

ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF SECULAR RELIGION AND RELIGIOSITY

AN EXEGESIS OF THE ARWORK 3

This exegesis is a complement to, and a critical reflection of the mixed media art work 3, which explores alternative forms of secular religion and religiosity, within the context of contemporary western societies. 'Alternative' means that the interest of the investigation lies beyond the institutional and established religions, or other religious organisations or movements. Rather the interests of the research project lies in forms of religion and religiosity as cultural phenomena and subjective experiences that are assumed to be fluid and contextual, fragmentary, trivial and unconscious. Alternative forms of religion and religiosity that are informed or in some way related to a scientific worldview, to technology, and to nature. The work is not only interested in these various forms, but also in how they are disseminated through the media, and their manifestation in popular culture. The exegesis is structured in three parts, and sets out with an introduction of the project's context, scope, objectives, along with its research questions, a brief historical background, followed by an account of the terminology used in this project. A formal description of 3 will be given in the second part, then I will present its methodologies, an outline of its content, its inception and development, and finally an attempt to situate the work within a broader discourse within contemporary art. The concluding part will open with an account of the main themes expressed through the work, and then a discussion will follow relating this content and its symbolic dimensions to how a semiotic transferal of meaning occurs. Ultimately I will discuss the outcome of the work, and propose some new questions emerging from the art work and from this text.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to a global survey made in 2010 by PEW Research Center, 84% of the world's population stated to be religiously affiliated¹. A considerable amount of the remaining non-affiliated, are citizens of the western societies, generally speaking, Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Another significant feature of the majority of these societies is that they share a scientific worldview, meaning here "the picture of the universe that emerges if one brings together the different theories of physics, astronomy, biology, sociology, and so on into a systematic whole."² Most of us, affluent secular westerners, see ourselves as post-enlightenment, rational and analytical minded people, who would prefer the Big Bang theory to describe the origin of the universe, rather than for instance the biblical, the Norse or the Maori cosmogony.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is in this context that this projects starts out, asking; is there really no place for the religious in contemporary western societies, and is it true that we do not believe in anything? That is, outside the institutional and organised religions, and outside the confines of new religious movements, or 'New Age'. Has science enlightened us, woken us from of our previous illusionary slumber, leaving religion behind as something we have progressed beyond, as historical or evolutionist theories put forward by for instance

Georg W.F. Hegel, Auguste Comte and Edward B. Tylor?³ Have we perhaps lost the necessity for religion and religiosity since its functions⁴ are being facilitated by other processes or institutions within society? Perhaps the scientific worldview, with its instrumental, materialistic and mechanistic approach to nature and life and humans, has produced a disenchanting world⁵, devoid of intrinsic value, autonomy and meaning, inducing in individuals a spiritual crisis,⁶ or could this be a reiteration of one of the biblical deadly sins, 'sloth'?

Or are there other ways of approaching the religious, starting out by questioning historical progress, or the whole idea of progress? An idea that today seems deep-rooted with the advance of science and technology, coupling the growth of knowledge with social and moral improvement, but could this in fact just be a myth? A myth invented by enlightenment philosophers as a secular version of the messianic kingdom?⁷ Then what about atheism, can that be a form of religion, "... an evangelical creed not unlike Christianity", as suggested by philosopher John Gray about 'new atheism'?⁸ Perhaps the scientific worldview does not alienate us from our surrounding environment and our biological bodies, but rather has a potential for a deeper understanding of our relation to nature? An idea suggested by professor of religion, nature, and environmental ethics Bron Taylor, with his notion of 'dark green religion', which he for instance relates to deep ecology, environmentalism and paganism.⁹ Maybe science actually can be the source for a spirituality, as Sam Harris suggest in the book *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion*, something which is also expressed in the growing number of people identifying themselves as 'spiritual but not religious'.¹⁰ What if we could look to culture to find religion's replacement,¹¹ or perhaps popular culture, a milieu where everybody can take part, where one can 'worship' a pantheon of icons, indulge in countless stories, and essentially where one can feel some sort of connection and identity?

This project is concerned with what I see as narrow conceptions about the religious. Conventional conceptions that are fixed in institutional, moral and dogmatic understandings of religion, or with a 'New Age' religiosity and spirituality. For are there not religious yearning and aspiration, obsession with the supernatural, desire for transcendence, worship of people and sacralisation of places and objects, present in western contemporary societies? This project suggests that there are, and with a reconsideration of what the religious is, the artwork 3 sets out to explore and give an account of this by focusing on religious expressions disseminated through mass media, and their location within popular culture. With the vantage point in popular culture discourses on science, technology and nature, these expressions do not make out a clear picture of any new totalising religion, but rather make out a set of patterns, structures, dimensions, motifs, ideas, and beliefs that reflect something religious. To show the relationship between science, technology and nature, other significant characteristics of the western societies are also examined. Here I am referring to a capitalist economy, consumer culture, the entertainment industry, and the Judaeo-Christian cultural tradition, which in themselves play significant roles in influencing, shaping, and maintaining the alternative forms of religion and religiosity this project sets out to explore.

The aim of this investigation is not to prove that all westerners are religious, contrary to their own assertions. It is rather an effort to make aware notions of the religious, to widen its category, and put forth structures, dimensions and patterns of western culture and show their religious or religious-like properties. Through the artwork I attempt to account for a particular western worldview, which is infused

and based on a scientific materialist perspective, by representing its cosmology, meaning here the order of the world. A cosmology that not only consists of particles, natural forces and their interactions, but also technological devices, natural environments, animals, people, and fictions and imaginations that depict everything from utopian futures to end times. This representation does also aim to reveal the power of media, here as images, audio and text, and on how they increasingly define our world and our everyday life.

BRIEF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A common characteristic of the western societies is that of its Judaeo-Christian heritage, which in the 16th century consisted of largely religious societies, whether Jewish, Catholic or Protestant. This century is significant, because it gave birth to modern science, and with that a breakthrough for a scientific worldview, which already had influenced Europe by renaissance humanists.¹² These undertakings paved way for a new understanding of the universe, for a scientific cosmology and a secular worldview. 'Secularisation' is a term used to signify the declining influence of the western Christian churches on society, economics and politics, starting in the 16th century and accelerated in the 18th century.¹³ In the succeeding centuries, the 'secularisation thesis' formed, influenced by an earlier enlightenment discourse, and articulated by some of the contemporary philosophers and theorists, among others Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Max Weber's formulation of the thesis became the most influential, stating that secularisation is one of five integral parts of a 'modernisation' process, which also included rationalisation, industrialisation, bureaucratisation and urbanisation.¹⁴ With modernisation followed technology, mass literacy and education, new modes of production, capitalism, and the mass media, which radically changed European society and culture. But towards the end of the 20th century the 'secularisation thesis' was cast into doubt, and a notion of the post-secular society emerged, claimed for instance by Jürgen Habermas.¹⁵ The notion of 'the post-secular'¹⁶ describes the return of the religious into the public consciousness, the political debate, and into culture in general. The results of an increasing globalisation and immigration are some factors that have led religion once again at the centre of the public debate.

Western history of art has also gone through a gradual secularisation process, which essentially cut its religious ties when art became an autonomous practice, and then among other things, became a medium for social and cultural critique. Even though art critical of religion is prevalent, religion in itself has been largely absent from contemporary discourse on art.¹⁷ But there are nonetheless examples, like the 2015-2016 exhibition *Rainbow in the Dark: On the Joy and Torment of Faith*¹⁸ Other exhibitions that have engaged with religious topics have been the 2006 Singapore Biennial entitled *Belief*; the 2008 exhibition *Traces du Sacré*;¹⁹ *GOD & GOODS. Spirituality and Mass Confusion* (2008);²⁰ *Medium Religion*²¹ (2009); and *Animism*²² (2012). Damien Hirst's exhibition *New religion* (2005)²³ takes another approach to religion, where he rather bluntly proclaims that science is the new religion.²⁴ Other contemporary artists that engage with religious themes are for instance Kevin Bewersdorf, who is interested in digital media in relation to spirituality and the sacred,²⁵ and filmmaker and artist Apichatpong Weerasethakul who explores the relationship between religious beliefs, modernisation, technological advancement and popular culture.²⁶ Bill Viola is an example of an artist who employs video as a vantage point to explore the

spiritual and the sublime.²⁷ These artists are examples on different ways of approaching the religious from an outside perspective, while maintaining a sensitivity, respect and acknowledgment of it as lived and real experiences.

TERMINOLOGY

Until now I have generally talked about 'the religious', but here I would like to nuance this term by separating 'religion' as referring to cultural aspects of the religious, from 'religiosity' as referring to the subjective aspects of the religious.²⁸ By stressing this distinction, I am able to explore both the cultural expressions and the individual experience of the religious, by making use of both a discursive and a phenomenological approach.

RELIGION

The question about what religion is, can be answered from a range of different perspectives, and be explored within different scientific disciplines. My particular exploration of religion within this artistic project, has its origin in the anthropological approach to the question. Anthropology can perhaps best be described as "the science of the diversity of humans, in their bodies and their behavior" and consequently, an anthropological approach to religion will therefore be "the scientific investigation of the diversity of human religions."²⁹ From this focus on variation and diversity, follows a broader conception on what appears as religion in different societies, and how they may appear and be manifested as alternative forms of religion.

Within anthropology, culture is often the vantage point for investigating subjects as for instance politics, gender, kinship, language or religion. Culture is here generally understood as "the learned and shared ideas, feelings, behaviors, and products of those behaviors characteristic of any particular society"³⁰ or as "the skills, conceptions and ways of being individuals has acquired as members of a society."³¹ It is not culture in the sense of high or low culture, or cultural products as paintings and theatre plays, but rather a concept that corresponds with the term 'popular culture', defined as "the aspects of attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, customs, and tastes that define the people of any society [...], the culture of the people."³² In other words, an anthropological approach to religion enables a perspective where popular culture makes out one of the central areas where religion becomes expressed, and where it is formulated, practiced, experienced and learned. It is from this understanding that this project looks to popular culture for alternative forms of religion.

The concept of culture within anthropology has been significantly influenced by the works of Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), who considers culture to be a system of meaning, and more concretely, a system of symbols. According to Geertz, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic form by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life."³³ Ideology, common sense, art and religion are all examples of this kind of cultural systems, Geertz claims.³⁴ In the influential essay "Religion as a Cultural System" Geertz defines religion as "(1) a system of symbols which

act to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic”³⁵ Religion is, according to this definition, the dimension of culture that not only provides individuals with meaning and direction in life by offering models of the world (worldview, ontology), but also by offering models for action (moral, ethos) that correspond and mutually reinforce each other.³⁶ At the core of the religious perspective is “the conviction that the values one holds are grounded in the inherent structure of reality, that between the way one ought to live and the way things really are there is an unbreakable inner connection.”³⁷ Geertz explains: “sacred symbols function to synthesize a people’s ethos—the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood — and their worldview — the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order.”³⁸

To summarise, the term ‘religion’ refers to the cultural aspect of the religious. Religion is a system of meaning which through symbols mediates conceptions of the world and ways of life that correspond with each other and mutually reinforce each other, which in turn give meaning and direction to individual existence. Comprehensive systems of meaning as these, that encompass both ontology and morality can also be described as “broader clusters of meaning”,³⁹ or what is referred to as discourses. Discourses are “the way people talk or write about something, the body of knowledge implied, or the use of that knowledge”⁴⁰ and/or “themes, attitudes and values – expressed through written and oral statements, images and behavior – which at a given time and place, within a certain institutional or non-institutional context are deemed meaningful.”⁴¹ An important feature of discourses are that they “not only claim to be meaningful, but they also make a claim to truth”,⁴² in the same way as religions are clothed in an “aura of factuality” and “moves beyond the realities of everyday life” (‘the real’), by claiming and formulating the “really real.”⁴³ This characteristic can also be applied to popular culture, which is something that not only consists of films, pop music, sports and so forth, but is also “influenced by professional entities that provide the public with information. These sources include the news media, scientific and scholarly publications, and ‘expert’ opinion from people considered an authority in the field.”⁴⁴ My exploration of religious expressions within contemporary culture, is with the application of this set of concepts, an exploration of that ontology and moral that unites and mediates in the system of symbols that are inherent in popular culture, and more concretely in its audiovisual discourses.

RELIGIOSITY

While I with ‘religion’ want to stress the cultural dimension of the religious, I will with ‘religiosity’ accentuate the subjective dimension of the religious. ‘Religiosity’ is far less theorised than what ‘religion’ is, according to Angel,⁴⁵ who is one of the few that has explored the concept, while he himself refers to William James (1842-1910) and his *The Varieties of the Religious Experience*, as an early example of someone who has done so.⁴⁶ The concept ‘religiosity’ “originates in a western tradition of reflecting religious phenomena”, for instance within psychology, sociology, theology and anthropology, but it lacks a precise and interdisciplinary definition. Conceptually it is connected to terms as ‘spirituality’, ‘piety’, ‘devoutness’, or even ‘godliness’, and it can be used as a general anthropological term that covers “cognition, emotion, attitude, and self concepts.” Religiosity deals with “personal experience of

individuals” and “there is no need to relate the term ‘religiosity’ to some established religion”, according to Angel.⁴⁷ A similar understanding of the term is found in Stolz,⁴⁸ who defines religiosity as “individual preferences, emotions, beliefs, and actions that refer to an existing (or self-made) religion.”⁴⁹ For both Angel and Stolz religiosity relates to the aspect of the religious which Geertz calls ‘ethos’, that is, the moods and motivations of the religious individual which appears as “the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood.”⁵⁰

To address this subjective and individual dimension of religiosity, a phenomenological approach has been central to the specific expression of my art work, because of my intention of creating a religious experience in the viewers of the work. A phenomenological approach is “the study of phenomena as they appear to the consciousnesses of an individual or a group of people; the study of things as they appear in our lived experiences”,⁵¹ and a phenomenological approach in explorations of religious individuals and individuals religiosity makes it possible “to take seriously the experience of a religious reality, central to the people we study.”⁵²

2. THE ART WORK

3 is a mixed media installation consisting of a nine minute three-channel video loop accompanied by: a three-channel soundtrack; a corridor lit by fluorescent black light lamps with a text on two walls; and a book on display near the entry, which is for sale in the exhibition in a limited edition of nine. The first element one encounters is a reading copy of this book, titled *Somethingness - The Poetry Companion to 3*, which is displayed on a shelf. On the right side of the book display is the entrance to the video work, which is entered through a curtain, then one is lead through an ultraviolet lit corridor containing a translucent text. After passing through the corridor one enters a bigger space with three 46" screens arranged in a triangle. In the middle of this room, a stationary, ordinary office chair is placed, where the viewer is supposed to sit. The three channel videos are elaborately arranged together with, on the one hand, a continuously, melodic and rhythmic soundtrack, and on the other, a text which is expressed both through graphics on the screens, but in general through the vocals of the music, and it is this text that is printed in the book.



Figure 1. Ørjan Amundsen, 3, 2016. Installation views.

METHODOLOGY

The different elements of this work are meant to form a unified whole, but most central is the audiovisual part. Its distinguishing feature is that it consists of visual, musical and literally material, that is 'found' or 'remixed'. Artworks deploying this mode of production or strategy are often referred to as appropriation, assemblage, sampling, collage, mashup, or what I will refer to, remix. This method of reusing preexisting material has been used by artists since early modernist art.⁵³ During its history, it has taken multiple forms and made popular in the 1960s by artists like Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg.⁵⁴ Digital media, subsequent technological innovations, and social media later opened up a new level of appropriation, resulting in a non-artistic approach to remixing media, parallel to the artistic approach. This situates the art work 3 not just within the field of remix and video art, but also within a larger 'remix culture'.

DESCRIPTION

The accompanying book, which includes the lyrics of the music in the video work, contains material obtained from for instance poems, textbooks and commercial slogans. But through series of editing, manipulating, poeticising and the short three-lined structure of every poem (reminiscent of and inspired by the Haiku form), the final text has become generally self-composed. The accompanying book with its twenty pages is produced with the application 'Photos', native to Apple's OS X, and the photo book printing service Apple provides through this application. All the images in this book are obtained from Apple's website. The zigzag corridor lit by black lights leading into the video work, has on two walls a fluorescent text, that is, a quote by philosopher Alfred North Whitehead:

Nothing can be omitted, experience drunk and experience sober, experience sleeping and experience waking, experience drowsy and experience wide-awake, experience self-conscious and experience self-forgetful, experience intellectual and experience physical, experience religious and experience sceptical, experience anxious and experience care-free, experience anticipatory and experience retrospective, experience happy and experience grieving, experience dominated by emotion and experience under self-restraint, experience in the light and experience in the dark, experience normal and experience abnormal.⁵⁵

The three video channels are arranged in a triangular position inside a room lit only by these screens. At the centre between the screens have been placed an office chair, indicating that this work is only intended for one person at a time. The intention behind this is to maximise the viewer's attention to the work, and with that facilitate commitment to, and a total absorption of, the work. The way the screens are arranged, prevents the viewer from seeing all the screens at the same time, leaving it up to the viewer to actively move around on the office chair that enables circular movement, so the viewer can easily shift attention from one screen to another. The imagery in the video work is material collected from a range of different sources, for instance feature and documentary films, TV-programs, commercials, music videos, etc. There is no clear narrative, but as mentioned earlier, it is structured around an account of a scientific cosmology. With material depicting for instance animations and models of atoms, planets and black holes; juxtaposed, merged or superimposed with technological devices, consumer products, natural landscapes and scenes from science-fiction films.

The soundtrack consists significantly of sampled material, however it is also to some degree modified and remixed together with a self-produced vocal track. The sampled material is generally from pop music, but

also from a range of other sources, such as nature sounds, voice-over narrations, and other sound effects. The continuous flux of the images is contrasted and intertwined with the equally fluid continuous soundtrack that partly corresponds directly, for instance via rhythms, chord shifts, and other musical cues, or indirectly by connections between what is sung and what is displayed. The video work is looped and has no clear recognisable beginning or end. It has nonetheless a climax, reached in the middle of the duration, preceded by a gradual crescendo where sound and the image increasingly intensifies until reaching its central apex.



Figure 2. Ørjan Amundsen, 3, 2016. Installation view.

DEVELOPMENT

While applying for this specific masters program, I was engaged with my bachelor of fine art project, *Universe*, which also involved appropriation of found material. This project was inspired by T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*, and by an idea proposed in Philip Dick's novel *Valis*: that the divine communicates through waste.⁵⁶ The idea was to question the disillusionment and spiritual crisis reflected in the *The Waste Land*, and it was produced out of quotes, lyrics, slogans etc., that I collected from my everyday encounters with books, films, the Internet, or generally from the information in the world around me. The project was an open-ended experimentation with writing which finally became the basis for a remix video where I attempted to transform or translate this poem into images. This video, along with the poem, became my graduation work. The questions posed in this work, along with its methodology, motivated me to explore this theme and form further, in a more structured and theory based approach.

During the first two semesters of this masters program a variety of ideas surfaced, out of the research, discussions, and studio talks, both in relation to my subject matter and to artistic methods. The first work I produced was the result of an idea of using the Internet as the vantage point for studying secular religiosity or spirituality, something for instance artist Kevin Bewersdorf explores in the book *Spirit Surfing*. Another inspiration was the religion Syntheism, founded in Sweden in 2012, among other by Alexander Bard who in the book co-written by Jan Söderqvist *Syntheism - Creating God in the Internet age* proposes that the "Internet is God."⁵⁷ The seemingly omnipresence and omniscience of the Internet, the community and the immaterial 'space' it enables were some of the aspects I explored in this first work. It was titled *Internet* and was an attempt to bluntly materialise the immaterial by exhibiting a printer with a printout of a webpage. This webpage consisted of a text composed of quotes with certain highlighted words (hyperlinks), for instance by Mark Zuckerberg; "If we succeed, the Internet will truly represent everyone."⁵⁸



Figure 3 & 4. Ørjan Amundsen, *Internet*, 2014, & *Black Ops...I Did it Again*, 2015. Installation views.

In the second semester I attended a course in anthropology of religion,⁵⁹ which provided me a theoretical framework to ground my questions in, and I turned my attention on to how religion and religiosity relates to culture and worldview. The course had also made me conscious of how the study of religion with its terms and concepts is influenced largely by a western intellectual tradition, which again is influenced by the Judaeo-Christian religions.⁶⁰ This awareness was one of the aspects I wanted to explore in the work I did for the second semesters evaluation.

Triptych: Black Ops...I did it again (Three studies for the MFA exhibition 2016, at the base of a crucifixion). A three channel video, distributed on three computer displays, all with different sizes, and exhibited on a table reminiscent of an altar. The main theme this work investigates is a seeming paradox within western culture, that on the one hand there is an unprecedented prevalence of depression, and on the other there is a pervasive focus on, or even obsession with, happiness, health, fitness and wellbeing. I attempted to create an opposition between these two phenomena which I speculated were, in the former case an expression of a kind of negative spirituality, or 'cult of death'; and the latter an expression of a 'cult of life'. I used the centre screen as an intermediate, to suggest that the two phenomena are in constant interaction, and essentially two sides of the same coin. This work was made, as the subtitle indicates, as a test for the final exhibition, indicating I had decided on making a three channel video installation. The potency of the three channel video to convey not only a large amount of images but also a special

interaction between the images and its soundtrack, enabled me, as I saw it, to explore the web of references and relations there are between ideas, symbols and media content.

I proceeded in the following semester with collecting material for the work, and made initial plans for a triangular room with rear projected screens for walls, that could be big enough for a small group of viewers. But I soon realised that an installation like this, would need a very large space or some high end projectors, which were unattainable. With these concrete limitations at hand, I decided to make the work for a single person, something I realised would enhance the experiential aspect of the work. I also decided to use a screen size that fitted the viewers distance, in that way not exhausting the audience more than necessary. The idea to make an accompanying book came out of the a wish to put attention on the whole work as consisting of three equally important parts - poetry, music and video.

CONTEXT WITHIN CONTEMPORARY ART

As mentioned in the introduction, exhibitions and artists concerned with exploring the religious in contemporary secular society do exist, but are not widespread. The religious is nonetheless not the only concern of my work. *The Whole Earth*, from 2013 is the exhibition that pointed out for me the interesting link between the 'Silicon Valley' culture and "hippie culture and cybernetics, nature romantics and technology worshippers."⁶¹ A relationship I also make use of in my work, and something which is similar to what artist Ying Miao, in the work *App-Nosis*, explores; that is, the relation between spirituality and Apple products' cultic dimension in the recent group exhibition *Secret surface. Where meaning materializes* (2016). This exhibition "presents contemporary works that deconstruct metaphysical explanatory models without wholly abandoning the question of meaning",⁶² a similar strategy employed in my project.

A significant feature of my work is that it induces a certain sensory overload, created by abundance of audiovisual impressions. This technique is of course nothing new in art, just consider Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*; or abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky, who in his book *On the Spiritual in Art* suggested that the sensation of colours could be spiritual experiences.⁶³ Other works and artists that have influenced and informed my project that share this formal expression is for instance the video work *Neo Geo: An American Purchase* (1989) by Peter Callas, which has been described as a "complex mix of cartoon-style drawings, graphics and visual iconography which bombards the viewer with sounds, colours and images that increasingly saturate and overload the screen",⁶⁴ and contemporary video artist Ryan Trecartin (often in collaboration with Lizzie Fitch), who uses a hyperactive and frenetic editing technique, along with frequent use of appropriated texts and multiple video and audio channels. A different approach to an excessive use of the video medium is found in the works of Bill Viola, who is said to be "updating the sublime for a contemporary secular audience."⁶⁵ The artwork 3 is also concerned with the power and the meaning of images in a mass mediated world, something that artist and writer Hito Steyerl has investigated throughout her career. Her works are "committed to complication, as she deftly and lightly weaves associative webs designed to catch our imagination, but not to fix it down,"⁶⁶ a formulation I would like to voice as an ambition of my work.

3. DISCUSSION AND OUTCOME

In this final section I will analyse and interpret outcomes of the work 3, with a focus on the video element of the work in relation to an understanding of religion as a system of symbols. In the succeeding section I will apply a semiotic model to examine how this meaning system is opened up and reinterpreted, expanded and developed through the use of the remix strategy. Then I will give a brief account of all the elements in the work, and of how they relate to each other. Finally I will attend to the experiential aspect of the work, discussing what subjective experiences the work may induce in its audience, and if this can be described as something religious.

THE DISCOURSES OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND NATURE IN POPULAR CULTURE

With the vantage point in religion as a dimension of culture, and as a system of meaning that is expressed in symbolic form, I will here discuss prevalent symbols and its characteristic features as (I have found them) presented in popular culture discourses on science, technology and nature. Symbols that provide meaning and direction in life by offering a model of the world (worldview, ontology) and a model for action within this world (ethos, morale). The symbols that I have detected and re-presented in the video work, will in turn be discussed in relation to broader, contemporary discourses on science, technology and nature, to support my assumption that alternative forms of religion and religiosity prevail in contemporary western societies.

SCIENCE

The video material that I categorise as exemplifying a science discourse with religious properties, are largely obtained from popular science documentaries, in general based on the natural sciences. These video clips depicts for instance graphic models of the subject element, enactments of theories, analytical steps, and journeys through time and outer and inner space, from the microcosmos of the quantum world, to neurones firing in the human brain, and to sliding between galactic clusters and in between the multiverse. The clips are characterised by a frequent use of special effects, microscopic and telescopic all-seeing perspectives, multiple colours, grids, models, animations, graphs and maps.

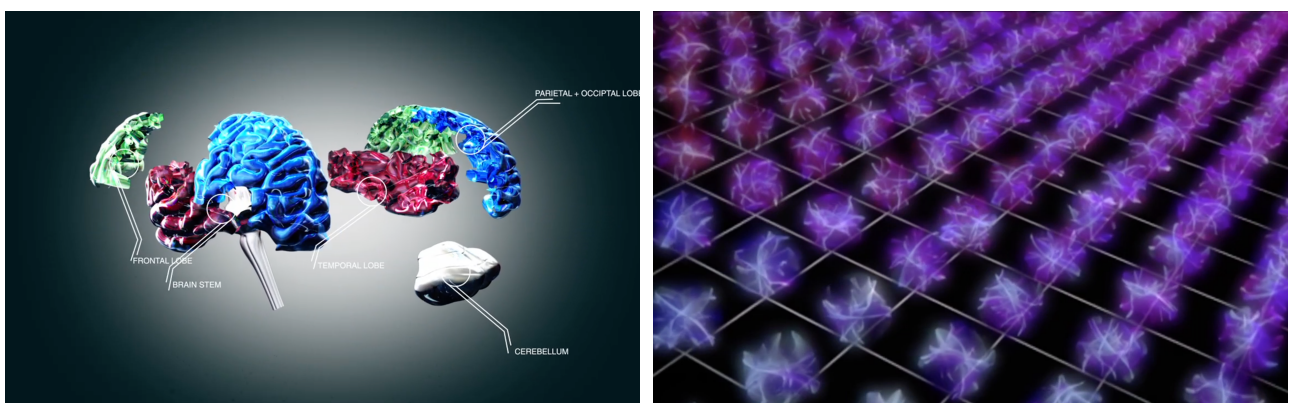


Figure 5 & 6. Stills from 3, Ørjan Amundsen, 2016.

These clips share and generally formulate a worldview where everything is in a mathematical order and essentially possible to systematise and analyse all aspects of. The world is presented as something which is fully understandable through the theories and formulas that have been provided by science. All parts of the universe are potentially a case for scientific concern and exploration, and that which still remains as 'unknown' is necessary for the ongoing discovery of the scientific quest. The ethos established within this 'science' discourse, is a sense of partaking in the scientific endeavour, a rational curiosity and an empowerment by acquiring knowledge. It values the importance of science, establishes a trust in scientific method and its knowledge, along with an admiration of the people (or human intelligence in general) who dedicate themselves to the hard work of science.

What I attempt to show in the video work, is the prevalence of this worldview and ethos, where science is the dominant way to describe the world and everything in it, and thereby rendering other forms of knowledge and approaches as false. In other words, the totalising potential of science in having a monopoly on truth, defining what counts as valid questions and reliable answers. In my work I do not only intend to show that the science discourse of popular culture promotes a worldview and ethos of naturalism, but also that it takes on different forms. One is represented by for instance Richard Dawkins, who writes: "[T]he universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference."⁶⁷ This is of course a relevant perspective with scientific grounding, but at the same time it also expresses a Nietzschean 'tragic view', which philosopher John Caputo considers as a kind of religion.⁶⁸ But science is not only providing evidences for a cold and blind universe where mankind is just a short lived random accident. In another form of naturalism, which also subscribes to atheism, science is rather a source for awe, wonder and sense of deep connection to the cosmos. This approach is for instance supported by astronomer Marcelo Gleiser, when he says: "We have to teach that science has a spiritual dimension; not in the sense of supernaturalism, but in the sense of how it connects us with something bigger than we are."⁶⁹

TECHNOLOGY

The material within the category of the 'technology' discourse, is generally obtained from commercials, promotional videos, documentaries and feature films, and are representing technological devices, vehicles and instruments, both as fictional or as consumer products. The material presents these artefacts as extraordinary achievements, that are unique, novel and innovative creations that promise an improvement of life or for humanity in general. Another common feature is depictions presenting the technological objects as autonomous, without any human interventions. The videos present them as created, or rather emerging, directly out of the elements that they are made of, despite the fact that they are made by and created for humans. This is suggesting that technology is superior, perhaps even to humans. This worldview also has its negative counterpart expression, as a world where technology is a threat and fear to humanity, a common motif in science-fiction. In general the 'technology' discourse formulates a worldview where rapid change is the normality, where humanity is steadily progressing and even transcending through technology, where the technology acquires existence and agency, and where "the present already contains the future and this future explains the present."⁷⁰ And the corresponding

morale, the ethos, is that human and social progress shall and will correspond with the technological progress.

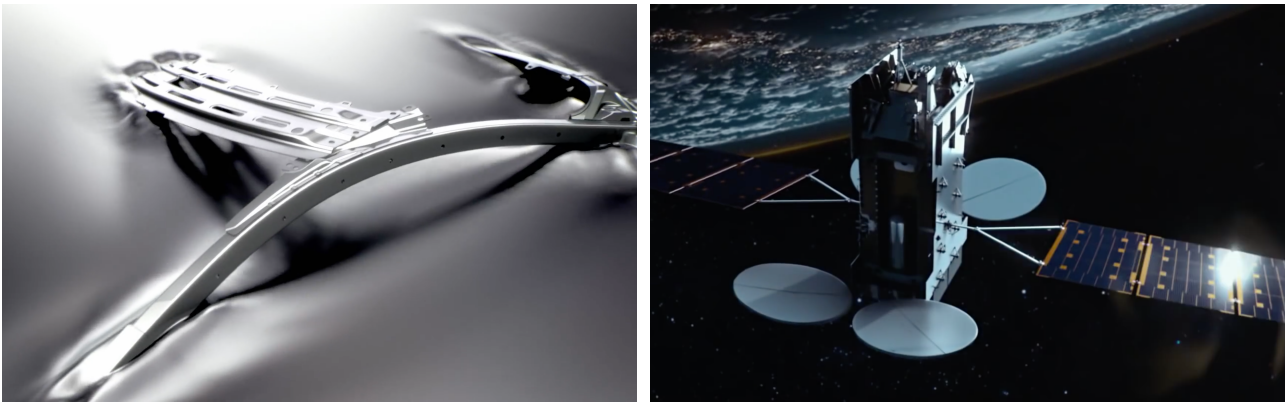


Figure 6 & 7. Stills from 3, Ørjan Amundsen, 2016.

The application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, that is, technology, is an important characteristic of the western societies, who one may agree “view themselves and the world through the lens of their dominant technology.”⁷¹ In a sense we are technological beings,⁷² meaning that we have always used extensions of ourselves to mould our environment. Contemporary western dependence and fascination for technology unmistakably feeds the popular imagination of what the consequences and prospects of technology are, in the form of hopes, promises, beliefs, and off course anxieties. The prospects of information technology, bioengineering, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence (AI) are some of the technologies that have shaped the popular imagination of ‘technology’, through Hollywood fictions, their scientists and developers, and self proclaimed visionaries such as Raymond Kurzweil. The latter predicts ‘the singularity’, in which he means a point in time when the human merges with AI, becoming digitised and ceasing to be biological organisms.⁷³ This spiritual quest, as media theorist Richard Barbrook puts it, is not new,⁷⁴ the hope for immortality is an age old motif, so is the idea that humans can use science and technology to create better versions of ourselves. A frightening example of this is how the idea of eugenics were applied by Nazi-Germany. One could also ask if the promise of technologically advancing the human species, introducing as other transhumanistic prospects as augmentation of human intellectual, physical, and emotional capacities, along with elimination of suffering,⁷⁵ would in fact be an enhancement, or actually the extinction of humankind. Another dark vision that has made it to recent headlines backed by for instance Stephen Hawking,⁷⁶ and Nick Bostrom,⁷⁷ is the idea that AI will outmatch its maker and potentially eradicate humanity.

End-time motifs are found to be closely linked to the humanists belief in progress, according to philosopher John Gray. He traces this worldview back to Christianity, claiming “[T]heories of progress are not scientific hypotheses. They are myths, which answer the human need for meaning.”⁷⁸ It is at least safe to say that ‘progress’ is a prevalent idea within the western societies. It is an idea of western societies as continually advancing, scientifically and technologically, which is basically taken for granted. It is a belief in knowledge and that the application of that knowledge leads to a simpler, healthier, more just, and less violent lives, as claimed by for instance Steven Pinker,⁷⁹ or Matt Ridley who wrote the book *The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves*. Even the vision of Norwegian University of Science and Technology’s

(NTNU) "Knowledge for a better world", enforces this idea. There is nonetheless no easy way of finding a universal set of criteria for deciding what is good and bad development. If one for instance considers the WWF's Living Planet Report from 2014, which documents that 52% of the Earth's animals has gone extinct since 1970⁸⁰, one may argue that progress is contested.

NATURE

In my video work I have chosen depictions of nature that adhere to and exemplify a certain discourse of 'nature' found within the popular culture. This material is largely taken from nature documentaries, and typically depicts different pristine natural environments, devoid of any humans and human activity. A world of complexity yet totality is portrayed, with scenes from the lives of species and habitats. Here we find frequent use of panoramic overviews, intimate close ups, slow motion, moving shots, and point of views from the air, under the sea surface or underneath the ground. A holistic worldview teeming with life is being formulated, where everything is connected with everything else, and we are shown this fine tuning in relation to nature's fragility. This deep ecological perspective induces a reverence for nature and life that in turn establish an ethos where nature has value in itself and should be protected from human intervention, and rather be an object for adoration and admiration.



Figure 8 & 9. Stills from 3, Ørjan Amundsen, 2016.

Recent climate change research, ecological transformations (or destruction), and the notion of 'the anthropocene', have revitalised the attention towards nature. Environmental concerns are not only reflected by environmentalist, but by politicians, religious leaders, corporations and the entertainment industry. Nature has been and still is elemental for many religions around the world. Even though the Christian dominion model over nature has influenced western societies and culture with an emphasis on its instrumental value, opposing opinions have without doubt been important. The European romantic movement, and later American writers and thinkers as for instance Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson have been influential for what Bron Taylor, a scholar of religion and nature, calls 'dark green religion'. He argues that this is a form of religion that "considers nature to be sacred, imbued with intrinsic value, and worthy of reverent care,"⁸¹ and that it is widespread and growing. Taylor distinguishes different categories of this type of religion, wherein scientific skepticism and disbelief in supernatural agency is a position that also can be, and is, included. That nature is both a place for the sacred, or for experiencing

the sublime, and at the same time a place for extraction and manipulation, are some of the paradoxes I explore.

To explore how the discourses of 'science', 'technology' and 'nature' may relate to each other, I have also used a variety of clips that do not necessarily connect directly to either of these three main discourses, but rather point to, suggest and open up potential semiotic relations between the discourses and their system of symbols, from which further and novel meanings may emerge. More precisely, what the video work in its entirety attempts to show, is the symbiotic relationship between science, technology and nature, to the capitalist economy, to consumer culture, to the entrainment industry and to the Judaeo-Christian cultural influence (or post-Christian culture).

THE REMIX OF MEANING

Remix is a semiotic phenomenon and the method of remix is "based on a semiotic logic performed with a combined set of actions consisting of the selection, decomposition, hybridization, and rewriting of (pre)existing texts."⁸² The aim is to produce nontrivial new texts, that is, texts as in symbolic systems of meaning in any medium, that are non-repetitive expressions "that expand into other networks of meaning in unanticipated ways,"⁸³ by repurposing preexisting signs and meaning systems. The remix is a rearrangement of something already recognisable,⁸⁴ and as I have mentioned above, my strategy has been to detect, select and decompose video material that contain some recognisable systems of symbols, which are representative of broader discourses on science, technology and nature within popular culture. With a vantage point in these conventions, symbols, metaphors, icons, references and other pre-established forms and cultural resources, the "pre-stressed blocks of meaning"⁸⁵ that the audience are assumed to be familiar with and dispose, my work seeks to call upon the interlocutors interpretive competences by planning the remix actions accordingly⁸⁶. It is essentially in this strategic capacity to identify and utilise "the know-how" of the audience, that a work of remix proves effective, according to semiotic theorist Peverini⁸⁷. It is not simply a result of the skills in selecting a set of cultural resources and then recombining them creatively in a relatively novel way, but the remix video is also created with an awareness to symbolic systems and a meta-linguistic competence, and it operates and functions on a meta level, creating a sort of meta-text that rewrites the popular cultural discourses.⁸⁸

Likewise, the description and analysis of how and why a remix generates new meanings, cannot be done by merely referring to the observable, surface features and only view the work as an expression with "sources." A more useful level of description and analysis, is the semiotic level and especially with the use of the semiotic model developed by philosopher Charles S. Peirce (1839-1914).⁸⁹ Following this model, meaning is not something that resides "in" any sign, neither in perceptible properties of the sign nor privately in anyone's mind. Rather it is understood as an ongoing cognitive *activity* or *process* among individuals sharing a culture, which means that meaning is what someone *does* or *activates* when participating as semiotic agents in the collective use of symbols. "Human symbol systems [...] incorporate a structure and a process enabling anyone to think with others and form nodes of cognitive relations in concepts that always seek completion in further relations."⁹⁰ In this generative meaning-making process, termed 'semiosis', the general law is that "*the interpretation (meaning) of a set of signs will always take the*

*form of another set of signs.*⁹¹ In Peirce' model, the sign is a triadic structure which is open and dynamic. The sign is (1) a sign vehicle, that is, its perceptible properties ('representamen'), which stands for something inter-individually cognitive, (2) an object or a concept ('referent'), which in turn stands in relation to a cognitive agent, in some respect or capacity. In the mind of that agent, the sign creates an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign, depending upon how (in what respect and capacity) it addresses the semiotic agent, who recognises the kind of sign and its conceptual possibilities, as an interpreter in an interpretive community. That new sign which it creates, the outcome and meaning of (3) the first sign ('interpretant') will consequently be a new sign.⁹² "Symbols grow. They come into being by development out of other signs....A symbol, once in being, spreads among the peoples. In use and experience, its meaning grows."⁹³

What this creates is not only multiple layers of meaning that continuously grow out of each other by juxtaposing and combining different content, but it weaves a new text. This expression, seen in relation to the other elements of 3, is the cosmology I sought out to create. In other words, the order of the world I have created is one that is not reducible, absolute or true, rather it is a complex open-ended expanding universe of meaning systems. "The result is a flight along metaphoric chains that go where nobody knows or predicts: "Metaphor is the law of growth of every semantic" as people make more and more analogies and associations and play with the ones they have."⁹⁴

MULTIPLE SEMIOTIC RESOURCES

The multiple layers of meaning the remix video generates, are further increased when taking into account the totality of the whole art work. In this sense, the video installation, the soundtrack and its lyrics, the corridor and the book becomes meaningful symbols in the relation to each other. The soundtrack and its lyrics provide a key connection between the three video channels and its sometimes erratic and confusing visual expression. The lyrics provide a narration, which along with the music constantly references semantically, rhythmically or affectively to the imagery. This audiovisual totality is framed within another totality, that is, the space the video installation creates, where the viewer is seated in the centre surrounded by video and audio. This seemingly position of control is contradicted by the inability of seeing everything at once, creating a 'blind spot' that is intended as an analogy to being immersed in a body, in conceptions, in a culture, in a worldview and in a cosmology. By contrasting the white cube with the dark ultraviolet lit space, the corridor is meant to suggest a ritualistic crossing from one status to another, something anthropologist Arnold van Gennep termed the 'rite of passage', in order to "to unite oneself with a new world."⁹⁵ The quote on the corridor walls, a long list of different experiences, suggests that all experiences are valuable; and its length and distribution across several walls, echoes the abundance contained in the video work. The book contains the narration of the soundtrack in text form, accompanied by images depicting Apple's current line of products, arranged according to the products monetary value. Some of these products are also depicted in the video work, and in a way the book is an attempt of translating the seemingly enthusiasm the video has with consumer products into a concrete example of an object that is at same time a consumer product, but unique and also an art object for sale. The book opens with the same Alfred North Whitehead quote as in the corridor, where the first word 'nothing', is deliberately highlighted to correspond with the main title of the book, 'Somethingness'. This is

further meant as a metaphor for the assumption I hold in the project, that even though we westerners are content with a scientific worldview where at the bottom of things there are nothing, yet we do believe in something.



Figure 10 & 11. Pages from *Somethingness - The Poetry Companion to 3*, Ørjan Amundsen, 2016.

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING NOTHING RELIGIOUS

I have with this project explored alternative forms of religion and religiosity, through an artwork expressing a specifically western cosmology where conceptions of science, technology and nature are constitutional elements. So far I have accounted for alternative forms of religion as cultural aspects, that is, systems of symbols, and to conclude I will turn my attention to the individual aspects of the religious, or religiosity, and its experiential aspects.

The strategy has been, as discussed above, to communicate ideas and provoke reactions on a pragmatic level (to think with the audience). Simultaneously the work also seeks to seduce and overwhelm, amaze, entertain and amuse, that is, effects attained by immersing the audience in a space with audio and visual content that is spectacular, colourful, grandiose, in some ways aesthetically pleasing, or even zany and sometimes banal. In other words, an attempt to induce in the individual viewer a religious experience.

This experiential and aesthetic aspect also attempt to reflect on the omnipresence and pervasiveness of media, whether in the form of text, images or sound, and on the methods and strategies employed in its dissemination. But still I hope my work is not simply recognised as a cultural critique disguised as entertainment. By revealing the possibilities for manipulating and changing meanings, I intend to show both positive and negative powers of popular culture. I am asking the question; does this unescapable flow of information render individuals semantically and semiotically lost, producing what Jean Baudrillard called the 'implosion of meaning'?⁹⁶ At the same time I am wondering if there could be another way of looking at, and experiencing this flood, a way that is not about trying to make sense out of information, that is, referential meaning, but rather about transcending into an experience meaningful in itself, like looking at the stars, or a piece of art you don't understand. Perhaps it is the experience of the 'sublime', that exceeds the limits of understanding, that "cannot be contained in any sensible form?"⁹⁷ More precise

perhaps, it is a modern sublime that includes “the vastness of nature as represented in modern science” and “the awe-inspiring complexity and scale of the capitalist-industrial system and in technology.”⁹⁸ Or could this experience be, to use another term by Baudrillard, ‘the ecstasy of communication’? Something even he admitted could be “a singular form of pleasure”, even though stressing its aleatory and dizzying effect.⁹⁹

FINAL WORDS

As indicated in paragraph above, there are a range of questions and topics that I could have paid more attention to, and brought into my project, as for instance power structures and ideology, media theory, aesthetics or in general art theory, to name a few. I have also found the semiotic approach to the remix methodology fruitful, but only scratched the surface of this way of analysing my artistic production, and importantly also about religion and popular culture as systems of symbols. Nonetheless I believe that I have with this somewhat ambitious project managed what I sought out to do, namely to *explore* alternative forms of religion and religiosity.

What is a religious experience? A question underlying this project, and a question left unanswered, still I would like to advocate William James’ claim that there is no single feature of the religious experience that defines it, along with his understanding of it as: “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine.”¹⁰⁰

- ¹ Pew Research Center, "The global religious landscape".
- ² Stenmark, "Worldview", 928.
- ³ Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion: Culture to the Ultimate*, 14.
- ⁴ Ibid. 21.
- ⁵ Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Fischhoff, 270.
- ⁶ Campbell, *Myths to Live By*, 11.
- ⁷ Horkheimer, *Critique of Instrumental Reason*, 72.
- ⁸ Gray, "A Point of View: Does atheism have to be anti-religious?"
- ⁹ Taylor, *Dark green religion: Nature spirituality and the planetary future*.
- ¹⁰ Frank, "Does Being 'Spiritual But Not Religious' Really Mean Anything?"
- ¹¹ Alain de Botton, *Religion for Atheists: A Non-believer's Guide to the Uses of Religion*.
- ¹² Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 258.
- ¹³ Kent, "The character and possibility of Christian theology today", 888-889.
- ¹⁴ Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 250-251.
- ¹⁵ Habermas, "Notes on Post-Secular Society", 17-29.
- ¹⁶ Habermas states that the term post-secular society "can only be applied to the affluent societies of Europe or countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand." (Habermas, "Notes on Post-Secular Society", 17.)
- ¹⁷ Elkins & Morgan, *Re-Enchantment*, i.
- ¹⁸ At Malmö Konstmuseum.
- ¹⁹ At the Centre Pompidou in Paris.
- ²⁰ At Villa Manin Centre for Contemporary Art, Passariano.
- ²¹ At the ZKM, Karlsruhe.
- ²² At the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.
- ²³ First exhibited at Paul Stolper Gallery, 78 Luke Street, London (2005), but has recently been shown at Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art, Gdansk, Poland (2015), The Lightbox, Woking, United Kingdom (2015) and The Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016).
- ²⁴ Hirst, *New Religion*, chapter "Interview".
- ²⁵ Connor, "Five Years Later, Kev Has a New Website".
- ²⁶ Rebhand, Bert, "Ghost World".
- ²⁷ Arya, "Bill Viola and the Sublime".
- ²⁸ Angel, "Religiosity", 2013.
- ²⁹ Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 2.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 3.
- ³¹ Eriksen, *Små Steder - Store Spørsmål. Innføring i Sosialantropologi*, 15.
- ³² Browne, *Popular Culture. Studies Across the Curriculum*, 25.
- ³³ Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 89.
- ³⁴ Geertz in Micheelsen, "I Don't do Systems: An Interview with Clifford Geertz", 16.
- ³⁵ Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 90.

- ³⁶ Eriksen, *Små Steder - Store Spørsmål*, 208.
- ³⁷ Geertz, *Islam Observed*, 96-97.
- ³⁸ Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 89.
- ³⁹ Papen, *Adult Literacy as Social Practice*, 12.
- ⁴⁰ Barnard, *History and Theory in Anthropology*, 197.
- ⁴¹ Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 37.
- ⁴² Papen, *Adult Literacy as Social Practice*, 12.
- ⁴³ Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 90, 112.
- ⁴⁴ Delaney, "Pop Culture: An Overview".
- ⁴⁵ Angel, "Religiosity", 2013.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 2014.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 2012-2013.
- ⁴⁸ Stolz, "Explaining religiosity: towards a unified theoretical model", 345-377.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 347.
- ⁵⁰ Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", 89-90, 96.
- ⁵¹ Desjarlais & Throop, "Phenomenological Approaches in Anthropology", 88.
- ⁵² Knibbe & Versteeg, "Assessing Phenomenology in Anthropology. Lessons from the Study of Religion and Experience", 48.
- ⁵³ Manovich, "Remix Strategies in Social Media", 151.
- ⁵⁴ Irvine, Irvine, "Remix and the Dialogic Engine of Culture: A Model for Generative Combinatoriality", 31.
- ⁵⁵ Whitehead, *Adventures of ideas*, 226.
- ⁵⁶ "The symbols of the divine show up in our world initially at the trash stratum."
- ⁵⁷ Bard & Söderqvist, *Syntheism - Creating God in the Internet Age*.
- ⁵⁸ Zuckerberg, "Mark Zuckerberg on the Future Where the Internet Is Available to All".
- ⁵⁹ "Religion, worldview and cultural classification". Course code SANT1103. NTNU.
- ⁶⁰ Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 5.
- ⁶¹ At the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.
- ⁶² KW Institute for Contemporary Art, "Secret surface. Where meaning materializes". Press release.
- ⁶³ Kandinsky, "On the Spiritual in Art".
- ⁶⁴ Meigh-Andrews, *A History of Video Art*, 228-229.
- ⁶⁵ Arya, "Bill Viola and the Sublime".
- ⁶⁶ Gray, "Artist Profile: Hito Steyerl".
- ⁶⁷ Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design*, 133.
- ⁶⁸ Caputo, *On Religion*, 120.
- ⁶⁹ Gleiser, "Science Doesn't Want To Take God Away From You".
- ⁷⁰ Barbrook, *Imaginary Futures*, 6.
- ⁷¹ Davis, *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information*.
- ⁷² Clark, *Natural Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence*.
- ⁷³ Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*.

- ⁷⁴ Barbrook, *Imaginary Futures*, 4.
- ⁷⁵ Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values".
- ⁷⁶ Hawking, "Transcendence looks at the implications of artificial intelligence - but are we taking AI seriously enough?"
- ⁷⁷ Khatchadourian, "The Doomsday Invention".
- ⁷⁸ Gray, John. *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*, 2.
- ⁷⁹ Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*.
- ⁸⁰ McLellan, Living Planet Report, 4.
- ⁸¹ Taylor, *Dark Green Religion*, ix.
- ⁸² Peverini, "Remix Practices and Activism: A Semiotic Analysis of Creative Dissent", 334.
- ⁸³ Irvine, "Remix and the Dialogic Engine of Culture: A Model for Generative Combinatoriality", 16-17.
- ⁸⁴ Navas in: Peverini, "Remix Practices and Activism: A Semiotic Analysis of Creative Dissent" 334.
- ⁸⁵ Lévi-Strauss in: Peverini, "Remix Practices and Activism: A Semiotic Analysis of Creative Dissent", 334.
- ⁸⁶ Peverini, "Remix Practices and Activism: A Semiotic Analysis of Creative Dissent", 335.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 335.
- ⁸⁸ Peverini, "Remix Practices and Activism: A Semiotic Analysis of Creative Dissent", 335.
- ⁸⁹ Irvine, "Remix and the Dialogic Engine of Culture: A Model for Generative Combinatoriality", 17.
- ⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 18.
- ⁹¹ *ibid.*, 20-21.
- ⁹² *ibid.*, 18.
- ⁹³ Peirce in: Irvine, "Remix and the Dialogic Engine of Culture: A Model for Generative Combinatoriality", 18.
- ⁹⁴ Langer in: Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, 119.
- ⁹⁵ van Gennep, *The rites of passage*, 20.
- ⁹⁶ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Chapter: "The Implosion of Meaning in the Media".
- ⁹⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans.Pluhar, 99.
- ⁹⁸ Llewellyn & Riding, "The contemporary sublime".
- ⁹⁹ Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, trans.Johnston, 132.
- ¹⁰⁰ James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 21.

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