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“The Theology of the Image”

Chapter 7 of *In the Image and Likeness of God*
(St. Vladimir's Seminary Press: 1974), pp. 125-139.

The theme of the image, in the knowledge of God and man, is of such importance for Christian thought that I think we are justified in speaking of a “theology of the image” in the New Testament or in the work of a particular Christian writer without fear of magnifying a doctrinal element of secondary value out of all due proportion. Thus (to mention only one work among many which have appeared recently), Fr. Henri Crouzel's study, *Theologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origene*,¹ touches on all the fundamental problems of Origen's thought; and this in spite of the fact that the writer apologizes in his introduction for having limited the “theology of the image” to a single aspect— that of the relationship of God to man by the intermediary of the Word. Even this concentration on the role of the second hypostasis cannot reduce the scope of the theme of the image of God in Origen's thought: if the Logos is the Image which makes known the paternal Archetype, all the problems connected with the manifestation of God belong to the “theology of the Image”— whether “cosmic” in nature created by the Word, or “historic,” in the revelation given to a people chosen to receive the Message of God. If man is *logikos*, to use here an expression of Origen's, if he is “in the image” of the Logos, everything which touches the destiny of man— grace, sin, redemption by the Word made man— must also be related to the theology of the image. And we may say the same of the Church, the sacraments, spiritual life, sanctification, and the end of all things. There is no branch of theological teaching which can be entirely isolated from the problem of the image without danger of severing it from the living stock of Christian tradition. We may say that for a theologian of the catholic tradition in the East and in the West, for one who is true to the main lines of patristic thought, the theme of the image (in its twofold acceptance— the image as the principle of God's self-manifestation and the image as the founder of a particular relationship of man to God) must belong to the “essence of Christianity.” The little book by Roman Guardini which bears this title gives a prominent place to the idea of the image. But on the contrary, one looks in vain for the theme of the image in Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*.

The reasons usually advanced by certain Protestant theologians who would like to exclude the “theology of the image” from the essentials of Christianity can find support in a sound knowledge of Biblical vocabulary. Thus Karl Barth in his *Dogmatik*² declares

that the teachings of the Fathers of the Church about the “theology of the image” were entirely invented, without any scriptural foundation. Emil Brunner,³ who is less categorical, nevertheless concludes that “the doctrine of the Imago Dei., if one equates the phrase with the truth for which it stands, does not play a very important part in the Bible.” Anders Nygren in *Agape and Eros*⁴ eliminates the theme of the image, quoting E. Lehmann, who says: “The strongest argument against ‘creation in God’s image’ is the complete silence of the rest of the Old Testament on this subject, which, if it had been a prevalent idea, might have been expected to be very frequently used, and used to the full, in the constantly recurring treatment of the relation between God and men. But no Prophet, no Psalm, not Job., not even the humane Deuteronomy, has any suggestion or such a likeness of nature between God and man.” And the same writer adds: “It is no accident that this doctrine of the image of God was first developed at a time when the Greek language was making its way into the religious literature of the Jews.”

“it is no accident”: here is a phrase which merits attention. Lehmann and Nygren simply wanted to say that the theme of the image of God is foreign to Revelation: it is an Hellenic contribution which we owe to the Platonic and Stoic associations already latent in the terms *OK6v* and *6VO(COMC)*, used in the translation of the book of Genesis by the Septuagint, about the third or second century before Christ.

These ideas are developed in the book of Wisdom, written in Greek about the middle of the first century before our era. In fact, we find there (2:23) a paraphrase of “Let us make man in our Image” which gives to man’s vocation the attributes of incorruptibility and conformity with God in what is proper to Him or, according to another version, conformity with His eternity (*aiMT-q-Mr.*). In the same book (7:26) Wisdom, co-creator of the universe, makes God known in creation: she is the *dma6-yaa[Aa* -the reflection (or radiance) of the eternal light, “a spotless mirror of the working of God,” the “image (*FAK6v*) of his goodness.” This is almost the second hypostasis of Middle Platonism or the Logos of Philo.

Certainly the fact that the sudden development of the theme of the image coincided with the entry of the Greek language into the religious literature of Judaism was not fortuitous. But one may wonder if this recourse to a new vocabulary, rich in philosophical tradition, was not the answer to an internal need of Revelation itself, which thus received in the last stage of the Old Covenant an increase of light which was to lend new coloring to the sacred books of the Jews. “It is no accident” that the Jewish diaspora, in order to keep alive the word of Truth revealed to Israel, chose to give it an Hellenic expression, which allowed the authors of the deuterocanonical books to open up a theology of the image on the eve of the advent of Christianity.

The precise facts appealed to by theologians who are opposed to the patristic doctrine of the image must be admitted by all who, as they face the texts of the Old Testament, are unwilling, to close their eyes to the history of the formation of the Biblical canon. Thus they will recognize that the Hebraic expressions *tselem* and *demut*, governed by the prepositions *be* and *ke*, in Genesis 1:26 (which give: “in our image, after our likeness”) have not the positive and direct force of *kat’ eikona hemon, kath’ homoiosin hemon* of the translation of the Septuagint. In the context of the sacerdotal narrative of Genesis, the creation of man “in the image” of God confers on human beings a dominion over the animals analogous to that which God enjoys over the whole of his creation. If, as is sometimes supposed, this text is aimed against the Egyptian cult of theriomorphic gods, the expression “in the image” would have a mainly negative meaning: animals have nothing of the divine, for only man is made “in the image” of God. But it has also been noticed that the expression “after our likeness” ought to limit still further the positive force of “in our image, perhaps to avoid at the same time the Iranian myth of the “heavenly man”: man is *only in the image*— he has only a certain distant analogy with the Lord through the place which he occupies among earthly creatures. Obviously all this is too thin for us to be able to speak of an Old Testament doctrine of the “image of God” except in negative terms: the God of Israel, Creator of heaven and earth, has nothing in common with the divinities of the other nations. He has no image in human or animal form which could be worshipped. This is in complete harmony with the formal prohibition of any plastic representation of God: “Therefore take good heed to yourselves. Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure” (Deut. 4:15-16). “Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice” (Deut. 4:12).

Let us concede this much to the opponents of the theology of the image: in the purely Hebraic text of the Bible, interpreted in the historic context in which the books of the Old Testament were composed, there is nothing (or almost nothing) which would permit us to base either a theognosis or a religious anthropology on the notion of the image of God. Nevertheless, this God who hides Himself— the God of Isaiah (45:15)— the “God of Israel, the Savior” who does not show his nature by means of any image, does not remain an unknown God: He speaks and He exacts a response; He reveals His Name and He calls His chosen by their name: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. He is a personal Absolute who enters into relationships with human persons. For Judaism before Christ, as for a believing Jew today, this is so. To quote the witness of Martin Buber:⁵ “The great achievement of Israel is not to have taught the one true God, who is the only God, the source and end of all that is; it is to have shown that it was possible *in reality* to speak to

Him, to say 'Thou' to Him, to stand upright before His face." "It was Israel who first understood— and much more— lived life as a dialogue between man and God."

This God reveals Himself as transcendent to every image which could make known His nature, but He does not refuse personal relationship, living intercourse with men, with a people; He speaks to them and they reply, in a series of concrete situations which unfold as sacred history. Nevertheless the depths of His nature remain forbidden to all enquiry. If there is a gnosis which is purely Hebraic, it is not a knowledge of the divine nature, but the revelation of the mysterious designs of God given to the prophets, a revelation of the divine economy being realized in a history directed towards one end, a history which finds its meaning in the promise of an eschatological event. Some Hebraizers will tell us that even the tetragrammaton of Exodus, the name of God, says nothing about the divine Being, about God considered in His nature. The Septuagint translated this declaration thus: *Ego Eimi Ho On*— "I am the one who is" (or, "who am"). According to some modern exegetes the translation ought to be "I am who I am," in the sense of a refusal to give the name. For others, the declaration means: "I am He who remains faithful." This personal Absolute is the God of history, a God who takes seriously the engagement He demands of men, for He commits Himself by entering into relationship with those whom He chooses. Intolerable folly to the Greeks: can one say "Thou" to the transcendent principle of becoming?

Indeed, in the religions and metaphysics which are foreign to the revelation given to Israel, the "I-thou" relationship can only be maintained on the level of polytheism, at a level which remains below that of a philosophical theology. As soon as one approaches the Absolute, dialogue with the divinity becomes impossible, absurd, for even to call him God would not be proper. He must be named otherwise, in order not to sully his impersonally objective purity: "That which truly is," "the Good transcending being," the One. Or— even better— deny him all names, embracing a way of negative knowledge which will end in a mysticism of absorption in the Unknowable. "Of Him there is no name, no definition (*logos*), nor knowledge nor feeling nor opinion." This conclusion to the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* was to become a kind of "Scriptural authority" for the whole Platonic tradition of negative theognosis down to PseudoDionysius, who introduced this text into Christian literature, though without mentioning the name of Plato.

Unlike the monotheism of the Jewish prophets, this monotheism (or rather, "henotheism") of the Greek philosophers does not refuse to justify the image: rather, its legitimacy is taken for granted. One could not practise apophatic ascent towards the Deity, unknowable and nameless in itself, if what comes later, at the level of being and knowing, was not the Deity's expression on a less elevated plane. Thus the *vo6q*— the

Intelligence— of Plotinus is the *Ftycdw* of the One (*Enneads* V, 1, 7), while the Soul of the world is called *eidolon* Of the Intelligence (V, 1, 6). This impersonal God, whom it would not enter one's head to address in prayer as "Thou," is certainly not the God of sacred history. Doubtless, we avoid applying the term "nature" to him; and yet, since he is the Archetype of what comes after him, the perceptible nature of the cosmos is also, in the last resort, a distant image of this God who transcends all that makes him known outside his absolute identity with himself (VI, 8, 18). The One of Plotinus thus appears, when all is said and done, as a God of holy nature. And this is even more true for the God of Middle Platonism (as, for example, the God of the Hermetic writings), not to mention the God of the Stoics. Now nature, sanctified because it is the image of the Unimaginable, is full of gods who, though never masters of history, yet receive sacrifices from mortals and reply to their supplications by oracles, revealing the inexorable laws of the universe.

This is scandal to the Jews: can one admit a world without history, subject to necessity, a beautiful and ordered world, no doubt, but where nothing new can happen? We do find this view in the Bible, the pessimistic view of Ecclesiastes: for the author of this strange book, written after the exile, the necessity which rules and orders the whole of created nature is "vanity." St. Paul takes up this expression again, to say that creation did not subject itself to 1. vanity" of its own will, but as a consequence of the sin Of man (Romans 8:19-20); there are also men, the "sons of God," who must finally liberate nature from its bondage to corruption. And in the same Epistle to the Romans (1:19-23) the apostle of the Gentiles, while giving his due to the God of the philosophers— knowable from created nature, manifested in images which show the invisible and eternal— condemns the ",vanity" of the wise men who, after having had the merit of knowing the God of cosmic nature, did not glorify Him as the personal God of Revelation, the God of history, the God of the promises— Him to whom one says "Thou"; they persisted in making their prayers to idols.

In considering this passage of St. Paul, the disciple of Gamaliel, we have the right to wonder: did the tradition of Israel really ignore the aspect of "nature" in this God who remains always uniquely personal and refuses not only images which might make Him manifest in the cosmos, but also theology (in the Greek sense of the word), intellectual or mystical seeking which would dare to climb towards His mystery, going beyond images? Several texts in the Wisdom books, the multiplication of gnostic writings in more recent Judaism, and above all the work of Philo (who notwithstanding his Hellenism remained nevertheless a believing Jew) ought to prove the contrary. But people want at all costs to oppose the "God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob" to the "God of the philosophers and scholars," without, however, meeting as Pascal did the living God of a living Bible. For there is also a dead God, the God of a particular school of Biblical

purists who are too wedded to the Hebraic letter, which they study in the historical context of its redaction, to be able to recognize the life (dynamic, and in this sense never “pure”) and the living tradition which leads to the discovery in the most ancient texts of a meaning ever new, adapted to each new stage of the divine economy before Christ. It is in the name of a God reduced to the categories of an abstract Judaism, the God of an inert book duly studied, that Biblical science, setting itself up as a theology, wants to proscribe the theology of the image by declaring it foreign to Revelation.

It is true that the God of Greek thought who admits images is not yet He of the Jewish Revelation who forbids them: an act of folly is needed to reach Him by faith, by crossing an abyss. But on the other hand it could not be said that the God of the philosophers is “another God,” a stranger to that hidden God of Israel who “dwells in thick darkness” (III Kings 8:12). If He excludes images and condemns the curiosity of those who would pry into His transcendent nature, it is because the initiative of revelation belongs to Him alone in the history of the people which He has chosen for the recapitulation, in one unique event, of the whole of history and of the whole nature of the universe. This personal God is no mere Existence, devoid of nature; but He hides the depths of His Being until the decisive moment, only making Himself known to His elect by His authority. “Theology” in the proper sense, as the Fathers of the Church were to understand it, remains a closed book to Israel until the Incarnation of the Word. What was allowed to the Greeks was forbidden to the Jews, but this prohibition was their privilege as well as a restriction. It was to be lifted at the moment when God chose to reveal Himself fully to all men, to Jews and to Greeks, by the perfect Image who is of the same nature with Him, and to allow Himself to be known in the Spirit who searches the depths of His nature. Through the Incarnation, which is the fundamental dogmatic fact of Christianity, “Image” and “theology” are linked so closely together that the expression “theology of the image” might become almost a tautology which it is, if one chooses to regard theology as a knowledge of God in His Logos, who is the consubstantial Image of the Father.

Yet there is a series of problems which the term “image,” in Christian theology, must inevitably raise. Let us pause first on the image in Trinitarian theology. St. Paul calls the Son “the image of the invisible God” (*eikon tou theou aoratou*— Col. 1:15, 11 Cor. 4:4). In the context of an Hellenistic theognosis this expression would imply a correspondence of the image to its archetype: the Logos would be the image of the first hypostasis (unknowable in itself) in so far as it made the first hypostasis known. This would be a correspondence of likeness, based on a natural participation ‘of the inferior in the superior. There would therefore be a non-identity of nature (or of level) but nevertheless a kinship, a *suggeneia*. This means that it would be possible to go further and to raise the level of God-image to that of God-archetype, only if one could attain to the

inexpressible nature of the God-archetype in itself. In the Christian context of a Trinitarian theology this relationship of the image to the archetype must be utterly transformed, as can be seen from the following text of Gregory of Nyssa:⁶ “The Son is in the Father as the beauty of the image resides in the archetypal form ... the Father is in the Son as the archetypal beauty remains in its image ... and we must think both these things simultaneously.”

Indeed, we are here dealing with a new doctrinal element which is foreign to Greek thought and foreign also to the thought of a Hellenizing Jew like Philo, for whom the personal God of the Bible, identified with the impersonal God of Hellenism, remains nonetheless a closed monad, a person-nature transcending by his essence the Logos who is his image, his mediator vis-A-vis the created world— the Hebraic Utterance personified rather than personal. The new element, peculiar to Christian theology, is the distinction between Nature or Essence and Person or Hypostasis in God, a distinction which cannot be avoided by those who recognize the divinity of Christ. Not identical in person, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are identical in nature or essence. This is the exact meaning of the term *homoousious*, which is approximately translated by the adjective “consubstantial.” Since the Logos of Christians is the consubstantial image of the Father, the relationship of the image to the archetype (if one wishes to keep this last term, which was familiar to Origen but was already an archaism in Gregory of Nyssa) — this relationship of the image to that which it manifests can no longer be thought of as a participation (*methexis*) or a kinship (*suggeneia*), for it is a matter of identity of nature. So it would seem that this relationship of the image to the model which it manifests ought to be interpreted as the personal relation of the Son to the Father. This is what Fr. Leys chose to do in the last chapter of his book *L'Image de Dieu chez S. Gregoire de Nysse*.⁷ But if we introduce the theme of the Image-which-makes-manifest into intra-Trinitarian relationships, we cannot avoid a new difficulty: how could the personal relationship which indicates non-identity by itself give rise to the manifestation of one person by another? True, the notion of the Son as Image of the Father implies personal relationship; but what is manifested by the Image is not the person of the Father but His nature, identical in the Son. It is identity of essence which is shown in the difference of persons: the Son, in his function of *eikon*, bears witness to the divinity of the Father.

This is a commonplace of Greek patristic writings. Thus, for St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the name of Logos would be applied to the Son “because He remains united to the Father and reveals the Father ... because He is, in relation to the Father, as the definition is to that which is defined. For *logos* also means definition, and ‘He who knows the Son, knows the Father also.’ The Son is therefore a concise declaration of the nature of the Father, for every being that has been begotten is a silent definition of his begetter.”⁸ This last example is rather illuminating: a human individual is “the picture of

his father” by the family characteristics which he has in common with him, not by the personal qualities which distinguish his father. Therefore, when one wishes to apply the theology of the image to the Trinity, one ought, in order to prevent any ambiguity, to speak of the 11 natural image,” as did St. John Damascene,⁹ for whom the Son is an *eikon physike*, “complete, in everything like the Father, excepting the characteristics of unbegottenness and fatherhood.” The same thing can be said of the Holy Spirit, who is “the image of the Son,” for “ ‘no man can say, Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit’. So it is in the Holy Spirit that we know Christ as Son of God and God, and it is by the Son that we see the Father.”

The Trinitarian theology of “images” can have its place only in a vertical perspective, that of the self-manifesting action of the divine nature, to which the old patristic formula corresponds: “from the Father, by the Son, in the Holy Spirit.” This manifestation is not the act of an impersonal divinity surviving from unconquered Hellenism, for it presupposes the “monarchy of the Father” who manifests the attributes of His nature by the Logos in the Spirit. So, for example, in this theology of the image, the attribute of wisdom will have the Father as the source of wisdom, the Logos as hypostatic wisdom, expressing fully the Archetype in his person, the Holy Spirit as the energetic radiance of wisdom, common to the three hypostases, revealed outwardly and communicable as a gift to created persons. The theme of the image in Trinitarian theology, when placed in its proper perspective, can help in understanding the true meaning of the “energetic” theory of the divine attributes in the Byzantine theology of the fourteenth century. At the same time it justifies the Trinitarian theology of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, by permitting us to remove from the wealth of their speculative thought the (usually unmerited) reproach of subordinationism.

I shall not have time to develop certain observations on the theme of the “image” in Christology. The idea of the “Image of God” is attached here to the hypostasis of the Son who, in becoming man, makes visible in the human nature which He assumes His divine Person, consubstantial with the Father. Yet one cannot recognize the divinity of Christ (and consequently His character of “perfect image of the invisible God”) except in the grace of the Holy Spirit.

It is in the context of the Incarnation (say rather: it is by the fact, by the event of the Incarnation) that the creation of man in the image of God receives all its theological value, which remained unperceived (or somewhat impoverished) in the letter of the sacerdotal narrative of the creation as seen by critical exegesis. It is not that one wishes to deny the importance or depreciate the merits of the historical study of the Bible: it is most valuable and ought to be taken into consideration by theologians. But never must

this exegesis usurp a place which does not belong to it: that of a judge in theological matters.

The positive sense of a particular relationship to God, which does not appear in the Hebrew expressions *tselem* and *demut*, begins to be more precise in the Greek translation of the Septuagint, where *eikon* and *homoiosis*, governed by the preposition *kata*, are already loaded with a promise of future theology, denoting a progress of tradition, a “preparation for the Gospel” in a brighter light of Revelation. Proclamation of the Image of God manifested in Christ, the God-Man, makes use of this translation, discovering new connections favourable to an anthropology revealed, though latent, in the letter of the Biblical writings (for example Psalm 8: 6, quoted in Hebrews 2:6).

The idea of kinship— *suggeneia*, *oikeiosis*— implied in the Hellenic notion of the image was insufficient, as has been said, for a Christian doctrine of the Logos, the consubstantial Image of the Father: indeed, here no difference at all of nature may be admitted. In Christian anthropology, on the other hand, the idea of kinship would have been excessive, for the *diastema*, the distance between uncreated and created natures is infinite. Thus, as in Trinitarian theology, the term “image”— or, rather, “in the image”— applied to man must be given a new meaning along the same line of thought which made us distinguish in God the personal or hypostatic from the essential or natural. Man is not merely an individual of a particular nature, included in the generic relationship of human nature to God the Creator of the whole cosmos, but he is also— he is chiefly a person, not reducible to the common (or even individualized) attributes of the nature which he shares with other human individuals. Personhood belongs to every human being by virtue of a singular and unique relation to God who created him “in His image.” This personal element in anthropology, discovered by Christian thought, does not indicate, in itself, a relationship of participation, much less a “kinship” with God, but rather an analogy: like the personal God, in whose image he is created, man is not only I., nature.” This bestows on him liberty in regard to himself, taken as an individual of a particular nature. Though not explicit in patristic anthropology, this new category of the human person or hypostasis is nonetheless always presupposed by it. What is important to notice, in speaking of the theology of the image applied to man, is how the human person manifests God.

In its Trinitarian use, the term “image” denoted one divine Person who shows in Himself the nature or the natural attributes while referring them to another Hypostasis: the Holy Spirit to the Son, the Son to the Father. This presupposed, as we said, identity of nature or consubstantiality, something which is obviously out of the question for a created person who must be thought of as an “image” of God.¹⁰ “Image,” or “in the image,” the human person could not truly be either; it could not make God manifest, transcending

the nature which it “enhypostasizes,” if it did not have the faculty of becoming like God, of assimilation to Him. Here enters the theme of *homoiosis*, of resemblance, with all that it can imply of Platonic heritage, going back to the *Phaedrus* and the *Theaetetus*. Of course, in Christian anthropology resemblance or assimilation to God can never be thought of otherwise than as by grace coming from God, which excludes the natural *suggeneia* of Greek philosophy, replacing it with the idea of filial adoption.

Nevertheless— and this is the last remark I should like to make— theologians who try to find the “image of God” (or “what is in the image”) in the human being by distinguishing it, as “a certain something,” from the rest of human nature which “is not in the image,” will never succeed in freeing themselves entirely from the *suggeneia* of Greek thought. This remains true of Origen, though Fr. Crouzel has succeeded in clearing him of several charges which had become almost traditional. It is true in a certain degree of St. Gregory of Nyssa: thus, whenever Gregory tries to locate the “image of God” only in the higher faculties of man, identifying it with the *nous*, he seems to want to make the human spirit the seat of grace by reason of a certain proximity which it has with the divine nature; this is again a survival of the idea of *suggeneia* inherited from Origen. On the other hand, other texts, which Fr. Leys is right to emphasize, show a dynamic concept of human nature, rich in possibilities, poised, like a *methorion*, between likeness and possible unlikeness; this would presuppose, it seems to me, another conception of the image, closely linked with the condition of personhood— and which would extend to the whole human make— up, not excepting the “cloak of skin.”

Quite apart from the interpretation of the doctrine of the image in the works of St. Gregory of Nyssa, I for my part believe that this is the only conception of the image (or of “in the image”) which can fulfill the demands of a Christian anthropology. Man created “in the image” is the person capable of manifesting God in the extent to which his nature allows itself to be penetrated by deifying grace. Thus the image— which is inalienable— can become similar or dissimilar, to the extreme limits: that of union with God, when deified man shows in himself by grace what God is by nature, according to the expression of St. Maximus; or indeed that of the extremity of falling-away which Plotinus called “the place of dissimilarity” (*topos tes anomoiotetos*), placing it in the gloomy abyss of Hades. These are the two extremes between which the personal destiny of man may veer in the working-out of his salvation, which is already realized in hope for everyone in the incarnate Image of the God who willed to create man in His own image.

Notes.

¹ Paris: Aubier, 1956.

² III.1 (Zurich, 1945) p. 216 ff. [English trans. *Church Dogmatics* III.1 (Edinburgh, 1958) p. 191 ff.].

³ “*Der Mensch im Widerspruch* (Berlin, 1937) p. 519. [English trans. *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology* (London, 1939) p. 499].

⁴ *Eros et Agape* I, p. 257. [English trans. (London, 1953) p. 230n.].

⁵ “Le message hassidique,” *Dieu Vivant* 2, p. 16.

⁶ *Adversus Eunomium* 1; P.G. 44, col. 636.

⁷ (Paris, 1951).

⁸ *Or.* 30 (*Theologica* 4), 20; P.G. 36, col. 129A.

⁹ *De imaginibus* 111, 18; P.G. 94, col. 1340AB.

¹⁰ This expression, stronger than “in the image~” is found in I Cor. 11:7: *eikon kai doxa theou*.

explores the theology of images with reference to the devotional art of the Italian Renaissance, or, more precisely, to the painted image of Christ. The essay will aim to penetrate the theological theme of threshold "to show what it means to talk of." The theology of images was later deeply embedded in Dominican teaching and thought, enabling the progress from corporeal sight (seeing with the "eyes of the body") to spiritual perception (understanding with the "eyes of the mind"). The hierarchy of images the macro image the micro image The structure of the image the tenor the vehicle the ground for The functions of the image cognitive communicative aesthetic educational... The functions of the image: cognitive, communicative, aesthetic, educational. All the images in a literary work constitute a hierarchical interrelation. At the top of this hierarchy is the macro-image "the literary work itself understood as the image" envisioned and depicted by the author. There exist an erroneous belief that images are constituted only by personages. Arnold asserts that images may be connected also with weather, landscape, events, etc. E.g. the rainy weather in Hemingway's works; the snow in Frost's poems. Images may be static as well as dynamic. E.g. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius. According to Christian theology Jesus Christ is the uncreated perfect image of God and therefore bearing the image of God, means that the human person is to become Christ-like. Therefore to image God simply means to be like Christ or to imitate Christ. This is made clear in St Paul's letter to the Colossians. This passage shows the significance of Christ for an understanding of the human person. That is to say, in order to understand what it means to be human one must attain "the measure of the full stature of Christ (Eph 4:13). If Christ is in the image of God and human persons are in the image of Christ then it can be said that humanity is in the image of the Image. But the passages about the image of God have commonly been taken to be relevant evidence for the question of natural theology, and we have to devote some discussion to them. Let me remind you of the passages themselves.1 At Genesis 126, after the other elements of the world have been created, God says, "Let us make man in our image, like our likeness," and, it goes on, "let them have dominion over" the various animals and the world in general. The word rendered as "man" is, of course, "adam," humanity, not just male persons "or so it seems.2 The next verse, 127, goes on to say that God created man Art and image theory, Theology of Images. "Defending the image. Catholic answers to the Bilderfrage after the 1566 Iconoclastic Fury," (Supervisor: Victor Schmidt; February 2012). Save to Library. The author interprets the "ratio triplex" for the ecclesiastical use of images, formulated by Philip for the first time, as an attempt to reconcile rudiments of the Greek discourse on images, as imparted by John Damascene, with Augustine's theology of the Trinity. According to this interpretation, the Gregorian dictum on images as writing for the illiterate played no role in High Scholastic summas, and we have to reconsider the question how legitimate is to talk about a cohesive theory or conception of the image in the Medieval West. Save to Library. Download.