

Introduction

Many say that today we live in times of images. Such statement is not exactly clear because the term “image” is quite differentiated and complex. But in any case, there is a lot of truth in it. The present book wants to contribute to its better understanding and evaluation, and to better knowledge and clarification of the roles, significance, and forms of images in our lives. It covers several areas of humanities. Certainly, we may denote it as interdisciplinary but we may also add that anthropological, philosophical, theological, psychological, and educational investigations occupy the central place in it. Some of the papers are also contributions to religious studies, history of art and aesthetics. In the monograph, however the boundaries between those disciplines are more or less blurred, they are intertwined.

The book consists of nine essays written by eight authors. The authors come from different countries, represent different scientific disciplines, occupy different positions in the academic world, and belong to different generations. The book starts with **Bojan Žalec**’s first paper. It is a philosophical text. It deals with Kierkegaard’s view on man’s becoming an image of God. According to Kierkegaard, that is the main telos of human life. Žalec places his presentation in a broader frame of Kierkegaard’s theological anthropology and psychology, and his ethics of God’s call, personal growth and self-actualization. Since love plays a crucial role in Kierkegaard’s account, we may speak also about Kierkegaard’s ethics of love. Žalec shows that the basis of man’s becoming an image that God intended for him/her is – according to Kierkegaard – man’s love for God. On the other hand, the fundamental obstacle to reach this telos is not individual’s

self-affirmation, but rather his/her self-appropriation. **Magdalena Ficoń** brings us closer to the cycle of emblematics in the Franciscans' monastery at Franciszkańska street, Krakow, Poland. She shows the value of emblematic art, which through the essential fixation of words and images tends to give the understanding of the world and man living within. Her analysis leads us into the deeper meaning of Christ's passion and resurrection, the topics fundamental for human existence. On the basis of Krzysztof Kiesłowski's films as well as on John Paul II's teaching, **Dagmara Pięta** undertakes the question how movies can affect theological thought. Providing patterns of moral life, truths about man and metaphysics, awaking the beauty are here merely markers of the real content of the issue. The central topic of **Mateja Centa's** paper is stigmatization of emotionality. She analyzes its concept, and explores its origins and function. She puts a special stress on its consideration in relation to women, and introduces and explains the notion of "images of emotion." She concludes the paper by listing mechanisms and social strategies that should be used and applied in order to overcome the stigmatization of emotionality. They include sympathetic imagination and "education focused on direct experience and contact." **Stanko Gerjolj** deals with similar issue as *Žalec's* first essay, with the formation of mature, stabile, sensible, caring and loving personality who is capable of healthy relationships and helping to others. His central focus is on the role of education in this process, and especially on the appropriate attitude and conduct of the educator. He underlines the crucial importance of communication and adequate educator's advices for a successful personal formation of the protégé. As a model, he uses a Biblical story of Tobiah for which he provides a detailed interpretation from the pedagogical point of view. The exploration of the old-Polish sermons, made by **Anna Jungiewicz**, results in the exceptional comprehension of the world as a printing press with God, the Print-Editor. The divided structure of the Universe, included in this picturesque metaphor, is proposed to be followed with a deeper thought. **Ana Martinjak Ratej** argues for the thesis that totalitarian regimes have developed a specific idea or conception of human being and person, an image of a human person. The aim of her paper is a description and elucidation of this idea. She stresses and explains the following characteristics of the totalitarian conception of a person: lack of dignity and his/her own meaning of life, complete transparency, mere mean for reaching regime goals, complete atomization, development of language

only for transmission of information, has no capability for initiative action, following of tyrannical totalitarian logic instead of reason and common sense, could be characterized as a “living dead.” The upshot is that the totalitarian regimes have tried to make a human person entirely superfluous. The reading of **Veronica Beliaeva-Saczuk**’s paper makes an opportunity to get some knowledge of the exotic area of the Okian region, the Russian Federation. The relevance of visual portraits of the White and Green Taras, and the religious life of local Buddhistic communities have been interestingly presented. The second **Žalec**’s paper concludes the book. It deals with Islamophobia. **Žalec** presents its definition, characteristics, origins, broader background, function, and outlines the ways how to combat it. He claims that Islamophobia, “fear” of Islam, is based on a distorted image of Islam. It is a twin or a double of radical Islamism although superficially both are presented as opposites, and it is propagated by (self-)proclaimed fighters against radical Islamism. Both are extremely negative phenomena and ruin intercultural and interreligious dialogue. **Žalec**’s message is that efficient combating of Islamophobia demands (common) action of both Muslims and non-Muslims. At this point his message converges with **Centa**’s in stressing of the importance of (education by) direct contact and experience. Because of “totalitarian” aspects of Islamophobia, his essay can be seen also as a completion of **Martinjak**’s paper.

Images are very important for dialogue and communication, both in a positive and in a negative sense. With this book, we want to contribute to cultivation and flourishing of good communication and dialogue at different levels and in different areas: among scientific disciplines, among religions, among cultures... We hope that it in itself is a felicitous exemplification of them and that its personalist message will find some reception.

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