

INTRODUCTION:
THE SACRED AND THE SENSES IN AN AGE OF REFORM

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The notion of the sacred has been fundamental to the development of comparative religion as a distinct field of study. The numinous, as Rudolf Otto analyzed it in *Das Heilige* (1917), was an autonomous sphere of the human experience and, as such, the essential common denominator of all religion. Criticizing rationalist theologies of his day as too narrow, Otto was open to anthropological studies that included ‘primitive’ religions within their purview, but he was equally adamant in rejecting approaches he deemed reductionist, be they psychological or sociological. The numinous, then, was an experience *sui generis* directed at an object external to the self; non-rational, it was an affective state provoked by a *mysterium tremendum*.¹

One may or may not accept Otto’s axiom of irreducibility – clearly, since his day, the charge of reductionism has been a regular companion of the anthropological, sociological, psychological, and cultural-historical approaches that have enriched our understanding of religious phenomena. Regardless of one’s position in this matter, however, Otto’s analysis was both innovative and marred by a peculiar blind spot. On the one hand, he opened up for consideration the embodied nature of religious experience, and its ‘awesome’ affective powers. On the other hand, one can only be baffled (even when keeping in mind Otto’s roots in Lutheran theology) by his assumption that the apprehension of the numinous bypassed ordinary sense experience and instead relied on something he was to call the ‘sensus numinis’.² Today, almost a century after Otto’s seminal book

¹ Otto R., *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (1917; consulted ed., 2nd ed. Breslau: 1918). A direct target of Otto’s criticism was Wilhelm Wundt; more indirect ones included Freud, Weber, and Durkheim: see Raphael M., *Rudolph Otto and the Concept of Holiness* (Oxford: 1997) 44–45.

² He traced this concept back to Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760): see Otto R., “Zinzendorf als Entdecker des Sensus Numinis”, in idem, *Das Gefühl des Überweltlichen (Sensus numinis)* (Munich: 1932) 4–10. In contrast, he dismissed as endowed with ‘a certain naïveté’ (‘fast naïv’) William James’s characterization of the religious experience as ‘a perception of what we may call “something there”, more deep and more general than any of the

appeared, there is no question but that this stance is untenable. Scholars have come to recognize that religious experience is overwhelmingly mediated by sensory discourses and practices. Accordingly, in recent years the study of religious phenomena has increasingly moved from established social-, cultural-, and religious-historical approaches to the analysis of the sensory – as well as affective – dimensions of religion.³

The early-modern European world is a privileged observatory for the study of these dimensions.⁴ The complex conglomerate of liturgical, pious, and spiritual practices we call late medieval Christianity was characterized by intense if often problematic forms of engagement with the material world. It was precisely this engagement that during the Reformation became subject to violent disputes over the relations between the secular

special and particular “senses” by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed’ (‘eine Vorstellung von etwas *objektiv* Existierendem [...], die tiefer und allgemeingültiger ist als irgend eine der einzelnen und besonderen Empfindungen, durch welche nach der Meinung der heutigen Psychologie die *Realität* bezeugt wird’). For Otto, James’s empiricism did not permit ‘the recognition of faculties of knowledge and potentialities of thought in the spirit itself’ (‘[die] Anerkennung von Erkenntnisanlagen und Ideengrundlagen im Geiste selber’) that would allow an (in Otto’s view) simpler explanation of the phenomenon. See Otto, *Das Heilige* 11, n. 1 (English trans.: idem, *The Idea of the Holy* [Harmondsworth: 1959] 24–25, n. 1; emphasis in original).

³ For introductions to the recent boom in studies on sensation, see Classen C., *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures* (London – New York: 1993); Howes D. (ed.), *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Oxford – New York: 2005), as well as a series of readers entitled *Sensory Formations* published by Berg (Oxford – New York); Jütte R., *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace*, trans. J. Lynn (orig. 2000; Cambridge – Malden, MA: 2005); Smith M.M., *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (Berkeley – Los Angeles: 2007); also published as *Sensory History* (Oxford – New York: 2007); Meyer B. (ed.), *Aesthetic Formations: Media, Religion and the Senses* (New York: 2009); Gottang A. (ed.), *Mit allen Sinnen: Sehen, Hören, Schmecken, Riechen und Fühlen in der Kunst* (Leipzig: 2010); Bacci F. – Melcher D. (eds.), *Art and the Senses* (Oxford: 2011); Gavriluk P.S. – Coakley S. (eds.), *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Spirituality* (Cambridge: 2011).

⁴ Relevant for the period considered in this volume are, among other titles, *I cinque sensi* = *The Five Senses*, a special issue of *Micrologus* 10 (2002); Cowan A. – Steward J. (eds.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500* (Aldershot: 2007); Ferino-Pagden S., *I cinque sensi nell’arte*, exh. cat., Centro Culturale Santa Maria della Pietà, Cremona (Milan: 1996); Nichols S.G. – Kablitz A. – Calhoun A. (eds.), *Rethinking the Medieval Senses: Heritage, Fascinations, Frames* (Baltimore: 2008); Schleif C. – Newhauser R., *Pleasure and Danger in Perception: The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, a thematic issue of *Senses & Society* 5/1 (2010); Quiviger F., *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art* (London: 2010); Sanger A. – Kulbrandstad Walker S.T. (eds.), *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice* (Farnham: 2012); Boer W. de, “The Counter-Reformation of the Senses”, in Laven M. – Bamji A. – Janssen G. (eds.), *Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation* (Farnham: forthcoming, 2012); Hall M.B. – Cooper T.E. (eds.), *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church* (Cambridge: forthcoming, 2013). Further references can be found in the bibliographies of contributions to this volume.

and the sacred, matter and 'spirit', body and soul, health and salvation.⁵ At the intersections between these spheres stood the five senses – the portals of the soul, the links between the inner and the outer worlds. It was impossible for them not to be crucially implicated in the Reformation conflict and its consequences. What was at stake were multifarious aspects of human experience and expression: speech and music, literary and visual representation, the organization and use of space, the appreciation of basic human wants and needs (food, drink, sex), the experiences of pleasure and pain, health and illness. The term 'sensuality' marked the territory as central to the human condition and, all at once, raised warning signs of moral danger above it.

The present volume offers the reader a number of forays into this territory. The project originated in two panels presented at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (St. Louis, 2008) and was developed in seven more panels at the Renaissance Society of America conference (Venice, 2010). This book largely consists of a selection of these latter papers, duly revised and expanded. To a degree, they remain *pièces d'occasion*; and they certainly do not aim at a systematic overview of the subject. Nevertheless, they represent a common set of interests in, and approaches to, a burgeoning field of study. In their findings, too, we were pleased to detect multiple common themes, connections, and confirmations. The following pages are meant to highlight a few of these.

A preliminary word on method and scope may be in order. Most historical documentation has either left the sensory experiences of human subjects unspoken or expressed them in conventional, abstract terms, for instance in the codified language of courtly poetry or in the terms of Aristotelian or Platonic philosophical inquiry. In periods of profound cultural change, however, when habitual assumptions are suddenly questioned, they may rise to the surface of observable historical reality. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation era was such a time. In fact, the traditional uses of material objects and substances – and the sensory experiences associated with them – were at the heart of the Reformation contestation. To realize this, one need think only of the debates about the physical aspects of the Eucharist and other sacraments, images and relics, song

⁵ See now Bynum C.W., *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Late Medieval Christianity* (New York – Cambridge, MA: 2011). On the issue of 'spirit' as an ambiguous representation of the connections between the material and non-material worlds, see Göttler C. – Neuber W. (eds.), *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, *Intersections* 9 (Leiden – Boston: 2009).

and music, and incense, oil, and water. Equally obvious, out of this contestation emerged far-reaching changes in the sensory environments of churches and other places of worship, and in the routine behaviours of the early modern faithful. All were affected to some extent by efforts to separate the sacred and the profane, to achieve a more proper or effective engagement with the divine, to reorder gender relations, and to discipline human conduct according to new ethical standards. The disciplined person – as a massive new conduct literature makes clear – was to reform her or his sensory relations with the world. What was at stake in this complex, and by no means unidirectional, transformation is often best understood by studying its manifestations up close. Instances of crisis, conflict, and change may provide ideal opportunities to explore the ways in which sensation was understood, experienced, repressed, channelled, or promoted. For this reason most authors of this volume have chosen a focused, micro-historical approach to the subject.

The contributions are organized around a number of interlocking themes and accordingly divided into six sections. We begin with the simple but fundamental notion of the senses as interface – or, to use premodern metaphors, as the doors, gates, or windows – between the subject and the world. As such, they could also open pathways to the divine. These pathways, their hierarchy, and their relationships to each other had been an issue of debate since the time of the early Church fathers. From the late Middle Ages onwards, movements of religious reform and renewal led to a reconsideration of the senses as channels for experiencing and communicating with the divine; shifts to more ‘interior’ and ‘private’ forms of religiosity went along with a growing interest in the workings of the inner senses. Vision, the subject of the first group of essays, had long been exalted as the noblest of the senses, but early-modern Catholic artists, in a resolute denial of Protestant criticisms of the religious image, explored new ways to increase its devotional potential. In the confused years of the early Reformation, for example, a virtuoso painter like Parmigianino contributed to the intense Christocentric devotions of his day with an intimate but foreboding depiction of the Virgin and Child – perhaps his most renowned painting. Through an innovative use of religious iconography and a subtle, layered form of representation (as Alfred Acres argues) he suggested intimations of the Passion, fostering an intimate form of meditation that made a ‘studied investment in a conscious, gradual, and precious labour of seeing’. With the motif of a cross on the reflective surface of an urn held by the Virgin – a motif that is more suggested than clearly shown – Parmigianino both probed the threshold between visibil-

ity and invisibility, and referred to the distinctive artifice of his own pictorial style. In less ambiguous and more directed ways, mediated forms of viewing increasingly benefited from the technological revolution brought about by the printed image. Again the Christ figure was frequently central to the endeavour. While the Counter-Reformation was in full swing, the extraordinary representational power of image-relics like St. Veronica's veil and the Shroud of Turin could be, and was, replicated and multiplied through printed copies, and thus spread far and wide. As Andrew Casper suggests, this had enormous implications for the sensory aspects of the cult. It meant that relics formed by touch, and believed to contain physical traces as well as the imprint of Christ's body, allowed divine communication not only through their originals, but also at a remove. This raised (to vary Walter Benjamin's famous expression) the problem of the relic in an age of mechanical reproduction: what did it mean for the notion of representation (in its most literal sense) to view and even to touch a reproduction of Christ's body relics? What did it mean for his 'real presence'? Here, obviously, viewing and touching are far more than physical acts. They are intertwined with contemplative operations which in the devotional resurgence of the Counter-Reformation era became heavily theorized and systematized. Walter Melion focuses on the foremost image theorists of the age – the Jesuits – to dissect the connections between the act of viewing and the higher faculties of the soul. He does so through a painstaking exegesis of another celebrated set of print images, namely those accompanying Pedro de Ribadeneyra's *Life of Blessed Father Ignatius of Loyola* published by Theodoor Galle of Antwerp in 1610, showing the multiple ways in which their rich visual vocabulary turns the hagiographical text – itself the result of visual and auditory testimony – into a project of conversion. In Ribadeneyra's finely tuned descriptions (which themselves expand on Augustine's model of vision), Ignatius's spiritual growth and illumination is revealed and encouraged by a continuous flow of images circulating and mediating between his inner and outer senses and between the divinity and his soul. At the core of Melion's analysis is the question of how Galle and his team of Antwerp engravers transformed Ribadeneyra's complex distinctions of non-sensory and non-representational revelations and illuminations into a visual imagery of colourless rays, aureoles, and clouds.

Yet the realm of worship and meditation was a multisensory one: opening it up for exploration is one of the most innovative trends in current scholarship. Whereas the traditional privileging of sight had been questioned before, the late medieval and early modern era brought new attention to the 'lower' senses of taste, smell, and touch, and also to speech and

hearing. To these senses the second section of this volume is dedicated. Barbara Baert explores the issue of intersensory connections from the perspective of iconology and visual anthropology: her test case is the *Noli me tangere* scene and its complex interpretation in doctrinal and devotional texts. The analysis focuses on the garden as biblical setting of the encounter between the risen Christ and Mary Magdalene, but also as image and allegory of the Garden of Eden and the interior garden of the soul. The frequently abundant horticultural environment in visual representations of the scene may thus be linked to a broader artistic trend to create images appealing to senses other than vision.

In contrast, Rachel King's essay on amber shows the promise of studying a material substance for its sensory uses; and it moves the discussion firmly into Reformation territory. By the end of the Middle Ages, the widespread rosary devotions were intimately associated – one would assume largely subconsciously – with the tactile and even olfactory sensations of handling amber beads. The Reformation disrupted this ingrained experience, common to much of Europe, by turning amber into contested matter. Accordingly, its devotional applications waned in German Protestant lands and surged in Counter-Reformation Italy. Such applications thus became confessional markers, while alternative profane uses could be seen as evidence of a decline in piety. Yet this development was not without complexities. On the one hand, German amber exports to Italy continued unabated; on the other, in Italy and elsewhere, amber products were promoted as collectibles, fashion accessories, and perfumes.

On the other side of the confessional divide, speech and hearing were of course at the centre of Reformed theologies. Jennifer Rae McDermott focuses on the ear of the faithful as the channel through which early-modern Anglican ministers delivered the Word of God. Her contribution expands the traditional model of a split between a Catholic visual and a Protestant vocal aesthetics to include contemporary medical and anatomical discourse. The broad dissemination of Bartolomeo Eustachio's discovery of the aural tube (1564) led to an almost obsessive awareness of the ear's vulnerability to poison attacks. In early modern England, this anatomical discovery further served to promote Protestant ideas about the superiority of the word – and especially the Word of God – over the image. Understood as a subtle fluid or divine *spiritus*, the Word of God was accorded the power to penetrate into the innermost recesses of the soul. Ministers were presented as physicians who, with their tongues, would unlock the worshippers' ears and infuse or 'impregnate' their souls with the divine word and thus protect them against evil forces.

Closely associated with such ideas about the senses as conduits of divine (or malignant) influences was an awareness of their role in the affective life. A third group of essays examines these connections between senses and affects. Like their Protestant counterparts, Catholic authors also turned to widespread medical or natural-philosophical knowledge; they did so, however, with the opposite purpose of confirming the power of material images over the bodies and souls of their viewers. Of the tripartite rhetorical function of an image – instructing, delighting, and affecting spectators' minds – the latter was given primary importance in post-Tridentine treatises on sacred art. Italian art critics particularly associated Flemish painting with the power to elicit the viewer's emotional response. As early as the mid-fifteenth century, the humanist Bartolomeo Fazio praised Rogier van der Weyden for his ability to represent sorrow and tears in depictions of the Passion. The widely shared view that Flemish artists excelled in the representation of grieving and weeping (holy) figures, and that their paintings, in turn, provoked 'devout persons to shed many tears' could also give rise to ironic or derogatory comments, as suggested by this often-cited phrase ascribed to Michelangelo by the Portuguese Francisco de Hollanda, himself the son of a Flemish artist.⁶

What are the implied connections between artistic style, gender, and emotional culture? This is a theme pursued in the essays by Jennifer R. Hammerschmidt and Sarah Joan Moran. They investigate the ways in which two major Netherlandish artists, both renowned for their art of portraiture, deployed artistic means to generate affective responses – and strengthen emotional ties – in specific communal or corporate settings. Hammerschmidt offers a fresh look at Rogier van der Weyden's Prado *Descent from the Cross* by studying its local agency and function within the context of the so-called *kermis-ommegang* or procession of Our Lady, held annually on the feast day of the Virgin of Sorrows. Rogier's unusual re-enactment of the *Descent from the Cross*, which also includes elements of the Deposition, was shaped by and responded to the scenes of the Passion performed by actors in several pageants of the procession. The indeterminacy of the depicted figures, in a space that recalls both a sculpted

⁶ The quotation reads: 'Flemish painting [...] will satisfy, generally [...] a devout person more than any painting from Italy, which will never cause him to shed a tear, whereas that of Flanders will cause him to shed many': Hollanda Francisco de, *Diálogos em Roma* (1538): *Conversations on Art with Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. G.D. Folliero-Metz (Heidelberg: 1998) 76–77. For an excellent analysis of this complex passage in a fictive dialogue between Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna, see Agoston L.C., "Male/Female, Italy/Flanders, Michelangelo/Vittoria Colonna", *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (2005) 1175–1219.

shrine and the site of Christ's crucifixion, also links them to the striking images visualized in the inner space of the mind that, according to late-medieval tracts on meditation, furthered the process of remembering and experiencing the Passion events. Moran explores the Begijnhof, or Court Beguinage, in early-seventeenth-century Antwerp as a central component of the city's socio-religious fabric, closely connected as it was to members of the aristocratic and commercial elites. Central to the services provided by these female communities was praying for the souls in purgatory, a charitable practice and an investment that increased in value after the Council of Trent. In analysing Anthony van Dyck's *Lamentation* executed for the high altar of Antwerp's Beguine Church, Moran explores the personal relationships between the altarpiece's maker and its intended (female) viewers by considering their shared understanding of and reliance on Counter-Reformation techniques of meditation. These techniques, she argues, purposefully engaged the inner and outer senses to bring the devotee nearer to God. They shaped the religious mentality of both the artist and the Beguines, and thus informed the visual character of the work. Not only are they a crucial element to understand the *Lamentation's* meanings in its historical and spatial context, but they complicate traditional concepts of 'artists' and 'patrons'.

The tears powerfully evoked in late-medieval Netherlandish art also accompanied, in great abundance, the private and public prayers of an impressive number of saintly Catholics in the following centuries. Joseph Imorde argues that the considerable attention given to exorbitant weeping and wailing in post-Tridentine religious literature points to a shift in the understanding of the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. Motivated by an increased interest in the writings of the fathers of the Church, the 'inner sense of taste' (*gustatum interius*) or the 'palate of the heart' (*palatum cordis*), as St. Augustine calls it, was given equal or more importance than the inner sense of sight or the 'inner eyes' (*oculi interiores*), since the former alone was capable of tasting the sweetness of God's love. This spiritual-palatable delight expressed itself in tears, thus provoking a multisensory theatrical performance that in its turn had a powerful impact on the senses of the devout.

Studies such as these demonstrate considerable continuities between medieval and later forms of piety; they also appear to suggest a smooth alignment between sense applications and the affective tenor of lived devotional experiences. Yet tension, conflict, and disruption were of course defining features of early modern Christianity: they constitute a fourth theme in this volume. If the devotional engagement with the

physical realm is intrinsically problematic, it was so particularly in this era of reform. Already in the fifteenth century, as is well known, a prophetic movement like Savonarola's embraced an asceticism that was instinctively anti-sensory. Klaus Pietschmann, in his contribution to this volume, goes farther to show how religious music became the subject of deep ideological controversy at the height of the Florentine Renaissance. Savonarola rejected sophisticated uses of polyphonic chant as a way to echo the heavenly choirs. The reason was that, in the hands of the Medici elite, musical commissions of such 'celestial soundscapes' were meant to suggest an ideal association with their own court and oligarchically ruled city. Savonarola protested this association on moral, political, and religious grounds. The sensual lures and worldly pretences it implied were absent from his own ideal city – a republic that aspired to reflect the true heavenly order through the asceticism of Gregorian plainchant. The case illustrates in a compelling fashion how sensory discourses and practices could have far-reaching political ramifications.

In his day Savonarola was clearly an outlier, but before long the tables were turned entirely. Within a generation we see conflicting views of paradise return, but this time in a different context and with a different outcome. The Paduan playwright Ruzante, in his *Dialogo facetissimo*, famously posited next to the ascetic heaven of those who had lived abstemious lives, the mellower paradise of those who enjoyed their just rewards for an earthly existence based on honesty and respect for the senses. Laura Giannetti positions Ruzante's voice amidst the era's complex debates about health, diet, and morals: it emerges as part of a long-term trend towards growing appreciation of taste. But it stood in a tense relationship with religious norms. For all his obvious ironies, Ruzante's purpose was a serious one: in a time of dearth and hunger, and perhaps influenced by heterodox utopias and criticisms of ecclesiastical law, he advocated for a better world based on a healthy appreciation of the body. Not surprisingly, this could not stand as the Counter-Reformation garnered steam. In a symbolic act, later censors cut Ruzante's alternative paradise from reprint editions of his *Dialogo*. The theological implications of the issue of sense experience are therefore obvious.

It is the merit of Matthew Milner's research to have demonstrated abundantly that discourses about sense perception were central to the Reformation conflict itself, as evidenced by the case of England. In the final analysis, not only idolatry but also heresy was the result of a disordered sensory apparatus. Theological dissidence was not just a matter of the mind but of the body; as a consequence, the defence of orthodoxy

included the need to control the senses. Significantly, Milner notes, the argument cut both ways: for all their differences, the discourse of sensory discipline was common to both reformers and traditionalists. Hence the insistent call to 'captivate one's senses' echoed across the religious and political spectrum, appealing to the individual, the confessional group, and society at large. And while the discourse grew out of late medieval piety (suggesting important continuities across the threshold of the Reformation), it further evolved as it incorporated humanist ideals of self-control and civility.

In sum, sensory discipline went well beyond individual morality, nor was it targeted merely at isolated issues such as dietary customs or musical enjoyment. In the early modern era the concern with the senses encompassed personal morality as well as community ethics, the private sphere along with the public. What was involved was the creation of sensory environments – our fifth theme. It is obvious that the world of art should be directly engaged in projects of this kind. Renaissance architects, engineers, visual artists, and masters of ceremony excelled in designing integrated urban spaces and staging compelling rituals, but sound, smell, and movement contributed as much to their sensory impact as the visual aspects. Nor was this impact limited to deliberate planning: life itself intruded with its own spectacles, sounds, smells, and tactile encounters. Thus Venice's Piazza San Marco, as Iain Fenlon shows, became a veritable 'theatre of the senses': it showcased both profane and religious rituals accompanied by elaborate visual, auditory, and other sensory productions. The Counter-Reformation not only expanded or added devotional and artistic elements, but did something more. In its rituals of cultic celebration or expiation, especially in the aftermath of a devastating plague, it transformed established notions of Venice as a Christian republic to turn the civic stage into an image of the City of God.

Such projections of ideal forms on the urban community, and the ideological and ritual programs that accompanied them, left a deep imprint on the sensory environments of early modern cities. In this vein seventeenth-century Naples, the proverbial 'paradise inhabited by devils', repeatedly dramatized the promise of the sensory fulfilment awaiting the blessed in the hereafter. To be sure, such imaginative endeavours were reserved for special occasions. But the Baroque celebrations of lights, sounds, smells, and (sometimes) tastes put on during selected feast days, as Wietse de Boer explains, show how these urban projects – at once ritual, theatrical, architectural, musical, artistic, and even gastronomical – presupposed a conception of communal space characterized by the way the senses

experienced it. The Theatine preacher Giovanni Battista Giustiniani conceived of heaven itself in the same sensory terms. In an echo of other imaginative paradises, such as the Florentine one analysed by Piet-schmann, Giustiniani and other Neapolitans shaped theirs through competition and ideological difference. In the wake of the Masaniello Revolt (1648), in particular, they responded to political crisis as well as the hunger of the urban poor.

Elsewhere in Italy, too, churchmen, lay patrons, architects, and artists collaborated to create communal experiences of this kind. In the Sacro Monte of Varallo we have the opportunity to observe such a project in the isolation of Piedmont's Alpine slopes, far removed from a corrupt world. There, a New Jerusalem emerged as an ideal physical and artistic environment that would allow a pious, and fully sensory, engagement with the drama of the Passion. Yet throughout its long history the project was marked by disputes, tensions, and conflicts among the protagonists involved. Christine Göttler examines the renewed interest in the pilgrimage site from the 1560s onwards in light of contemporary discussions about the effect of material images upon the minds and senses of the faithful. Gaudenzio Ferrari fashioned his Calvary Chapel as a consummate work of religious art fostering sensual, intellectual, and spiritual knowledge and delight. Thus, drawing on his insights into the harmony and composition of the soul, he 'invented' the iconography of a soul in contemplation. Yet the more recent additions to the original program of the Passion, especially the Chapel of the Garden of Eden, were met with growing anxieties that the delightful interiors would lead the imagination of the pilgrims astray.

In this way novel forms of sense application raised complex aesthetic, moral, social, and psychological concerns. There were also obvious connections with the major cognitive and scientific innovations of the early modern period. Jennifer McDermott's essay, discussed above, provides a telling example of the influence of a new understanding of hearing on Anglican preaching. That the imaginative realm was itself in turmoil is also suggested by the way in which breakthrough discoveries and inventions were negotiated and accommodated within established spiritual traditions. Galileo's telescope, named in the course of one preacher's explorations of the heavenly wonders (discussed in De Boer's essay), has a significance that goes well beyond the cosmological sphere: as an optical instrument it is symbolic of the cognitive-empiricist shift associated with the scientific revolution. What are the implications of this shift for the realm of religion? Clearly it is past time to retire well-worn tropes about

the early modern conflict between science and religion, and investigate up-close the cultural transformations – whether subtle or clamorous – brought about by the era's renewal of natural philosophy. The study of changing notions of sense perception may be a critical way of revisiting the theme.

This volume's final section offers two examples of such an exploration of the connections between senses, science, and the supernatural. Already in the sixteenth century (and anticipating broader changes in the following century), medical thought about the causation of disease was in flux; and, as Yvonne Petry shows, reconsideration of the role of vision and touch played an instrumental role. In the French physician Jacques Grévin's ideas about poisons we may detect a medicalized Neoplatonic conception of vision as able to emit noxious or otherwise effective influences. Yet Grévin, motivated by Protestant criticisms of Catholic 'superstitions', raised questions about existing supernatural theories of contagion. He allowed that demonic powers were able to harness vision to this effect, and that God might protect humans against it, but in the natural world contagion required transmission through touch. A different assessment of the reach of the natural and supernatural spheres is documented in Sven Dupré's contribution. Yet here, too, the crucial importance of the senses is evident. Dupré offers a nuanced exploration of the response to Kepler's *Optics* (1604) written by two of the foremost Jesuit mathematicians, Franciscus Aguilonius and Christoph Scheiner. Their reintroduction or, rather, continuation of the theory of *species* was not motivated (Dupré argues) by a religious conservatism's distrust of innovation, but rather by a deep concern about the role of the inner and outer senses in the attainment of both natural and spiritual knowledge. It was the same concern, we note, that informed Galle's *Life of Ignatius of Loyola* studied by Melion. Regulated by *species* or subtle substances, according to a tradition originating in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, sense perception served as an absolutely necessary tool in engaging the spiritual senses or the faculties of the soul.

In early modern culture, then, the involvement with the senses was far-reaching, and their intersections with the sacred were numerous and complex. As this volume shows, they concerned the ritual and performative, the physical and contemplative, the representational and symbolic, the spatial and imaginative, the doctrinal and cognitive, the medical and scientific, as well as the ethical and aesthetic dimensions of religion. Given this multiplicity, the book's organization is pragmatic: like these introductory pages, it is meant to suggest some common themes among the contributions, by no means to exhaust them. It is up to the reader to

discover further connections. The editors are bound to stress that these forays remain partial and preliminary. Yet two conclusions can be drawn. First, it is striking to note the degree to which early-modern religious theory and practice considered sensation as an interconnected, or even integrated, set of experiences. Second, that these experiences gave rise to profound differences and conflicts confirms their centrality as an issue – and hence an explanatory factor – in the religious crisis and transformation of the Reformation era. Thus, in presenting its findings, this volume extends at once an invitation for further research.