self-effacement that is the subject of his inquiry. It is one of a number of recent publications that show how much philosophical interest is to be had from looking at the domain of spirituality, and the book as a whole will be a valuable resource for anyone working or reflecting on a large range of issues in moral philosophy and the philosophy of religion.

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Wessel Stoker *Where Heaven and Earth Meet: The Spiritual in the Art of Kandinsky, Rothko, Warhol, and Kiefer*. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2012). Pp. x+233. €50.00 (Pbk). ISBN 978 90 420 3544 7.

This is a welcome book in a key respect. It attempts to tackle the loose way in which the language of 'transcendence' is repeatedly deployed by many of those who try to discuss the spiritual concerns of contemporary art – and, for that matter, the art of a modern period stretching back at least to the Romantic era. Quite correctly, Wessel Stoker remarks on the laziness of many uses of the idea of the transcendent, and the consequent lack of analytical bite in interpretations of works of art which are thought to suggest a numinous realm, or a quality in material reality which points beyond the brutely given.

What we need, he argues, is a typology of transcendence. Not all transcendence is the same. To this end, he sets out in this book three distinct forms of *seeing* or *indicating more* in things that he derives from the artistic traditions of modern western Europe. They are immanent transcendence, radical transcendence, and radical immanence (which, for his purposes, does count as a type of transcendence).

Immanent transcendence finds an early manifestation in the works of Caspar David Friedrich, whose natural landscapes suggest religious depth; a power to disclose to the devoutly contemplative viewer the divine Spirit at work within them (rather like the *logos spermatikos* of the early Church Fathers). All things participate mystically and communicatively in their divine source.

Radical transcendence is introduced with the help of Barnett Newman's vast, overpowering, almost rebarbative canvasses. These both hint at but also deny to the viewer any participatory access to the noumenal realm. They do not mediate; they often seem precisely to negate the possibility of mediation. They keep us at a distance, and as a consequence have a certain tragic quality to them.

Radical immanence has some continuities with pantheism. There is no 'outside' to the world. The 'more' that is unlocked and displayed by the perceptive artist is an excess or an abundance that is also part of the world's inmost dynamics.

Stoker describes this typology as a 'search engine' for the work he intends to go on and accomplish in the book. It is laid out and explicated in the course of his opening chapter. The four chapters that follow are a series of case studies, each one examining in detail a single artist whose work has achieved prominence in the past century, and diagnosing the sorts of transcendence towards which their work gestures (using the typology as diagnostic tool). The four artists are well chosen in terms of the scale of their influence and the interesting differences in emphasis, method, and content that emerge in their approaches when they are looked at together. They are Wassily Kandinsky, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol, and Anselm Kiefer.

A final chapter summarizes the findings of the book, and reflects on what might have proved itself of value in the methodological approach adopted.

The 'search engine' that Stoker puts to work inclines him to conclude that 'immanent transcendence' is a very common mode in which modern artists formulate transcendence. Even if not in natural landscapes (as in Friedrich's work), versions of immanent transcendence are offered to us in Warhol and Kiefer. Kandinsky is interpreted as a 'radical immanentist', and Rothko stands as the biggest exception (perhaps not surprisingly, given his close association with Newman, and the similarities in their approaches) as an advocate of 'radical transcendence'.

There is much that is illuminating and interesting in Stoker's discussions of these artists and their oeuvres, and the book is well-illustrated, so that in many cases a painting under discussion is reproduced at just the right point in the body of the text, meaning that you can look at it as it is discussed. The Kiefer chapter is especially interesting: he is the least well-known of the four main artists, and certainly one of the most fascinating.

There are many ways in which the book felt hurried and superficial, however. Occasionally, it seemed as though information was there for information's sake, and that it had not been sufficiently digested, or integrated with the main lines of the argument.

Even though we gain from Stoker's efforts to give some definition to the way that 'transcendence' is invoked, for example, he leaves the concept of 'spirituality' frustratingly vague. It seems to me that it would be better to tackle both terms, given how frequently they appear in consort with one another. 'Spirituality', writes Stoker, 'refers to a spiritual attitude towards life'. This is something of a tautology. He goes on to add that: '[I]t has to do with one's orientation in life. People search for the transformation of their internal being and of the relationships between humans, the world, and (usually) God or the divine.' But notwithstanding this addition, it is hard to derive much content to the notion of spirituality from a

working definition that encompasses internal and external life, and human, non-human, and divine being. The only sure thing is that spirituality has something to do with 'transformation' – though from or towards what we are not told.

Such vagueness is a weakness in the book in other respects too. In particular, Stoker's references to theological thinkers seem markedly less informed and acute than his treatment of the artists he discusses. On the whole, he marshals the names of major theologians as shorthand for an ideal type of one sort or another that he wants to correlate or contrast with the sort of transcendence that a particular artist manifests in his work. Karl Barth, for example, is invoked on a number of occasions as a theologian of radical transcendence, who is thereby correlated (loosely) with the instincts of Barnett or Rothko. But his complex christological thought is not interrogated in any serious way, and barely quoted. It seems almost entirely to be derived from Barth's early Romans commentary, in which the lack of an *Anknüpfungspunkt* between heaven and earth is emphasized – an important intervention in its time. But there remains a world of difference between the 'tragic' visions of Barnett and Rothko, as Stoker characterizes them, and the richly detailed theology of revelation and reconciliation that Barth went on to build around the idea of God's self-communicating Word, which is shot through with a remarkable mood of joy (Bonhoeffer identified Barth as an exemplar of the quality of *hilaritas*). Stoker very briefly, towards the end of his book, gives a nod to the fact that Barth's christocentrism puts limits on the usefulness of a comparison with artists of radical transcendence, but by that point the stereotype has done its work.

Elsewhere (p. 20), a list of exemplars of another of the three sorts of transcendence – in this case 'immanent transcendence' – is rolled out, and we find 'Schleiermacher, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer . . . Hegel, and . . . Prince Myshkin' among the company. This list is so diverse that it barely tells us anything useful at all, and passes airily over the fact that a great deal of Bonhoeffer's early intellectual work (*Act and Being*, for instance) was a sustained attack on certain key Hegelian ideas.

And a very doubtful claim indeed – exegetically and theologically – is made about the Gospel of John, once again in the form of a passing remark which receives no amplification or justification (Stoker is at this point discussing the thought of the French phenomenologist Michel Henry): 'For Henry, Life is a core concept, not in the sense of biological life but more in the sense in which John talks about it in his gospel. It is not a visible phenomenon but *an immanent experience of the self*' (p. 82). I cannot myself derive from the famous prologue of John's Gospel, in which the Word of life is said both to be with God and to *be* God, the conclusion that the evangelist is talking about some experiential form of human interiority.

Other generalizations abound, and (it seems to me) they are most often about the religious aspect of what Stoker wants to discuss ('the mystic wants to

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move away from sensory images' (p. 62): has he read Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Hildegard of Bingen?). This constitutes a serious flaw in the book's ambitions to make a convincing critical case that is responsibly and authoritatively interdisciplinary. And the art-historical side of Stoker's discussions is not immune to problems either. He discusses the immense influence on Rothko of the mosaics at either end of the Sta Maria Assunta cathedral on the island of Torcello, but then, inexplicably, refers to them as 'paintings' (p. 119).

Stylistically, *Where Heaven and Earth Meet* shows marks of haste, or at least carelessness, on the part of proofreaders or perhaps the translator. There are numerous typological errors, and a repeated and irritating use of the word 'if' in place of the word 'whether' (as in: 'I would like to explore the question if Kandinsky retained the spiritual character of his work', p. 66). But it is, of course, the content that matters most. So, how should this bold book be evaluated in relation to its core argument?

My judgement is that its welcome move to draw distinctions between different types of transcendence could have done more to highlight the key role that has been played in western aesthetics by the paradoxical doctrine of the incarnation. This doctrine is at the core of specifically Christian aesthetics, which in turn makes it a pervasive part of the inherited DNA of western art. Of Stoker's three types, it is nearest to 'immanent transcendence', but its genius is that it denies any artificial dichotomy between 'immanent' and 'radical'. The transcendence of the incarnate Christ is immanent-*and*-radical. The materiality of this Christ is intrinsic to his ultimacy, not just an outward sign of it. And thus, the incarnate Christ does not gesture towards a more mystical realm behind or beyond himself (as Friedrich's moons or oceans might) in which the body as sign drops away.

Stoker is, I expect, of the view that this specifically Christian notion of transcendence does not have a direct influence on most contemporary artists – and (if he does indeed think this) he is perhaps right. What modern aesthetics has liked to speak of as sublimity (and it is sublimity that is most commonly equated with 'transcendence' in modern art criticism, as David Bentley Hart has pointed out in his provocative and weighty book *The Beauty of the Infinite*) has been described by way of a *contrast* with the formed, the proportioned, the human-scale, the beautiful. We might acknowledge here another binary pairing that holds powerful sway in modern aesthetics, Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian (patterned order) and the Dionysian (form-breaking flux), which maps relatively well onto the beautiful–sublime distinction.

These binary pairs – like most binary pairs – do not catch all in their net. And the Christian tradition's habitual complexification of them may still make some difference to the works that contemporary artists produce, even when the influence is indirect; even when its origins may have been forgotten. So I wonder whether Stoker might have made it a more explicit task of his book (i) to analyse

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the ways that his types of transcendence relate to the powerful dichotomies of beauty/sublimity and Apollo/Dionysus, and (ii) to analyse the ways in which a Christian legacy still leaves its traces in the subversion of these dichotomies. I should be clear: this is a call for something to be more explicitly articulated in the book; it is not a claim that it is not present at all.

We can see that it is present when, for instance, Stoker very persuasively sees in Warhol more than mere endlessly regressive irony; he discerns a genuine concern with Christ as healer (and thus a genuine hope for *bodies*). He also rewardingly reads Kiefer as insisting on the inescapability of historical circumstance and particularity, in a way that underwrites his continued interest in figural representation – as in this contrast with Mondrian: '[T]he price of Mondrian's radical immanence is the historical situation. In other words, heaven is too much separated from earth in a spiritual sense' (p. 181). Whereas: '[I]nstead of a spirituality without hope, Kiefer presents a spirituality of concrete as an open question to heaven with a spark of hope' (p. 186). Here are recognitions that transcendence is not always disruptive, irruptive, liminal, or abstract, and when this possibility is explored (as Stoker explores it in Kiefer's and in Warhol's works), we may be better served as aestheticians if we are helped to detect in such works the legacy of a Christian tradition; a tradition that does not make the sublime the enemy of the figural, but sees in the incarnation a fundamental assurance that *glory takes form*. Or, in a favoured phrase of Janet Martin Soskice, a tradition in which intimacy and ultimacy are one.

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Sarah Coakley (ed.) *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions*. (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). Pp. vi+264. £19.99 (Pbk). ISBN 978 1 4443 6193 3.

The past two decades have seen a growing and well-documented interest in the relationship between reason and the emotions in moral philosophy, the philosophy of religion, and systematic theology. Significant contributions from the likes of Robert Solomon, Martha Nussbaum, and the late Peter Goldie (who features in the present volume) have reshaped debates surrounding rationality, 'the passions', and religious belief.

It is in the context of these developments that Sarah Coakley firmly locates this volume, the proceedings from a 2010 conference of the same title held at Cambridge University and subsequently published in two journals