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Observing Beginnings in Painting: Cézanne, Newman, Warburg

As a visual medium, painting is in many respects ideal for the observation of beginnings. One basic differential appears here which is prior to all arrival, constituting it as a process of approximation and very often also as a shift of frontiers: that between inside and outside, between acquired and familiar property and the foreign other. A painting that is spatially organized according to the laws of the central or vanishing point perspective raises already the question of the border: It is a projection of the three-dimensional vision onto a surface and thus cuts the visual pyramid in half.¹ But also a non-illusionist and thus primarily flat painting is based on at least one boundary. The icono-phenomenologist Gottfried Boehm has labeled this observation 'iconic differential'² which he understands as the fundamental contrast between a straightforward surface and the iconic occurrences included. It constitutes visual perception by creating a systematic in-and-out-difference.

The showcase character of the image as a segment – we even do not have to speak of it as a part of reality – predestines it for creational myths. The notorious lament of many painters in the face of the blank canvas, their *horror vacui*, mirrors this mythical charge. Their complaint that the moment of beginning is particularly precarious and painful illustrates image-making as a myth of birth. It is mirrored by the doubt of the right moment of abandonment, a dirge entertained vividly within modernity.

The pre-textual, elementary dimension of visual perception reinforces this creational mythology and its archaic power. In defiance of the biblical statement "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1), the mythical immediacy of images is even more evident than that of textual media. If the myth is taken seriously as a request to work on it instead of trying to eliminate it by pure ratio, one is automatically confronted with the question of the point of arrival and beginning; the beginning of the work, metonymically of the whole visual world or even the artist as its creator.³ As a visual medium painting can thus become a medium to observe the visual. In other words, the medium of painting not only focuses on limits and differences. It also uncovers the fundamental role and the discursive construction of beginnings and arrivals. It thus raises questions also posed by ethnographic writing.

In the following I would like to show by two examples and their interpretation respectively that these basic structures correlate with constellations which could be called *ethnographic* or even *ethno-iconic*. It is not by mere chance that the works I am going to discuss are landscape paintings and non-relational paintings having derived from the landscape tradition as well, even if this may not be evident at first glance. The genre of landscape painting has been revalued continually since the end of the 18th century. Landscape pictures advance a new visual relation to the world in the same breath as the repertoire of pictorial signs is modernized.⁴ In a double sense new territories are being explored. But at the same time, in the ungraspable landscape of the Romantics a deprivation, an unseizable remnant and an inapprehensible dimension of transcendence is staged, indicating this first crisis of modernization. Progressing exploration leads to a further transfer, but non to a negation of boundaries.

This will grow to become an American topic, by the way, and it is relevant for the understanding of the art of Barnett Newman. The radical abstraction of post-war America, even though having been derived from a romantic perception of landscape, denies not only every object-relation, but also its own historical background. Nonetheless a relation might be established *ex negativo*: The non-relational image may be seen as a non-representational imaging of the fundamental *terra incognita* which accompanies each visual perception. Its position is settled beyond the traditional space concept of the central-point perspective. It is difficult to grasp this beyond-the-frontier, the retreat into a reflexive space. This may be illustrated by a famous phenomenological text on painting: Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *L'Œil et l'esprit* (1964).⁵ The author reflects upon the liminal character of painting in the ethno-iconic sense already developed. This is why the text can also be read as a reformulation of creational myths in terms of modern aesthetics. Unsurprisingly, due to its accentuation of visual appearing its phenomenological approach strengthens this affinity. Also, even in its more general passages, the text seems to be written as an acclamation of one particular artistic position; a position reputed to visualize congenially the appearance of the world and/or of the image we generate of it: that of Paul Cézanne. His concept of painting⁶ is staged by Merleau-Ponty as a kind of incarnation of the program he identifies as a reflexive form of painting, as a kind of meta-imaging.⁷

His point of departure is that the self-observation of human perception is only possible, if possible at all, in the pending mode of aesthetics; it can never be totally achieved because the point, respectively the interface of the perceiving and the perceived can never be fixed durably. This is why the philosopher pays such great attention to the interminable processuality of the perception. According to Merleau-Ponty it is complement to the intertwining of in and out, which takes form in the medium of painting. He sketches painting basically as a liminal phenomenon. It is thus able to make visible not only the separation, but also the intertwining of inner and outer sphere, material und immaterial world, of the perceiving system and the perceived objects. A crucial role is acclaimed by the human body, which conceived as this interface between in and out, subjectivity and objectivity. The body intervenes in each pictorial perception and representation of the world as a medium for the reception and production of images. But at the same time, as already discussed, the body loses its well defined ontological location. From this observation Merleau-Ponty derives the loss of fixed taxonomies and dichotomist concepts of order such as the in-and-out-duality in painting.⁸

The place of these dichotomies is now occupied by a concept of intermediation which is intentionally conceived as ambiguous. Its openly structured reciprocity delineates a postcolonial constellation. Not only does it reflect on the insight that the world of objects as well as its perceiving appropriation can never be fixed and enlightened completely. It also re-esteems this as the basis of an aesthetic surplus which seems to be more interesting than unambiguous and everlasting fixations.⁹ According to this, within the body – which can itself never be observed without intermediation – provisory equivalentents of the outer world are created only through the computation of the external world to provisory images; throughout this process sensual and imaginary eye cooperate. Central to this theory of painting is the following idea: Through the staging of pictorial processuality the everlasting beginning of the computing visual perception can be grasped or even represented in a certain way. If pic-

torial signs such as lines or colored blots manage to stage themselves as processual, reversible, as a disequilibrating stimulus for further visual graphemes, they can enforce the impression of the constant reappearance of the image. By this, they create a notion of pictorial self-forming, of autopoiesis of the image. According to the post-colonial constellation developed above the idea of demiurgic almightiness is thus shifted into the aesthetic object, into the image. Merleau-Ponty transforms old creation myths in such a way as to grasp this auto-poetical restaging of creation within the visual phenomenon called painting.

According to Merleau-Ponty, Cézanne in his landscape painting arrives at this apparent self-computing of the image and its processuality. Moreover, it was his particular achievement to have prevented this processuality from vanishing into pure temporality. Quite to the contrary, Cézanne managed to bestow it at the same time with perpetuity, a perpetuity of endless redevelopment by which precisely and solely the quality of autopoiesis becomes observable. Merleau-Ponty had already demonstrated in *Le doute de Cézanne* that the essential character of Cézanne's work did not consist in Impressionistic etherisation.¹⁰ Instead he had insisted on the eternity of a doubtful and sometimes even desperate process of constant creation within the painting of the Provencal master. It was, as Merleau-Ponty showed, only due to fact that the painter renounced to the routines of iconic appropriations of the visual that he was able to re-establish nature as a self-organizing and -ordering power. To achieve this, Cézanne had to transform himself into the medium of a *natura naturans* generating and transforming itself permanently; without denying, however, that subjective perception is deeply preformed by tradition, the systematic perspectives of modern science and media.

It seems to me that this double movement of a decisively modern melancholy is exactly at the core of the postcolonial constellation. By allowing the outside to germinate within oneself one could, according to Merleau-Ponty, observe and feel in oneself something objective. When opening up to the autopoiesis of the exterior world, one could even rediscover traces of the initial unity of the senses. This archaic sensuality was particularly enabled by Cézanne's handling of color, a pictorial parameter traditionally charged with sensational qualities: It is commonly regarded as an extremely flexible, atypical, swinging and sounding medium of expression.

An art historian already introduced, Gottfried Boehm, has further developed Merleau-Ponty's interpretation.¹¹ It seems crucial to me that Boehm also points out the originality – in the literal sense of the word – as a characterization of Cézanne's visions. The German scholar shows in detail what constitutes the artist's pictorial concept. The blots of color from which Cézanne models, if not to say, constructs, his visions hardly have an exact referential function, especially at closer inspection.¹² Their location is difficult to define, and the formal contours of the dots do not correspond exactly with the limits of the objects depicted. The association of a representational image appears only if these quasi-autonomous blots brushed onto the canvas interlude to a kind of tissue, of relational texture. Boehm deduces the visual impression of a text-like syntax of the image from this colored texture – but not without consideration of the limits of this metaphor.¹³ The evident metaphor of a text alluding to the mythical “In the beginning was the word” strengthens the dimension of beginning inherent to this painterly texture. It becomes clear that the aim is to catch the ‘letters of nature’ and to make them ‘legible’. This initiates a research for the be-

ginning or core point of the syntax of nature lying beyond the surface of a photorealistic resemblance.

It is significant that Cézanne has developed this primitivism in 'his' province, the Provence, from where it finally radiated in a universal range into the history of art. Several general qualities occur within this limited frame of the seemingly well-known environment: the postcolonial constellation, the objectivity of the perceiving subjectivity in the sense already developed above, the staging of a forever-ungraspable nature and the everlasting but never fulfilled perception of the world. By transforming the seemingly familiar ambient nature into another being, which is acknowledged as being other, an inversion takes place. One may speak of it, once again, in terms of a postcolonial constellation *avant la lettre*. Regardless of its evident archaism it is well reflected und constituted reflexively because it insists on the fact that mediation is inevitable.

Cézanne projected nature as an ungraspable other which can only painfully be forced into its role as parameter of painting. Barnett Newman however conceived the artwork itself as something far away and unreachable. In the following, I would like to show how Newman by using huge canvases structured by color fields and -zips, continues this approach.¹⁴ At the same time I would like to discuss the following point: Newman radicalizes the only semi-abstract art of Cézanne to arrive at decisively non-relational painting.¹⁵ One may now ask if in doing this he reintroduced patterns of colonial representation, even in a closer, ethnographic-territorial understanding – even though Newman himself would have denied this.

Newman charged his 'empty' color-fields with highly metaphysical expectations. The painter conceived his huge canvases as vehicles for the experience of a metaphysical shock intended to destabilize and through this to replace the spectator even physically towards an initial state. In other words: If the spectator allows him- or herself to be colonized by the large-scale image, he or she can return to an initial, experience-based openness. This consciously provoked loss of control possesses its own tradition. The classical notion of the sublime as overcoming the purely formally beautiful returns in Newman's aesthetic of the ungraspable super-formal.¹⁶ But in this case it was also intended to support a climax of the avant-garde dogma of renewal and fracture.¹⁷ Newman aimed at nothing less than a 180-degree change in the function of non-figurative art, a sort of fundamental return to an initial point before all later trials of a new beginning.¹⁸ The small, flash-like lightning zips dividing many of Newman's canvases might already be interpreted as the smallest possible visualization of an iconic difference, an abstract, binary optical code. In this sense, they can be comprehended as a fundamental constellation of an archaic, abstract iconicity. In this way Newman understood his concept of painting as fundamental: Painting had to be decontaminated not only of all traces of objective representation, but also of European abstraction¹⁹ which Newman regarded as its uncompleted transcendence.²⁰ According to Newman only American painters were capable of accomplishing the route leading beyond the confines of representation. Only they could generate a new reality of transcendent experience through confrontation with the presence of the image.²¹ To Newman, the entry into the image's continuum the identification of the subject with the depicted scenery, even it is if reduced to a minimum as in cubism, was a dead end. It even detracted the spectator from the higher und purer mission of the artwork.

He stated a diametric difference of the aesthetics of European avant-garde abstraction and American non-relational art. This also meant a fundamental shift of the world geography of art. By this, the artist advanced on the path of delimitation and autonomy of American art which many American painters had taken in the 19th century – and this includes those artists who arrived in the United States as immigrants.²² According to Newman, on the one side, in Europe, stood an abstraction not completed consequently, on the other, the leading America achieved a radicalization of European avant-garde to arrive to absolute transcendence.²³ According to this *translatio imperii creationis*, old and new world were poles inevitably drifting apart from each other.²⁴

Robert Rosenblum has written an art history explicitly corresponding to this changed cultural map, entitled *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*.²⁵ Its first aim is to reactivate an unorthodox tradition bypassing the capital of Old-European Academism, Paris: that of northern Romanticism. The influential art historian understood the refuse of all iconography which characterizes Newman's pictorial universe as a renewal of the Romantic crisis; a crisis of established symbolic patterns now reactivated by an actual iconic skepticism, bridging Protestant and now Jewish icono-phobia. In his complementary text, *The Abstract Sublime* Rosenblum argues that this modern negation is rooted in the icono-skeptic idea of the sublime and its transformation. In America the sublime was no longer understood as an inner-iconic *mise-en-abyme* of representation, but reformulated as a constellation shifted to the reception of art.

Newman believed himself authorized to be the speaker of this disconnection from Europe.²⁶ He emphasized the gap and supported the argument by reevaluating Native American art.²⁷ Not only Newman's painting *Pagan Void*²⁸ is inspired by tribal art. The partner he chose for his understanding of the image was thus an America different from that of the European invaders. Thereby Newman radicalized the provincial primitivism of Cézanne who had already invested his well known environment with a partly foreign otherness and deduced a new image concept from this. The American artist reverted instead at his turn to a sort of alliance that had been typical of the post-Cézanne modernism. The connection between the radical modern, non-relational painting and archaic art should be made once again. It was the common goal of Newman's post-war-painting and of early modernism to provide the literal archaism of the radical modernism with an anthropological dimension. The closing of ranks with an art outside from the accelerated European historicity should authenticate the New American Art Newman aimed at. Indeed, we can not neglect his good intentions: He tended to a reciprocal exchange between the old and the actual American art under the auspices of a living myth.²⁹ It remains to be discussed if this reciprocal alliance was structured asymmetrically, a characteristic already of the exotism of the first modernism quite generally.

There is no doubt that Newman mobilized the traditional emblematic role of the foreign savage for America in a modified way in order to provide an anthropological basis for the aesthetics of modern sublime. Its central point of reference was an emphatic modern 'Americanness' instead of the European old world. It is significant that Newman emphatically called the cited primitivisms 'barbaric' and at the same time understood them as an American antiquity. In his view, they could prove his idea that the artwork was a kind of vehicle or of channel of affects. Excited by the

fear of an almighty and chaotic nature they could be averted by the artwork and its ritual use. One inspiration for this may be seen, as I would like to suggest, in Aby Warburg's excursions into ethnology.³⁰ His thoughts on the serpent ritual of the Hopi Indians of New Mexico offer many parallels.³¹ Here Warburg could study in a nutshell how the ritual invocation stabilized a mythical outlook. His basic assumption was that as an art historian he could gain a deeper insight into symbols as they were still being forged. Europe was being regarded as separated by a many thousand-year-thick ash layer from the blaze of this forge.³² Warburg comprehended the ritual handling of the serpent as an aesthetic procedure whose elementary structure could gain significance for later symbolic practices.³³ He located the symbolic production of the serpent ritual explicitly at the interface between concrete and abstract signs. According to Warburg, it interlocked creatively a motivic and an energetic reading.

Newman, the 'Non-European' American artist (who was nevertheless educated as an Old-European) shifted the theoretical accents into abstraction. However, he kept the ritual foundation in his concept of abstraction. The energy of the initial dimension of myth and fetish which are actualized each time anew during each ritual should be transferred to his paintings. The canvas is conceived, like a fetish, as something unknown which could be grasped neither mimetically nor conceptually. On the contrary it should confront the spectator with an inapprehensible void before all representation. This could be grasped through living experience.³⁴ Newman exemplified this aim by an anecdote about his intuitive breakthrough to the image concept, which should determine his mature work: He had contemplated his painting *Onement*³⁵ (created in 1948) one whole year long, during his everyday life, before he grasped its meaning for his further life:³⁶ „*This was the beginning of my present life*“, said Newman. His statement pays tribute to myths of rebirth and of sudden inter-subjective fusion (*Onement*). According to a mythical and ritual logic, Newman conceived the moment of creation and the permanence of the work as fusing within a concept of presence.³⁷ His notorious dictum „*The Sublime is Now*“ aims exactly at this *hic et nunc*, at this modern-archaic *kairos*.³⁸ Inner and outer space, image and reception coincide in the happy moment of the sublime experience.³⁹ Here the self-observing of passive and productive perception is again virulent – including all the blind spots, because the loss of subjective control is part of the program.

But the place of the violent and endless nature is now occupied by the image itself. Thus, Newman is no longer looking for the “harmony parallel to nature” envisioned by Cézanne.⁴⁰ To him it had become obsolete in a tragic way – in the time of the atomic bomb.⁴¹ Now the image itself had to be a living analogue of the immense, abysmal and suddenly striking *natura naturans*.⁴² The small cleavages (called zips) in the color continuum hint at this, functioning as signals of sudden strike. In this sense, they possess not only a semiotic but also a temporal signature.⁴³ As abstract codes, they demonstrate immanently to image the dialectic of the sudden abruptness and hopeful rebuilding of a new subjectivity; a reflexive subjectivity purified by a fundamental catharsis. Here again a postcolonial constellation takes shape: a self-criticism of the subject's dominance over nature and thus indirectly over itself, at least over the modern subject's parts taken for nature.⁴⁴ The perfectibility of control, basis of each colonial politics, is counterbalanced by a dramatic staging of 'initiality'.⁴⁵ The pathos of many of Newman's titles (*Pagan Void*, *The Name*⁴⁶, *Voice of the Fire*⁴⁷, *Here*⁴⁸, *The Command*⁴⁹ etc.) evokes the idea of beginning according to creation-

al myths. This anthropologically generalized theology was conceived both as a return to a point before all cultural diversification and as a critics of all visual representation. In this highly cultivated primitivism Newman radicalized an approach that Cézanne had chosen practically and in a more gentle way also theoretically. But Newman over-dramatized the offset from the 'typical' European strategies of imaging, which he regarded as incomplete. He advanced constellations which might itself be suspect of a colonial attitude because he was so keen on finding an 'Americanness' beyond the horizon of European colonization. This also proves that painterly self-enlightenment as a form of 'iconographic reflection' of its basics and blind spots always remains an open process. Cézanne, Newman and their philosophical and art-historical interpreters have immensely animated it. Despite of this fact, or even on account of it, we have to restart the process anew.

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¹ Markus Dauss, “Perspektive als Denkform der Ambivalenz: zwischen Madame de Staël und Vilém Flusser”, non-published manuscript of a lecture (University of Giessen, November 2004).

² Gottfried Boehm, “Die Wiederkehr der Bilder”, in: idem (ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?* Munich 1995, pp. 11-38, here: p. 30.

³ The arrival or birth of the artist is also a highly mythical – and by this strongly metaphorical – moment: Ernst Kris/Otto Kurz, *Die Legende vom Künstler. Ein geschichtlicher Versuch*, with a preface by Ernst H. Gombrich, Frankfurt am Main 1980, pp. 100-120.

⁴ Norbert Schneider, *Geschichte der Landschaftsmalerei. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zur Romantik*, Darmstadt 1999, p. 13; Werner Hofmann, *Das entzweite Jahrhundert. Kunst zwischen 1750 und 1830*, Munich 1995, pp. 336-357.

⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Das Auge und der Geist“, in: idem, *Das Auge und der Geist. Philosophische Essays*, edited and translated by Hans Werner Arndt, Hamburg 1984, pp. 13-44 (original title: *L'Œil et l'esprit*, Paris 1964).

⁶ Paul Klee is the second artist to which Merleau-Ponty refers emphatically.

⁷ Merleau-Ponty 1984, p. 21.

⁸ To elaborate this, Merleau-Ponty displays a critical lecture of René Descartes’ *Discours De La Methode Pour bien conduire sa raison, & chercher la verité dans les sciences. Plus La Dioptrique. Les Meteores. Et La Geometrie. Qui sont des essais de cete Methode*, Leyden 1637.

⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Le doute de Cézanne”, in: *revue Fontaine*, tome 8, n° 47, December 1945; reprint in: idem, *Sens et non-sens*, Paris 1948, pp. 15-44; also in: Gottfried Boehm (ed.), *Was ist ein Bild?* Munich 1994, pp. 39-59 (edition used here).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gottfried Boehm, *Paul Cézanne. Montagne Sainte-Victoire*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

¹² Cf. also: Michael Lüthy, “Subjektivität und Medialität bei Cézanne – mit Vorbemerkungen zu Dürer, Kersting und Manet”, in: *Subjekt und Medium in der Kunst der Moderne*, edited by Michael Lüthy and Christoph Menke, Berlin 2006, pp. 189-207, see here particularly: section IV.

¹³ Already Merleau-Ponty (1994, p. 48) had used the metaphor of texture, referring himself to Joachim Gasquet (*Cézanne*, Paris 1921).

¹⁴ Corresponding ideas on Newman I have already published in “Alterität als Entfremdung in der Malerei von Friedrich bis Richter.”, in: *Fremde Figuren. Alterisierung in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Anthropologie um 1800*, edited by Alexandra Böhm and Monika Sproll, Würzburg 2008, pp. 317-350.

¹⁵ Max Imdahl, *Barnett Newman. Who’s afraid of red, yellow and blue. Einführung*, Stuttgart 1971, p. 27.

¹⁶ Jean-François Lyotard, “Der Augenblick, Newman“, in: Michael Baudson (ed.), *Zeit. Die vierte Dimension in der Kunst*, Weinheim 1985, pp. 99-105.

¹⁷ Robert Rosenblum, “The Abstract Sublime”, in: *ARTnews*, February 1961, pp. 39-41, 56f.; reprint in: idem, *On Modern American Art. Selected Essays*, New York 1999, pp. 72-79.

¹⁸ Harold Rosenberg, *Barnett Newman*, New York 1978, p. 43.

¹⁹ Newman’s most detested European artist, his best beloved enemy, was Piet Mondrian.

²⁰ Rosenberg 1978, p. 30-32; Imdahl 1971, pp. 6f.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 26-29, 37f.

²² Ortrud Westheider (ed.), *Neue Welt - die Erfindung der amerikanischen Malerei*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Bucerius Kunst Forum (Hamburg), February 24 to Mai 28, 2007, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, July 21 to October 21, 2007, exhibition and catalogue by Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser, with contributions by Winfried Fluck and others, Munich 2007.

²³ For the absolute pretension of the first (European) and second (American) avant-garde cf.: John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute. Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko and Still*, London 2000.

²⁴ Imdahl 1971, p. 9; Rosenberg 1978, pp. 29, 37f.

²⁵ Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition*, London 1975.

²⁶ Imdahl 1971, pp. 43, 64f. Newman quarreled intensively with Erwin Panofsky about the title of one of his canvases, *vir heroicus sublimis*. Panofsky, reputed as founder of the iconology and humanistic interpret of Old-European images, had immigrated to Princeton. Their dispute is only an episode in a bigger ‘clash of civilizations’ staged in this years. But here again different image concepts were at the core of the debate. Cf. Beat Wyss, *Ein Druckfehler. Panofsky versus Newman - verpasste Chancen eines Dialogs*, Cologne 1993.

²⁷ W. Jackson Rushing, *Native American Art and the New York Avantgarde*, Austin 1995, pp. 126-137.

²⁸ Barnett Newman, *Pagan Void*, 1946, oil on canvas, 83, 8 x 96, 5 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, donation of Annalee Newman.

²⁹ Imdahl 1971, p. 127. Newman’s conception of myth is inspired by the early Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Gustav Jung and Wilhelm Worringer.

- ³⁰ Aby M. Warburg, *Schlangenritual. Ein Reisebericht*, Berlin 1988. Dazu: Ulrich Raulff, "Die sieben Häute der Schlange. Oraibi, Kreuzlingen und retour. Stationen einer Reise ins Licht", in: Benedetta Cestelli Guidi/Nicholas Mann (ed.), *Grenzerweiterungen. Aby Warburg in Amerika*, Hamburg 1999, pp. 64-74, here: p. 65; Salvatore Settis, "Kunstgeschichte als vergleichende Kulturwissenschaft. Aby Warburg, die Pueblo-Indianer und das Nachleben der Antike", in: Thomas W. Gaethgens (ed.), *Künstlerischer Austausch (Artistic Exchange). XIII. Internationaler Kongress für Kunstgeschichte Berlin 1992*, 3 tomes, Berlin 1993, tome 1, pp. 139-158, here: p. 149.
- ³¹ Aby Warburg, *Schlangenritual. Ein Reisebericht*, edited by Ulrich Raulff, Berlin 1988. Cf. also: Raulff 1999, p. 65.
- ³² For this and the following cf.: Ulrich Raulff, *Die sieben Häute der Schlange. Mit Aby Warburg durch die Wüste*, in: idem, *Wilde Energien. Vier Versuche zu Aby Warburg*, Goettingen 2003, S. 48-71; Claudia Zumbusch, *Wissenschaft in Bildern: Symbol und dialektisches Bild in Aby Warburgs Mnemosyne-Atlas und Walter Benjamins Passagen-Werk*, Berlin 2004, p. 215.
- ³³ Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. Eine intellektuelle Biographie*, Frankfurt am Main 1981, p. 120.
- ³⁴ Imdahl 1971, pp. 61, 83.
- ³⁵ Barnett Newman, *Onement I*, 1948, oil on canvas and masking tape on canvas, 69, 2 x 41, 2 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, donation of Annalee Newman. The title, a neologism, already implies an offset form the art of the ornament which aimed at Mondrian and his followers.
- ³⁶ Ulf Poschardt, "Das Erhabene ist jetzt. Über die Implosion des Zeitkerns in Bildern von Barnett Newman", in: *Kunstforum*, tome 150, April – June 2000, pp. 290-297, here: p. 295.
- ³⁷ Poschardt 2000, p. 295.
- ³⁸ Barnett Newman, "The Sublime is Now", in: *Tiger's Eye 3* (March 1948), p. 51-53.
- ³⁹ Michael Bockemühl, *Die Wirklichkeit des Bildes. Bildrezeption als Bildproduktion. Rothko, Newman Rembrandt, Raphael*, Stuttgart 1985.
- ⁴⁰ Joachim Gasquet, *Cézanne*, Paris 1921, cited according to: Walter Hess, *Dokumente zum Verständnis der modernen Malerei*, Reinbeck 1956, p. 19.
- ⁴¹ Rosenblum 1961, p. 79.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 61.
- ⁴³ Ibid., pp. 51f.
- ⁴⁴ Rudolf zur Lippe, *Naturbeherrschung am Menschen*, 2 tomes, Frankfurt am Main 1974.
- ⁴⁵ According to Rosenblum (1961, p. 78) Newman replaced the romantic pantheism by a romantic 'pain-theism'.
- ⁴⁶ Barnett Newman, *The Name*, 1949, brush and black ink, 611 x .380 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.
- ⁴⁷ Idem, *Voice of Fire*, 1967, acryl color on canvas, 543, 6 x 243, 8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
- ⁴⁸ Idem, *Here III*, 1965-1966, steel, 319, 4 x 60, 0 x 47, 0 cm, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, anonymous donation.
- ⁴⁹ Idem, *The Command*, 1946, oil on canvas, 121, 9 x 91, 4 cm, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum, donation Annalee Newman.