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Prolegomena to an Analytic Theology of Holy Images.

The visual aspects of faith and philosophical analysis

ABSTRACT:

THIS PAPER PROPOSES A PROLEGOMENA TO AN ANALYTIC THEOLOGY OF HOLY IMAGES. FOR THIS END, WE WILL CONSIDER SOME HISTORICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL FACTS AS REGARDS PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS AND ANALYTIC THEOLOGY, AND THEN WE WILL CONFER ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS TO IMAGES. FINALLY, WE WILL TRY TO UNFOLD THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF HOLY ICONS, AND, AS AN OBJECT-LESSON, WE WILL EXPLICATE THE PROBLEM OF IDOLATRY BY MEANS OF OUR PRECEDING CONSIDERATIONS.

KEYWORDS:

THEOLOGY, VISUALITY, HOLY IMAGE

Even a not too deep analysis of the corresponding literature could easily convince us that analytic theologians have been negligent of Holy Images up to now. To illustrate this point, we could refer to some of recent textbooks on analytic theology.¹ In this corpus, we could find papers on the history of analytic theology, on its scientific position and, of course, analytic approaches of theological problems are also frequently occurred, but the authors show very little interest in images. Indeed, the problem of Holy Images has not been mentioned at all.² Nevertheless, in consideration of the attitude of analytic philosophy and western theology as regards images, the above mentioned phenomena are everything but surprising.

1. On the desiderata of an analytic theology of Holy Images

First, as it is well known, analytic philosophy is inherently language-based with all of its consequences. The relation between philosophy and language could be imagined, as Searle proposes, at least in two ways.

„I distinguish between the philosophy of language and linguistic philosophy. Linguistic philosophy is the attempt to solve particular philosophical problems by attending to the ordinary use of particular words or other elements in a particular language. The philosophy of language is the attempt to give philosophical illuminating descriptions of certain general features of language, such as reference, truth, meaning and necessity...”³

The above delineated distinction, which determined the differences between Oxford Philosophy and Cambridge Philosophy for decades, pertains to serious philosophical consequences. Linguistic philosophy presupposes that the analysis of ordinary languages is the premium method that could lead us to the recognition and resolution of age-old philosophical problems (Wittgenstein accounted philosophy as therapy in this sense). The philosophy of language presupposes that our most important philosophical concepts such as 'truth', 'reference' or 'meaning' should be conceived in linguistic context, moreover, according to the radical interpretations, they are linguistic entities. It is evident that regarding 'truth' as a linguistic entity is very beneficial for the logical foundation of language but this conception spectacularly breaks with the traditional philosophical approach (though alternative theories of truth had been certainly existed before the emergence of analytic philosophy). Therefore, it is not a surprise that analytic philosophers have been slightly concerned with typically non-linguistic entities such as pictures (a few exceptions will be mentioned later).

¹ Crisp, O.D. – Rea, M.C. (eds) (2009) *Analytic Theology. New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*. Oxford University Press.

² Harris, H.A. – Insole, C.J. (eds) (2005) *Faith and Philosophical Analysis. The Impact of Analytical Philosophy on the Philosophy of Religion*. Ashgate.

³ Searle, John (1969) *Speech Acts. An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-4.

Second, from the very beginning, analytic philosophy has regarded mathematics as the ideal science. However, it is well known that, until the end of the 20th century, or more precisely, until the emergence of computer science and its visualization capacities, the application of pictures (diagrams, graphs or projective figures) had been qualified as unreliable method compared to analysis. Mancosu, who draws a critical analysis of the mathematical application of pictures claims⁴ that the epistemic status of visualizations is still queried in mathematics albeit a few exceptions could be found.⁵ Among mathematicians, proving by pictorial representations and visualizations is admissible mainly in fractal theory and differential geometry, but, as Barwise and Etchemendy points out⁶, the application of pictures in the context of mathematical proving is still a heretic idea. As regard logic, we could say that, at least since Frege, modern logic is conceived as symbolic entity in spite of the fact that the Fregeian *Begriffsschrift*⁷ is an inherently graphical system. Moreover, even though logic diagrams as alternatives to symbolic logical systems constitute an independent discipline today (diagrammatic reasoning), discussions on logic diagrams are absolutely neglected in analytic philosophy. Sun-Joo Shin⁸ draws a preeminent recapitulation of this topic.

In a few words, we could say that analytic philosophy with its close interrelation with language on the one hand, and mathematics on the other hand necessarily omitted discussions on pictures. Thus, while logics, linguistics and the philosophy of language seems to be reossified in the smelter of analytic philosophy, pictures sink out of sight.

Now consider the second term of the complex expression ‘analytic theology’. Analytic theology itself is characteristically western in nature and seemingly, it has not considerable intellectual relations with Eastern Christianity. However, the questions of the epistemic and ontological status of images are typically problematized in eastern orthodox theology, or, strictly speaking, they are considered as fundamental theological problems. While the discussion on holy images is relatively marginal in the West, an orthodox theological treatise without reference to Holy Icons is almost irrepresentable. Of course, the orthodox concept of ‘Icon’ should not be confused with the western concept of holy images because the orthodox ‘Icon’ is basically a Christological concept from which the Holy Icons, as sacred objects, could be conceptually derived by participation, therefore they stand on the same level of certitude as Holy Scriptures. On the other hand, ordinarily, holy images are considered from a didactical or aesthetical point of view in the West. This basic

⁴ Mancosu et al (2005) *Visualization, Explanation and Reasoning Style in Mathematics*. Springer.

⁵ Needham, T. (1997) *Visual Complex Analysis*, Clarendon Press, Oxford., Fomenko, A. (1994) *Visual Geometry and Topology*, Springer Verlag, Berlin.

⁶ Barwise, J. - Etchemendy, J. (1996) *Visual Information and Valid Reasoning*, in Allwein, G. and Barwise, J. (1996).

⁷ Frege, Gottlob (1879) *Begriffsschrift: eine der arithmetischen nachgebildete Formelsprache des reinen Denkens*. Halle.

⁸ Sun-Joo Shin (2002) *The iconic logic of Peirce's graphs*. The MIT Press., Sun-Joo Shin (2006) *The Logical Status of Diagrams*. 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press.

difference has so deep theological, philosophical and cultural roots that we could not analyze the causes of it in this short paper. As regard cultural and historical differences, it need not to be explicated that analytic philosophy as a typical anglo-saxon discipline hardly takes root in the culture of orthodox clime (Maxim Lebedev is a late exception). Of course, it does not mean that there are no eastern orthodox analytic philosophers from the west: Richard Swinburne is a distinguished example.

The above mentioned parameters keep away the theology of the Icons from analytic theology nearly with the force of necessity. It should be mentioned here the works of Pavel Florensky who was the only one orthodox theologian who handled analytical and logical problems. He procreated remarkable writings both as a mathematician and as a theologian, but the most important of them are decidedly his *The Pillar and Ground of Truth*⁹, where he poses serious mathematical, logical and philosophical problems in the context of theological questions. It cannot be overemphasized that Florensky was an educated mathematician, a professor of mathematics and physics and a qualified theologian, a clerk in holy orders (and later a New Martyr) who studied exceptionally deep and essential philosophical and logical problems while he continuously paid regard to the limits of philosophical analysis. I think that Pavel Florensky is worth considering not just as the first and maybe the sole eastern analytic philosopher, but also as a forerunner of analytic theology.

Images and Analytic Philosophy

As it has been formerly mentioned, the questions as regards images had been already thematized in the history of analytic philosophy at least for a short time. Of course, this tematization was not unprecedented: in the first instance, Charles S. Peirce, the notable philosopher, mathematician and logician should be mentioned.

First of all, Peirce was the founder of modern semiotics and he introduced the famous icon/index/symbol trichotomy of signs. Albeit all three terms have been defined in many ways by Peirce, we should concentrate here on those definitions where the most essential distinctions between icons and symbols are clearly elucidated.

„I had observed that the most frequently useful division of signs is by trichotomy into firstly Likenesses, or, as I prefer to say, *Icons*, which serve to represent their objects only in so far as they resemble them in themselves; secondly, *Indices*, which represent their objects independently of any resemblance to them, only by virtue of real connections with them, and thirdly *Symbols*, which represent their objects, independently alike of any resemblance or any real connection, because dispositions or factitious habits of their interpreters insure their being so understood.”¹⁰

⁹ Florensky, P (2004) *The Pillar and Ground of Truth: an Essay on Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*. Princeton University Press [Sztolp i utverzsgyenyije isztyini. M., 1914.]

¹⁰ Peirce, C.S. (1909) *The Essential Peirce. Selected Philosophical Writings*. Vol. 1 (1867-1893), edited by Nathan Houser & Christian Kloesel, 1992, vol. 2 (1893-1913), edited by the Peirce Edition Project, 1998.

"... an analysis of the essence of a sign, (stretching that word to its widest limits, as *anything which, being determined by an object, determines an interpretation to determination, through it, by the same object*), leads to a proof that every sign is determined by its object, either first, by partaking in the characters of the object, when I call the sign an *Icon*; secondly, by being really and in its individual existence connected with the individual object, when I call the sign an *Index*; thirdly, by more or less approximate certainty that it will be interpreted as denoting the object, in consequence of a habit (which term I use as including a natural disposition), when I call the sign a *Symbol*."¹¹

Now the difference between a symbol and an icon is quite clear: in the case of the former, the sign refers to its object by convention, while in the case of the latter, the sign refers to its object by resemblance or by partaking in the characters of the object. A bit more formally:

- (1) If in a conventional language L the representation s signifies the entity O , then s is the symbol of O in L , and O is the object of s in L .
- (2) If for entities i and O it holds that $j(i)$ and $j(O)$ then I and O partake in φ , and i, O resembles each other in j . If i is a representation and O is an object, then i is an icon of O in j .

From the definitions (1)-(2) it follows that the main difference between icons and symbols is that symbols are basically linguistic entities while icons are not necessarily, because j could be any perceptual (or, as in the case of logical icons: logical) property.

On the other hand, Peirce was the one who developed iconic logical systems which have the same representational force as first order logical languages. His, so called, existential graphs should be considered as the prototypes of modern diagrammatic reasoning systems.¹²

Now we should mention Nelson Goodman's famous *Languages of Art*.¹³ It was not just the first analytical work dedicated to the problem of images but maybe the most influential writing on this topic up to now. Since *Languages of Art* had posed almost every problem that was analyzed by later analytical philosophers, we should

Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Vol 2:460-461.

¹¹ Peirce, C.S. (1906) *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, 8 volumes, vols. 1-6, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, vols. 7-8, ed. Arthur W. Burks. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931-1958. Vol 4:531.

¹² Roberts, Don D. (1973) *The Existential Graphs of Charles S. Peirce*. Walter de Gruyter., SOWA, John (1984) *Conceptual Structure: Information Processing in Mind and Machine*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley., Sun-Joo Shin (2002) *The iconic logic of Peirce's graphs*. The MIT Press., Sun-Joo Shin (2006) *The Logical Status of Diagrams*. 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press.

¹³ Goodman, Nelson (1968): *Languages of Art*. The Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc.



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dwell on Goodman's book a bit longer. For example, consider his first distinction between the relational properties of resemblance and representation.

„An object resembles itself to the maximum degree but rarely represents itself; resemblance, unlike representation, is reflexive. Again, unlike representation, resemblance is symmetric: B is as much like A as A is like B, but while a painting may represent the Duke of Wellington, the Duke does not represent the painting”¹⁴

A bit more formally:

- (3) For every x, y: if R is the relation of resemblance then xRx and yRy and if xRy then yRx
- (4) For every x,y: if R is the relation of representation then $\neg R(xRx)$ and $\neg R(yRy)$ and it is not the case that if xRy then yRx

With modal operators (3)-(4) could be written as (5)-(6) shows.

- (5) $(\forall x \forall y) \Box(xRx) \supset \Box(yRy) \supset xRy \supset \Box(yRx)$
- (6) $(\forall x \forall y) \neg \Box(xRx) \neg \Box(yRy) \supset xRy \supset \neg \Box(yRx)$

After presenting the differences between resemblance and representation, Goodman introduces a few way of signification by which pictures could be related to their references. For example, in the case of denotation we could speak of a relation between a picture and an object.

„A picture that represents like a passage that describes an object refers to and, more particularly, denotes it [...] If the relation between a picture and what it represents is thus assimilated to the relation

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 4.

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between a predicate and what it applies to, we must examine the characteristics of representation as a special kind of denotation.”¹⁵

- (7) A picture i denotes (R_d) its object O if i is O in the sense that $R_d(i, O)$ could be read extensionally.

There are also significations where a picture signifies neither an object, nor a set of objects but the elements of a given class individually.

„... a picture, like a predicate, may denote severally the members of a given class. A picture accompanying a definition in a dictionary is often such a representation, not denoting uniquely some one eagle, say, or collectively the class of eagles, but distributively eagles in general.”¹⁶

Let's call the signification of this kind distributive denotation (R_{dis}).

- (8) A picture i distributive-denotes its objects $o_{i...n}$ if $R_{dis}(i, ((o_1, o_2, \dots, o_n) \ni O))$ could be read extensionally.

According to Goodman, representations could be conceived without any denotata. In these cases pictures signify labels: they should be read intensionally. Let's call the signification of this kind intensional signification (R_{int}).

„Other representations have neither unique nor multiple denotation. What, for example, do pictures of Pickwick or of a unicorn represent? They do not represent anything; they are representations with null denotation. The simple fact is that much as most pieces of furniture are readily sorted out as desks, chairs, tables, etc., so most pictures are readily sorted out as pictures of Pickwick, of Pegasus, of a unicorn, etc., without reference to anything represented. What tends to mislead us is that such locutions as "picture of" and "represents" have the appearance of mannerly two-place predicates and can sometimes be so interpreted. But "picture of Pickwick" and "represents a unicorn" are better considered unbreakable one-place predicates, or class-terms, like "desk" and 'table'.”¹⁷

- (9) A picture i intensionally signifies (R_{int}) its object O if i is O in the sense that $R_{int}(i, O)$ could be read intensionally.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 21.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 21.

In the case of intensional signification we could say that representations signify labels (concepts, classes). Then, strictly speaking, representations here will not relate to any objects but relate to a (possibly empty) set. For example, we could find the related extensions (objects) for the set with the label 'man', but we could not do the same with label 'Pegasus'. In other cases pictures could 'represent-as' their objects.

„The locution "represents . . . as" has two quite different uses. To say that a picture represents the Duke of Wellington as an infant, or as an adult, or as the victor at Waterloo is often merely to say that the picture represents the Duke at a given time or period—that it denotes a certain (long or short, continuous or broken) temporal part or 'time-slice' of him. Here "as . . ." combines with the noun "the Duke of Wellington" to form a description of one portion of the whole extended individual.”¹⁸

As it could be seen the formula „represent...as” is actually a functor (R_{ra}) that should be completed with and individual name. In this case the representation refers to a fragment of its object (iO).

- (10) A picture i represents...as its object O if $R_{ra}(i, ^iO, O)$ could be read extensionally.

But, according to Goodman, the real cases of 'representing as' are those where a fragment of an extension represents a different fragment of the same object.

„The second use is illustrated when we say that a given picture represents Winston Churchill as an infant, where the picture does not represent the infant Churchill but rather represents the adult Churchill as an infant. Here, as well as when we say that other pictures represent the adult Churchill as an adult, the "as . . ." combines with and modifies the verb; and we have genuine cases of representation-as. (...) In general, then, an object k is represented as a so and so by a picture p if and only if p is or contains a picture that as a whole both denotes k and is a soandso-picture.”¹⁹

- (11) A picture i represents...as its object O if $R_{ra}(i, ^iO; ^gO)$ could be read extensionally.

After presenting Goodman's ideas on the different ways of pictorial signification we should mention the differences between (pictorial) representation, expression and exemplification.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 27.

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 27-29.

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„One tentative characteristic difference, then, between representation and expression is that representation is of objects or events, while expression is of feelings or other properties. (...) So far, then, we have found nothing incompatible with the conclusion that representation and expression are both species of denotation, distinguished only by whether that which is denoted is concrete or abstract.”²⁰

„Exemplification is possession plus reference. To have without symbolizing is merely to possess, while to symbolize without having is to refer in some other way than by exemplifying. The swatch exemplifies only those properties that it both has and refers to.”²¹

As it could be seen, representation is a relation between a picture and an extension (individual object), while expression is a relation between a picture and an intension (label, class).

- (12) A picture i represents its relatum O if and only if the relation $R(i, o)$ is interpreted extensionally. When $R(i, O)$ is interpreted intensionally, then i expresses its relatum.

Exemplification (R_{ex}) is a relation between a representation (a picture), a property and an object.

- (13) A picture i exemplifies (R_{ex}) its object O in j if and only if both i and O are j in the sense that $R_{ex}(\varphi)(i, o) \dot{E} \varphi(i) \dot{U} \varphi(O)$

As it could be seen, we have presented a relatively detailed analysis of *Languages of Art* because, as it has been already mentioned, Goodman had posed almost every serious problems as regards pictures which emerged in later analytic philosophy. With no claim of being exhaustive we should mention some of the later authors, say Max Black (1975), Hintikka²², Walton²³, Wartofsky²⁴, Wollheim²⁵, Wolterstorff²⁶, and Schier.²⁷ Nevertheless, as

²⁰ Ibid. 46;50.

²¹ Ibid. 53.

²² Hintikka, Jaakko (1975) *The Intentions of Intentionality and other New Models for Modalities*. D. Reidel Publishing Company.

²³ Wallon, Kendall L (1974) Are representations symbols? *The Monist*, 1974. Vol. 58, No.2.

²⁴ Wartofsky, Marx W. (1972) Pictures, Representation, and the Understanding. In.: Rudner - Scheffler (eds.): *Logic & Art. Essays in honor of Nelson Goodman*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc.

²⁵ Wollheim, Richard (1970) *Art and its Objects*. Penguin Books.

²⁶ Wolterstorff, N. (1980) *Works and Worlds of Art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

²⁷ Schier, Flint (1986) *Deeper into pictures. An essay on pictorial representation*. Cambridge University Press.

it could be seen by the referred literature, the influx of pictures to analytic philosophy was rather a short-lived extravagancy than an abiding tradition. But, after all, even this short analytic period has led to essential considerations as regards the communicative application of pictures, so the question whether an analytic theology of images could be possible is a very important one.

Propaedeutics

For a better understanding of the methods which could make a discipline analytic (may it be philosophy or theology) we have to analyze the concept of 'analysis' first. But of course an inquiry of this kind also presupposes a concept of analysis. To avoid the vicious circle we should presuppose that we already have what we seek, and we can simply have a look at the things that researchers with an analytic self-image do. A recent analysis (Demeter 2013) shows that we could talk about 'analysis' in multifarious senses, and besides the unquestionable similarities there are many basal differences between them. But if we focus on similarities we could adopt Michel Rea's following branch of propositions as regards the methods of analytic philosophy.

„P1. Write as if philosophical positions and conclusions can be adequately formulated in sentences that can be formalized and logically manipulated.

P2. Prioritize precision, clarity, and logical coherence.

P3. Avoid substantive (non-decorative) use of metaphor and other tropes whose semantic content outstrips their propositional content.

P4. Work as much as possible with well-understood primitive concepts, and concepts that can be analyzed in terms of those.

P5. Treat conceptual analysis (insofar as it is possible) as a source of evidence.”²⁸

As regards analytic theology, I think we should add two additional propositions, namely

(P6) In the course of the analysis we should use theological expressions in accordance with the theological language use.

Note that (P6) presupposes that analytic theology is first of all theology, and not philosophical remarks on theological topics. I think that many confusions could be avoided by this clarification.

(P7) The achievement of the analysis (namely the analysant) should be coextensive with the corresponding theological statement (namely: the analysandum).

²⁸ (Crisp, O.D. - Rea, M.C. 2009:5-6).

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It is easy to see that (P6) and (P7) express the same analytical criteria for different linguistic levels: (P6) says that the extensions of theological expressions should not vary in the course of analysis, and (P7) expresses that the truth-value of a given statement should be preserved, too. Of course an analysis complies with (6) - (7) could be meaningful, and what is more, *only* an analysis of this kind could be meaningful for two reasons.

First, a theological analysis could not *show* that an axiomatic theological statement is false because axioms are the *presuppositions* of any meaningful statement so there can be no theological analysis without postulated theological axioms at all. So when a theological analysis results in a false sentence (or the analysis is meaningless or absurd) then it shows the unsuccess of the *analysis*, and not the falsity or absurdity of the analyzed sentence (the analysandum). However, this principle holds not just for theological, but also for any kind of analysis. A mathematical or logical analysis could result in a recognition that a given mathematical or logical axiom is false or absurd, because their axioms (as, for example, in the case of logics, the axiom of Identity or the axiom of Choice in the case of ZFC) are the presuppositions of the analysis itself. Consider the following example.

- (i) $2+2 = 4 \text{ } \neq 2$
- (ii) $2 = 3$
- (iii) $\text{É } \neg(A=A)$

It is quite clear that (iii) does not show that the axiom of identity ($A=A$) is false, but it shows that the analysis itself is somehow defective. Moreover, it is easy to see that all the formulas (i)-(iii) are senseless without presupposing the axiom of identity.

Second, extensional identity does not exclude the possibility of intensional difference and what is more, only intensional differences make sense of any explication and analysis at all, because, as against extensional ones only intensional identity statements could call forth new knowledge.²⁹

Considering the above mentioned seven propositions we could try to delineate the propaedeutics of an analytic theology of Holy Icons.

Characteristics of Icons

The most elementary relation between Icons, images and signes could be represented as (14) shows.

- (14) $\forall(x) \text{ Icon}(x) \text{ É Image}(x) \text{ É Sign}(x)$

Analytically, Icons neither could be identified with images, nor with signs, while everything holds for a sign, holds for an image, and everything holds for an image, holds for an Icon. It also means that using the expression 'Icon' is always more analytical than using the term 'image' or 'sign'. At the same time, we do not always need this analytical level, because sometimes we could refer to Icons with expressions like 'image' or 'sign'. For example, if the aim of an analysis is to make a distinction between an Icon and its referen-

²⁹ Frege, Gottlob (1892) Über Sinn und Bedeutung. Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik, NF 100, S. 25-50.

ce, it is enough to say that a sign should not be identified with its reference. The difference between a Holy Icon and the Holy Eucharist could be explicated by showing the fact that Icons are signs, but the Holy Eucharist is the transfigured body of Christ Himself. In a similar way, if we would like to make a distinction between Holy Icons and the Holy Scripture, it is enough to say that Icons, as opposed to texts, are images.

Besides the derivative properties that they share with signs and images, Icons have specific properties; one of them pertains to the code of Icons.

- (15) According to a given code L , namely the canon of Icon painting, the representation s signifies the reference r if $L \langle \phi s \hat{E} \phi r \rangle$

The formula (15) means that if a representation could be paired with an extension in the canon of icon painting, then the representation entails its extension. That will be a case, we could understand the astonishing statement of Pavel Florensky that there exists the icon of the Trinity by St. Andrei Rublev; therefore God exists. The ontological conception that Icons evoke their references is based on the realist tradition as regards Icons.³⁰

Here we make use of the Peircean concept of icons. As it has been already mentioned, Peirce said that icons denotes their reference by resemblance and by a given code. But we can suggest with Saul Kripke³¹ that this code could not be fully arbitrary: the successive chain of representations, namely, the chain of Icons could be traced back to original witnesses and finally, to the reference itself. In the case of the Holy Icons, this code is undoubtedly the Tradition of the Church. As Thomas Sebeok ascertains,³² aside from this above mentioned code and referential chain, we have no chance for locate the reference of a given representation. According to the theology of the Eastern Church, this referential chain of Holy Icons tracing back to their references is a fundamental proposition: without a recognised reference chain no images could be conceived as Holy Icons.

- (16) A representation s could be the Icon of the reference r by a given code L if and only if there is a recognised reference chain RC that goes back to r from s .

The statement (16) also means that without a given $RC(s, \dots, r)$ a representation could be only an image or a sign, but not an Icon. The simplest demonstration of this proposition is that since no one have ever seen God the Father, we have no Icons of God the Father, or since the Holy Spirit was seen, for example, in the picture of a dove, we only have Icons of \langle the Holy Spirit in the picture of a dove \rangle (cp. propositions 10-11).

³⁰ Florensky, P (2002) *Beyond Vision. Essays on the Perception of Art*. Reaktion Books, pp. 175-183.

³¹ Kripke, Saul (1980): *Naming and necessity*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

³² Sebeok, Thomas A (1984): *Communication Measures to Bridge Ten Millennia*. Technical account for the Office of Nuclear Waste Isolation, Batelle Memorial Institute.

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Moreover, an Icon could not be arbitrary because it should partake in the properties of its reference: it has some of the properties of its reference by participation (and not by essence). That being the case, a picture refers to its reference by its own properties whether its reference exists or not, but in case of an absent reference, the picture will not work as an Icon. A non-existent entity could not have a living Icon: Pegasus could have a picture, but not an Icon. So there are so-called false Icons which do not have a reference; but an Icon could also be false in a different sense, when it refers to its object by false properties. For example, if an s Icon is j, and its r reference is non-j, than s is a false Icon of r. Strictly speaking, false icons are not Icons at all. A pure Icon has all the properties of its r reference, so for a pure Icon s it holds that for every properties F: Fs \dot{E} Fr. Of course there are only one Icon that is logically pure, namely, Jesus Christ as a pure Icon of God the Father.

Veneration and worship as picture-acts

An Icon, as any representation, could work as a sign only by an act of an agent; communicative acts by visual representations are the so-called picture-acts. As Goodman proposes, these acts could be differentiated by the type of the signification (representative act, exemplificative act, expressive act etc.). In the case of Icons, the most important differences between the allowed picture-acts had been explicated by the Second Council of Nicaea. Therefore, we have to explicate here the concepts of veneration and worship regarding Holy Icons. For this sake we have to analyse the logical structure of complex expressions contains the following expressions: Icon, idol, veneration and worship.

As it has been already mentioned, Icons are pictures, and pictures are signs, so Icons share the logical structure of signs.

- (17) I(s;r)

where (17) means that an Icon is an ordered pair of its representation and its reference by an appropriate code. It also means that nothing could be considered as a sign, nor as an Icon without its reference.

- (18) Icons are relational entities that presuppose an iconic representation and a reference, so any action concerning Icons are actions concerning an ordered pair of the logical structure I(s;r).

As opposed to Icons, idols are not relational entities, since the expression 'idol' refers to the object itself. Any action concerning idols are actions concerning (presupposed) non-relational objects. Idols are fake gods in a broader sense, but they could be interpreted epistemically only, as false knowledge, because a fake God is not God at all, so an idol is always an ontological paradox.

Veneration is an act that could be performed towards any venerable reference.

- (19) An agent could perform the act of veneration with the representation s towards the reference r if r is in the range of the concept venerable in an appropriate code $L(s;r)$.

Worship is an act that could be performed towards God only, so it is a structurally simple expression. Now from the above analysed four expressions (Icon, idol, veneration and worship) four complex expressions could be constructed, namely Icon-veneration, Icon-worship, idol-veneration and idol-worship. The logical structure of these complex expressions could be explicated by the logical structure of their parts as follows.

In the case of icon-veneration, it is obvious by the logical structure of any Icon that the object of the veneration could be only the reference of the sign (so, the reference of the Icon). The representation of the Icon, without its reference, could not be a representation at all. Anything that is venerable in an Icon is venerable on the grounds of its reference only.

In the case of Icon-worship, we face with a formal contradiction, because its constituents mutually exclude each other. Icons, pictures and signs could not be worshipped as representations, because any act that is performed by a sign trends towards its reference. Therefore, logically, the complex expression 'Icon-worship' is meaningless.

Finally, in the case of Idol-veneration and Idol-worship we face with the same ontological paradox as in the case of Idols, so there can be no *real* idolatry. However, as epistemological facts, there can be false knowledge as regards the reference of Idols.

As a conclusion, we could conceive that (i) from the above mentioned picture-acts, only the act of Icon-veneration could be performed by an orthodox Icon (ii) the complex expression 'Icon-worship' is a logical contradiction (iii) the acts of idol-veneration and idol worship should be conceived as psychological, but not as theological questions. ■

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