

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS AND THE DEVOTION OF THE NAZZARENO OR REDENTUR; THE STORY OF HOW A SINGLE LOCUTION OR THOUGHT SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD THROUGH EMBODIED COGNITION AND NEUROSCIENCE

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SUMMARY

Here we describe one Locution-or thought - that Saint John of the Cross experienced, and how this locution led to the important devotion of the Redentur or Nazzarenu, - Christ carrying the Cross - which still draws huge crowds of devotees worldwide. We have traced how this single thought of Saint John of the Cross has been transmitted across time and space to influence large groups of people across the centuries and continue to do so. To do this we have used numerous disciplines including Church History, Art History, Iconography, Anthropology as in Popular Religion and Story Telling and Neuroscience. In Neuroscience, we attribute this transmission through artworks to Embodied cognition, which is mediated via the Mirror Neuron System and the Default Mode Network, which also mediate Empathy and The Perception of The Self.

Key words: Church History - Art History - Iconography - Anthropology - Popular Religion - Story Telling – Neuroscience - Mirror Neuron System - Default Mode Network

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INTRODUCTION

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THE LOCUTION

When Saint John of the Cross was prior of Segovia, between the years 1588-1591, he had had a locution from a picture of Christ Carrying the Cross (Fernandez 2011). Standing in front of the picture one day, Brother John heard a few words: "Brother John, ask me what you want for these works you have done for me." To which the saint replied, "Lord, To suffer and be despised for your sake." Also, when he was Prior of Los Martires in Granada, he had founded a Confraternity of the Nazzareno, of Christ carrying the Cross, and drafted the Statute for the Confraternity, and ordered from a sculptor Pablo de Rojas a Statue of Christ carrying the Cross for the Confraternity, made between 1582 and 1587 (Fernandez 2011). It would be John of the Cross himself, as prior of Granada, who carried out the commission for the Brotherhood, according to the spirituality of the Discalced Carmelites. In this way, the devotion to the Nazareno developed in Granada (Fernandez 2011). Saint John had also established this devotion in the convent of Baeza (Jaen), and had given it some simple statutes, which are preserved. This is the current Cofradía de Nuestro Padre Jesus del Paso (Fernandez 2011).

Thus it came about that it became a frequent occurrence in Andalusia that monasteries of the Carmelites would have both Confraternities and statues of Christ carrying the Cross-Jaen is a good example, with the popular Cofradía de Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno de Jaen, with the famous statue called el Abuelo "grandfather" (Abuelo), to which attached a legend that it was made in a night by an unknown old man. The story narrates that one day an old man appeared at the door of a house belonging to the Carmelites and offered to sculpt a statue of Christ Carrying the Cross, provided he worked alone. The next day, the statue was found completed, and man had disappeared. This confraternity was founded around the year 1588 (Fernandez 2011). Its Confraternity Members seem to be the first ones to start the tradition of members of the confraternity carrying the cross behind the statue on Good Friday, and so, in Andalusia, it came about that, beginning with the idea of Saint John, more and more parishes and other Orders of friars began to also develop these Confraternities and honour these statues, as devotion to the Nazzarenu grew. Naturally, it was not only the spread of this devotion because it had been started by a saint that enabled the spread, but also the presence of good baroque sculptors which enabled the spread of this devotion. Furthermore, the reputation these statues acquired among the devotees of helping them with their needs, and this was related to the possibility of the devotees relating to these works of art. We shall attempt to explain how it comes about that such a relationship between statue and devotee comes about.

In order to see whether it was indeed the idea promoted by John of the Cross that spread the devotion, we used the internet to find out the dates of completion of Statues of the 16th and seventeenth Century of the Nazzareno linked with Confraternities in Andalusia. We hypothesized that, if they had been made after the influence of Saint John, then they should be dated after 1582. We checked

the dates from the Internet sites of the various confraternities, and we found that this was the case with all of them. There was only one Statue, in Malaga, in which case it appeared that a new confraternity of the Nazzareno, El Rico, had been formed as a break away from another confraternity, which also indicated an increase in devotion from that date, which was 1658 (Table 1).

Table 1. Dates of Andalusian Statues of Nazarenos (Christ Carrying Cross) Valladolid as comparison

Town	Statue	Date	Author
Huétor Vega (Granada) (Previously Granada)	Jesús Nazareno	1582-1587	Pablo de Rojas
Baeza (Jaen)	Nuestro Padre Jesus del Paso	1587	anonymous
Jaen	El Arbuelo	1588	anonymous (Sebastián de Solís)
Mancha Real	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno	1598	Sebastián de Solís
Alcaudete	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno	1592	
Baeza	Jesús Nazareno de la Caída	Before 1698	circle of José de Mora
Antequera	"Señor Caído"	1764-1744	José de Mora - Andrés de Carvajal
Ubeda			Jose de Mesa
Velez Malaga			Jose de Mesa
Cordoba	Jesus Cadio de Cordoba	1676	workshop of Pedro de Mena
Agular de la Frontera	Nuestro Padre Jesús Caído	1876	Blas Molner
Seville	Jesús del Gran Poder	1620	Juan de Mesa
Seville	Jesús de las Penas	1756	
Seville	Jesús de las Penas	17 th century	
Seville	Jesús de la Salud	c. 1615	
Seville	Jesús de la Divina Misericordia	1640-1641	
Seville	Jesús con la Cruz al Hombro	1687	
Seville	Jesús de la Pasión	1615	
Seville	Ntro Padre Jesús Nazareno	1609	
Seville	Santísimo Cristo de las Tres Caídas	1630	
Seville	Nuestro Padre Jesús de la Salud	1738	
Seville	Jesús Nazareno	1685	
Seville	El Cristo de las Tres Caídas de San Isidoro	17 th century	
Cordoba	Nuestro Señor de los Reyes	1987	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús del Buen Suceso	17 th century	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno de la Santa Faz	1988	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús del Calvario	1723	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús de la Pasión	17 th century	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno	17 th century	
Cordoba	Nuestro Padre Jesús Caído	17 th century	Pedro de Mena
Granada	Santísimo Cristo del Trabajo	1987	
Granada	Nuestro Padre Jesús de la Amargura	17 th century	
Granada	Nuestro Padre Jesús del Gran Poder	1996	
Granada	Nuestro Padre Jesus de las Tres Caídas	17 th century	
Granada	Jesús Nazareno	1982	
Granada	Jesus de Amor y la Entrega	1983	
Granada	Nuestro padre Jesús de la Pasión	1984	
Malaga	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno Titulado "El Rico"	1939	José Navas Parejo
Malaga	Nazarene of El Paso (El Moreno)	17 th century	Anonymous,
Valladolid	Camino del Calvario	1614	Gregorio Fernández
Valladolid	Nazarene	1600-1620	Pedro de la Cuadra
Valladolid	Cristo Camino del Calvario	2009	Miguel Ángel González Jurado
Valladolid	Nuestro Padre Jesús Nazareno	1600-1620	Pedro de la Cuadra

THE SPREAD FROM ANDALUSIA TO ALL AROUND THE SPANISH EMPIRE

Malta was part of the Spanish Empire, with Sicily and Southern Italy... So our Redenturi, as we call Christ Carrying the Cross, including the Redentur Ta L'isla, which are Confraternity Images for the Good Friday Processions, and also with the custom of carrying crosses behind the statues, may well have developed from the customs initiated by Saint John of the Cross.

As we shall see later, Through Embodied Cognition, the face of Jesus in these statues appears to be speaking directly to the viewer, as it did to Saint John of the Cross... And not only this, but we know traditionally that in Malta, statues of the Nazzareno were carved and used in Good Friday Processions, because Maltese sailors saw the statues in Spain wearing real clothes; (Domain 2020, Agius 2013, Bonnici 1998, Cassar Pullicino 1993, Mangion 2019, Zammit Gabarretta, Zarb 1998), Also, Malta acquired the use of Crosses carried by Penitents from the Confraternities of Spain, based on the one in Jaen 1888. These Maltese Redenturi also are dated after the locution of Saint John of the cross. Thus the famous Redentur of Senglea was made by Saverio Laferla in 1742. The Redentur of the Valletta set was also made by Saverio Laferla between 1737 and 1742 (Grima 2022). Other Maltese Redenturi are more recent. Similarly in Italy, Redenturi, like the ones in in Pulia, for example in Taranto were sculpted and used in Good Friday Processions.

The Cult of Christ carrying the Cross spread to America. All treasure ships coming from America had to come to the Torre del Oro in Seville to pay Duty. In Guatemala, St Teresa had established Carmelite Missions, and sent there a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In Guatemala city, as in Spain, All the Nazarenos were carved after 1582, thus, Jesús Nazareno del Consuelo 1835 Jesús Nazareno de los Milagros 1740 Jesús Nazareno de las Tres Potencias in 1667 Jesus Nazareno del Rescate middle of the 17th century Jesús Nazareno de Candelaria "Cristo Re" 1563. Jesus de La Merced 1655. Interestingly, legends regarding the Carmelite nuns have attached themselves to Jesus de La Merced and Jesus Nazareno del Rescate. Thus, Jesus Nazareno del Rescate is so called because after the expulsion of the regular orders in 1829, the remaining nuns had to pawn the image to cover their expenses. Faithful members of the congregation paid to have the image recovered, and from there came the name Jesus of the Rescue.

The legend of Jesus Nazareno de la Merced is an interesting story that is believed to have taken place in Guatemala City involving one of the most famous religious sculptures in the country. "In the convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Spain there lived a young nun from Guatemala. She was led to move to the convent in Guatemala, and there asked Jesus, during Holy Week, which sculpted statue in Guatemala most resembled Christ's face when on Earth. She was told that "Of the images of

Christ that have been sculpted, the most similar to the Son of God is the Nazarene found in the church of the Mercedarian order in New Guatemala of the Assumption."

Furthermore, in the Philippines, where the Augustinian Recolects took a famous Nazzareno, Nuestro Padre Jesús, Nazareno El Nazareno Negro, by a Mexican artist in the 16th century and brought it to the Philippines in 1606 to Manila, as well as a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel which was donated by the Carmelites. This is the Our Lady of Mt. Carmel of San Sebastian Basilica, which is a statue crowned by the Vatican Chapter. There is huge devotion to the Nazareno Negro, whose procession draws great crowds. Sometimes, on special occasions, the Statue of the Nazareno Negro is taken, by the Crowd, to meet the statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The Meeting of the two statues, is called a "Dungaw", and happened when the image of the Black Nazarene and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel met in front of Quiapo Church, surrounded by huge crowds.

EMBODIED COGNITION

It is known that, when an observer looks at an artwork, he is able to "think himself into", and so associates himself with the Artwork (Agius 2018, Ishizu 2011, Kawabata 2004, Maglione 2017, Trentini 2015, Vartanian 2004, Vessel 2010, Yue 2007). This process is known as Embodied cognition (Caramazza 2014, Ishizu 2011, Kawabata 2004, Mahon 2015, Trentini 2015). It has been shown that in fact, the two neural networks associated with Embodied cognition are the Mirror Neuron System (Caramazza 2014, Hoenen 2017) and the Default Mode Network (Vessel 2013, 2012). However it is also known that these two networks are also associated with Empathy (Brinck 2018) and the perception of the Self. It is now suggested that at least three neural systems play important roles in empathy. These include the mirror neuron system, the affective empathy system located in the anterior insula (AI) and midcingulate cortex (MCC), and the cognitive empathy system of theory of mind which almost overlaps with the Default Mode Network network (Sandrone 2013, Molnar-Szakacs 2013, Wanqing Li 2014).

Therefore it appears that a person, when using embodied Cognition to look at a statue, is able to experience the statue, and feel empathic to what it represents- In this case Christ Carrying the Cross- and therefore feel associated with what the statue represents. This is facilitated by the fact that the baroque Sculptors designed the statue so that Christ's face is looking at the Onlooker.

CONCLUSION

We have traced how a single thought of Saint John of the Cross has been transmitted across time and space to influence large groups of people across the centuries and continue to do so. To do this we have used numerous disciplines including Church History, Art History Icono-

graphy, Anthropology as in Popular Religion and Story Telling and Neuroscience .

Through the lens of embodied cognition, it is fascinating to see how a single idea, initially expressed by a single person (in this case, Saint John of the Cross), can spread geographically and endure for centuries. The processes through which such a notion is passed down are not just social or historical; rather, they are firmly anchored in the common neurobiological systems that influence how we view ourselves and other people.

Perceiving and reacting to art activates the default mode network and the mirror neurone system, which support empathy, self-referential thinking, and social understanding. Therefore, religious artworks like the Redentur statues, which were popular throughout the Spanish empire and beyond, have lasting power not only because of their aesthetic value or devotional purpose, but also because of their ability to trigger basic brain processes that cause the viewer to feel moved, personally connected, and changed. This incredible fusion of neuroscience, art, religion, and anthropology demonstrates how the common architecture of the mind binds people together throughout history.

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Both authors contributed to the literature search and the drafting of the text.

Both authors approved the final manuscript.

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