

Rob Noland

Mr. Pope

Senior thesis

8 May 2007

Unity through Art: A Christian Aesthetic

In “Towards a Christian Aesthetic” Dorothy Sayers writes that regrettably “the Church as a body has never made up her mind about the arts, and it is hardly too much to say that she has never tried.” She goes on to explain that this does not mean that the church has not “puritanically denounced the Arts as irreligious and mischievous or tried to exploit the Arts as a means to religion and morals.” She suggests that both of these attitudes towards art are false and degrading. Frank Burch Brown, in his book “Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste” has a similar diagnosis, saying that the church is ambivalent about taste. It is clear that the church has not produced an acceptable aesthetic. In this thesis I shall offer up reasons for this problem, and also a possible solution. I neither find it necessary nor think it possible to fabricate an entirely new aesthetic for Christianity. I assert that the church can build on and reclaim the aesthetic foundation of other thinkers.

We must first consider a general definition of “aesthetics.” According to the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy aesthetics is “the study of the feelings, concepts, and judgments arising from our appreciation of the arts or of a wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime.” I shall use this definition for my model for

reclaiming aesthetics for the church. For clarity's sake, I shall refer to all the classes "considered moving, beautiful, or sublime" under the broad subject heading of art. However, one of the first things to notice from this definition is that it clearly distinguishes aesthetics from the study of art itself. Aesthetics is the study of a human's *appreciation* of art, both God's art and our art. It is not simply the elements of art. We must notice also that beauty is only part of this definition. Many people would consider beauty at the heart of all aspects of art. These are generally the people who insist emphatically on a particular definition of beauty. However, beauty is a notoriously hard concept to define. Leo Tolstoy, in his book "What is Art" says "after mountains of books have been written on the subject by the most learned and profound thinkers . . . the question, "what is beauty" remains to this day quite unsolved, and in each new work on aesthetics is answered in a new way" (Tolstoy 20). Neither has beauty been defined in our own day. If we were to catalogue all of the definitions of beauty, even within the Christian community, the list would be long indeed. Since it is clear that we cannot simply appeal to beauty, we must consider the aspects of aesthetics in the Oxford definition. I shall begin by analyzing feelings, concepts, and judgments surrounding art and then I shall briefly talk about the "moving and sublime." Finally, I will take what we have gathered from the discussion of these topics and relate it to a Christian worldview. My goal is to show how art is absolutely necessary to the Christian life.

We must first consider the feelings aroused from art. Suppose while walking through the Prado museum in Madrid a person comes across "Christ Crucified" by Diego Velazquez. As he stands staring at the painting there are several reactions he could have. First, the viewer may feel an indescribable reverence for the artwork or a feeling of

unworthiness. The painting, just because it is a picture of our savior crucified, could soften the viewer's heart. Or, even if the painting has no particular religious meaning for the viewer, the image of a crucifixion could simply fill the viewer with terror. In either case, we would say that the subject has been moved by the artwork's sublimity. We shall talk more about this effect later. Second, it is also possible that the subject takes no consideration and feels no emotion in regard to the painting. This is a curious reaction. Unless the painting is extremely poorly executed it is hard to imagine how anyone could feel no emotion when seeing a large painting of Christ crucified. Perhaps it is the man who wears a crucifix around his neck to whom a painting of the crucified Christ is simply commonplace. Maybe it is a person who normally feels no empathy towards anyone and is now completely separated from the artwork. Or, it could just be a non-emotional person. In "The Abolition of Man" C.S. Lewis noted how many pupils were falling victim to starved sensibility. He said "For every one pupil who needs to be guarded from a weak excess of sensibility there are three who need to be awakened from the slumber of cold vulgarity. The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts." Alas, this statement is just as true in our day as it was in Lewis'. On all sides it appears that cold rationality is winning over aesthetic sensibilities. Clive Bell, in his book "Art", argued that the reason that there is hardly any sensible writings on aesthetics is that aesthetic sensibilities and intellect are rarely united in the same person (Bell). He stated that the men who have intellect but not aesthetic sense are more to be pitied than those that have the opposite. However, there is a third reaction. This is the reaction of the art critic. He is neither immediately struck by the sublimity of the work nor completely unmoved. He is carefully examining the painting before him. Mentally, he is going

through a checklist. “Does it look realistic? Is the painting balanced . . .? What was the artist’s purpose?” In short, he is examining it for technical details. It was precisely this sort of reaction that led Kierkegaard to emphasize that in the making and enjoyment of art “the point of view of the religious is completely dislocated” (Brown 31) In other words, a religious subject is made into an object of human amusement. The act is similar to a dissection. A dissection is essentially the act of turning one of God’s dead creatures into a lesson on anatomy. In order to learn about the creature, the biologist is forced to open it up and look at its inside. He is not, like the Zoologist, out in the field observing how the animal lives. It would be easy to say that the Zoologist has a better grasp of the essential nature of the organism. After all, the only time the biologist has ever seen the animal is when it was dead. However, the biologist is just as necessary as the zoologist because without him no one would understand how organisms work. In the same way, art critics are just as necessary as the aesthete. They are necessary to interpret the artist’s work and analyze its technical aspects. The dislocating effect is a legitimate concern that should not be taken lightly, but it is no reason to reject art or the art critic.

It is clear that the emotional aspect of art is important. Therefore, as a caution I will list several ways emotions about art can diminish. First, over-familiarity can cause us to ignore emotions and simply focus on the content. To illustrate this effect Frank Burch Brown cites the example of St. Augustine. Augustine congratulates himself in Book X of *Confessions* that he is no longer moved to tears when he sings hymns but is rather able to appreciate the truth in the words (Brown 103). He had lost so much and he did not even know it. Augustine had become desensitized to the emotions that the hymns evoke. In this way, he had lost a very important aspect of art. Another way to become

desensitized to these emotions is to over analyze art. If we accept the attitude of an especially hardened art critic and do not let ourselves admire an artwork until we assure ourselves that it is aesthetically worthy we may find that we have lost all aesthetic feeling.

Apart from emotions, there are also concepts that artworks suggest. It can be a hard thing to grasp how an artwork can suggest concepts. How is it that a flat stretch of canvas, or a purely instrumental piece implies concepts? The same way the creation declares God's invisible attributes. We learn of God's goodness through his providence, we learn of God's love of order through the minuteness of the atom. Just like general revelation, every piece of artwork (whether it be a painting, poem, play, or piece of music) is a window into the worldview of the artist. Even the strict realists, who paint only that which they see before them, betray their worldview by what they choose to depict. There have been literally thousands of theories on how precisely artwork conveys concepts. First, I would like to consider the way Leo Tolstoy has conceptualized art. Some of Leo Tolstoy's most controversial writings were about art. One writer describes his theory of art as "unreasonably narrow, exclusive, and arbitrary" (Jahn, 1). In his essay entitled "What is Art?" Tolstoy declares that we should cease thinking about art as a means of pleasure and instead think of it as necessary to human life. How could art be necessary to human life? The answer lies in his definition of art, and what he perceives its purpose to be. He says that art is a "means of intercourse between man and man"; it is no less necessary than speaking or writing. However, whereas speaking and writing convey *ideas*, art conveys *experiences*. This is the key concept in Tolstoy's theory. In his view, art is so much more than simply representation. To Tolstoy, it matters not how much a

horse depicted in a painting actually looks like a horse. What does matter is if the horse in the painting connects the painter's experience of a horse with the viewer's experience of a horse. In this way, the artist communicates his experiences to every viewer who experiences the same thing. The power that Tolstoy ascribes to art is both wonderful and profoundly terrifying. Art could be either a divine blessing or a means of destruction. It could be a stumbling block to all those who view it, or a path to enlightenment. As the apostle James wrote, "Let not many of you become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (James 3:1). James' warning stands also for artists. If Tolstoy was right then the artist's power is even greater than the teacher's. A teacher can only transfer information to his students; he cannot transfer his experience. Through this effect Tolstoy gives art a highly moral role in human society. In Tolstoy's view the difference between good art and bad art is not its technical qualities, but the effect that it has on society (Jahn, 1). If no man has ever had a shared experience with another over a piece of "art" then it is simply not art. He says that "infectiousness" is the key element that distinguishes art from non-art. Art should awake a "spirit of joy and spiritual union." This is one of the main qualifications of Tolstoy's art, which some scholars have criticized for its exclusivity. Tolstoy does not suggest that every purported "work of art" awakes a spirit of joy and spiritual union; on the contrary, he says that every *true* work of art will awake a spirit of joy and spiritual union. He makes this his qualification for art (Tolstoy 120). One potential problem with this statement is that it could exclude masterpieces of the canon of art under an apparently arbitrary qualification. Could we say that Daumier's "Third Class Carriage" has united its viewers with joy and spiritual union? On the contrary, it is a bleak depiction of the human life.

The painting is of a full carriage of people that are completely oblivious to each other. They are traveling together in the same direction, but there is no bond of love between them. Tolstoy's theory is also a rather subjective way to evaluate art. It is of course impossible to guess whether or not individuals have had shared experiences in response to certain artworks. However, we can say that it is very unlikely that abstract art evokes the same emotions in multi-generational beholders. Indeed, abstract artists boast in the fact that their art has no standard interpretation or reaction. However, despite these defects, Tolstoy's theory of art has important implications for the Christian worldview that I will piece together at the end of this thesis.

Dorothy Sayers, famous for her detective novels and a supporter of classical Christian schools, has another theory of art in *Toward a Christian Esthetic*. She develops a view that purports that art is not representation but primarily a creation of something new. She says that the idea of art as creation is "the one important contribution that Christianity has made to Aesthetics." She even says that the way an artist creates is comparable to the way God creates through his son. Sayers then goes on to assert that art is primarily an expression. However, Nicholas Wolterstorff, a prominent Christian Philosopher takes issue with Dorothy Sayers' aesthetic in his book, "Art in Action". He says that Sayers has adopted the Western post-Enlightenment image of the artist as an individual expressing his inner consciousness by making a new creation. (Wolterstorff, 68) Though he states his agreement with the idea that art is a creation, he gives us the other side of art- the dirty side of art. He describes poetically the evil acts that are committed in the name of "art." These acts are more numerous than most Christians would assume. However, after listing all this evil he describes art's redemptive role. He

says “Art can serve as instrument in our struggle to overcome the fallenness of our existence, while also, in the delight which it affords, anticipating the shalom which awaits us.” (Wolterstorff, 83-84)

The Bishop N.T. Wright, in an address at Oxford titled “Apocalyptic and the Beauty of God” takes a similar stand. He says

“True art, I suggest, approximates more and more to the vision of the way things are and the way things shall be. We humans know in our bones that we are children of the present creation, which is simultaneously both glorious and shameful, and that we are designed for a fuller creation, a new order, a world flooded with the creator’s glory, full of justice and joy and, yes, beauty.”

Wright declares that the present fallen world is evil, but stresses the fact that it is still God’s world and is “simultaneously both glorious and shameful”. In the beginning of the lecture he describes the viewpoint of the “Left-Behind” school of thought in discussion of “Apocalyptic.” Those who believe that Jesus will come again soon to snatch them off this evil earth tend to be careless stewards of God’s creation. Wright emphasizes that instead of hoping to leave the world, they should be working to redeem the world and show through artwork what the world will one day be like. Wright’s hope for the new Kingdom comes from his dissatisfaction in the present state. Later in the lecture he says: “Part of the difficulty faced by those who have dreamed dreams of new countries, of new lands where all would be well, is that, in order to arrive at this utopia, they always seem to have to do some fairly un-utopia-like things” (Wright). Wright is entirely correct in noticing this trend in history. His point can be clearly seen in the French, and Bolshevik revolutions as well as the revolutions in third-world countries. In every case the

revolutionaries set before themselves an ideal, and putting all morals aside demolish their former system of government. To use a phrase from T.S. Eliot's *Choruses from the Rock*, "They continue to dream of systems so perfect that no one would need to be good." Since it is the case that man cannot arrive at more perfect systems through revolution and the abandonment of the old system Wright suggests that art has quite a noble task at reversing these evil effects. Art points to the new world, even while revealing the problems in the old. He compares the role of the artist to the spies bringing back grapes from the Promised Land. The artist transcends the barriers of time by pointing to the "already" and the "not yet". He calls art that has this effect "Apocalyptic". He gives several notable examples of what such "Apocalyptic" art looks like. For instance, he speaks of an artificial tree called "The Tree of Life" that was made through a collaboration of African artists. What makes this tree interesting is that it is made from the machetes and AK-47s that the Africans had once used to kill each other (Wright). It is a true picture of redemption. He says that it "reflects the Isaianic promise that swords will be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks."

We must lastly consider judgments concerning art before moving on to what is moving, beautiful, or sublime. The judgments concerning art are the most widely disputed and divisive aspect of art. To make a judgment concerning art it is first necessary for one to understand what makes art good, but there are many different theories on this. Francis Schaeffer, the Swiss theologian and founder of L'abri ministry, outlines four objective tests of excellence- technical excellence, validity, Intellectual content (worldview), and integration of content and vehicle. These tests can be converted into four questions that can be asked of any artwork. Is it technically excellent (does it

follow the principles and elements of art)? Is it valid (is the artwork true to its intended purpose)? What is the worldview displayed in this work of art? How does the artwork integrate content and vehicle? These are the ways Schaeffer gives us to universally evaluate an individual piece of art. However, Schaeffer's four tests, though useful to the critic, are a very impersonal way to consider art which falls short of reality. As humans, we do not run artwork through the four tests and then declare the art beautiful and worthy of our admiration. Schaeffer is not describing an aesthetic; he is describing criticism. Schaeffer seems to rely heavily on technical excellence in judging art. As we have said before, Tolstoy considers art to be good if it is effective at transferring a moral emotion. According to him, neither beauty, technical excellence, nor pleasure is significant to art. Still other Christian theorists on art have taken a different view of art. William Blake, for example, did not make a distinction between glorifying God through art and glorifying him *in art*. He even went to the extreme of saying that all Christians must be artists in some way. He says, "A Poet, a Musician, and Architect: the Man or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian." Before anyone who has no talent in artistry questions his salvation, we should analyze what Blake meant by this declaration. I suggest that he does not literally mean that every Christian must fall into one of these three categories. Frank Burch Brown gives us a way to interpret Blake's statement. Blake believed that all religions originally spoke one language and had one religion, which is the religion spoken of by Jesus (Brown 31). Therefore, for the Christian the art of the Hindus is no less important than the art of the Jews. The highest art of all religions all qualify as unsurpassable gifts of the spirit (Brown 32). He said "Prayer is the study of art", "Praise is the practice of art", "The Divine Body manifests itself in Works of art" (Blake 31).

Blake obviously assigns to art a very religious role. However, Brown asserts that most Hindus would not accept Blake's definition of their religion. Furthermore, Blake has a very loose definition of what it means to be a Christian. Therefore, we should not take this view to its extreme and say that all art is good and worthy of our admiration. As Kierkegaard himself said, "In a Christian context everything, yes everything should serve to edify." (Kierkegaard, ?) We can completely agree with this statement. We should not love art for art's sake, as the seculars say we must. N.T. Wright considers art to be good if it points to the redemption of creation. Perhaps the most astonishing feature of art is that it links different eras of the church. Not only does it link current believers, it links the modern Christian with Christians of every race, and every color and of every time. However, standards of art that are implemented wrongfully can be a cause of division. A good example of this is the difference in standards between the art of the East and the West. The iconoclasts of the West would not acknowledge the "idolatry" they saw in the icons of the East as legitimate art. The Eastern Orthodox believers saw their art as perfectly legitimate. Brown quotes John of Damascus:

"It is clear that flesh is material. Therefore I adore, worship, and venerate the material by which my salvation was gained. I worship not as God but as full of divine grace and efficacy. Is not the wood of the cross most blessed and most happy? Is the sacred and venerable mount, the place of Calvary, not material? Is not the life-giving stone . . .? Are not the ink and paper of the Gospels material? Are not the body and blood of our Lord material? Either remove all worship and adoration of these things, or allow, according to the tradition of the Church, the

*veneration of images dedicated to the name of God and his friends the saints,
 because they are in the shadow of the Holy Spirit.”*

Although I am happy that John of Damascus steers clear away from Gnosticism in this passage, I must take issue with his reasoning. I say that it was not the wood of the cross that brings salvation, but Christ’s atoning blood. It is not the ink and paper of the gospels that gives understanding but the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we neither worship the cross nor revere the ink, but believe in our savior Jesus Christ.

No one can deny that the present church is now disunited and split in many directions. However, art is a powerful means of unity. It is astonishing to think that millions of Christians before me have worshipped God in the singing of “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” This unity is essential. Therefore, let us not (as much as possible) divide over preferences in art. Rather, let us be united by the enjoyment of true art. As Christians we are not called to just unity with our brothers and sisters in our local community. On the contrary, we are called to unity with the Church Universal as it is in Heaven. At this present time of disunity in the visible church, it is often overlooked that the church universal must remain united. Paul speaks many times of the unity among the brethren (Ephesians 4, Romans 15). I propose that Paul did not simply mean unity between the believers that were present on the earth at that time. Rather, I think that Paul is suggesting that Christians should remain united with the church Universal. One significant, and necessary, way to do this is to create art that will capture the emotions of countless numbers of future generations. In the same way, we are united with the Christians that came before us, and the ones after us, through prior masterpieces.

Over a million tourists a year become overwhelmed with emotion when they see the “David.” They are not awestruck from the David’s technical excellence, validity, or superb worldview. They could not possibly take all these elements in at one time if they tried. If it is to overwhelm at all, the statue overwhelms its viewers with feelings evoked from its sublimity. Sublimity is normally only ascribed to non-human objects of amazement. Normally, something is sublime if it transcends the ability of the human mind to fathom its greatness. In this case, we could argue that the “David” is sublime because we cannot fully grasp the enormous impact that it has had on the human psyche. When tourists become overwhelmed at the “David” it’s because they have come face to face with emotions that millions of men and women before them have had. There before them is Michelangelo’s ideal form of the man that was after God’s own heart. It is truly a stunning piece of artwork, apart from any consideration of Schaeffer’s criteria.

By the very nature of the subject, it is very difficult to saying anything objective about what is moving, beautiful, or sublime. One writer on aesthetic says that “a system of aesthetics can have no objective validity” (Bell). Bell claims, in his book entitled “Art” that the personal experiences of peculiar emotions are the starting point when talking about aesthetics. What does this mean? It means that every work of art produces a certain kind of emotion. Bell argues that every individual artwork produces a peculiar emotion but that there is something shared between all arts of the same medium (e.g., the visual arts): “. . . Either all works of visual art have some common quality, or when we speak of “works of art” we gibber.” Bell says that the one property that is similar to all works of visual art is “Significant Form.” Significant Form is lines and colors formed in a certain way so that it is aesthetically moving. Of course, Bell admits that this makes aesthetics a

“purely subjective business” since the only way we can evaluate art is through our emotions. We may still ask, “what is it about lines and colors that can cause us to be moved?” Is it not more likely that works of art move us because we see the glory of God’s creation in them? In Bell’s theory, something is not a work of art to a particular individual until it has moved him in some way. I think that we, as Christians, should be wary of any theory that suggests that art is purely subjective. It is a distortion of the truth to say that a painting can be art to one person, but not to another. If a person is not moved through looking at the “David” for example, then it would not be appropriate to say that the “David” is not a work of art for him.

Finally, after examining all these different theories I shall attempt to bring them together and construct a Christian view of aesthetics. Before doing that, we should first examine how art appears in the Bible. God’s people have a rich history in the creation of artwork to the glory of God- from the Old Testament to the present day. Many people assume that the Israelites had no representational images since the Ten Commandments forbid graven images. However, Francis Schaeffer in *Art and the Bible* points out that it is a misconception to say that the second commandment forbids all representational art. God instructed Moses to place gold Cherubim in the Holy of Holies and gold candlesticks with almond blossoms (Schaeffer 380, Exodus 25:18, 31-33). Clearly, the Lord had not commanded against the creation of representational art but rather the worship of them. Schaeffer points to these passages to show that God does not forbid all representational art. We should also notice the symbolic aspect of the art used in the temple and elsewhere in Scripture. In the tabernacle were symbols of both the present age, and the age that is to come. We should also note the symbolic aspect of the fiery serpent Moses made, at the

command of God, to heal the Israelites of the serpent bites. Clearly, the serpents represented sin, and the fiery serpent represented the coming Savior. However, in 2 Kings 18:4 King Hezekiah broke the serpent in pieces because the people had been burning incense to it. They had transgressed the commandment. It is clear that symbolic objects are distinguished from what they represent. If the serpent on the pole directly represented the Messiah, then Hezekiah would not have pleased God in breaking it once the people worshipped it. Throughout the Old Testament God gave the Israelites specific instructions on how to glorify him with the works of their hands. The distinction is even clearer in the furnishings of Solomon's Temple. Second Chronicles 3:6 says "And he [Solomon] garnished the house with precious stones for beauty." It is clear from this, as Schaeffer points out, that the stones had no pragmatic purpose. God simply wanted beauty in the temple. It appears that God is interested in beauty for its own sake (Schaeffer 381). The Old Testament is also rich in music. Consider the Song of Moses in Exodus 15, which all the Israelites sang after they were delivered from Egypt. Schaeffer comments on how amazing it must have been to hear hundreds of thousands of people "gathered on the far side of the Red Sea and singing an antiphonal song - a work of art." (Schaeffer, 387) There are many instances in the Bible of the Israelites worshipping God with music. David worshipped the Lord with the harp, and Psalm 150 says

"Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise Him with tambourine and dance; praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!" David also worshipped the Lord with poetry. Schaeffer cites a psalm that is included in the Septuagint but not in our Bible. He says, "We do not need to think that everything David wrote was *inspired by God* the way what is in the Bible is inspired. So

even if this is a genuine psalm of David, it is probably not inspired in that sense.

Certainly not all art is God speaking as a muse through the artist. Rather, it is the *mannishness* of man that creates. The artist as a man does not disappear, leaving the muse alone to speak. We can consider the following psalm from the Septuagint, therefore, to be David writing a piece of poetry as a piece of poetry. A portion of it reads:

My hands formed a musical instrument

And my fingers tuned a psaltery.

And who shall tell my Lord?

The Lord Himself, He Himself hears.

Schaeffer says, “. . .*the man who really loves God could write his poetry, compose his music, construct his musical instruments, fashion his statues, paint his pictures, even if no man ever saw them. He knows God looks upon them.*” (Schaeffer 386) This is a profound statement that appears to stand in almost total opposition to Tolstoy’s analysis of art. In effect, it is saying that one of the sole purposes of art is worship to God. However, there is perhaps no more edifying act than this. Even so, it is a simple fact there are few people then or now who would be content to leave their artwork hidden from all but God. They are not content with the knowledge that their art brings glory to God. They want their artwork to be praised by men. There are many perhaps that would argue that the artist is doing humanity a disservice to keep his art hidden. Schaeffer would argue that such men do not understand the purpose of art. Even a great masterpiece such as the “Mona Lisa” will eventually perish, and be no more thought of. The poetry and music of David,

however, will forever bring glory and honor to God. Moreover, it will fulfill what Tolstoy said was the purpose of true art. The poetry in the Psalms has contributed more to joy and spiritual union than any other imaginable source.

Finally, I would like to bring all these concepts together and show how art is unequivocally necessary to Christian life. The point of agreement that we have observed with all of these theorists on art is their emphasis on unity. Blake showed how art was comparable to a universal language that unites all peoples under the banner of Jesus Christ. Tolstoy theorized that art unites the artist and all his viewers with common experiences. Wright showed that art transcends the barrier of time and brings meaning to human experience. Without art it would be very hard indeed for Christians to see how death has been defeated and we shall all live forever as new creations. We might lament with the preacher that “All is vanity, all is vanity and grasping after wind.” I suggest that art, apart from suffering, is the most powerful tool of unity available to the Christian. It unites Christians with the experiences of not only their Christian brothers living in the world, but also with those living 600 years before them. When I look at the “David” I am experiencing emotions that Christians living hundreds of years before me have had. It is a unifying effect that exhorts me to keep to the faith. As Christians we sometimes forget that there is a universal church that is composed of all believers of all ages. We cannot throw away the traditions and values of those that came before us. The context may be different but the exhortation is the same: “be you all of the same mind.” Cross-temporal unity can only be achieved through art. This is our calling as Christians. Therefore, we should glorify God through our creation and appreciation of art.

Works Cited

- Bell, Clive "Art" New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company Publishers
- Blackburn, Simon "Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy" Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press
- Brown, Frank Burch "Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life" Oxford University Press
- Graber, Andre "Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins" Bollingen Series XXXV Princeton University Press
- Jahn, Gary R. "The Aesthetic Theory of Leo Tolstoy's What is Art" The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. Vol. 34, No. 1 (Autumn 1975), pp. 59-65
- Lewis, C.S. "The Abolition of Man" New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Simon & Schuster
- Sayers, Dorothy L. "Towards a Christian Aesthetic." The Whimsical Christian. 1969 New York : Macmillan publishing , 1978. 73-90
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas "Art in Action" Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company
- Wright, N.T. "Apocalyptic and the Beauty of God" Sermon at Harvard Memorial church, October 22, 2006

