

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

TOB 60, General Audience of Apr. 15, 1981

A Note on Method

- There are two dimensions with regard to the body
 - 1) The objective reality of the body
 - 2) The subjective consciousness and subjective experience of the body
 - Both dimensions are in Scripture and require theological analysis
 - An investigation of man cannot exclude either dimension, each dimension must be examined in light of the other

Role of Culture

- Cultural works allows the dimensions of body and experiences of it to extend beyond living persons
- Through culture man can experience the reality of the body
- Aesthetic experience, the looking at a work of art and the body
 - The body is objectified outside its ontological identity according to artistic creativity
 - The aesthetic look cannot be isolated from consideration of the concupiscent look of Matt. 5:27-28
- Aesthetics within the ethos of the body requires the creation of a climate of purity
- Purity can be threatened by various works of art
- The question is how to understand the body as an object of culture in light of the ethos of the body

The Body as an Object of Culture

- The body has been a perennial object of culture
- Man is the subject of culture, using his humanity and body in creating culture
- “Object of culture” is defined as a subject of works of culture and particular works of art
- Distinction between the living body which creates the work of art and the body as the model of the work of art

The Distinction between Film and Painting

- Question: is film and photography of the same kind of work of art as painting or sculpture
 - There is an essential difference
 - Within painting and sculpture the body remains a model subjected to reworking by the artist, the process which JPII calls **transfiguration**
 - Film and photography do not undergo transfiguration of the model, for the body is reproduced as an object for reproduction through technology
- When artistic reproduction becomes the content of representation and transmission, it loses its fundamental contact with the body
 - The body reproduced in such a way becomes an anonymous object
 - Anonymity is the effect of spreading the image-representation
 - This is essentially different from the transfiguration of art models
- A good outside resource, Dietrich von Hildebrand's Aesthetics, vol. 2, ch. 20I fi

Thank You for Watching

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