



REVIEW ARTICLE

THE SEARCH FOR THE GRAIL AS SEARCH FOR DIVINITY REVIEWING CULTURAL
PARADIGMS OF THE 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The development of this research work is due to the thought of reflecting on "search for divinity" as part of the principal theme of the doctoral thesis we have underway. In it, from discipline of the History of Art, we deepen on into the tourist activity, in particular the product called Cultural Tourism through the route of the Holy Grail, which extends from the city of Jaca in Aragon to the city of Valencia, in Spain. In a society gripped by voracious consumerism, the practice of the search for the divine relegated to the encounter of human beings, it is a question that it must be also studied from the Academy. The methodology consists of inspect-from the point of view psychological and historiography-, the following paradigms: post-capitalist culture and the pursuit of the divinity; as output to the dehumanization of global consumerism. From end of the 19TH century up to our present, through different referents in the discipline of History of Art. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate through reflection, as human beings in general, has to rethink its place in this new world that has nothing to do with industry early last century. In the end, the conclusions section invites to choose sides of that personal search which we must never stop practicing, because the humanists, - who also are generators ultimately, of academic thought that we bequeath to our forerunners-, we must know how to transmit values to build a better society.

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INTRODUCTION

This research work is based on the need to take different points of historical reflection and psychological, about what is happening in the global society. Traditionally the studies of History of Art, are focused mostly on works, artistic productions located in a last past far. We are not talking about archaeological studies about the ruins of Thebes in Egypt, the Coptic writings of the East. We are commenting that almost 85% of production in research on the history of art is focused on places and times not contemporary or current. Our mission here is to comment on since long before that in Europe we had consciousness of social individuals - and we mean as an example of this reflection to the revolution which meant in England at the end of the 19TH century let people vistiesen not according to their social class, but according to your taste or propaganda that produced those pictures, those decorations of buildings and sculptures exposed. Because all it observed from form holistic receives always multiple readings that make up the historical narration of the moment. Exactly at this point, from the discipline of the History of Art, is trying to illustrate

the actions undertaken in the field of Cultural tourism, with a series of decisions that well can be interpreted today as faults or failures, such as Juan Antonio Ramírez talk in his book¹. The methodology undertaken for the implementation of this article, is limited largely to the space that we have for the drafting of the present work. We know the existence of large compendiums written from sociology, didactics and psychology, explaining different points of view of what is meant by culture. But we wanted to propose to Burckhardt and Panofsky, as scholars of our discipline since the 19TH century, with the purpose of focusing the discourse of what we mean by culture. This presents different definitions that have been nurturing our discipline - the History of Art- through several contributions. We will then discuss the work of Walter Benjamin which again shows his criticism towards the consumer society and the total trivialization of art and culture. In a second section, we present relations between the pursuit of divinity and the quest for the Holy Grail, where it aims to demonstrate the need to begin to think about turning points that can lead to the society as a whole to create a more humane world, in the noble sense of the word. Finally, we provide a sincere reflection on what should be a change of the cultural

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¹ RAMIREZ, Juan Antonio. History and art criticism: failures (and failures). Lanzarote: Fundación César Manrique, 1998

paradigm within each of the human beings who occupy a territory without wars, with optimal living standards and high levels of personal consumption, that lead to empathize and improve the planet.

The History of art and the work of art as cultural phenomenon

It is essential to look to the past to take conscience of the place we occupy today within our historical development as a society. The History of Art provides a holistic about the same point of look from iconology. If we are called "Sons of Rome", it will be because we are still drinking at the social level of their inventions or proposals collected at the same time of previous cultures. Such is the case of the iconic narration and the emergence of the same in the ancient Greece. In the territories which currently correspond to the Hellenic country. Makes almost three millennia, in the Mediterranean East has produced a revolution visual at the time in that the representation of those texts acquires a cultural function. I.e., appear representational art based on a text written. A text that not only "used" to be read, but has another function: to be represented.

And although the iconographic representations exist as such in the history of mankind since thousands of years ago, we have to go back to the 5th century BC. to ascertain the maturation and fixing this representativeness which finally crystallized with the cultural invention of art.

With this we want to explain that if in a remote past the image was in the service of rituals and a form of persistence in the belief of certain forces of nature, render text through works of art is definitely the emancipation of art of the image as a human instrument. Giving rise to the image of art as part of the secular life of the civilization. This new concept of the use of the image is consolidated approximately between the II and III of our era. So, that visual narrative, it begin to keep the cultural role that the artwork is easy to read it. All this brings a new plastic development, as the cultural invention of the art, implies that artists have to create his own language to be capable of transfer to images those same concepts of "power" and "religion" expressed in texts². Art happens to have a cultural role merely as a visual representation of cultural events which are the texts. Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) considers art as a historical document and an end in itself. According to García Mahiques³, is a cultural purpose and therefore continuously speak of influence between art and culture, to identify practically these two terms.

The culture being the sum of all spontaneous spirit developments that create a historical reality. In this historic setting involved both State and Religion. Two elements that, as already is having commented, used for their own purposes the images of power in its artistic representation of them themes. Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) in his essay published in 1932 in the magazine *Logos*⁴, explain of way concrete the form in that is has configured in the image a theme or topic. Positioning the idea of "concept" directly to the iconographic level. Thus, explains that "these" types iconographic have gone encoding is in the traditional culture of the societies, acquiring a character

conventional that starts from times past, without leave of having a historical continuity. But by the other side, presenting, however variations in the way of representing them, on the basis of their cultural mobility. Considering that the cultural tradition is finally who configures the iconographic types, as well as the knowledge of the source that produces them.

Therefore, following the footsteps of Panofsky, who say that while the theme does not change throughout history - we propose as examples the theme of love, the victory or the Last Supper - iconographic types instead, varies.



Illustration 1. Vicente Juan Masip (1510-1579) Circa 1562. *The Last Supper*. Prado Museum. Madrid.

In the case of the sacrament, the subject always fluctuates around what is exposed in the New Testament, however the representation varies with the iconographic type expressed in the representation of forms or different objects: the placement of the Cup and the bread on the table, represents the sacrament type Eucharist. On the other hand, the representation of the table with the Apostles asking Christ, refers to the Last Supper kind tradition. Based on their studies, Panofsky concluded that the type iconographic not maintained a continuity at the time, but varies depending on fields and cultural situations. Following the wake of their own conclusions: find that not there are structures Visual objective or perceptions universal, but particular constructions made by each culture depending on their vision of the world⁵. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), he offers an outstanding analysis of what we mean by work of art from the Frankfurt School. Addressing the same in the context of industrialization, the mass society and totalitarianism. In the prologue⁶ of the work can read that all them deficiencies existing in the work of art concerning the concept of "aura", is summarized in that a time have dominated the reproduction technicalities of the work of art as made daily, what is lost is the aura of this. That loss is symptomatic and its significance drags with it a profound crisis

⁵ See definition of worldview RAE (2016): Vision or conception global of the universe.

⁶ Little correspond to these requirements the thesis on the art of the proletariat after its seizure of power; much less still some on the classless society; more instead some thesis about the trends evolutionary of the art under the current conditions of production. His dialectic is not less perceptible in the superstructure than in the economy. That would be a mistake to underestimate his combative value. In: BENJAMIN, Walter. *Speeches interrupted I*, Taurus, Buenos Aires, 1989.

² The conceptual representation revitalizes whenever power needs to resort to the world of photography to express its own permanent imagination. An example is the Roman art, pure political propaganda.

³ GARCIA MAHIQUES, Rafael. *Iconography and iconology / I The history of the art as historical cultural*. Madrid: Encuentro, 2008.

⁴ (GARCIA MAHIQUES, Rafael, 2008) pp. 57-58.

of cultural values that are no longer being transmitted in the artistic field. Thus, to multiply the reproductions on a massive scale, instead of showing the work from a unique presence, the message that contained the work of art as something that elevate human consciousness to the ecstasy of the senses, becomes a shock of the tradition. Mass movements take new Visual Media, photography and film mainly as a mere entertainment while there is a liquidation of the value of tradition in cultural heritage. We take as an example the cinema and when this art may not produce cultural values by definition, produces an inherently political courage. Benjamin concludes about the politicization of art that art cannot claim their autonomy against a technology, because this is inevitably political. No doubt the consequence of this loss of the "aura" is the politicization of art⁷. And if we say that art is a politicised act, because the political budget destined by the "Department of Culture", is at last, who nourishes it.

The Search for the Divinity

In a global world prostituted seems outdated, - given the socio-political system in which we live, talk of the Grail and its relationship with the divine and the most high sacred⁸. We have an issue of capital importance, obviated by a majority - for interest or ignorance - this problem, it's to find an equity between the "divinity" versus the "evil society" (neo-liberal, wild-capitalist, globalized by the arms industry, and psychopathic). This search road, starts with the search for the man, in the virtuous sense; perhaps better still, of the man Christ, whose splendid image we owe to Leonardo, and is generally known as a Renaissance man. The other side, exist the dark, that coexist in our days in the human more perverse, the psychopath (from the individual to the organization, both brutal, both changing), that fuel our society and they protect each other⁹. The divinity, nor is corresponds essentially with what popularly we know as "so good", or them good principles that is refer them commandments or virtues. We could approach the concept as a number of qualities that furnish the honour, at its finest, set of qualities that would form a man rising, the gentleman (in his time walking and armed, defender of honour and of the poor). Characterized by: honesty, dignity, justice, courage, capacity for sympathy, altruism, loyalty, etc., something that pallidly best men will emulate today. The divine goes beyond all this, implies "power and unknown qualities", whose impalpability to us, it would materialize with the expression of *misteriis divinitatis*, just as there is a *misteriis iniquitatis*, a mystery of evil¹⁰. All mystery represents a reality unattainable, beyond of the understanding human, that never we arrive to achieve fully or understand. That we just sit through them, dreams and some phenomena, strange, paranormal and preternatural -visions, appearances, etc.-. We mistakenly think that trying to be something divine must necessarily be unachievable, like that secret or secret, hidden or implicit in the Holy Grail, the continent of the blood of Christ. We know that in the Ancient Testament the blood

belonged to the God Father, but the Son offers it symbolically, along with his flesh, his disciples, approaching the human mystery. Thus the mystery is made accessible by faith, but there is something more. The key is that the approximation to the truth, in this case for "the truth of all truth", is a question of determining "elements" of identification.

‘In the natural or social science, the truth is likely, is a question to approach it as much as possible. It's something like an Asymptote, which is a line that is approaching more and more to the horizontal of a Cartesian axis system straight or curve, but never touch it. In science a probability ("p") equal to or less than 0.01 imply, according to degrees of freedom, that of every 100 cases, in one studied relationship, one would not be met. It is the minimum error parameter applied to a measuring scale in mathematical terms. The only truth to 100 per 100 in our human knowledge, its that human life is not always endures, the body that sustains it must die. And the "p" always exists, is part of our human contingency. However, as knowledge, we can only glimpse the absolute truth through the empyrean. When we think in elements of identification, we think in the *Imago Christi*¹¹, of the man as image of Dios, and still more in the Gnostic *eristis sicut dei* ("were / will be as gods")¹². Those traits that all human beings are called to implement, but by reasons unknown, a lot of the humans are lost. About this fact, there is a multiplicity of theories, that we do not discuss, ranging from inhumanity applying by the voracious capitalism to humans or the limited capacity of the whole society to evolve into empathy all of humanity, individual by individual, without distinction.

The Grail reflects blood, life, knowledge and, in short, the power of which the man is a light - twisted reflection - in most cases. It is also the logos of Heraclitus¹³, which tends to be associated with the divine, nature with its laws and its phenomena in constant evolution, the order and the law that governs the life and the environment, widely understood, the microcosm and the macrocosm. This canon of Agnostics and atheists hesitant is also embraced by some believers, arguing that behind all this is God, your God, who, to the dessert all governs it. Nothing to do with that "God crazy who dislocated dreams", Bukowski *dixit*¹⁴.

Conclusion

Moreover, the word "religion" has the same etymology in Latin of "reconnect", which means linking or, more properly, reattach¹⁵ it and in this case, should be with Nature. The *sangraal* -resumed at the end of the 18TH century by French romanticism royalist¹⁶-, on the one hand represents the lineage of the blood of Christ, by the other, the human approach to the concept of "divinity" through the quest for the Holy Grail.

¹¹¹¹ LUIS LADARIA, S.J. "Humanity in the Light of Christ in the Second Vatican Council," in René Latourelle, ed., Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives, Vol. II. New York: Paulist Press, 1989, p. 386-401.

¹² DE SANTOS OTERO, Aurelio. Los Evangelios Apócrifos. Edición crítica y bilingüe. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1993.

¹³ GREDOS. Los filósofos presocráticos. Textos originales. Compilación del Editor. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1975.

¹⁴ RUSSELL, Harrison. Against the American Dream: Essays on Charles Bukowski. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1998.

¹⁵ ECHEGARAY, Eduardo de. Diccionario general etimológico de la lengua española. Madrid: Faquinetto, 1887, p.123.

¹⁶ The powers that be nostalgic to the French monarchy - removed by the French revolution in 1789, thought that relate blood of Christ with the seed Royal Merovingian, through the literature of the middle ages of the quest for the Holy Grail, it would legitimize the plain people, the return of the form of totalitarian Government of absolute monarchy. As needed by the spheres oligarchic of the power.

⁷ At the same moment in which the standard of authenticity fails in artistic production, it upsets the integral function of art. Instead of its foundation in a ritual appears his rationale in a different practice, namely in the policy. (BENJAMIN, Walter, 1989)

⁸ LINCOLN H., BAIGENT, M. y R. The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail. Londres: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1982. (Traducción:El enigma sagrado. Madrid: Ed. Martínez Roca, 2005.

⁹ ALARIO BATALLER. S. Las nocturnidades de don Arturo del Grial, (2002, 2011), novela, <http://www.lulu.com/alario7> (26-10-2016)

¹⁰ HUMANES BESPÍN, Iván; ALARIO BATALLER, Salvador. Malditos. La Biblioteca olvidada. Barcelona: Grafein Ediciones, 2006.

However, we can ensure that you it's another quite different issue. The higher life, knowledge of this nature, the power (not in vain it was looking for, among others, by the Nazis¹⁷), which has nothing to do with the man.

What human is prose vulgar that understands the power as the result of the domination, whose progeny is especially the money and the sex. Worldly things and the world belong to Rex Mundi the King of this world, of the devil according to the Gnostics, perhaps the back of the hand of God. A mystery, but we can go to the data that emerge from the UN itself through its portal where you can consult all the global war, brings us closer to the reality of society. Looking at this world and this time, if we remember that the XX century - we can say that it was horrible-, the XXI, it exceeds with grow. Nothing further away from Christ and the Grail, the divine and sublime dignity of being. Seen it seen, or the nature or the culture human it is being manipulated to the dark side of life, want it or not.

There were other systems of society in the past, not in vain the Romans gave way to the basis of what we know today as a system of laws for the common good, the common law legal-, another thing is the justice and dignity. Free will is no longer thing of many, rather few. All the human beings are called to search the light divine of which forms part. A world guided only by economic interests leads squarely into the hands of Mephistopheles. Empathy and delicacy of human treatment have to be our new currency of legal tender. And as humanists who have studied at the University is our duty to give back to society in the form of knowledge and light, all that knowledge we have received. We can go in search of the Holy Grail because we now know that divinity begins with ourselves.

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¹⁷ LLONA, Guillermo. Así buscó Hitler el Santo Grial en España. 11/06/2012. ABC. In: <http://www.abc.es/20120609/archivo/abci-ahnenerbe-ocultista-espana-201206081210.html> (26-10-2016)

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