The Limits of a Discipline

cogitatum necessarium
Architecture and the Mystery of Things
Michelangelo: a case study

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Abstract

This thesis examines the parallels between two distinct disciplines: Architecture and Roman Catholic Mysticism. The argument centers on these disciplines' connection to the world of corporeal things and examines the convergence and divergence of the disciplines in this respect. It is argued that whereas the mystic is compelled by his vocation to simply notice the beauty and the truth and the goodness of things as the work of God, the architect is required to attempt to improve things through the craft of his occupation. The poetry of Michelangelo serves as a relevant case study.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my committee,
to my family, and to TJ,
to Tim and Kenna and Lucas,
and to Art and Melissa and Maria.
Without their love, their support
and their patience this would not
have been possible.

historicus suam materiam in tempora dividit. necesse est omne tempus unitatem certam habere ut nobile sit. historicus hanc unitatem confirmare cupit. id non solum sumit. vera similia inter res distinctas invenire temptat, exempli gratia: artes, litteras, philosophiam, motus religiosos, et cetera. haec opera laudata in se versus occupationem periculosam comparationum ducebant. temptationem neglegere aut deflectere lineas quae parallelae currere recusant pauci resistere possunt. nemo aliquid ultra unum locum brevem vincere potest. necesse est omnem hominem doctrina incohata secondaria confidere cum ultra crepidam ire audet. ne sutor supra crepidam. theologia mystica unus modus videre est et architectura unus modus videre est sed theologia mystica non architectura est. [1]

cogitatum necessarium

I begin with a recollection of a conversation that I had with a young priest during my studies in Rome. Our discussion started innocently enough with a certain amount of 'shop talk': as a kind of a summary of some of the different thoughts and achievements of various theologians in history. During the conversation this priest, this theologian, took issue with every theology we considered. His criticisms were pointed precisely at the questions that each theology did not (or could not) address: what he considered to be the 'unanswered' questions of each theology. I began to fear this man was searching (indeed that he was on a kind of a quest) for a theology that could answer all questions.

I decided to ask him if he thought there were any limits to theology, if he thought theology could ever satisfactorily answer all questions: if it were possible, if it was within the limits of theology, as a discipline, as a science, as a speculative science, to be able to answer all questions. His reply was that it certainly was possible. I was shocked by his ability to find the science of theology so magnanimous.

For my own part, I had spent a significant portion of my opening days in Rome explaining to others (in terms that grew increasingly unconvincing and insufficient) just how natural it was that someone who possessed an undergraduate degree in architecture, and had finished his course work for a masters in the same discipline, could become interested in the study of dogmatic theology. I was confronted with my own enthusiasm to marry the new theological ideas to which I was being exposed to the architectural thoughts and theories with which I had some familiarity. I now felt a strange and unsettling echo of my own words in the priest's appraisal of theology. I began to wonder the limits of architecture.

Mystical theology, in particular, presented itself as an intriguing point of departure, as the language of mysticism lends itself so well to the interests of architects. Mysticism notices, studies and celebrates the details of the world. Such attention to detail is not only enticing to architects (and more generally to those who have studied or who have been exposed to architecture at any significant depth) but it may in fact be found in the writings architects hold most dear. It may indeed be

tempting to argue that the whole of the aesthetic tradition somehow shares in the mystical tradition.

Some may contend that we need not go as far as architectural theory or history to sustain the argument. It may be possible to understand sketching and the 'abstract' design of objects (tables and chairs and toys) to belie the architect's fascination with the details (the mystery) of things.

It may also be possible to construct the entire argument with the statement that there is no ascetical architecture. Indeed, architecture cannot afford such a proposition. Art in general does not lend itself well to the *via negativa.*[2]

There does of course exist a *sed contra*: the simple observation that architecture is not mysticism, nor mysticism architecture and that any commonality (any parallel) between the two is entirely superficial. But such a dismissal is made too easily and is far from profound.

I have chosen to examine the similarity between mysticism and architecture and to search for distinctions within that similarity.

I also wonder, as I entertain the possibility of doctoral work in the field of literature, how an architect can begin to appreciate the limits of his discipline. How it is that an architect might realize that he is no longer operating within the territory proper to architecture. How it is that he may come to discover that he is operating outside the realm, or the jurisdiction, of architecture.

I may note that I had begun this thesis as an investigation of the union of architecture and theology. I have come to discover (particularly through the study of Michelangelo's poetry) that while I may not have realized this union in any discernible fashion, I have begun to recognize its limits.

The ability to delineate or circumscribe architecture may be just as necessary and just as critical to the architect as a realistic appraisal of its potential.

Architecture and the Mystery of Things

We will now discuss the parallels between disciplines of architecture and mystical theology. In so doing, it is necessary to begin with a rough categorization of the primary schools of the western Christian mystical tradition: the *via negativa* and the *via positiva*. Respectively, these schools represent the tradition of transcendence and the tradition of immanence. The basis for such a categorization is the schools' approach to worldly creation.

The *via negativa* is primarily interested in the individual soul's ascent to God; to God as unknown; to God as unknowable, the *deus absconditus*.[3] For God to remain unknowable we must guard against mistaking knowledge of the worldly for knowledge of the divine and as a result of this separation the worldly is discarded as untrustworthy and misleading. There is a fundamental mistrust of the corporeal, or perceptible, elements of creation.[4] Instead, the *via negativa* seeks to concentrate on the transcendental aspects of God. That is to say, on the characteristics beyond the apprehension of the senses.[5] This is the spirituality proper to the ascetic: he who seeks to forego the pleasures of this world or perhaps may even see the pleasures of this world as misleading or dangerous. Pleasure in this world is denied in anticipation of the pleasure in the world to come.

In contrast to such suppositions stands the *via positiva* which searches for the universal among and in the particular. The *via positiva* seeks God and His glory in the things of creation. The mystic is free to seek and to enjoy God in the very fabric of His creation. He perceives the world as concrete and fully meaningful. The splendor of the Creation of God is not useful to the mystic merely as a device for establishing and maintaining an analogous relationship to God (although it may be that too), but it is also dignified and enjoyable *in se*. Not only does it present the beauty and truth and goodness of God, but it *is* the beauty and truth and goodness of God. It is to be appreciated and enjoyed and reveled in by God's creatures. And furthermore, God intends such enjoyment. The enjoyment that comes from the created thing and its relation to other created things is seen as the will of the divine creator.

A fragment of one of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* is perhaps among the most succinct framings of the essence of the school of the *via positiva*. In the third quartet, *Dry Salvages*, section five, Eliot writes:

> Men's curiosity searches past and future
> And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
> The point of intersection of the timeless
> With time, is an occupation for the saint -

This statement captures the credo of the *via positiva*.[6] And in fact, we find in the writings of many mystics the attempt and even the celebration of the ability to find the transcendent in the particular: the timeless in the timely.[7]

We now turn to this tradition to find and to bring to the discussion a few examples of such ability. We look first to the writings of Saint Francis of Assisi and most specifically to his "Canticle of the Sun."

> Praised be my Lord God, with all His creatures, and especially our brother the Sun,
> Praised be my Lord for our sister the Moon, and for the stars,
> Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and clouds, calms and all weather,
> Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable to us, and humble and precious and clean.
> Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom Thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright and pleasant and very mighty and strong.
> Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits and flowers of many colors, and grass.
> Praise ye and bless the Lord, and give thanks to Him and serve Him with great humility.[8]

There is an awareness that God fills all of Creation. We are told in Jeremiah that God fills the heaven and the earth.[9] And again, in Isaiah, "Heaven and earth are full of your glory."[10] This belief is repeated in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass when just prior to the consecration of the bread and the wine the congregation joins with the choirs of heaven in singing the *Sanctus*, their unending hymn, to the glory of God.[11] It is for the faithful in general but for the mystic in particular to find this glory. It is for the mystic to apprehend the beauty and the goodness and the truth with which God fills creatures.[12] Francis finds it in the splendor of the Sun, in the Moon, in the clear and the lovely stars, in the calm and weathered wind, in the clean water, in the bright and pleasant fire, the fruited and the flowered earth and even in

the death of the body. The reader cannot but notice the references to the sensual qualities of creation. Indeed, the ability to find God with and through the senses is an inescapable precept of the school of immanence. Also one cannot escape the theme of the canticle: may God be praised, but not only may He be praised by man and by men but may He also be praised with and by Creation. May God find praise in union with His creatures and may God be given praise by His creatures.[13] The poem is much less a personification of the elements of Nature and much more a celebration of their God-given characteristics. Francis urges us to follow in the example laid before us by creation: compare "serve Him with great humility" and "Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is... humble."

That we can find the goodness and beauty and truth of God and even virtue itself in the elements of creation is a position maintained in varying degrees by all mystics. The great German mystic Meister Eckhart preaches that: "Whoever knew but one creature would not need to ponder any sermon, for every creature is full of God and is a book."[14] He also states: "God creates the world and all things in a present now..."[15] effectively illustrating creation as a continual action: not a single act or even a finite series of acts but a constant (although not eternal) process. God is, even now, creating the world and all things in it. And furthermore, this is 'enjoyable' to God. God takes pleasure in creating and in endowing His creation with His attributes. We find in a sermon:

> God gives equally to all things; and as they flow from God, they are equal. In their first outflow angels, men and all creatures flow forth from God equal... If one takes a fly in God, it is nobler in God than the highest angel in itself. Now all things are alike in God and are God Himself.[16] Here in this sameness God finds it so pleasant that He lets His nature and His being flow in this sameness in Himself. It is just as enjoyable for Him as when someone lets a horse run loose on a meadow that is completely level and smooth. Such is the horse's nature that it pours itself out with all its might in jumping about the meadow. This it would find delightful; such is its nature. So, too, does God find delight and satisfaction where He finds sameness. He finds it a joy to pour His nature and His being completely into the sameness, for He is the sameness Himself.[17]

Not only is Eckhart here making the point that God is in creation and that God finds creation, and creating, to be enjoyable - but we should also be struck by the imagery used by Eckhart to make his statement: that of a frolicking horse. Such unashamed use of worldly experience is characteristic of the school of immanence.[18]

It is an intriguing element of Eckhart's writing that he often makes reference to Saint Augustine. We may well wonder what such a powerful mystic seeks to accomplish by quoting and discussing the opinions of a bishop best known for his neo-platonic treatises. And yet, it is within the writings of Augustine that we find perhaps the most clear debate as to the limits of the *via positiva*. In his Confessions, Augustine struggles with accepting the beauty of creation. He asks to what extent are we able to enjoy the things of this world and to what extent should we enjoy them.[19] In Book X, Augustine states;

> Not without doubting, but with assured consciousness, do I love Thee, Lord. Thou hast stricken my heart with Thy word, and I loved Thee. Yea, also heaven, and earth, and all that is therein, behold on every side they bid me love Thee; nor cease to say so unto all, "that they may be without excuse"... But what do I love when I love Thee? Not the beauty of bodies, nor the fair harmony of time, nor the brightness of light, so gladsome to our eyes, nor the sweet melodies of varied songs, nor the fragrant smell of flowers, and ointments, and spices, nor manna and honey, nor the limbs acceptable to embracements of the flesh. None of these I love, when I love my God; and yet I love a kind of light, and melody, and fragrance, and meat, and embracement, when I love my God...[20]

Augustine is convinced that he loves God, but he is less convinced that what he is loving is in fact God. His doubt is concentrated on the merits of sensual enjoyment and fittingly Augustine calls into judgment each of his five senses. The seeing proper to beauty and light, the hearing of music, the smelling of fragrance, the tasting of honey and manna, and the touching of embracements.

In fairness to Augustine, I will finish his quote:

> ... and yet I love a kind of light, and melody, and fragrance, and meat, and embracement, when I love my God, the light, melody, fragrance, meat, embracement of my inner man: where there shineth unto my soul what space cannot contain, and there soundeth what time beareth not away, and there smelleth what breathing disperseth not, and there tasteth what eating diminisheth not, and there clingeth what satiety divorceth not. This is what I love when I love my God.[21]

He is puzzled on two fronts; firstly, that creation bids him to love God, and thus is not so easily dismissed, and secondly, that he realizes that he does love "a kind of light, and melody, and fragrance." Augustine turns to the elements of creation to answer his question. He asks the earth, the sea, the deeps, the living

creeping things, the air, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and in fact all things if they are God and receives the answer: "We are not thy God." Furthermore they give him a hint: "He made us."[22] Augustine then turns his questioning to himself and decides that he is a man; a man with a body and a soul; an outer man and an inner man. He decides to seek God with his inner man; his soul. But concludes that his inner man "knows by the ministry of the outer... through the senses of the body."[23]

Augustine's debate not only confirms the role of the body in finding the glory of God in creation but also reveals the danger of the *via positiva* : idolatry. Idolatry has long been a threat to Christianity and its fore-father in faith, Judaism.[24] It allows the things of this world to be pursued in their own right. It effectively allows them to become the *telos*. Worldly things may point us to God, they may direct us toward Him, indeed this He intends for them to do, but we must not allow ourselves to substitute them individually for God, or in effect make a god of them.[25]

But Christian doctrine also affords the greatest ally to the *via positiva*. That ally is the Incarnation. The fact that, Jesus Christ, a member of the Eternal Trinity, became man, assumed flesh and became like us in all things but sin is the cornerstone and the paradigmatic precedent of the *via positiva*. We realize that not only do we desire to be like God, but He desired to be like us.[26] Christ's assuming humanity gives dignity and sacredness to our perceptions.

God become man and furthermore He came as a baby: the most needy of all men both materially and emotionally. He did not present Himself as a professional holy man, but rather as a simple friend. He came eating and drinking.[27] It is also significant that Christ spoke in parables and not technical philosophical terms. He offered stories and not treatises, rhetorical discourses or dialogues. His manner of speech and the manner He chose for His Gospels was that of simple narrative.[28] The beauty and the enjoyment offered by the parable as a story is significant: as is that of the beauty and enjoyment which surrounds us in creation.

For a comment on the enjoyment of this beauty we return to Augustine. In addition to his prose works, the prolific bishop offers us poetry, among which we find "The Beauty of Creation Bears Witness to God." The poem actually is little more than a reiteration, in verse form, of the points previously discussed. But what is noteworthy is the explicitness of the conclusion:

Question the beauty of the earth...
Question the living creatures that move in the waters...
question all these.
They will answer you:
"Behold and see, we are beautiful"
Their beauty is their confession of God.
Who made these beautiful and changing things,
If not one who is beautiful and changeth not?[29]

This same ability to see and appreciate the beauty of things can of course be found in the writings of secular authors and poets. Here we shall look at two: Alighieri Dante and William Shakespeare.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* is a beautiful and stunning example of the power of the *via positiva*. We are struck by Dante's ability to weave the truths of Christian theology into such corporeal experiences. Perhaps nowhere in the history of Western literature has the eternal been made comprehensible in such tactile and sensual language.

Among the obvious examples: Dante writes in the first person, in vernacular Italian and the work contains many accounts of the specific histories of the characters encountered. We also find Dante insistent upon using the word *esperienza* (experience). In the first canto of *Paradiso* :

> The glory of Him who moves all things penetrates the universe and shines in one part more and in another less. I was in the heaven that most receives His light and I saw things which he that descends from it has not the knowledge or the power to tell again; for our intellect, drawing near to its desire, sinks so deep that memory cannot follow it. Nevertheless, so much of the holy kingdom as I was able to treasure in my mind shall now be the matter of my song.

and later in the canto:

> The passing beyond mere humanity cannot be set forth in words; let the example suffice, therefore, for him to whom grace reserves the experience (*esperienza*).

Dante has:

...come to the divine from the human,
to the eternal from time. [30]

Dante has had the experience. It is retold for the benefit of we who have not. And within the recanting of the experience we are told in very sensual terms of the river of light: glistening with light and rubies and gold, of which Dante drinks 'like an infant waking long after its hour suckles at its mother's breast', and the rose of heaven: fragrant and odorous and attended to by apian angels.[31] In purgatory, we are told of the mountain that quakes at the *Gloria* announcing the heavens' acceptance of another perfected soul.[32] And we are told that even hell itself is a work of God's artistry.[33]

The concrete, and the most documented, instance of Dante's combination of worldly beauty and eternal truth is his guide, Beatrice.[34] But beyond her exquisite literary and allegorical function, Beatrice serves another of far greater significance: she proves that it is possible for earthly love to become divine love.

> [T]he principle is established for the first time, and never again so magnificently: for the sake of infinite love, it is not necessary for the Christian to renounce finite love. On the contrary, in a positive spirit, he can incorporate his finite love into that which is infinite - but at the cost of terrible sufferings, of course, as Dante shows us.[35]

Another poet devoted to discovering the divine in the worldly is William Shakespeare. Shakespeare is among the most accomplished poets in the study of the ordinary. Specifically, he has developed a proficiency for the detail of character and it is these observations that he brings to his work.[36] We find an admission, of sorts, in *King Lear*.

> Come let us away to prison.
> We two alone will sing like birds in the cage.
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness. So we will live,
> And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
> At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
> Talk of court news;
> and we will talk with them too,
> Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
> And take upon us the mystery of things,
> As if we were God's spies[37]

The mystery of things. The architect is, to an extent, engaged in finding the mystery of things. The architect must, as a maker, maintain a certain attraction for things, as things are the physical material from which the architect makes architecture.[38] The architect has an obligation to be acquainted with the materials of his profession. But the architect must always balance his respect for things, and for the dignity of things, with the realization that architecture seeks not to discover the dignity of things in and of themselves, and much less for themselves, but always with the intent to build with them.

Architecture, is a profession. It is not a vocation. To finish the quote from Eliot's *Four Quartets*:

> But to apprehend
> The point of intersection of the timeless
> With time, is an occupation for the saint -
> No occupation either, but something given
> And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
> Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

The mystic's 'occupation' or apparent occupation is actually a vocation: something given and taken. The contemplative receives a call from God and responds to his vocation with religious vows.

While the architect may at times find it helpful to suspend doubts as to the vocational dimension of his artistry, eventually his infatuation with things must yield to the desire to build. The architect cannot afford to be continuously engaged in a way of seeing, as can the poet or the mystic. The thing cannot be at once completely mysterious and usable.

The mystic is not interested in using what he sees. The beauty that he sees, the mystery that he notices, need not be expressed. The mystical vision need not manifest itself in the form of mystical writings. It very well may do so, but the validity of the mystical experience does not depend on such production.

For an example of this thought we turn to the writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins. In his poems we find a consistent position as regards beauty. We have need of but two citations.

From *To what serves Mortal Beauty?*:

What do then? How meet beauty? Merely meet it; own
Home at heart, heaven's sweet gift;
then leave, let that alone.

From *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*:

... deliver it, early now, long before death
Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God,
beauty's self and beauty's giver.

The mystic, who recognizes the beauty and the mystery of things to be a gift from God and indeed the splendor of God, is to notice beauty, acknowledge it as the work of the Divine Maker, thank Him accordingly and then return it. He is not to use it. He is not to use it to produce. That is not his charge.

By contrast, the architect, as an artist, develops this way of seeing only so far as it is of service to his profession, to his art: which is the art of making. The architect's primary interest lies in the work, not in the vision.

Art can be exercised in virtue of (and not without) the shift from the way of seeing proper to the poet to the object of the work proper to the artist. This permits the production of poetry, of music, of literature, of architecture. This allows the very possibility of the discipline.

The mystic, as poet, must guard against confusing the attraction and the mystery and the beauty that God manifests in things for God Himself. Likewise, the architect must avoid confusing the prevenient seeing required of him for architecture itself. If idolatry is the potential pitfall of the mystic, to be caught in an undistanced infatuation with the mystery of things is the paralysis of the architect.

Michelangelo: a case study

How can the artist resolve this ability, this longing, to see with the practical considerations of his art? For a case study we turn to the poetry of Michelangelo Buonarroti.

The established architect, painter, sculptor, began writing poetry in 1501 with a simple verse; "David with his sling and I with my bow."[39] He began a serious undertaking of poetry two years later, at the age of twenty eight.[40] His ability was quickly recognized: as early as 1518 his verse was set to music.[41] It was referred to with reverence in a 1547 lecture on artistic theory by the Florentine Benedetto Varchi. By his death, Michelangelo had written no less than three hundred sonnets and madrigals.

What is striking in Michelangelo's poetry is the tension we find there: the tension between a love of earthly beauty, fostered by a lifetime's work in the field of the visual arts, and the dread of the consequences of such love in the face of an eminent judgment by his God. [42] What is clear is a desperate need to find a resolution between artistry and salvation.[43]

In Sonnet 283, written in 1552[44], we find a statement of the dilemma:

The fresh green years cannot imagine how much
one's tastes and loves, desires and thoughts all change,
my dear Lord, as the final steps approach.
The soul gains more, the more it loses the world,
and art and death do not go well together;
in which then should I place my further hope? [45]

Michelangelo is dying, or more correctly, he is haunted, with great anxiety, by the possibility of his death. In 1521, he penned: "Whoever is born must come to death."[46] This preoccupation with death was encouraged by events in his own life. By 1552, Michelangelo had seen one of his brothers, his father, his friend del Ricco, his love interest Vittoria Colonna and his good friend and servant Urbino pass into the next life. Furthermore he had been plagued by a series of maladies intent on reminding him of his mortality. He suffered kidney stones and ear troubles.[47] In 1540, he fell from the scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel badly injuring his hip.[48] He was so preoccupied with the state of his health that in a letter responding to the commission inquest of Francois I, King of France, he cautioned:

"...and if death interrupts my desire [to work for you], I shall sculpt or paint in the other life, where one does not grow older."[49] Indeed, his illnesses seemed to be a favorite course of discussion in his letters to his nephew, Leonardo. 15 March 1549: "...I need the help of God... About my malady, I cannot urinate... I pass the night without rest and the doctors... say I have a stone."[50] By the fifth of April they were certain he had a stone.[51] A year later, he informed Giovanni Francesco Fattucci, "I am fighting death."[52] And but a few months later he was "bearing with patience the defects of the old."[53] The Final Judgment also seems to have weighed heavy in Michelangelo's mind; at this same time he was painting *the Last Judgment* and declared that the work presented to him two darts: one of salvation and one of damnation.[54]

Michelangelo, as a pious man, is preparing to lose the world and meet God. But his interest is more profound than the typical man of seventy-seven years. For he realizes he cannot lose the world so easily: he is an artist. Not only does he enjoy and see the beauty of the world but he has devoted himself and his life to worldly beauty. Were such a comment reasonable, it would be possible to say that this is all he knows. Michelangelo's anxieties caused him to be torn between his art and his salvation: *art and death do not go well together.* [55] He was searching desperately for a resolution of some kind. We find his poetry to be a search for such a resolution.

In 1535 the proposition seemed impossible.

Sonnet 105:

My eyes did not see any mortal object
when I found complete peace in your beautiful eyes,
but saw within them, where every evil's despised,
him who invests my soul, so like him, with love.
For if my soul weren't created equal to God,
it would wish for nothing more than outward beauty,
which pleases the eyes; but since that's so deceptive,
it rises beyond that, to the universal form.
I say that, for one who lives, whatever dies
cannot appease desire; nor can the eternal
be sought in time, where human flesh still alters.
Unbridled desire is merely the senses, not love,
and slays the soul; our love makes us perfect friends
down here, but even more, through death, in heaven. [56]

My eyes did not see any mortal beauty when I found complete peace in God's eyes. The peace of God's eyes blinds one to the beauty of this world. Outward beauty is deceptive. The eternal cannot be sought in time. The senses

slay the soul. The beauty of the world blinds one to the peace of God's eyes. The situation seems both easily decided and, for an accomplished and devoted artist, utterly hopeless. But Michelangelo introduces a distinction in this sonnet which will prove important: the distinction between love and desire. Love is not desire. Desire is exclusively of the senses and accordingly base, shameful and blameworthy. Love is that which, through death, makes us perfect. Also of relevance is this link established between death and love. And while Michelangelo is still some years from any kind of satisfying resolution, he has already begun to make the distinctions and findings necessary to allow its tenability.

In Sonnet 164, we find the same basic ideas changed slightly but significantly.

As a trustworthy model of my vocation,
at birth I was given the ideal of beauty,
which is the lamp and mirror of both my arts.
If any think otherwise, that opinion is wrong:
for this alone can raise the eye to that height
which I am preparing here to paint and sculpt.
Even though rash and foolish minds derive
beauty (which moves every sound mind
and carries it to heaven) from the senses,
unsound eyes can't move from the mortal to the divine,
and in fact are fixed forever in that place
from which to rise without grace is a vain thought.[57]

Michelangelo has now introduced the concept of grace. It is interesting to note that at this time, 1541 to 1544, he was painting *the Conversion of Saint Paul* . [The writing of the sonnet corresponds to his painting the image of the author of the New Testament epistles formulating the doctrines of election and grace as *charisms* : acts of God's free election.] Michelangelo clearly considers his artistry to be a vocation: a call, by God. And it is through this vocation that he has access to grace. For in fulfilling God's will, by answering his call, Michelangelo receives grace and this grace affords him certain abilities. Most importantly: he can now see the divine in the mortal. He can perceive the timeless in time. Unlike the rash and foolish men who derive beauty from the senses, he has been given the ideal of beauty and the grace that "alone can raise the eye." He has established a position: he seeks to pursue his salvation by the masterly performance of his vocation.

Perhaps as a result of a series of maladies, including more painful kidney stones, he later discovers he has made no real resolution. In 1546:

Because old age robs us
of blind and deaf desire,
I'm making my peace with death,
now that I am tired and nearing my last word.
My soul, which fears and adores
what the eye cannot see,
is distancing me from your face, Lady,
as if from something dangerously seductive.
But Love, who won't yield to truth,
delights my heart anew
with fire and hope, and seems to say to me
that love is not merely human... [58]

He has returned to the same questions, the same concerns. The face of the lady, worldly beauty, is rejected as "dangerously seductive."[59] The soul adores (and fears, because of the judgment at death) what the eye cannot see. The soul and the senses are again placed in opposition and this presents a difficulty in his attempt to make peace with death. But to make peace is not necessarily to surrender, and still less, to surrender unconditionally. In an attempt to reach a settlement Michelangelo now concedes that love still delights him, and says with hope, that love seems to suggest that it is not merely human. He begins to hope that his human love can lead to divine love. That his earthly desire can lead to divine Eros. It will take Michelangelo four more years to make convincing sense of this love.

Sonnet 280, 1550:

My soul, troubled and perplexed, finds within itself
no other reason for this than some grave sin
scarcely known to me, although it is not concealed
from the boundless pity that relieves the wretched.
I am speaking to you, Lord, since nothing I do,
without your blood, can attain bliss:
Have mercy on me, seeing I was born
subject to your law; your mercy will be nothing new. [60]

It is significant that Michelangelo directs his speech to Christ Himself. "I speak to you, Signore." "Nothing I do can attain bliss without your blood." He trusts both his creaturliness and his vocation to Christ. He reminds God that he is a creature and that as a creature he "was born subject to [His] law." He reminds God that he is an artist and that his artistry is a vocation. But most importantly, he is now convinced of the possibility of progressing from earthly love to divine love, with the aid of grace. Love, specifically the ultimate expression of love, the love of

Christ as expressed in His Passion and death, becomes Michelangelo's resolution. Through Christ as his God (the giver of his being and his artistic vocation) and through Christ as his Redeemer (the one who offered the supreme act of love for the redemption and salvation of the world), Michelangelo has been given the grace to love the divine through the earthly and to love the earthly as it should be loved: through the divine.

Not only does he reveal his resolution in verse, but also in stone. He soon begins his work on what will become the Pieta del Santa Maria del Fiore. The work is described in the (authorized) biography by Condivi: He has begun a work in marble which he is doing for his own pleasure.[61] Michelangelo plans to donate this pieta to a church and to have himself buried at the foot of the altar where it is placed.[62]

For the next five years, Michelangelo sculpts the body of Christ as it is brought down from the cross when he is in need of solace, when he cannot sleep, when he is troubled.[63] Holding the body of the Redeemer are the Magdalene and the Blessed Mother: two beautiful examples of perfect love. And he sculpts himself, his own self image, in the form of Nicodemus: the Pharisee who had met with Jesus in the night and came to prepare his body for burial, bringing oils and spices.[64] The depiction of himself as Nicodemus, attending the body of the crucified Christ, beholding His mortally wounded flesh, surrounded by and supporting the women who loved him most, transform the Pieta from merely another masterly execution of a pious scene to a man's personal and profound devotion to the act through which he found the perfect resolution between his worldly occupation and his divine redemption.[65]

Michelangelo recognizes the limits of his discipline. He does not allow his art to interfere with or become his salvation. Michelangelo discovers that his artistry, while it may be a significant piece of his theology, may not be his salvation. He has come to accept that art, as a discipline, held to the criteria expected of salvation, presents itself as painfully inadequate. Michelangelo realizes that he need not chose to place his further hope on a decision between art and death. Art as a *habitus*: an inclination toward earthly beauty developed throughout a lifetime's work. Death as the inevitable port to judgment for which some few

fortunate men have the luxury of time to prepare. Instead, he rests his hope firmly on God to Whom he trusts his salvation. But he retains his art: in a vocational sense to give glory to, and reflect the glory of, God and in a theological sense to better understand God's relation to man through beauty.

Notes

[1] This statement is a paraphrase of remarks made early in Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*: "The historian divides his material into periods of time. Each period must have a certain unity in order to be distinguishable. The historian wishes to verify this unity. He does not merely suppose it. He attempts to discover similar truths (parallels) between such distinct phenomena as; the arts, literature, philosophy, religious movements, etc. Laudable in itself, this effort has led to a hazardous pursuit of parallels. Few men are able to resist the temptation to ignore or deflect lines that refuse to run parallel. No man is able to master more than one concise field of study and so every man needs to rely on incomplete secondary information when he dares to venture beyond the foundation of his discipline. Let not the cobbler rise above the sole." To these statements I add: "Mystical theology is a way of seeing and architecture is a way to see but architecture is not theology."

[2] Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, offers an interesting insight on the possibility of the ascetic and the artist informing one another's discipline. He suggests that whereas the artist may present to the ascetic a discipline with a certain degree of unselfconsciousness and an integrated method which is never in itself an end, but always holds the produced work as its end, the ascetic in turn presents the artist with the possibility of a condition in which one is raised above his subject and his material and indeed above his art itself.

[3] Saint Thomas of Aquinas states in the *Summa Theologica* that, without grace, the closest we can come to knowing God is to realize that we cannot know Him. *ST*, Q12,A7 and A13,r obj 1.

[4] It is interesting to recognize the folly of such a sharp distinction. The Spanish Carmelite Saint John of the Cross, perhaps the most recognized of the proponents of the *via negativa*, seems on one level to concur precisely with the tenets of the school of transcendence. An excerpt from his *Ascent of Mount Carmel:*

> In order to arrive at having pleasure in everything,
> desire to have pleasure in nothing.
> In order to arrive at possessing everything,
> desire to possess nothing.
> In order to arrive at being everything,
> desire to be nothing.
> In order to arrive at knowing everything,
> desire to know nothing.

In *the Dark Night* he writes of the actions which cleanse the soul and the senses and allow for a more intimate and a more familiar relationship with God. They are perceived as a withdrawal of God from the believer, and as such are described as dark. Ironically, what Saint John is actually describing is God's approaching the body and the soul in order to purify faith and hope and love. The darkness is actually the failure of the perceptions to apprehend God. The infinite light of God is too bright for the finite senses and being overwhelmed they instead perceive

darkness. This amounts to a near-perfect illustration of the epistemology of Saint Thomas Aquinas who states in the *Summa* that because of the finitude of the senses they fail to perceive the extremes of their proper sensible. *ST,* Q75,A3,r obj 2.

[5] Characteristics which may be present or instanced in things, or in the particular. But, the particular is of value only so far as it contributes to the knowledge of the universal.

[6] For the reader that cannot be satisfied with such a poetic description of mysticism, I submit that it is extremely difficult to find a scholarly definition given the general skepticism of Western intellectual thought for things mystical. I can state however, that what is consistent in all definitions of mystical theology is the importance of experience (as definitions of natural theology reflect a reliance on reason and dogmatic theology on faith and inspiration). I offer the definition of Jean Gerson; *theologia mystica experimentalis cognitio habita de deo per amoris unitivi complexum*; mystical theology is knowledge of God by experience (arrived at) through the embrace of unifying love.

[7] I confess that such ability is not limited to the Christian tradition alone, but I must speak to and of the tradition of which I possess the most knowledge and this is the western Christian tradition and more precisely, the Roman Catholic tradition. I must also stress that the mysticism of which I am speaking is not to be confused with obscure 'spiritual' thoughts or esoteric speculations which are all but too often unprincipled, not held responsible to true faith and the product of the heresy of Indifference.

[8] The canticle is here written in its entirety:

Oh Most High Almighty Good Lord God, to You belong praise, glory, honor and blessing.
Praised be my Lord God, with all His creatures, and especially our brother the Sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light: fair is he, and he shines with a very great splendor.
O Lord, he signifies You to us!
Praised be my Lord for our sister the Moon,
and for the stars, which He has set clear and lovely in the heaven.
Praised be my Lord for our brother the wind, and for air and clouds, calms and all weather, by which You uphold life and all creatures.
Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable to us,and humble and precious and clean.
Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom You give us light in the darkness; and he is bright and pleasant and very mighty and strong.
Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, which sustains us and keeps us, and brings forth diverse fruits and flowers of many colors, and grass.
Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation:
blessed are those who peacefully shall endure,
for You, O Most High, will give them a crown.
Praised be my Lord for our sister, the death of the body, from which no man escapes.
Woe be to him who dies in mortal sin.
Blessed are those who die in Your most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm.

Praise and bless the Lord, and give thanks to Him
and serve Him with great humility.

[9] Jer 23:24
[10] Is 6:3
[11] In Latin, *pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.* Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
[12] Indeed we can be sure that creation is good. God repeatedly declared it as such in the first chapter of Genesis.
[13] We find precedent in the Book of Daniel, where, in the fiery furnace the three with one voice sang for all of creation to bless the Lord. Dan 3:57ff. Also, at the crescendo of Dante's *Paradiso,* canto xxxiii, Saint Bernard sings praise to the Blessed Mother. Mary is proclaimed to contain the goodness of all creatures. She contains the blessings of all creatures. Nature is perceived as being able to bless. Apparently Dante shares in Francis' conception of Nature.
[14] Sermon 9 (Sir 50:6-7)
[15] Sermon 10 (Sir 44:16-17)
[16] For the purposes of distinction it is important to note that Eckhart is not professing pantheism; the doctrine by which God is understood to be the totality of the perceivable universe. Certainly the mystics recognize God as truly present in creation, but their metaphysics are far more complex than simple pantheism.
[17] Sermon 12 (Sir 24:30-31)
[18] Among the most striking examples in Scripture is the flock imagery in *the Song of Songs,* chap 4:1-2.
[19] The book being autobiographical, it is interesting to find such deliberations in Book X; Augustine's conversion having been affected only in Book VIII.
[20] *Confessions* X, 8
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] The Latin: *non sumus deus tuus; ipse fecit nos.* Literally: we are not your God, the Master has been making us. Augustine's choice of tense for the verb *facere* is of some consequence. While not using the present tense, *facit,* as does Eckhart, Augustine does not use the simple past, *fecerat,* which would indicate the making as a finished action; the Master made. Instead, the bishop uses the complex past tense; the Master had been making, or, the Master has been making, indicating that the action touches or affects the present.
[23] *homo interior cognouit haec per exterioris ministerium.* This conclusion, easily reached by Aristotle (and later Aquinas), is too often eclipsed by the Platonic reading of Augustine; understandable given his more frequent discussions of 'inner light': *illuminatio.* What the conclusion does show, however, is a certain (albeit uncharacteristic) trust in the sensual.
[24] It may be the case that gnosticism is now the greatest threat to Christian doctrine, mostly due to its superficial similarity to Christianity and the depth and development of its philosophical roots, but by far, the greatest threat to monotheism historically, is idolatry.
[25] There are very real limits to the search to find God in the worldly. We are told that "the things of this world are passing away." Luke 21:33. And we are also promised that "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it even so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for him." 1 Cor 2:9. The first statement warns us not to place too much importance on what is truly passing and the second that it will not compare with what God has planned.

[26] It is certainly not permissible to claim 'God's *desire* to be like us' to constitute the totality of the Incarnation but neither is such a statement to be misunderstood as our bestowing human qualities on God. The statement is valid in so far as it is a reflection of God's divine will and we can be most assured that God desires His will.
[27] Matt 11:18-19. What is important here is that Christ did not come as an ascetic, as most of the prophets had been up until this point. Christ in this passage contrasts Himself with Saint John the Baptist; the great ascetic who wore a hair shirt, subsisted on honey and locusts (Matt 3:4) and is described biblically, in the language of Isaiah: "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness" (Luke 3:4).
[28] While we must admit that these parables do have a transcendental aspect, often containing a prophetic or moral tone, we should not be too quick to husk their meaning and discard their matter.
[29]*The Beauty of Creation Bears Witness to God*

Question the beauty of the earth, the beauty of the sea,
the beauty of the wide air around you,
the beauty of the sky; question the order of the stars,
the sun whose brightness lights the day,
the moon whose splendor softens the gloom of night;
question the living creatures that move in the waters,
that roam the earth, that fly through the air;
the spirit that lies hidden, the matter that is manifest;
the visible things that are ruled,
the invisible that rule them; question all these.
They will answer you: "Behold and see, we are beautiful."
Their beauty is their confession of God.
Who made these beautiful changing things,
if not one who is beautiful and changeth not?

In a similar poem by the Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins, *God's Grandeur,* we find that God charges the world and the world remains charged, despite apparent destruction, by virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The poem reflects an idea, maintained by Augustine and more strongly by Aquinas, that despite appearances to the contrary, all things are essentially good by virtue of their having being. *ST*,Q8,A1,obj4 and Q48,A4.
[30] The quote is taken from the very excellent prose translation by John D. Sinclair. *Par,* canto i, 1-13 and 70-72 and canto xxxi, 37-38.
[31] *Par*, canto xxx, 46-99 and canto xxx, 100 to canto xxxi, 40.
[32] *Purg*, canto xxi, 40-72.
[33] *Inf*, canto iii, 4-6.
[34] In *Paradiso,* canto iv, line 116, Dante describes Beatrice as *[il] fonte ond'ogni ver deriva*; the fount from which springs every truth.
[35] This beautiful thesis is developed in Hans Urs von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Volume III: Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles* (p.32). The point is certainly made by Dante himself and, at that, in the extreme: Beatrice can actually substitute for Christ as the agent of Dante's salvation! *Par*, canto xxxi, 79-81.
[36] I owe the development of this thought, and in fact the development of many of the thoughts here present, to my interactions with a certain Father Paul Murray,

O.P. whose courses *God and the poets* and *the Humanity of the Medieval Mystics,* I attended during my studies at the Angelicum in Rome, Italy. The ability to find the superordinary in the ordinary is by no means a characteristic to be found exclusively in the writings and Dante and Shakespeare. I use them merely as well-known and convenient examples. But if I may be permitted to recommend but two others, I would submit without reservation T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and "Markings", a poem in *Seeing Things* by Seamus Heaney.

[37] *King Lear,* Act V, scene iii. Our reference comes just as Lear and Cordelia are to be imprisoned. Cordelia laments the prospect of prison, more for Lear than herself, and so admits "I am cast down." But Lear surprises his daughter, at once chastising and encouraging her. Here, I must concede that the majority of the literary criticism about this passage does not support my argument concerning the spirit in which it was written. I cite most specifically W.J. Birch's *An Inquiry into the philosophy and religion of Shakespeare.* Birch argues that the play is, in its entirety, a parody of religion and faith, concluding that we are to draw from the work that man is but a beast and God a too-willing spectator of our agonies. [In contrast I offer the tradition of the *Salve Regina.*] But other critics share my more optimistic reading of *Lear,* among them; W.R. Elton, *King Lear and the gods.* While acknowledging the totality of Birch's argument as but one of many aspects in *Lear,* Elton argues (in a scholarly fashion) that S included such propositions so as to make present all of the many voices in the debate concerning the possibility of discovering the *deus absconditus.* In this context, the findings of Birch are overpowered by the arguments of Calvin and Montaigne, who stated that man's reason is too dark and incapable to take upon it the mystery of things: God is not to be understood but obeyed. While Elton must admit that the mystery of human suffering is left unresolved in *Lear,* he does see the character of L standing in opposition to the assumptions of Calvin and Montaigne; at least the L that emerges from the purgatorial fire of his madness.

[38] The architect's fascination with writings like those of Gaston Bachelard's *the Poetics of Space* belies such an attraction.

[39] *The Poetry of Michelangelo,* James M. Saslow, p 10. The verse is sometimes rendered 'chisel', the Italian is *l'arco.*

[40] *Ibid.,* p 11.

[41] *Ibid.,* p 1.

[42] Whether this anxiety was a result of the iconoclastic tendencies of the Reformation era in which he lived, the direct influence of the Dominican preacher Savonarola, or simply a personal dilemma (or some combination) is unclear and a topic for another paper. We are told in *The life of Michelangelo Buonarroti,* Harford, p 49, that M had attended the sermons of the infamous Savonarola in Florence and read and re-read his sermons throughout his life.

[43] In my research I have found the disturbing thesis that M's poetry and constant references therein to the beauty of others, combined with a 'constitutional depression' that was manifested in the severity of self-criticism, lack of self complacency and habit of referring to himself as an 'unprofitable servant' has led some authors to interpret this dilemma as an inferiority complex. I cite specifically Nathan Leites' *Art and Life: Aspects of Michelangelo,* chapter v; Divine and defective, and *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti,* J.A. Symonds. Symonds states that M's poetry is "more psychological than literal" (p 409) {an uphill argument given the attention lavished on them in Florence by Varchi} and Leites says he projected his love from his "ghastly self" to the "glorious beloved." (p 72).

I submit such readings are evidence of far too much time spent in an amateur pursuit of psychiatry and that the statements by M actually reflect humility and a perception of the realistic limits of human art in the face of omnipotent God more than a simple inferiority complex.

[44] The dating of the sonnets is largely speculative. Most historians have chosen to base dates upon the drafts and versions of his poetry that M included for review in letters to friends. This practice was common from 1542-46. Other dates are extrapolated from the dates of sculptural and architectural projects on whose drawings M frequently edited his verse.

[45]Sonnet 283, Saslow, p 474. I use his translations;

Non puo, Signor mie car, la fresca e verde
eta sentir, quant'a l'ultima passo
si cangia gusto, amor, voglie e pensieri.
Piu l'alma acquista ove piu 'l mondo perde;
l'arte e la morte non va bene insieme:
che convien piu che di me dunche speri?

[46] Sonnet 21, Saslow, p 93: *Chiunche nasce a morte arriva...*

[47] *Life of Michelangelo,* Charles Morgan, p 195.

[48] Symonds, p 337.

[49] *Il carteggio di Michelangelo, Edizione posthuma di Giovanni Poggi,* [Herefafter, *carteggio*]. Letter MLXI, vol 4, p 237, 26 Aprile 1546: *E se la morte interrompe questo mio desiderio, e che si possa sculpire o dipigniere nell'altra vita, non manchero di la, dove piu non s'invechia.*

[50] *carteggio,* MCXXIII, v 4, p 315: *...o bisognio dell'aiuto di Dio... circa il male mio del non potere orinare, io ne sono stato poi malto male, muggiato di e nocte senza dormire e senza risposo nessuno: e per quello che gudicano e' medici, dicono che io o il mal della pietra.*

[51] *carteggio,* MCXXVI, v 4, p 319: *Noi sia' certi che io o la pietra...*

[52] *carteggio,* MCXLIII, v 4, p 339, ? Feb, 1550: *...io combatto colla morte...*

[53] *carteggio,* MCXLVII, v 4, p 344, 1 Aug, 1550:*...soportando con pazienza e' difetti della vechieza...*

[54] Symonds, p 331.

[55] In Sonnet 131 he also places these two aspects of his life in opposition: Saslow, p 275. *E parte pur m'assale,/ appresso al dolce, un pensier aspro e forte/ di vergogna e di morte;/ ne perde Amor per maggior tema o damni:/ c'un'or non vince l'uso di molt'anni.* Though there comes over me, while I am close to sweetness, a strong, harsh thought of shame and death, Love does not lose to fear of greater harm: for an hour cannot defeat the habit [of enjoying the beautiful] of many years.

[56] Sonnet 105, Saslow, p 236.

Non vider gli occhi miei cosa mortale
allor che ne' bei vostri intera pace
trovai, ma dentro, ov'ogni mal dispiace,
chi d'amor l'alma a se simil m'assale;
e se creata a Dio non fusse equale,
altro che'l bel di four, c'agli occhi piace,
piu non vorria; ma perch'e si fallace,
trascende nella forma universale.

Io dico ch'a chi vive quel che muore
quetar non puo disir; ne par s'aspetti
l'eterno al tempo, ove altri cangia il pelo.
Voglia sfrenata el senso e, non amore,
che l'alma uccide; e 'l nostro fa perfetti
gli amici qui, ma piu per morte in cielo.

[57] Sonnet 164, Saslow, p 322.

Per fido esemplo alla mia vocazione
nel parto mi fu data la bellezza,
che d'ambo l'arti m'e lucerna e specchio.
S'altro si pensa, e falsa opinione.
Questo sol l'occhio porta a quella altezza
c'a pingere e scolpir qui m'apparecchio.
S'e' giudizi temerari e sciocchi
al senso tiran la belta, che muove
e porta al cielo ogni intelletto sano,
dal mortale al divin non vanno gli occhi
infermi, e fermi sempre pur la d'ove
ascender senza grazia e pensier vano.

[58] Sonnet 268, Saslow, p 456.

Perche l'eta ne 'nvola
il desir cieco e sordo,
con la morte m'accordo,
stanco e vicino all'ultima parola.
L'alma che teme e cola
quel che l'occhio non vede,
come da cosa perigliosa e vaga,
dal tuo bel volto, donna, m'allontana.
Amor, c'al ver non cede,
di nuovo il cor m'appaga
di foco e speme; e non gia cosa umana
mi par, mi dice, amar...

[59] There is some speculation as to whom this poem is addressed. Some historians speculate that it was penned to Vittoria Colonna, with whom M met and corresponded often during this period. Others argue that it is simply an example of a courtly love poem, in the manner of Petrarch, written to an anonymous or fantastical beloved. The arguments are largely conjectural. But I submit that M's relationship with V certainly had some bearing on the poem and its nature. There is little doubt that M loved Vittoria. Only the nature of this love is disputed. Vittoria was known to be exceptionally pious, indeed she herself wrote beautiful religious verse, but she was not known for her beauty: some accounts portray her as ugly (Symonds, p362). Her piety has been held by some authors to be responsible for M's return to faith; although evidence for a loss of faith is lacking. The pair did exchange religious verse and M drew two crucifixions for her. But I wonder that Vittoria's greatest influence on M was not her circumstance, beautiful piety

shrouded by a less than beautiful visage, that may have led M to reinvestigate his understanding of both beauty and love: his pure (perhaps 'divine') attraction for something, or someone, lacking in earthly beauty.

[60] Sonnet 280, Saslow, his translation with changes, p 471.

L'alma inquieta e confusa in se non trouva
altra cagion c'alcun grave peccato
mal conosciuto, onde non e celato
all'immensa pieta c'a' miser giova,
I' parlo a te, Signor, c'ogni mie prouva
fuor del tuo sangue non fa l'uom beato:
miserere di me, da ch'io son nato
a la tua legge; e non fie cosa nuova.

[61] *Life of Michelangelo*, Condivi, p.87.

[62] *Ibid.*, p 90.

[63] Morgan, p 219, 228-9.

[64] John 3:1-21 and 19:38-40.

[65] While this resolution, or at least the tension from which it results, is well documented in respect to M's poetry, discourse concerning a possible link to the Pieta is almost nonexistent perhaps due to the lack of comfort most authors have toward the language I use here.

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Education

- Master of Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va, August 1996

- student, Pontificia Studiorum Universitas a S Thoma Aquino in Urbe, Rome, Italy, Fall 1995

- Bachelor of Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, May 1992

- Herndon High School, Herndon, Va, June 1987

Experience

- assistantship, faculty position, Va Tech, Europe Travel Abroad Program, Fall 1996

- assistantship, Va Tech, designed course entitled *International Construction Practices*, Summer 1996

- residential construction, HCR Designs, Blacksburg, Va, Summer 1996

- graduate teaching assistantship, Va Tech, academic year 1994-95

- retail sales, assistant manager, Bike Nashbar, Falls Church, Va, Winter to Fall 1993

- residential construction, Mashburn Studio, Blacksburg, Va, Fall 1991 to Fall 1992

- site engineer, general contractor, Charles E Smith, Herndon, Va and Ashburn, Va, Summer 1989, 1991

- laborer, residential construction, CP1, Reston, Va, Summer 1988

- part-time job throughout High School

Extracurricular

- second place, Concrete Masonry Competition, joint entry with Tareq Alkandari, Spring 1995

- student, Europe Travel Abroad program, with Olivio Ferrari and Eugene Egger, Summer 1990

- juror, 1992 Student Associate Young Architect Award Competition

- Conference Director, Atlantic Coast Collegiate Cycling Conference, 1990 to 1992

- President, Cycling Club of Virginia Tech, 1990 to 1992

- moderate proficiency in Italian and French