



Design, Sacrifice and Passing

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Sacred design is, from a specific view point, organically connected with the concept of *sacrifice*, of making sacred (Lat. *sacer facere*). The logical context in which such a relation is to be considered is that of metaphysics, because it implies the passing from a transcendent non-manifested state to a manifested one. More particularly, it engages a whole dialectic between the *unspeakable* (the sacred) and the *expressed* (the world). The former may be considered as a “strong concept”, for its role is unavoidable in the understanding of the world, and it is such because it constitutes the origin of speech. It is the ultimate “object” of significance, the essential intellection to be made. The fundamental importance concerning the sacred relies not in its relative signification, that is, in the particular determinations it receives or it manifests, but in its essential expression which speaks of the unspeakable. And such an essential utterance is most properly a sacred design.

The *unspeakable*, from a metaphysical perspective, is *that* which remains “naturally” and essentially unspoken, and it remains thus because it is fundamentally *the explained* and not *the explanation*. This unspeakable is what Nicholas of Cusa called *complicatio*. All expression is, in itself, a manifestation, a display, an explanation, a coming from concealment into visibility, or better said, into a relative visibility, because it gives way and it is subjected to alterity, and no longer to identity. Any such passing suffers a noetical reduction. That is, the thing signified and the sign are no longer one and the same. It could be said that with the birth of expression comes the birth of any duality and the birth of any concealment. Therefore, the sacred, seen in this light, is most properly *that* which is not hidden, or *that* which is evident and needs no expression. The literal Greek translation for this is *aletheia*. If the sacred is what it is, or better said, if *that* signified by the concept of sacred is what it is, is because *that*, the unspeakable, is ultimately the only thing we speak of. The modalities of our speech are properly *revealing it*, so they simultaneously announce it as the origin of pronunciation, of manifestation, and they conceal it by this very utterance. One’ speech is at once relevant and revelatory, significant and occulting.

But if speech is to be efficient, if it is to constitute the essential expression of the unspeakable, if it is to actually possess the power of making and unmaking, of formation and trans-formation, it has to be objectively significant and independent of – and not reduced to – psychological subjectivity and particular determinations. The reason for this comes from the fact that the manifestation of the unspeakable is par excellence

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ontological and not just psychological. The expression of the unspeakable is *kosmo*-logical and not just *anthropo*-logical. The psychological manifestation expresses only a particular domain of the sacred, and many displays remain outside of its definition. Therefore, when one considers an efficient speech, a speech that transports from the unspeakable to the articulated, that is, from evidence to occultation, and from there back to the evidence, one must envisage the ontological dimension of speech, the ontic dimension of *logos*. Such a logic display, which goes simultaneously from the origin to the sign and from the sign to the origin, is a *sacred design* and a sacred making, a sacrifice.

The notion of *sacrifice* extends ontologically to its proper significance of *passing*. To *design sacredly* means to *pass* and to *transport* the intellect from a particular state of veiling, of concealment (Gr. *lethe*), to the state of evidence, of disclosure, of unveiling (*aletheia*). This is the true dimension in which the sacred is understood as design: the one that *recovers* the pieces in the big picture¹ – the objective re-imagining of the unspeakable. It is the process of synthesizing and of re-membering. To re-cover means to symbolize (Gr. *syn ballein*, to throw together) and to re-collect. In this way, the expression is efficient, for it possesses both vital movements: the systolic contraction (occultation), when the unspeakable displays itself (Cusanus' *explicatio*), and the diastolic relaxation (unveiling) when the unspeakable shines in all its immediate evidence (Cusanus' *complicatio*). The sacred is thus designed and signified all together. It is designed through exteriorization and signified through introversion. Both of these directions have to be present in chorus within the expression, if it is to possess the sacrificial status, that is, of making sacred, of designing sacredly. The speech that does not meet them simultaneously suffers from incapacity in ontological junction, being therefore particularly irrelevant. Such a speech is in itself significant, but its significance does not transport to the ultimate object of signification, but to a particular incapacity (or definition) which ultimately lacks the design efficiency: the constructive power, the ontological and psychological fertility. The whole purpose of signification is that of reaching the parturient state of the unspeakable. The sign must rise again to the *symbol*, to the *re-collection*, and hence to a *sacred design*, by means of which everything is heavily and richly meaningful.

This sacrificial passage from mere significance to ontological designation is the remembrance of a kosmic display, of a manifestation of order which speaks of the unspeakable. The one taking this passage goes back the same way it came forth; it is, basically, the essential passing from sacredness to worldliness and from worldliness to sacredness, and it is the sacred pass from alterity to identity, from revelation to evidence and from evidence to revelation.

¹ We should note that there is a relation between the quality of being *holy* and the quality of being *whole*. Both have in common the Indo-European root *kailo*, which gave the English words *holy*, *heal*, *hale*, *whole*. From *kailo* derived the Proto-Germanic root *khailig*, which obviously gave the German *heilige*. Moreover, not surprisingly, *kailo* stands also at the root of the word *hole*. We find again the strange relation that exists between *hole*, *whole*, *heal* and *holy*.

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The revelation of the sacred design gives simultaneously the world, through expression, and transports, by means of the same expression, to the evidence of the unspeakable. The synthetic language of the sacred design is geometrical in its form, symbolical in its essence and guiding in its purpose. That is, the expression of the unspeakable is kosmic, ordered, for it manifests *that* which is utterly the highest significant.² This is the meaning of *geometry* (*gē metria*) in its kosmo-genetic aspect: *the manifestation of the intelligible*. The *space of expression* appears by means of taking possession of it; its reality becomes actual through measurement, through logical exteriorization or projection (Lat. *pro jacere*; to throw forward); through logical designation. Expression (Lat. *ex premere*, to press out) gives birth to the space that constitutes the domain of any logical display. It is a noetic systole (Gr. *systellein*, to draw together), by means of which the invisible metaphysical state becomes ontologically present through the flow of the logic vitality. The unspeakable manifests in an expressed unity (the sacred design), which in its turn constitutes the space of all particular modalities of speech, of all the particular organs and dialects of this Kosmic Body. The diastolic return from particularity to unity, and by that to the unspeakable, requires an opening, a *kenosis*, a depletion, a separation (Gr. *diastellein*) within and from the separation of the particular. The separation from the separation (the hole shot in the defined) gives way to and makes room for the recognition and for the design of the sacred.

Through the sacred design's kosmo-genetic measurement of the ontological space, it takes place a simultaneous symbolical re-orientation towards the unspeakable. The essential expression supports and guides the intellect in its journey towards the ultimate significance and towards the origin of all speech.

² This is why the manifestation of Logos is a Law and a Kosmos. It is a Law because the manifestation of Intellect is *flawless*, and it is a Kosmos because the same manifestation is absolutely *logical*. That is, it speaks coherently of its non-manifested Origin, and by doing this it *testifies* of It. From this perspective, the one in complete accord (*ad cor*) with the Kosmos, testifies together with it by being one with it, and just like the Kosmos, he is the Covenant between God and man.