

Rothko's Negative Theology

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper contends that the progression of Mark Rothko's painting, from his earlier, Surrealist-inspired figurative works to his later, more famous classical paintings, can be read as a fulfillment of the structure of Pseudo-Dionysius's mystical, apophatic theology. In *The Divine Names* and *The Mystical Theology*, Pseudo-Dionysius describes a process whereby one attempts, and fails, to speak the divine. Ascending from sensible representations of God, affirming and negating divine attributes, his texts offer an attempt, as it is often put, to express the inexpressible: God is that which is so perfect, so good, so overfull, that God is beyond being, utterly transcendent. The names for God offered in *The Divine Names* both express and fail to express God, for all recognizable attributes can only approximate but never fully represent the divine. We thus ascend, both by way of negation and by way of beauty and yearning, beyond knowledge and sensible representation into *unknowing* in the presence of a God beyond being.

Rothko's paintings can be read, I believe, as embodying this same sort of mystical ascent; his earlier, figural paintings often represent explicitly theological elements, specifically referencing the crucifixion and pietà. Furthermore, rather than see his later paintings as pure formalist abstraction, if we follow Rothko at his word and read them as concerned with *content* and *subject matter*, we can make the case that these paintings continue Rothko's religious references, echoing the structure of, for instance, a typical pietà. My argument is that the general de-structuring of form in his later work, when read as retaining this particular content, operates in the same way as the mode of negation Pseudo-Dionysius describes in his apophatic theology. Correspondingly, Rothko's work offers its viewers a "transcendent" and "religious experience."¹ In the end, despite Rothko's objections that he is "not a mystic," perhaps we can say that his work mirrors the structure, if not the content, of Dionysius' theology: indeed, the experience of the viewer before a painting of Rothko's structurally parallels that of the mystic before God.²

II. PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS

In the first paragraph of *The Divine Names*, we learn a few central elements of Dionysius's thought. Dionysius writes that the goal of his theology is to "reach a union" with the divine, but that this union is "beyond our own abilities ... of discourse or of intellect."³ It cannot be achieved solely through language or ratiocinative processes; instead, "since the unknowing of what is beyond being is something above and beyond speech, mind, or being itself, one should ascribe to it an understanding beyond being."⁴ That God is beyond being and fundamentally unknowable, and can be experienced by us only in unknowing beyond our thought, means that God is "beyond intelligence." However, God (or the Good) "is not absolutely incommunicable to everything."⁵ Instead, "it [the Good] generously reveals a firm, transcending beam, granting enlightenments

proportionate to each being, and thereby draws sacred minds upward to its permitted contemplation, to participation and to the state of becoming like it.”⁶ “Sacred minds” can be drawn upward to God, that pure *giving* beyond Being which is “the Source and the Cause of all life and of all being, for out of its goodness it commands all things to be and it keeps them going.”⁷

The ways in which God is spoken of (as “good,” “light,” and “perfection,” for instance) only partially reveal the being of God. The majority of *The Divine Names* is dedicated to articulating those names of God given in Scripture, names that “illuminate us” and draw us nearer to knowledge of God, encouraging our ascent beyond knowledge into that unknowing union with divinity. This union is achieved, not immediately, but only by using “whatever appropriate symbols we can for the things of God.”⁸ Thus, although God is not fully revealed in the Scriptures that describe or speak God’s names, these symbols work analogically to bring us nearer to God. After laying out this framework, Dionysius poses the by now obvious question: “How then can we speak of the divine names?”⁹ The goal of Dionysius’s theology is to attain union with God, whom we must understand at least somewhat, even if imperfectly. Thus, we must have a proper way of voicing these “analogies” which raise us “upward toward the truth of the mind’s vision.”¹⁰ The knowledge we can achieve, it should be made clear, is not of God proper; it is knowledge from our perspective. Knowledge in *The Mystical Theology*, like beauty in *The Celestial Hierarchy*, to which we will shortly turn, is situated in our existence but is not itself adequate to or representative of God.

The position described above underlies Dionysius’s apophatic, or negative, theology. As he explains in chapter three of *The Mystical Theology*, though, Dionysius combines affirmative and negative theologies in order facilitate this union with God: he first *affirms* the names and attributes as being representative of God while at the same time strongly indicating that God is *not* any of these attributions. God is the highest, the name which is “without a name,” which is “all” and “no thing.”¹¹ Indeed, the utility of attempting to speak the divine reaches its limit when we ascend high enough. Dionysius writes:

The fact is that the more we take flight upward, the more our words are confined to the ideas we are capable of forming; so that now as we plunge into that darkness which is beyond intellect, we shall find ourselves not simply running short of words but actually speechless and unknowing. ... [M]y argument now rises from what is below up to the transcendent, and the more it climbs, the more language falters, and when it has passed up and beyond the ascent, it will turn silent completely, since it will finally be at one with him who is indescribable.¹²

Dionysius explains here this method of combining cataphatic and apophatic theologies in the service of ascending upward into unknowing union with a God beyond being thus: “the way up [is] through negations,” which requires first of all the positing of something in order to then negate it.¹³ Once we rise high enough, though, we “turn silent completely”: indeed, “with a wise silence we do honor to the inexpressible.”¹⁴ Once we move beyond being we move beyond words and light; rather than a pure divine light we are in the presence of “darkness so far above light” in which nothing can be known.¹⁵

Thus we can attempt to ascend to union with God. We should note that Pseudo-Dionysius writes his mystical theology in an *experiential* way: he is explicitly concerned with how we can actually attain partial knowledge of and then union with divinity. His focus on experience is attested to early in *The Divine Names* when Dionysius writes, “all things long for [the Good beyond being]. The intelligent and rational long for it by way of knowledge, the lower strata by way of perception, the remainder by way of the stirrings of being alive and in whatever fashion befits their condition.”¹⁶ Everything yearns for unity with God, the superabundant beyond; the

form of this yearning signals that God is not merely something to be known or unknown, but is something to be felt and experienced.

Indeed, chapter four of *The Divine Names* discusses “Yearning” in connection with “Beauty.” In it, Dionysius writes, “Beauty is the cause of harmony, of sympathy, of community. Beauty unites all things and is the source of all things.”¹⁷ Furthermore, “the Beautiful is ... the same as the Good, for everything looks to the Beautiful and the Good as the cause of being”; thus, beauty “is ahead of all as Goal, as the Beloved, as the Cause toward which all things move, since it is the longing for beauty which actually brings them into being”¹⁸ Beauty is both the source and the goal of yearning and is correspondingly the cause of our innate desire to achieve divine union. Thus Dionysius writes, “so it is that all things must desire, must yearn for, must love the Beautiful and the Good.”¹⁹ Beauty inaugurates the desire for ecstasy, for moving outside of oneself into unity with the divine.

For Dionysius this yearning is not simply abstract or intellectual, even if, as some have argued, the ultimate mystical experience is somehow purely in the realm of the (beyond) intellect.²⁰ He consistently makes reference to sensory experience in order to describe how ascent is possible. In *The Celestial Hierarchy* he writes, “it is quite impossible that we humans should, in any immaterial way, rise up to imitate and to contemplate the heavenly hierarchies without the aid of those material means capable of guiding us as our nature requires.”²¹ Later he writes, “the Word of God makes use of poetic imagery when discussing these formless intelligences but, as I have already said, it does so not for the sake of art, but as a concession to the nature of our own mind ... in a manner suitable to our own nature.”²² That is to say, imagery and sensation serve a double role similar to the combination of apophatic and cataphatic theologies: they are not adequate to the divine, but they are necessary for our human ways of knowing, which arises from our corporeality. Even though “God is in no way like the things that have being and we have no knowledge at all of his incomprehensible and ineffable transcendence and invisibility,” the use of images enables “that part of the soul which longs for the things above actually to rise up.”²³ Sensory experiences are a necessary catalyst for our ascent; and while they are not wholly expressive of God, they are not useless or meaningless: “sacred pictures used to represent God ... enable the one capable of seeing the beauty hidden within these images to find that they are truly mysterious, appropriate to God, and filled with a great theological light.”²⁴

Correspondingly, our longing for the divine, inaugurated by beauty, can be seen in this same way. Dionysius claims, “we use letters, syllables, phrases, written terms and words because of the senses. But when our souls are moved by intelligent energies ... then our senses ... are no longer needed.”²⁵ Much like in Diotima’s ladder in Plato’s *Symposium*, Dionysius maintains that “the ‘beautiful’ which is beyond individual being is called ‘beauty’ because of that beauty bestowed by it on all things ... [I]t is the cause of the harmony and splendor in everything.”²⁶ As in the ladder we begin with the love of particular bodies and ascend to a love of the Form of Beauty, in mystical ascent we begin with our corporeality and move beyond it to a yearning for the divine. Importantly, Dionysius never negates “yearning” outright but instead urges that we eventually move from a sensory or emotive yearning toward an intellectual or divine yearning. Physical yearning, like bodily desire, is “partial, physical, and divided”; it is “not true yearning but an empty image or, rather, a lapse from real yearning.”²⁷ Real yearning, on the other hand, is precisely ecstatic: “what is signified is a capacity to effect a unity, an alliance, and a particular commingling in the Beautiful and the Good.”²⁸ Physical yearning eventually moves us beyond our bodies into purely ecstatic union with God: “this divine yearning brings ecstasy so that the lover belongs not to self but to the beloved.”²⁹ In this unity we are beyond embodiment but also *out of our minds*: “here, being neither oneself nor someone else, one is supremely united to the completely unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge, and one knows beyond the mind by

knowing nothing.”³⁰ Thus, although Dionysius does subordinate bodily beauty and yearning to the intelligible, ultimately even the intelligible is surpassed in true divine union. All the more reason, then, that our final act in the face of the divine is only silence: beyond *logos* and beyond embodiment we can say precisely nothing.

III. ROTHKO

Rothko’s paintings can be understood to progress along a similar trajectory as that outlined by Pseudo-Dionysius’s theology. Abstract Expressionism tends to be read along human, subjectivist lines, and Dionysius’s mysticism can be read as necessarily connected to human experience, even if it ultimately transcends it. Barnett Newman famously described Abstract Expressionism as “asserting man’s natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to the absolute emotions. . . . Instead of making cathedrals out of Christ, man, or ‘life,’ we are making [them] out of our ourselves, out of our feelings.”³¹ This implies a purely personal, deeply subjective and indeed embodied self-relation, rather than an ecstatic union of the self beyond self with the divine. Compare with Grace Jantzen’s description of ecstatic union with God in her book, *Power, Gender, and Christian Mysticism*: “here indeed is ineffability; but the ineffability is of *God* and of God’s unspeakable wonder. . . . [T]he ineffability of *God* should not be confused with the alleged ineffability of *subjective experiences*.”³² While Jantzen’s criticism might challenge Newman’s description, this paper aims to show that Rothko’s painterly development moves the viewer from the ineffability of subjective experiences to a transcendent ineffability, and that Rothko’s project maintains what he calls the “urgency of transcendent experience” that is commensurate with apophatic mysticism.³³

In order to see this, we should look first at some of his earlier, figurative paintings. Rothko’s 1944 painting *Gethsemane* takes as its subject matter the scene of Christ’s suffering at the knowledge of his crucifixion.³⁴ In her book *Subjects in Abstraction*, Anna Chave maintains that Rothko’s untitled paintings of this time period depict, albeit in a distorted fashion, a series of martyrs, flayed and hacked to pieces. Here he portrays the anguish of martyrdom, the experience of the religious person in the face of worldly suffering. As Chave explains further, Rothko’s paintings of this period explicitly reference the structure of a *pietà*. In *Entombment*, from the mid-1940s, we see a “triple goddess” raising “her two massive arms in a gesture of wailing or lamenting,” much like Mary is represented when mourning the death of Jesus in many classical *pietà* images.³⁵ The placement of a major horizontal axis toward the bottom third of the painting mirrors the prostrate Christ being held by Mary, while the elevated humps or blobs above this horizontal axis echo the raised arms of the distraught mother. Here Rothko references Christian images and scenes but not in a purely representational format; instead, he begins to *negate* the recognizable figure of the body, moving us out of immediate recognition or knowledge into an *experiential* mode of relating to the image.

We see this approach again in *Untitled* of 1948.³⁶ Chave explains that this apparently very abstract painting represents an image from the nativity, specifically the meeting of the pregnant cousins Mary and Elizabeth. She suggests that the figure on the left, squarish and pink, is “pregnant-looking,” with the L-shaped forearm folded over the protrusive pregnant belly. The larger, pink shape to the right of this could be her left forearm reaching out to greet the other pregnant woman she is encountering. The orange shape to the right Chave reads as a seated figure, more pregnant, with the red block with white stripes representing hair. Thus we can see an even more radical departure from form into something closer to formlessness: instead of depicting bodies, Rothko gently negates the form of the body in general. Much like Pseudo-Dionysius, Rothko’s painterly strategy is to move us by way of sensory experience that invites contemplation from knowing into unknowing, or from formed figure to formlessness.

This structure is pushed to its limit in Rothko’s classical paintings and in the Chapel paintings

in Houston, Texas. However, before examining these, we should draw out some parallels between Pseudo-Dionysius's view of beauty and Rothko's view. Beauty is, for Pseudo-Dionysius, the cause and goal of desire; we should move from the contemplation of individual beautiful bodies to true, eternal, changeless beauty: beauty leads to yearning which leads to ecstasy. In *The Artist's Reality: Philosophies of Art*, Rothko offers a definition of beauty that may seem to challenge that of Pseudo-Dionysius. He writes that beauty "is a certain type of emotional exaltation which is the result of stimulation by certain qualities."³⁷ Here, the experience of beauty appears to be primarily bodily and physical; whatever the "exaltation" Rothko speaks of might be it seems rooted strictly in physicality and sensuality. However, when discussing Platonic Beauty, he writes:

The abstraction [of the Platonic Form] itself in its nakedness is never directly apprehensible to us. As in the case of God, we can know its manifestations only through works, which, while never completely revealing the total abstraction in the round, symbolize it by the manifestation of different faces of itself in works of art. Therefore, to feel beauty is to *participate in the abstraction through a particular agency*. In a sense, this is a reflection of the infiniteness of reality.³⁸

Thus Rothko advances a more Dionysian/Platonic view of beauty than originally expected. Here he argues that our experience of beauty must necessarily be embodied, but and that this sensation of beauty *points beyond itself*; indeed, he even invokes the Platonic trope of "participation" to explain our embodied relationship to beauty: it is our agency as sensate humans that makes possible the contemplation of "the abstraction" of Beauty itself.

Rothko's Platonic understanding can explain the gradual development of his paintings from more representational Surrealism to the more formless, abstract paintings that characterize his later career. That is, his increasingly abstract style can be interpreted as a simultaneous negation and affirmation of pictorial convention: if Chave is right and his paintings do retain a semblance of religious convention, Rothko could be suggesting that, while these "sacred images" in their representational format do attempt to affirmatively represent the divine, they are inadequate to the task. Furthermore, Rothko insists that his works not be interpreted as pure content-less abstraction but rather as essentially concerned with subject matter. He argues, "the artist always chooses the subject matter that can most directly illustrate his particular notions of reality."³⁹ Rothko claims an intrinsic significance for the content of his paintings, all the way to the almost monochromatic Chapel paintings. We can gain insight into the significance his most abstracted paintings have for him by taking seriously his insistence that "abstract artworks use abstracted notions of shapes and emotions in plastic terms *to establish unity in a superior category*."⁴⁰ This leads to a position remarkably similar in structure to that held by Pseudo-Dionysius: recall that, for Pseudo-Dionysius, worldly beauty moves us toward true Beauty as true unity and the giver of unity (God). For Rothko, abstraction moves us in just the same way. We move from representation to (content-filled) abstraction for the sake of the unity of the "abstraction" of Beauty itself.

We may now consider Rothko's most famous works, the classical paintings that dominate his oeuvre from the late 1940s through the 1960s, generally referenced as belonging to two periods, "light"⁴¹ and "dark."⁴² These paintings take a very recognizable format: two or three rectangles of various colors and shades, floating on a background of other colors with raw, bleeding edges, usually separated by a thin line. Chave suggests that we can read these images as continuing Rothko's oblique references to traditional *pietàs*, maintaining that "those horizontal bands that cut across the center of these compositions might be seen as constituting an abstract metaphor for the martyr in a conventional *pietà*, as the martyr's recumbent body occupies a corresponding space in the picture field."⁴³ Furthermore, she claims, "the placement of forms in a pictorial space carries

symbolic inflections ... Whether or not viewers are conscious of the parallels between the structure of the conventional landscapes or portraits and the structure of Rothko's classical paintings, the high and low rectangular zones ... will still tacitly reflexively evoke basic associations" based on a prereflexive familiarity with one's own body.⁴⁴

The insistence on the viewer's embodied experience is essential for linking Rothko and Pseudo-Dionysius in the way I am attempting. Chave notes in the introduction to her book that:

[w]ith the largeness of their work, the New York School artists meant to reduce the disparity between the object's scale and the scale of the viewer's body, facilitating a closeness between object and viewer. These artists' paintings were generally meant to be hung fairly low—Rothko was explicit on this count—so that they faced and paralleled almost the whole of the viewer's body.⁴⁵

If abstraction offers a compelling way to represent a higher unity, and if our embodied experience of beauty should point beyond itself into the abstraction of Beauty itself, the relation of viewer to work is paramount. Indeed, Rothko argues that the painting is "not a picture of an experience; *it is an experience*."⁴⁶ If abstraction is a more direct way to communicate a fundamental unity, we can say Rothko creates for the viewer a mystical experience rooted in the body and its relation to objects that ultimately *moves beyond it into a higher unity*. The classical paintings are the height of Rothko's abstraction, and I maintain that they are the height of formal negativity, purely abstract shapes; correspondingly, they represent Rothko's attempt to facilitate something like an ecstatic, mystical experience: moving beyond or outside of one's everydayness by way of "transcendent experience."

Wessel Stoker notes that, for Rothko, "religious transcendence is not viewed as the supernatural in opposition to the natural, as a representation of a 'world' above this world. Rather, it is seen as a depth dimension of the world and of the human being herself."⁴⁷ Rather than attempting to move the viewer outside of herself in transcendent experience, Rothko tries to center her back in herself, to get her to coincide with herself. Indeed he does often claim to paint "basic human emotions"; yet, he describes those who engage his paintings as having a "religious experience," which, described "only by [the paintings'] color relationships [would] miss the point."⁴⁸ The *content* is essential here, and, while he does not view his paintings as inaugurating union with some Godhead, the negative movements of his abstraction *do* move the careful viewer into contemplation of the higher unity Rothko is after. In D. de Menil's description, inside the Rothko Chapel, "the black surfaces invite the gaze to go beyond. The chapel is a place conducive to spiritual activity. We are cut off from the world and its suffocating multiplicity, able to wander in the infinite. ... Here we are nowhere and everywhere; here we can find a blessed wholeness, a sense of unity."⁴⁹

The lack of representational content in the Chapel paintings shows Rothko's final attempt to communicate what I have been describing as a mystical experience that brings contemplation of something higher. The emotional effect the huge paintings have on the viewer can be taken, in Pseudo-Dionysius's terms, as a necessarily embodied step commensurate with our modes of knowing; however, their near-monochromaticity shows them to be, while necessarily concerned with content and subject matter, also *negating* that very subject matter, as it is inadequate to the task of bringing about "transcendent experience." Little wonder, then, that Rothko has chosen a very dark palette for such paintings; indeed, moving beyond knowing recognition we are left only with darkness, "far above light."⁵⁰

IV. CONCLUSION

I have argued that Rothko's progression from semi-representational Surrealism to his abstract

classical and Chapel paintings can be read in a fashion parallel to Pseudo-Dionysius's mystical, apophatic theology. I view Rothko's artistic development as his version of negative theology inasmuch as it takes specifically religious imagery and negates its form, moving through greater and greater abstraction to a higher unity, which Rothko believes can be achieved in and through this very abstraction. I maintain as well that Rothko's understanding of beauty is not totally dissimilar to Pseudo-Dionysius's; while the latter does subordinate the role of the body with respect to mystical, ecstatic union, there is a bodily role that inaugurates the possibility of mystical experience whatsoever. Likewise, the function of Rothko's abstraction is precisely to move us *beyond* immediate recognition of bodies into further contemplation; as he argues with respect to beauty, "this exaltation is usually composed of sentiment, sensation, and, in its highest state, intellectual approbation."⁵¹ Rothko does not view himself as opening the possibility for a purely emotional or affective response; for him, as for Pseudo-Dionysius, the highest state of beauty is the intelligible, and indeed, perhaps for both, it is *beyond* the intelligible. For Pseudo-Dionysius we pay reverence to God, in the end, only through silence in the darkness beyond light; for Rothko, in the face of the darkness of his most abstract Chapel paintings, only "silence is so accurate."⁵²

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¹ Mark Rothko, from Selden Rodman's *Conversations with Artists*. (New York: Devin-Adair, 1957), 93.

² Rothko allegedly said that he was "not a mystic. A prophet perhaps—but I don't prophesy the woes to come. I just paint the woes already here." Quoted in Anna C. Chave's *Mark Rothko: Subjects in Abstraction*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 192.

³ Pseudo Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: Complete Works*. Trans. Colm Luibheid. Ed. Paul Rorem. (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 588A.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 588B–C.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 588D.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 589C.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 592C.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 593A.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 592C.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 596A–C.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1033B–C.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 981B.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 589B.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1025A.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 593D.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 704A.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 704A–B.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 708A.

²⁰ Grace Jantzen characterizes Pseudo-Dionysius explicitly this way, as opposed to "affective" mystical theologies, in chapter four of her book *Power Gender and Christian Mysticism*.

- ²¹ Ibid., 121C–D.
- ²² Ibid., 137B.
- ²³ Ibid., 141A–C.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 1105C.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 708D.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 701C.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 709C.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 709D.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 712A.
- ³⁰ Ibid., 1001A.
- ³¹ Barnett Newman, “The Sublime Is Now” in *Barnett Newman: Selected Writings and Interviews*. Ed. John O’Neill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 170.
- ³² Grace Jantzen, *Power, Gender, and Christian Mysticism*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 283.
- ³³ Mark Rothko, “The Romantics Were Prompted,” in *Writings on Art*, ed. M. Lopex-Remiro, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 47.
- ³⁴ <http://www.nga.gov/feature/rothko/017.dex111.jpg>
- ³⁵ [http://en.wahooart.com/A55A04/w.nsf/OPRA/BRUE-8BWU7P/\\$File/MARK-ROTHKO-MARCUS-ROTHKOWITZ-ENTOMBMENT-IL.JPG](http://en.wahooart.com/A55A04/w.nsf/OPRA/BRUE-8BWU7P/$File/MARK-ROTHKO-MARCUS-ROTHKOWITZ-ENTOMBMENT-IL.JPG)
- ³⁶ <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/cctp738/Rothko-No-9-1948-oil-NGA.jpg>
- ³⁷ Rothko, *The Artist’s Reality: Philosophies of Art*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 63.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 186; emphasis added.
- ³⁹ Ibid., 85.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 80.
- ⁴¹ http://emuseum2.guggenheim.org/media/full/78.2461_ph_web.jpg
- ⁴² <https://www.greatmodernpictures.com/newroth06.jpg>
- ⁴³ Chave, 158.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 159.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 7.
- ⁴⁶ Quoted in *ibid.*, 172.
- ⁴⁷ Wessel Stoker, “The Rothko Chapel Paintings and the ‘Urgency of the Transcendent Experience,’” in *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion* (2008) 64:89–102.
- ⁴⁸ Rothko, *Conversations*, 93.
- ⁴⁹ D. de Menil, “Preface” in *The Rothko Chapel: An Act of Faith*, ed. S. J. Barnes. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 7.
- ⁵⁰ http://25.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_mb2sfsqIuo1qeazcjo1_1280.jpg
- ⁵¹ Rothko, *The Artist’s Reality*, 62.
- ⁵² Rothko, quoted in James E. B. Breslin, *Rothko: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 387.

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