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Materialising the sacred

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This chapter illustrates the shifting meanings of sacred/religious objects, in particular the recent phenomenon of sacred/religious into fine art commodities. This process, however, may lead to concerns about the new ways in which religious objects are valued. It is often suggested that this process of secularisation and commodification is a failure to respect the people who created it, and in some way presents a harm to the object itself.

According to the Oxford definition, the sacred belongs to the consecrated and the religious; to dedicated objects or purpose; and, objects or persons affiliated with a deity/god or venerated as holy.¹ The aim of this chapter is to reflect on what has made an object sacred in the past, and perhaps discover a basis to explain what makes an object sacred in today's predominantly secular world. I have selected two religious paintings. Both mark crucial transformative events. One is drawn from Christianity, the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. The other is a Tibetan Buddhist *thangka* (painting) of *Buddha Shakyamuni*.² I have chosen these two images to juxtapose their sacredness and how they have changed, been re-written or appropriated over time. They are also well-known representations, requiring no introduction.³ Numerous copies and similar illustrations are on exhibit in art museums and decorate private homes.

I argue that the meaning and value of religious objects is not rigid, but is fluid and open to modification or re-writing, irrespective of governing norms. Both the *Last Supper* and *Buddha Shakyamuni* paintings originated within a religious context but have since been appropriated into the Western fine art scene.⁴ At the same time as the meaning and value of objects is re-written, however, I argue that the museum context provides a reverential context for their appreciation. These objects have been formed and shaped from physical materials, yet appear to be invested with another 'meta'-materiality. This something is beyond the tactility of pigment, cloth, wood or bronze. It reaches across corporeal boundaries, beyond the written word and, for many people, resonates a sacredness.

The paintings

Leonardo da Vinci began the *Last Supper* in 1495, on the refectory wall of the Sta Maria della Grazie, a Dominican convent in Milan. Leonardo's innovation was capturing the moment when *Jesus* announces that someone at the table will betray him this night.⁵ The revelatory moment is realistically portrayed by Leonardo, capturing a wave of emotions — such as surprise, angst, anger, sorrow, and denial. It took Leonardo twelve years to complete this masterpiece, which has since been continuously restored and reproduced. The *Buddha Shakyamuni thangka* is estimated to have been painted between 1050 and 1100. In this painting, the Buddha's right hand is touching the earth, calling the earth to bear witness to his enlightenment.⁶ *Shakyamuni* is attended by two standing bodhisattvas, the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokitesvara, and the future Buddha, Maitreya.⁷ There are two seated monks above the bodhisattvas. On the top row stand seven past-Buddhas and another version of Maitreya. The five dhyana or directional Buddhas sit along the bottom.⁸ This was a significant painting when it was executed and today is a highly prized item within a private Western collection.

Both paintings were commissioned. Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, employed Leonardo to paint, sculpt and design various works, the *Last Supper* among them. We know the *thangka* was commissioned because these details are written in red Tibetan dbu med script on the back.⁹ The name of the donor is not recorded. The *Last Supper* is large, 460 by 880 cm, and was painted directly onto a wall. The *thangka* is 47 by 32 centimetres and was painted on cloth, with supporting textile mountings and dowel rods at both ends. This construction permitted it to be rolled up and transported or stored.

The themes in the two paintings were not unusual. The *Last Supper* was created as a fresco in the dining room of a convent. The painting depicts a supper in progress — breaking bread, sharing olives and wine — an everyday practice. On a religious level, it is at this supper that *Jesus* initiates his disciples into the Christian ritual practice of the Holy Eucharist — the consecration of bread and wine into body and blood.¹⁰ The *thangka*, on the other hand, was a *stupa* furnishing for the eleventh century Tibetan lama and translator Gos Lotsava.¹¹ A *stupa* is an architectural hollow bell-shaped vessel in which are placed highly valued items considered worthy to be remembrance offerings.¹² These offerings are not travelling companions on an afterlife journey such as is the Egyptian practice, but sacred objects offered in appreciation of the person now departed. Even though both these were conceived for religious spaces and depict religious scenes, only the Tibetan painting was consecrated. A lama ritually opens-the-eyes of a *thangka* by painting them in, thereby transforming it from a representation into a potent living deity.¹³ I have not found a reference to the *Last Supper* being consecrated.

Sacred meaning

Research on the sacred is hampered by the ‘injudicious’ use of the term ‘sacred’, which is too often conflated with the term ‘religious’. Peter Fingesten states categorically that ‘religious’ and ‘sacred’ art are ‘neither synonymous nor interchangeable...[and] these terms should be applied henceforth with greatest discrimination in order to avoid confusion’.¹⁴ Fingesten defined ‘sacred’ art as objects and symbols, which conformed to religious law and were consecrated by prayers, rites or rituals. This would include altars, vessels, vestments, architecture, sculpture and paintings, whereas, ‘religious’ art is produced outside of religious restrictions.¹⁵ Such a definition would mean that the *thangka* would be categorised as sacred art, because it was not only consecrated but executed according to religious conventions. The *Last Supper*, however, would be designated religious art, because it was Leonardo’s expression, he constructed the scene and the actors’ reactions. It was not a reproduction of an officially sanctioned painting, rather, Leonardo used everyday practice as his inspiration.

The *thangka* is not simply an idol but enjoys a status equivalent to Greek or Russian Orthodox icons.¹⁶ They are sacred manifestations. According to Jackson and Jackson, *thangkas* were a crucial medium by which the ‘ideals of Buddhism were evoked and brought alive. A sacred painting was for the Tibetan a physical support — in other words an embodiment — of enlightenment’. They also note that the simple *Buddha Shakyamuni* image was commonly commissioned for accumulating merit towards spiritual advancement.¹⁷

Wandering Buddhist teachers made use of the portability of *thangkas* to illustrate and inculcate religious messages for the nomadic illiterate population.¹⁸ The pictures told familiar stories, in the same manner as the stained glass windows, paintings and sculptures of the Christian church. The wrath of God unleashed upon the fallen sinner or the innocence of a lamb protected by the shepherd was silently impressed upon a significantly illiterate population. They were visual reminders of how to conduct their lives properly, under the omnipresence of an all-seeing God. The angelic forms of heaven and the horrors of purgatory were all pictured — graphic reminders that life’s actions were judged at death.

Both paintings, therefore, had a specific religious purpose, and it might be argued that this purpose ‘fixes’ the meaning or significance of the object, in contrast to the meaning or significance it has as fine art, in which it is considered primarily as an object with aesthetic and historical value, but also, problematically, a commodity to be bought and sold. Yet, we find such objects have always had financial and aesthetic values that displayed the status of the possessor.

'Materialising' the sacred

While the depth of understanding of the spiritual world represented by a *thangka* or the church windows may have differed between the illiterate and the aristocracy, the elite also used their access to resources to highlight their higher spiritual position and access to the sacred. For example, in Florence during the 1400s it was common practice for churches to sell altar naming rights. Prominent families would engage prestigious artists to create new altars or altar pieces. Nor was it necessary for a client to commission an artist. Open market stalls sold sculptures, paintings and elaborate wooden altars. Contemporary sources of the day describe these objects as fine art — beautiful but expensive. This ready-made market also catered for bulk purchases, evidenced by the payment of import duties for 30 statues of Madonna entering Rome in 1450.¹⁹

At the time the *Last Supper* was being painted there were Christian authorities who were condemning painterly extravagance because they claimed the worshipper was being distracted by the skills of the artist.²⁰ In 1494 Girolamo Savonarola decries the contemporary painterly figures in churches. In his words, they 'are with such artifice, adornment and virtuosity that they block the light of God and true contemplation; people do not consider God, but only the artifice of the figures'.²¹ The unpretentious images spelt out their message by repeating familiar iconography, symbols and colour systems, which the uneducated understood. In contrast, many popular artists of the Renaissance wanted to display their skills and their patrons wanted to sponsor art as a display of their power, wealth and prestige.²² For example, Leonardo painted the *il Moro* family crest above the *Last Supper*, to remind the religious fraternity of the wealth and beneficence of the *il Moro* family. Likewise, as already noted, a common purpose for commissioning a *thangka* was to gain merit. Quite often the donor was represented as a small figure sitting respectfully in the lower right hand corner.²³ The needs of the wealthy and supplicants created a demand for images of Jesus and Shakyamuni respectively.

Arthur Danto notes that art is constantly validated and revaluated by its activity in the marketplace, either as an original or as a copy.²⁴ Public presentation and discourse, whether exhibitions, catalogues, advertisements or tourist souvenirs, such as posters and postcards, negotiates a consensual view of an objects' fitness to be recognised and appreciated as art. This process of reproduction fuels the desire for art as a collector's item and commodity. Put crudely, the greater the recognition/reputation, the greater the desire to own.²⁵ The reproduction of images also contributes to a process in which the object is considered of value in itself, and the image becomes recognised and adapted in other images.

While access to the *Last Supper* remains restricted, Andre Malraux notes that its readily available reproductions has ensured that it is entered into our own

personal lexicon, even though we may never visit Milan to see the original.²⁶ Any member of today's general public would be able to recall many images that they have never set eyes on. The profusion of printed material, television, computers and other technological advances has expanded public access to visual images. With sufficient fame, the image becomes 'iconic'.

In the same fashion as the image of *Sakyamuni* has become essentialised as *the* historic Buddha, the depiction of the *Last Supper* by Leonardo is accepted as the authoritative depiction of that Biblical event. However, the recent clean and repair by restoration artist Pinin Brambilla Barcilon highlights questions about the authenticity of the *Last Supper* as we know it today. Just two generations after the *Last Supper* was completed, it was declared that the painting was already ruined and in need of repainting.²⁷ In 1652 a doorway had been cut into the centre of the *Last Supper* wall, destroying part of the lower portion, which included Jesus' feet. Thankfully, the early popularity of the painting had spawned copies and they were used as models for later restorations.

There has been a constant reproduction over centuries. Today's artists have used the *Last Supper* to incorporate new socio-political configurations, such as race and gender. Such uses may be controversial. Recently, the *Last Supper* was used as a template for a fashion advertisement. It caused an outcry in France and Italy, where it was first released and was subsequently banned. A French judge ruled that the display was a 'gratuitous and aggressive act of intrusion in people's innermost belief'. The posters were ordered down. The prosecuting lawyer stated 'when you touch on sacred things you create an unbearable moral violence which is a danger to our children'. In response, the defence argued that 'the work is a photograph based on a painting, not the bible...It is a way of showing the place of women in society today, which is a reflection of our changing values'.²⁸

Christina Toren, reports on the appropriation of Leonardo's *Last Supper* by the Fijians.²⁹ She notes that Jesus and his twelve apostles, as illustrated in the *Last Supper*, represent the same traditional social spacing as the Fijian chiefs. Both parties sit above the general public. Both parties share a ritual repast.³⁰ With the introduction of Christianity, the *Last Supper* has opened a space by which the sacredness and authority of the ancestors through the hereditary chiefs remains potent. Many carpet reproductions of the *Last Supper* hang in Fijian churches. They were brought back from Lebanon by young Fijian servicemen serving under the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon. The fact that the carpet is contemporary and is a product from the Holy Lands transmutes and while re-writing traditional Fijian sacredness, it also reinforces these sacred values.³¹

The sacralisation of the aesthetic gaze

The availability of reproductions of the *Last Supper* has made it 'portable' and, as such, it has crossed cultural borders. The portability of *thangkas* guaranteed that they could be easily stored rather than destroyed. Further, because *thangkas* were consecrated, their disposal could only be by ritualised burning.³² Plainly, the *thangka* of *Buddha Shakyamuni* has suffered sacrilege in the sense that it must have been looted from the *stupa* in which it was originally deposited. The looting may have been by rival monastery centuries ago, or a fortune seeker yesterday. Since then, the *thangka* has crossed national boundaries and has become a possession in a Western art collection.

Unlike the familiar sacredness of Christian imagery it has taken the West some time to become familiar with Tibetan art and to understand its sacred nature. Tibetan images reflected Catholic missionary thought and were considered the Devil's idols. In 1676, the first Western traveller to Lhasa, Jesuit Father Grueber wrote 'that our Religion had been here to fore professed in this place'. But the Devil 'hath had the malice to transfer and usurp all the other mysteries of our faith to his own worship'.³³ Missionaries were still promoting this concept into the early twentieth century. The 1903-04 British expedition into Tibet, led by Major Younghusband witnessed over 400 official mule loads of objects leaving Tibet (not including personal souvenirs).³⁴ Many of the Tibetan objects were settled behind glass vitrines in museums or in curio cabinets in private homes, occasionally appearing in the market place or auction house. During the early 1900s, few Westerners would have thought of the *thangkas* as sacred.

The contemporary world market is preoccupied with age and worth, whether it is the church, museum or collector valuing their material assets. Museums and collectors show little interest in collecting modern *thangkas* by Tibetan Masters no matter how traditional they may appear.³⁵ Further, contemporary Tibetan painters are not encouraged within their own communities to be innovative or employ contemporary Western styles. This is not a case of potential sacrilege but a political attempt by the diasporic Tibetan community to appear as the authentic agents of the sacred wisdom of Tibet's lost traditions.³⁶ Jean-Hubert Martin writes: 'Religious art is valued when it is ancient, and there is general recognition that it engendered humanity's greatest masterpieces.' He adds that contemporary works are not thought of as authentic because 'of the nostalgia for a time before'.³⁷ There is a sense in the Tibetan aesthetic art world that age reflects the quality of sacredness.

However, the rarefying of Tibetan material culture by Western collecting and exhibiting negotiates another performance space. The very nature of a museum implies that objects have been detached from their original contexts.³⁸ The *thangka* is re-imagined and re-written, not as an object of sacred worship but as a fine art object precious to Western art tastes.³⁹ According to Stephen

Greenblatt, museum objects can be thought of not so much as material artifacts but as visual memory, or memorial.⁴⁰ The objects are then reduced to tokens of immortality, the relics of a lost past or monuments to the frailty of cultures.⁴¹

In museums, fine art historians, expressing values concerning 'art-for-art's sake' set about coding the 'real' value of the object. In an interview, the veteran Tibetan art curator, Pratapaditya Pal, speaks of the connection between economic value and its aesthetic qualities. He states that 'my primary goal is to establish a yardstick for beauty in Himalayan art. After all, the price of an object is generally determined by its aesthetic quality'.⁴² Ivan Gaskell comments that the collecting emphasis on aesthetics and art history discourse has decontextualised the objects, reducing them to collectibles. He states that such discourse is a 'very effective means of expunging the sacred qualities of objects'.⁴³ However, I contend that museums have not necessarily expunged but add a new exterior gloss by relating to the object with Western values. The cynic might consider this the addition of a purely economic value. The Tibetan art on view in museums are curated as aesthetic masterpieces. Many of these items are borrowed from private lenders and therefore are still in the marketplace. As such, it could be said that Western collecting aesthetics has forged a new Holy Trinity of 'authenticated masterpiece' equals 'good investment' equals 'sacredness'.

We need not be this cynical. Museum 'aesthetic' values and the nature of something as 'sacred' may not be incompatible. Ivan Gaskell also notes that aesthetic qualities are often allied with the sacred. John Huntington is of the same opinion when he writes: 'The exceptional artworks gathered here reflect the religious practices that lead to this compassionate, illuminated state of being, as well as the myriad aesthetic expressions of its attainment.'⁴⁴ Present day museums exhibit to the general public a more acceptable version of the sacred — non-threatening and non-religious.⁴⁵ Yet, museums have continued the church tradition of lighting the pilgrim's path. Along the way, intensified pin-spots of light in a subdued space announce the next masterpiece. By presenting their artworks in an outer silence and under intensified light, the museum removes sensory distractions, thereby intensifying sensorial experiences, the precursor of sacred experiences.⁴⁶ Art philosopher Karsten Harris writes: 'Stepping into a museum or a concert hall we enter an aesthetic church, a sublime and rather chilly necropolis, stretching back across time... What needs preserving does so precisely because it has lost its place in our world and must therefore be given a special place.'⁴⁷

Prolific publishing of affordable books has opened the world of art to the general public. The art historian can describe and interpret a painting for the uninitiated, however, they cannot experience the painting for the viewer. All artwork needs spectators to decipher and interpret meaning.⁴⁸ Images need the

human gaze to give them voice and pre-eminence over other artworks. The power of the object is created and deployed by the gaze. As such, the image is appropriated by the social operation of seeing.⁴⁹ David Freedberg writes that the power of images 'cannot be thought of apart from the desires, needs, projections, and learned expectations of their viewers'.⁵⁰ David Morgan calls this 'the sacred gaze'. He stresses that the sacred gaze 'designates the particular configuration of ideas and attitudes, and customs that informs a religious act of seeing as it occurs within a given cultural and historical setting'.⁵¹ He contends that the sacred gaze is ruled by protocols that demand a particular performance and response from the viewer. I would argue that it is only in the last 50 years that the general public has learned to fix the Western constructed sacred gaze onto Tibetan *thangkas*, whereas the *Last Supper* had long been fixed by the sacred gaze. It was an important stop on the 'Grand Tour' of Europe.⁵²

Conclusion

It is commonplace within some disciplines to suggest that changes of value and meaning are ethically problematic. This is considered to be a particular problem for sacred objects.

By juxtaposing the two paintings, I believe that I have been able to isolate certain aspects of what makes manifest an object's sacredness to audiences at particular points in time and in specific contexts. Aspects such as religious subject, physical setting such as a church or museum, painted by a master, nostalgia, age, aesthetics and monetary values, all appear to have varying roles in constructing, maintaining or denying an object's sacredness. However, I still believe that the essential ingredient still resides in the paintings themselves. They appear to have the ability to bridge civilisations and mediate between history and mutable traditions. The paintings condense multiple messages and convey these to the senses in a way that language cannot.⁵³ They appear to be vehicles with the capacity to configure spiritual power.⁵⁴ The *Last Supper* and *Buddha Shakyamuni* reach out and materialise something greater than the physical materials that went into making them; a resonance that has outlived their makers and their original audiences; and a resonance that has overcome restorations, reproduction and relocation. Today's commodity-orientated world has enhanced the power of these paintings by exposing them to even greater audiences. *Buddha Shakyamuni* and the *Last Supper* rest in our museum-without-walls lexicon categorised and stored as both sacred and valuable.

Endnotes

- ¹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, vol. IX, pp. 16-7.
- ² I have maintained the title spelling of the catalogue. *Shakyamuni* can be equally spelt without an 'h'. Image and description of cat. No. 114 taken from Pratapaditya Pal, 2003, *Himalayas An Aesthetic Adventure*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, pp. 174-5.
- ³ It also means that for most readers there is no need for a visual prompt. An illustration of public familiarity is entering the names into 'image google'. In just 15 seconds over 2000 hits were recorded for *Last Supper* and 2500 hits for *Buddha Shakyamuni*.
- ⁴ James Clifford, 1988, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- ⁵ The betrayal passage can be found in *New Testament*, Mark 14:20-1.
- ⁶ Earth-witnessing mudra (*bhumisparsha*) is formed by the extended fingers of the hand touching the ground. It symbolises *Shakyamuni's* enlightenment under the bodhi tree. He summoned the earth goddess, Sthavara to bear witness to his attainment of enlightenment. Robert Beer, 1999, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*, London: Serindia Publications, p.154.
- ⁷ The Dalai Lama is said to be the earthly manifestation of Avalokitesvara.
- ⁸ The Five Dhyani Buddhas are the heads of five Buddha families. They are Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi. Each represents a cardinal direction with one in the centre. They are not historical figures, like *Buddha Shakyamuni*, but transcendent beings. Each is associated with a colour, mudra, an animal that supports his throne, an attribute and *bija* (seed syllable). A good introduction is the website 'Tibetan Buddhist Teachings on The Mandala of the Five Dhyani Buddhas', <http://www.tsl.org/Masters/buddhas/dhyani/frinroduction.html>. (Viewed September 2006.)
- ⁹ The script is in the form of *dbu med* (without head), which means it is less cursive than the commonly used *dbu can* (with head) script. The Tibetan language was adapted from Brahmi and written down at the time Buddhism was introduced into Tibet, seventh century. *Dbu med* first appears in the twelfth century. The *stupa* is bell shaped and represents the enlightened mind.
- ¹⁰ In reference to taking the bread and the wine, Jesus told his twelve disciples: 'Do this in remembrance of me', 1 Cor 11:23-25.
- ¹¹ Gos Lotsava (c.992-1074), also known as Drogmi Lotsawa, traveled to India and, after many years of study, returned to Tibet bringing with him instructions of almost 80 major tantras, including the important Hevajra tantra. See 'HH the Sakya Trizin Visits North America', *The Snow Lion Newsletter*, http://www.snowlionpub.com/pages/N50_1.html. (Viewed September 2006.)
- ¹² His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910-1991), the head of the Tibetan Nyingmapa school, noted: 'When a great teacher passes away, his body is no more, but to indicate that his mind is dwelling forever in an unchanging way in the dharmakaya, one will erect a *stupa* as a symbol of the mind of the buddhas.' See Stupa Information Page, <http://www.stupa.org.nz/>. (Viewed September 2006.)
- ¹³ 'Ronald Knox, an Englishman who lived in Sri Lanka in the 1660s and 1670s, observed bronze foundry practices there. Before the eyes of a Buddha image are made, 'it is not accounted a God, but a lump of ordinary metal, and thrown about the shop with no more regard than anything else... The Eyes being formed, it is thence a God.' David Freedberg et. al., 1994, 'The Object of Art History', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 76, no. 3, pp. 394-396 at p. 85. Furthermore, according to Robert Thurman, the Tibetans believe that the paintings and sculptures of deities are an extension of the deity. Marilyn Rhie and Robert Thurman, 1991, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet*, London: Thames and Hudson, pp. 36-37.
- ¹⁴ Peter Fingesten, 1951, 'Toward a New Definition of Religious Art', *College Art Journal*, vol. 10 no. 2, pp. 131-146, at p.144.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.133.
- ¹⁶ However, unlike the Greek and Russian understanding that icons are (re)produced by the hand of the spirit, the Tibetans are 'ordinary' artisans, generally born into the profession. There is a repeated idea that strenuous yogi-like practices precede Tibetan painting. Jackson and Jackson, state that this is a myth perpetuated by the idealism of textual sources, although, there are historical exceptions and the ritual practice of the 'day-thangka'. David Jackson and Janice Jackson, 1988, *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and materials*, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, p. 12. Oleg Tarasov, 2003, *Icon and Devotion: Sacred spaces in Imperial Russia*, London: Reaktion Books.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 11.

- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 11. See also figure on p. 9 captioned 'People of Tarap (Dolpo) viewing *thangkas* during a religious gathering'.
- ¹⁹ Creighton Gilbert, 1998, 'What did the Renaissance patron buy?', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 392-450, at p. 407.
- ²⁰ George Wolfe, 2002, 'Inner Space as Sacred Space: The temple as a metaphor for the mystical experience', *Cross Currents*, vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 400-411.
- ²¹ Savonarola (1452-1498) was an Italian Dominican priest and leader of Florence from 1494 until his execution in 1498. He was known for religious reformation, book burning, and the destruction of art he thought not suitable. In 1497 he set alight the 'Bonfire of the Vanities', here he burnt the excesses of moral permissiveness, such as mirrors, cosmetics, fine dresses and gaming tables. Artist Sandro Botticelli threw his own art onto these pyres. Savonarola is thought of as a precursor to Martin Luther (1483-1546). Gilbert, 1998, op. cit., p. 413.
- ²² Ibid., pp. 439, 444.
- ²³ Western painters have often signed their paintings in this same corner.
- ²⁴ Arthur Danto, 1989, 'Critical Reflections', *Artforum International*, vol. 28, (September), pp. 132-133, at p. 133.
- ²⁵ Howard Becker, 1982, *Art worlds*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 306-307.
- ²⁶ Andre Malraux, 1974, *The Voices of Silence*, St Albans: Paladin, p.16.
- ²⁷ Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574).
- ²⁸ The defense lawyer also noted that the photograph was inspired by the popular Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*. Anon., 2005, 'French Court Bans Christ Advert', BBC NEWS (online), 11 March, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4337031.stm>. (Viewed September 2006.) See 'Marithe & Francois Girbaud: Last Supper' for photograph. <http://www.epica-wards.org/assets/epica/2005/finalists/print/images/27020%20%20MFGSPRIN.jpg>. (Viewed September 2006.)
- ²⁹ Christina Toren, 1988, 'Making the present, revealing the past: The mutability and continuity of tradition as process', *Man* (n.s.), vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 696-711.
- ³⁰ The Christian bread and wine ritual to the traditional Fijian practice of kava drinking. Ibid.
- ³¹ The fact that the *Last Supper* is a textile is also relevant to Fijian tradition and the ritual importance of bark cloths. Ibid., p. 711.
- ³² Ann Shaftel notes that according to Mingyur Rinpoche the power/spirit of a Tibetan object is only destroyed when it is either burned or buried. This means that Tibetan objects held by public and private collections continue to be ritual objects irrespective of who owns them. Mingyur Rinpoche is a venerated teacher and master of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Personal communication.
- ³³ Jesuit Father Grueber travel diaries and letters were documented by Athanasius Kircher (ed.), 1677, *China Illustrata*, Amstelodami: apud Jacobum á Meurs, pp. 109, 118.
- ³⁴ Michael Carrington, 2003, 'Officers, Gentlemen and Thieves: The looting of monasteries during the 1903/4 Younghusband Mission to Tibet', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 81-109, at p. 104.
- ³⁵ Contemporary *thangkas* of traditional style are actively commissioned by Western Tibetan Buddhists.
- ³⁶ Clare Harris, 1999, *In the Image of Tibet: Tibetan painting after 1959*, London: Reaktion Books.
- ³⁷ Jean-Hubert Martin, 2003, 'The World's Altars and the Contemporary Art Museum', *Museum International*, vol. 55, no. 2, pp. 38-45, at p. 39.
- ³⁸ Ibid., p. 41.
- ³⁹ For the sake of this argument I have ignored Western Tibetan Buddhist practitioners.
- ⁴⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, 1990, 'Resonance and Wonder', in Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (eds) 1990, *Exhibiting Cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display*, Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, pp. 42-56, at p. 46.
- ⁴¹ Bernard Faure, 1998, 'The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 768-813, at p. 774. Also, Greenblatt, 1990, op. cit., pp. 43-4.
- ⁴² Jane Casey Singer, 2000, 'Pratapaditya Pal: Champion of the Himalayas', *Cloudband Magazine*, July 21, <http://www.cloudband.com/magazine/>. (Viewed December 2003.)
- ⁴³ Ivan Gaskell, 2003, 'Being True to Artists', *Journal of Aesthetics and Criticism*, vol. 61, no. 1, pp. 53-60, at p.150.

- ⁴⁴ John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel, 2003, *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditation Art*. Chicago: Serindia, p.19.
- ⁴⁵ Gaskell,,op. cit., p. 149.
- ⁴⁶ Wolfe, op. cit., pp. 400-11.
- ⁴⁷ Karsten Harris quoted in Donald Kuspit, 2004, *The End of Art*, New York: Cambridge University Press, p. xiv.
- ⁴⁸ Karen Stone, 2003, *Image and Spirit: Finding meaning in visual art*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, p12.
- ⁴⁹ David Morgan, 2005, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious visual culture in theory and practice*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 232.
- ⁵⁰ David Freedberg, 1994, 'The Object of Art History', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 76, no. 3, pp. 394-396, at p. 395.
- ⁵¹ Morgan, op. cit., p. 3.
- ⁵² The Grand Tour was popular from the 1660s to the 1820s and was a tour of European cultural venues. It was an educational rite of passage for wealthy-born bachelors. A grand tour could last from several months to several years.
- ⁵³ Stone, op. cit., p. 102.
- ⁵⁴ Titus Burckhardt, 1967, *Sacred Art in East and West: Its principles and methods*, London: Perennial Books, p. 7.