endowed with the responsibility to protect it as such.

Art possesses an "intensely human character" in its ability to communicate between one man to another. (96) Artists must therefore, possess passion for informing, alerting, awakening, inviting, and transporting society out of darkness into the marvelous light. "The great artists, even when they lack explicit faith, reveal the marvel of what is, in all its transcendental richness." (97) John Macquarrie speaks of art as "something like revelation. What is revealed has been there all the time, but it has gone unnoticed in our humdrum everyday experience. It needs the sensitivity of the artist to bring it to light, so that we notice things for the first time." (98)

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Freedom" (2 Cor. 3:17) (99)

In the humanity of Christ, our humanity has been taken up into the divine life of the Son of God, setting us free from paralyzing self-absorption, self-will, and distortions of truth. In His death and resurrection, we are liberated to respond to the Father's love and divine will, freed to "respond appropriately to the created world. Therein lies the very foundation and source of authentic freedom and authentic creativity." (100)
The Holy Spirit, then, is seen as working in cooperation with the Incarnate Son, to free humanity, enabling the artist to respond in outgoing love to others and to the created environment. His inspiration does not stifle artistic freedom but in fact actualizes it. For it is the Spirit who "draws alongside us, making us not less human but more human, not less free, but more free. His work in us is to open us up to things as they really are, yet without disrupting our nature as limited, finite and contingent creatures."(101) As Gerard Manley Hopkins articulates, "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things/ . . . Because the Holy Ghost over the bent/ World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings."(102)

However, lest there be confusion, the inspired artist is thus not free from toil and labor in creating. Quite the contrary – he is rather enabled in the sweat; for it is in and through this work that the Holy Spirit can most readily work. This inspirer of humanity, " 'enables us not by making us supernaturally strong but by opening our eyes. The Holy Spirit is that power which opens eyes that are closed, hearts that are unaware and minds that shrink from too much reality.' "(103)

Oftentimes, such as in ancient Greek culture, the lovely Muse of Poetry and Dance, are not Christian, but, as Gertrud von Le Fort suggests, " 'in her deepest impulses, unconsciously yet irresistibly, [she is] ordered towards what is Christian and is flooded with a gentle Advent-like light.' "(104)

The revered French Catholic poet and dramatist Paul Claudel, who also experienced a revelation of the supernatural through art, corroborates that "great art, even when it is not explicitly religious, can achieve good spiritual effects in others, if not in the artist himself."(105)
A poem by Bruce Bower entitled Art and Worship fleshes out the transcendent power of art:

How ever it may help us to transcend
Or comprehend this vast, impermanent
Realm where we commingle and contend,
Furnishing us as it were, with wings,
The way we formulate, share and present
To the far-off and unfathomed firmament
The yearnings of our souls toward higher things.

If a sculpture, story, symphony,
Or some plain strain played on a violin
Seems to articulate a verity
Resoundingly, it is because it springs
Out of a kindred sensibility,
Soaring above the universal din
To remind us all that we are kin
With anyone whom song inspires to sing.

And yet there is an all-surpassing thrill
Toward which the highest art can only tend
As circumstance, facility, and will,
And all divine endowment will allow;
The more immaculately to distill,
With every small degree it may ascend,
That which is eternally beyond,
And which we humbly ponder and avow.

To glorify a man, or venerate
His works, is therefore racial vanity;
Revering art, we falsely elevate
Ourselves, and fail to see that, here below
The height, our art is to articulate
That which we witness only partially,
Finding forms for what we know must be,
Yet can't be understood by what we know.(106)
The Church and Art: A Newly-Founded Alliance

It is for this reason – that is, the undeniable links between art and the supernatural – that the Church is concerned with developing a growing alliance with artists. On May 7, 1964, Pope Paul VI, John Paul II's predecessor, delivered a vibrant speech to artists during a special meeting he had with them in the Sistine Chapel. He expressed the Church's desire for a "renewed 'epiphany' of beauty which would respond to the "particular needs of the Christian community" in the coming years.(107)

The Second Vatican Council laid the mortar for a refreshed collaboration between the Church and culture, a relationship of open friendship and dialogue, which holds "immediate implications for the world of art."(108) At this significant council in the history of the Church, the Fathers made an appeal to artists, "This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. Beauty, like truth, brings joy to the human heart and is that precious fruit which resists the erosion of time, which unites generations and enables them to be one in admiration!"(109)

It was made clear, at this meeting, that artists have a "noble ministry" and as Father Marie Dominique Chenu claimed, the great works of artists are "‘not only aesthetic representations, but genuine sources of theology.' "(110) Begbie agrees, for art is truly a "vehicle of interaction with the world; a work of art is an object or happening through which we engage with the physical world we inhabit, and through which we converse with those communities with whom we share our lives . . . The experience of art is a mode of knowing the world . . . Consequently, the Church need feel no shame in employing the arts as media of theological truth."(111) Jacques Maritain agrees in his theory of creative intuition, that nature and man engage in a
"mutual entanglement" that motivates the work of an artist; and it is this colorful relationship that reveals the "self" as well as the "things" – the subject and object of the piece of art.

All too often, the Church misreads art as solely illusionary, emotional, and ornamental. These myths will only impoverish the Church. The Church is in great need of talented artists, who can translate and make attractive the Gospel message, creating a bridge from natural to supernatural through their art’s medium.

In addition to the Church needing artists, artists are in desperate need of the Church, the messenger of Truth for the world. John Paul II states that religion is the artist’s homeland as they seek inspiration and hidden meaning of things. He says that it is “within the realm of religion that the most vital personal questions are posed, and answers . . . are sought . . . Ultimately, it has been a great boon for an understanding of man, of the authentic image and truth of the person.” (112)

John Paul the Great concludes his letter by making an appeal to artists to strengthen the bond between the Gospel and art, inviting them to use their “creative intuition to enter into the heart of the mystery of the Incarnate God and at the same time into the mystery of man.” (113) For Jesus Christ not only reveals God but “‘fully reveals man to man.’ ” (114) How hungry we are for this revelation!

It is up to artists, the former pope says, to declare humanity’s need for redemption and that we have been redeemed by Christ. He firmly advises artists to reveal hope in Jesus Christ with all the “wealth of [their] ingenuity . . . Humanity in every age, and even today, looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and its destiny.” (115) For art truly “‘proceeds from the longing for that perfect existence which
is not yet, but which man, despite all disappointments, thinks must come to be when
the existent has reached its full truth and reality has been subordinated to actual
entities . . . Thus art projects in advance something that does not yet
exist.’ ”(116)

John Paul II ends by wishing upon artists, inspiration of the beauty that saves, for
which the world is dying of hunger. “May your art help to affirm that true beauty which,
as a glimmer of the Spirit of God, will transfigure matter, opening the human soul to the
sense of the eternal.”(117) This is what it means to be a true artist, “voicing creation’s
praise.”(118) How we have fallen. How our hearts burn within us for redemption . . . a
redemption that indeed has been won for us. Let us rejoice and praise Him!
Application to Dance

The art form of dance, by its nature, is a particularly pure sacramental art, for its medium is the entire body. It is uniquely vulnerable in its raw expression of the person, body and soul. Dancing requires the full use and focus of the body, intellect, and spirit, all united in one instant. In this way, it is especially able to communicate the truth of who we are as human beings and our calling to grow in hylomorphic, psychosomatic integration. It is in this state that man discovers who he is in all of his God-made glory. This honesty of person is true freedom and real human fulfillment.

Because in our fallen state we split body and spirit, it is common in our culture to ere in favor of one more than the other. In this way, our culture has taken on a dualistic paradigm, which hacks away at the dignity of our human existence. Taking the extreme of bodily ness, many people have become animalistic, solely following the body's raw instincts, passions, and desires without recognizing the inner spirit. Others have taken the equally dangerous extreme of prudishness, rejecting the body and paying heed only to the spirit and the "sanctifying" thereof (impossible as humans without the flesh of our bodily existence)! God created us as body-soul persons, and fulfillment of humanity is found precisely in this meaty integration.

Like any other art form, dance not only creates the culture, but the culture also creates dance. In other words, dance seen today, reveals the thoughts, attitudes, and paradigms of our modern culture. Oftentimes dance abides by either extreme taken by a certain individual – animalism or prudishness. Many dance styles today, in particular the perversion of dance in utilitarian club grinding, reflect the distortions of the human as seen by society. This solely self-gratifying movement marks a certain
animalistic, rather than personalistic, approach to being. Sadly this repeated bodily indulgence strikes at the human soul in its very depths. When it comes to the opposing extreme, prudishness, dance is usually avoided at all costs. These costs are detrimental to the well-being of a society.

So, why is there such an attack on dance? Perhaps because it is such a powerful means of developing body-spirit integration. Dance is the movement of persons, the intersection of their energy in time and space. It is incarnational grace. It is the movement that springs forth from the unity, not divorce of body and soul. If we were just bodies, what would we express? The need for expression would be obsolete. If we were just spirits, how would we express? Our means of actualizing the inner life would be eliminated, and therefore, dance would be impossible. We need both body and spirit in order to dance. The body is the instrument, the medium; the soul is the inner depth and substance, the wellspring of creativity.

View this in reverse, and we see that dance is in fact a testament to our body-soul existence. Dance, then, is sacramental. It is a physical, visible manifestation of an invisible reality. In this way, dance communicates truth. As modern dancer Ted Shawn shares, "'I believe that dance communicates man’s deepest, highest and most truly spiritual thoughts and emotions far better than words, spoken or written.'"(119) In this, lies the majestic and cutting power of dance. Truly, dance touches the heart of the matter.

Isadora Duncan, previously mentioned, was one of the first modern dancers in America to devise and make known her philosophy of dance, which colors most theories and goals of modern dance today. She believed in developing a natural and
freeing style of movement which originated from imitation of nature and the core of the human being, which she discovered to be the solar plexus. Duncan would often dance beside the ocean, from which she would draw her inspiration, undulating and rippling from her depths like the waves. Duncan greatly affirmed the indigenous intertwining of body and soul in her movement. She aimed at choreographing dances which outwardly expressed the inner, invisible realities. She states, "... the dance of the future will have to become again a high religious art as it was with the Greeks. For art which is not religious is not art, [it] is mere merchandise." (120) Duncan's goal: honesty of expression.

Another famous American modern twentieth century dance pioneer, Martha Graham, corroborates, "Dance is the hidden language of the soul... The body does not lie." (121) Evidently, Graham does not lie either! Dance exposes, through the body's motion, the truths of the heart, mind, emotions, and spirit. In this art form, it is difficult to hide them. This revealing nakedness of dance is what makes it such an effective art form. It literally reaches to the transcendent while kneading the dough of the earth as its foundation from which it springs and leaps. In its ecstatic movement, dance is caught up in, enraptured in, the captivating oneness of body and spirit. This is precisely what makes dance such an alluring art form, for both the dancer and the spectator.

The choreographer, while experiencing all of this, also engages in a somewhat different and most interesting experience. He has the privilege of being a co-creator, as he opens himself like a vessel to streamings of inspiration from above that develop into exultant, fluid, suspended, percussive, eerie, and beautiful movement and shapes. In concert dance, the pictures, messages, stories, or emotions that ensue are then given
over to a receptive audience, which is invited to participate in the exchange of persons surrendering their gifts of movement. It is a brilliant, collaborative effort which is intended to leave the society and culture at large – choreographer, dancers, and audience – with a better sense of what it means to be human, body and soul, pining for our ultimate meaning and purpose, unity with that glorious Transcendent, and experience of the fullness of redemption.
Dance, like all art, cries out to be redeemed, bought back from its transgressors for a high cost, that of revamping our view of humanity in light of Christian realism which establishes an adequate anthropology, through which the truth of human existence and therefore art can be discovered and raised into its intended splendor, made possible through the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; we as artists are called by virtue of our humanity to be co-creators within the vast beauties and laws of nature, to fight against relativism which impedes human fulfillment, creativity, and artistic genius, to seep ourselves in Truth, right reason, and morality, and to allow ourselves to be impregnated with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who frees humankind to bear life-giving fruit to a hungry world, for the completion of Christ's redemptive work.

May we, like Matisse's dancers, move with joy at the sound of our call. Man and woman, join hands, for our redemption is under way! Look to Him, the divine Artist who invites us, body and soul, into glorious action. Our response? Hopefully a resounding, "Time to move!"
Endnotes


4 Berry 14-15.


6 Berry, *Life is a Miracle: An Essay Against Modern Superstition*, 117.


8 Begbie, 3.


13 West, 22.

14 West, 23.


17 The New American Bible, Mat. 19:8.

18 The New American Bible, Isaiah 53:5.


21 Pope John Paul II, 1.

22 Pope John Paul II, 1.

23 Pope John Paul II, 1.

24 Pope John Paul II, 1.


29 Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, 229.


31 Saward, 75.

32 Saward, 90.

33 Saward, 92.

34 Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, 205.
35 Begbie, 206.

36 Begbie, 206.


38 Saward, 87.

39 Saward, 91.


42 Rowan West, 11.

43 Rowan West, 11.

44 Rowan West, 11.

45 Rowan West, 11.


48 Rowan West, 13-14.

49 Rowan West, 14.

50 Rowan West, 14.

51 Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*, 207.

53 Rowan West, 28.

54 Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*, 97.


56 Begbie, *Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts*, 98.

57 Begbie, 155.


60 Begbie, 218.


68 Pope John Paul II, 4-5

69 Pope John Paul II, 5.


71 Saward, 76.
72 Saward, 76.
73 Saward, 76.
75 Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, 213.
76 Begbie, 213.
77 Begbie, 213.
78 Begbie, 214.
79 Begbie, 215.
80 Begbie, 224.
    <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~lenin/JeanCocteau.html>) 3.
82 Saward, The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity & The
    Truth of Catholicism, 80.
83 Jacques Maritain, Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry, (New York, NY: Pantheon
    Books, 1953) 48-49.
84 Maritain, 49.
85 Saward, The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity & The
    Truth of Catholicism, 81.
86 Saward, The Beauty of Holiness and the Holiness of Beauty: Art, Sanctity & The
    Truth of Catholicism, 81.
87 Saward, 81.
88 Saward, 83-84.
89 Saward, 81.
90 Saward, 82.
91 Saward, 82.

92 Saward, 82.

93 Saward, 82.


101 Begbie, 228.


105 Saward, 78.


108 Pope John Paul II, 8.
109 Pope John Paul II, 9.
110 Pope John Paul II, 9.
111 Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, 257.
113 Pope John Paul II, 10.
114 Pope John Paul II, 10.
115 Pope John Paul II, 10.
118 Begbie, Voicing Creation’s Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts, 258.
120 “Isadora Duncan (1877-1927),” (13 April 2006.  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~gillis/dance/isadora.html>) par. 4.

**Bibliography**

_glory_of_go.html>.


