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LEON Miodoński

ORCID 0000-0001-8525-3813

University of Wrocław

email: leon.miodonski@uwr.edu.pl

Imaging the Absolute: Can Philosophy Visualize Abstractions?

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Słowa kluczowe: obrazowanie, ikonokogia, Jacob Böhme, romantyzm

Abstract

This article consists of three parts: the first gives a synthetic outline of intellectual tendencies in post-Renaissance thought (Hermeticism, Alchemy, Kabbalah, which generated the iconic turn (emblematics, iconology). Its essence boils down to the integral relationship of the motto (lemma), the engraving (imago), and the poetic text (subscription). The second part is a more detailed analysis of one of the illustrations contained in the first volume of the German edition of Jacob Böhme's works from 1682 (Gutenberg Project). The epoch, aesthetic tastes prevailing at that time and the Theosophical content of the work allow us to read this illustration from the point of view of iconology. The third part is devoted to two issues: First, one of the central themes in German idealism was the discussion around the notion of the absolute—whether the absolute can be grasped in concepts (Hegel) or in internal intuition (Schelling). Romanticism was dominated by a tendency to a subjective and speculative approach to the absolute. The philosophy and art of Romanticism was modeled on, among other things, medieval German mysticism and Böhme's theosophy, seeking in these sources the best representation of what is unrepresentable, i.e., the absolute. Secondly, philosophical and artistic Romanticism developed a new type of imagery–language images. The dilemma that resulted from the

discussion in German idealism—the notion or inner vision—from the modern point of view should be solved by a compromise: word and image.

Preliminary Remarks

This consideration concerns the ability of philosophy to visualize abstract content. The concept of the absolute contained in the title is an indication that we will be talking about German philosophy, in which this concept occupied a leading place in the philosophical debates of German idealism. In this case, we are dealing with a specific, commonplace, intuitively understandable intellectual climate as well as the conceptual apparatus and style of philosophizing which is characteristic in the idealistic search for the meaning of philosophical reflection. And it is in this context that the term *absolute* appears; an extremely vague concept and marked by various influences from mysticism, Hermeticism, and Spinozianism, to natural philosophy and political theology. It is most clearly visible in the Romantic philosophy of nature and the concept of genius, as well as in Schelling's philosophy of identity and in Hegel's concept of the objectification of the absolute spirit. The perspective of the absolute, at least in Romantic thought, presented a certain tempting vision of understanding the world in terms of the harmony of what is ideal, unconditional, and binding, and what is material, temporal, and sensual. This perspective was obviously marked by metaphysical speculation.

The initial thesis is that European thought willingly used the language of symbols, images, and metaphors, especially when it was dealing with issues that were difficult to imagine and inexpressible conceptually. Over time—when the word and concept referring to the knowledge obtained from the study of nature (i.e., actually from the Enlightenment) began to dominate—the iconic image, in particular Baroque iconology with its exuberant symbolism and encrypted content, receded into the background. However, when it comes to using the image in the narrowest sense of the word, i.e., in the form of an illustration, diagram, or drawing, it lived and developed dynamically. It seems that only the insufficient technical possibilities for editing in the old epochs prevented a wider use of these forms of expression.

The fundamental question that arises from this presentation of the matter is: Does philosophical abstraction, which is a higher form of human consciousness, give exhaustive knowledge about the world and humankind, or is it just an illusion of “pure reason,” which thinks that by itself, that is, a priori, a person discovers one riddle of the world after another? There is much evidence that the great systems of German idealism operated precisely in such a cognitive perspective. By resigning from imaging, philosophy has, in a sense, limited the field of its activity. Because, after all, not being a science *par excellence*, it aspired to refer to the most important issues. Karl Jaspers was very apt about this specific position of philosophy:

Philosophy wants to grasp the eternal truth. Wasn't this truth always the same, one and complete? Perhaps—but we do not receive it unambiguously as property in a generally applicable form. Being reveals itself to us only in time, truth—in temporal manifestation. In time, however, the full truth is not available objectively. Neither the individual nor history can capture it except in a passing phenomenon. (Jaspers, 2012, p. 117)

The Renaissance Iconic Turn

Regardless of the assessment of the Renaissance and the post-Renaissance era, it is known that in many respects it was a time of dynamic and profound changes in the consciousness of modern humanity (humanism, art, reception of antiquity), which gave an impulse to the development of modern philosophy. In some respects, however, it brought much misery to Europe (religious wars, and the madness of the witch trials). One thing is mentioned relatively little, especially among philosophers, yet it is important from the point of view of the proposed topic. Along with the Renaissance, a new form of imaging in art developed, in contrast to the essence and form of imaging in the Middle Ages.

This new trend was largely due to the process of synthesizing Greco-Christian-Egyptian Hermetic knowledge with classical alchemy and Kabbalah. The translator of *Corpus Hermeticum* was a Florentine, Marcilio Ficino (1433–1499), who, by the way, was also the translator of *Corpus Platonicum* and many Neoplatonic texts. At the same time, the process of developing Christian Kabbalah was taking place. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola

(1463–1494) should be regarded as an advocate of this trend. These four elements—Hermeticism, Alchemy, Platonism, and Kabbalah—are, in a sense, the theoretical basis for the new imagery. The “practical” interpretation, on the other hand, would be the art of deciphering hieroglyphs. The accidentally-found work *Hieroglyphica*, by the Greek philosopher Horapollon (5th/6th century AD) was published in 1505, along with, interestingly, Aesop’s fables. Horapollon explained the meaning of nearly two hundred hieroglyphs, which was a great impulse for the further exploration of secret signs, along with their references, primarily to transcendence (Kuder, 2017, pp. 261–264).

Also of key importance, and perhaps above all, was emblematics. The precursor of this new art is considered to be Andrea Alciato (1492–1550) and his *Il Libro degli Emblemi* (1531) (Alciato, 2018) (See Alvan, 2007). The three-part synergy of the motto, i.e., the lemma, the engraving, i.e., the imago, and the poetic text, i.e., the subscription, gained the status of theory of the poetics of the emblem. The meaning of emblematics boiled down to finding a connection between a word and an image, not on the basis of simple meanings, but via a game of meanings, a riddle, a rebus. The emblems did not always represent the highest level of poetics and graphics, but were instead an expression of aesthetic tastes and the “mass culture” of the time (Daly, 2016).

The last issue is iconology. The content of the image will be available only when the symbols that make up the image are correctly read. Iconology is inextricably linked to Cesare Ripa (1555–1622) and his classic work, *Iconologia* (1603) (Ripa, 2012; Thaler, 2018). The philosophical keystone for the iconic turn in post-Renaissance thought was the parallel development of the theory of imagination and the theory of metaphor. As a consequence, imaging reached its apogee in Baroque aesthetics. With the help of a sign, symbol or metaphor, a deep bond between humanity and nature was expressed; moreover, attempts were made to visualize various relationships between objects and concepts. By activating poetic fantasy and painting skills, attempts were made to cross the border of rationality, to discover what is elusive (Mühleisen, 2012, pp. 246–248). The above-mentioned elements, treated in a complementary way, explain the reasons why, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, iconographic representations of a symbolic nature spread widely in European culture—they were used by artists and philosophers to express what is difficult to express; they were also used by secret societies to pass on secret knowledge (Roob, 2014).

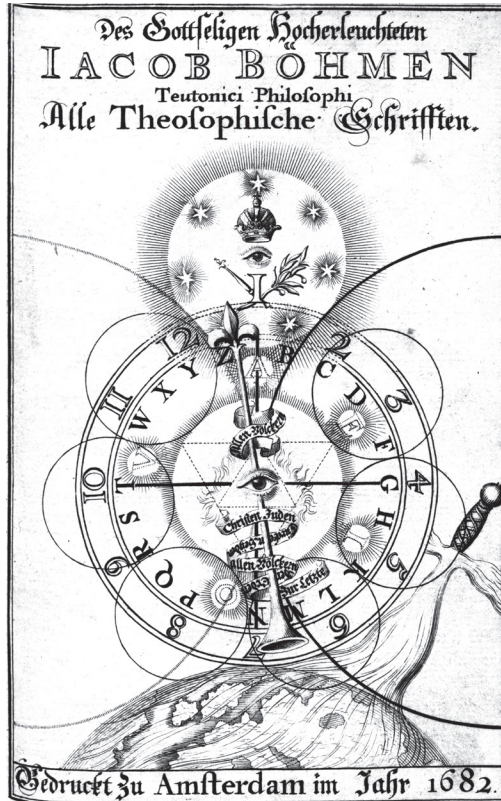
The Case of Jacob Böhme

We should start with depicting the most important symbols for a European, namely, those referring to what is inexpressible in words, i.e., God, who was known to be impossible to visualize in any form, especially in anthropomorphic form. And how to express what is infinite and most perfect? The Jews used the Tetragrammaton, i.e., text notation—four successive letters: jod, he, vav, and he, JHWH, together meaning “Jahve,” or “Jehova” (Roob, 2014, p. 100). In the same way of thinking about God, Christianity visualized the deep abstraction of Divine Providence as an eye in a triangle, the Holy Spirit as a Dove, or the Holy Trinity as a triangle. It was the competence of the artist and his invention to give these symbols a more or less elaborate aesthetic layer. An example of mature and sophisticated forms of imaging in European modern thought are the illustrations of hermetic-alchemical literature, in particular by Georg von Welling (Roob, 2014, pp. 322–326) and the works of Jacob Böhme (Roob, 2014, pp. 240–249). A beautiful album with secret figures of the Rosicrucians deserves a separate recommendation (*Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert*, 2016).

Jacob Böhme’s theosophy is undoubtedly one of the most interesting philosophical phenomena of the pre-Cartesian era. In general, Böhme used the language of symbol and metaphor, which even then, i.e., at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was extremely difficult to understand, and he was writing about the most important things: what is the nature of God, how was the world created, what is humankind’s dependence on divine things, and where are humans going. He relied on one source, namely the *Holy Scriptures* (Weeks & Andersson, 2019, pp. 16 ff.). Of course, he also used a certain amount of knowledge and concepts that he successively adopted from his well-educated friends. But biblical hermeneutics and creative imagination were of key importance to him—thanks to them, he built impressive verbal images with metaphysical content.

When the German edition of Böhme’s works was published in Amsterdam in 1682, each of the eleven volumes was issued with beautiful illustrations. It is worth noting the extensive symbolism and deep metaphysical imagery contained in the engravings. Only one exemplary illustration will be discussed below, namely, the one that opens the first volume of *Alle Theosophische Wercken* (Böhme, 1682; Roob, 2014, p. 249). All quotations

refer to the first, introductory, four-page part of the volume *Vorbericht wegen der Figur* (no pagination).



This digitized image comes from a book held by the University of Wrocław Library, catalogue number 308025

The deep Theosophical meaning of the whole illustration is described in this way:

In the figures there is hidden both the entire Sacred Scripture, which flows from the mouth of God through his holy teachers, prophets and apostles, as well as the sole purpose of repentance and piety. Hidden prophetic speeches, riddles and stories show where the miracle of Divine

wisdom is revealed. They tell the past, illustrate the present and foreshadow the future. Neither great diligence nor wisdom of itself can understand and guess them at a glance. Because in this figure there remains hidden the divine wisdom in its dignity. And it can only be given to a wise and understanding heart that seeks and discovers wisdom.

The whole thing consists of several complementary elements, which only when taken together give full and true knowledge about the world. The middle part illustrates two eternal principles: the world of darkness (Finstern–Welt) and the world of light (Licht–Welt). The mystery of creation unfolds between them. But the shape of this eternal divine creation and revelation cannot be directly grasped or illustrated. This is possible only, as the author pointed out, through the principle of light and darkness, “because everything spiritual is hidden, there is an indirect way through the cross which is the signature or determination of the Eternal, Divine and temporal generation of all beings.” Böhme’s concept of the birth of being takes place in the dialectic of processes, in other words, in the processes of qualitative transformation: in “what ascends” and “descends,” “what is above” and “below,” in “light” and “darkness,” in “spirit” and “flesh,” in “life” and “death,” in “fire” and “water,” in “air” and “earth.”

Another important part of the pictorial composition is the seven circles, one of which stands out—placed at the very top in the form of a radiant sun. The other six, touching circles, however, have several meanings: the 7 properties of nature, the 6 days of the creation of the world and “the Sabbath as the crowning of God’s creative act,” the 7 seals of the Apocalypse, the 7 periods of time, and the 7 requests from the Lord’s Prayer.

The central circle, the “radiant circle of the sun,” means the grace of the Word of God. The first circle (in which the numbers 2 and 3 are contained) represents the properties of fallen human nature. “Killing Abel starts an endless process of crime and hatred.” Those of the six circles that penetrate the radiant circle of the sun signify the grace of the Word of God reaching the prophets and saints. The seven circles also refer to “the seven qualities in nature” (Weeks, 2014, pp. 48–51).

The sign of God’s Providence in the center, enclosed in a fiery triangle, means the all-seeing eye of God. This symbol also refers to humankind, namely the inner eye that allows a human to see the mysteries of God and his or her will “depending on the time and the revealed end of history.”

The broad context is carried by Kabbalah numerology. The “7” at the intersection of the cross plays a special role in this case; it means the essence or “sacred element of divine corporeality,” from which all things come. The second meaning of “7” is Adam, created in the image of God, placed in paradise as the king of all creation, who lost his unity with God because he reached for the forbidden wisdom of knowing good and evil. His vanity has forced him into the wheel of time—he has lost his greatness and dignity and will remain so until the last hour, until the end of time. When and how this moment will come, no one knows. The third meaning of “7” is Jesus, the highest love and unity of God, who shared the fate of fallen man and died on the cross for love of man. “After the end of time, he will reign as the Divine Monarch of peace for eternity.”

The trumpet symbol carries a deep biblical message: “But that when the days come when the trumpet call of the seventh angel is about to be sounded, then God’s mystery, as He had announced the glad tidings to His servants the prophets, should be fulfilled” (Rev. 10:7).

“I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [sound of the] last trumpet call. For a trumpet will sound, and the dead” (1 Cor. 15:51–52).

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the blast of the trumpet of God. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord! Therefore comfort and encourage one another with these words. (1 Thess. 4:16–18)

The fiery sword—or the sword of justice—was used to guard the gates of Eden right after the expulsion of Adam and Eve. The Bible mentions angels armed with fiery swords, with which the beast will be finally defeated. For this reason, the fiery sword is the dividing weapon between paradise, “the world of fire of love” and the earth, “a world of punishment.” It therefore means the condemnation and the effectiveness of God’s word and judgment: “So [God] drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep and guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24).

The central position of the world clock hand in the figure refers to the real world and means the near end of times and the beginning of the reign of the Holy Spirit. The number “1” illustrates the Divine Unity as the beginning of all— “Divine Monarch of peace for eternity.” The scepter and the crown signify eternal and unchanging majesty and refer to God.

The internal alphabet A. E. I. O. U. means “nature’s open speech.”

This illustration has all the characteristic features of seventeenth-century emblems. The motto sounds extremely sublime: “All the theosophical works of the pious and highly enlightened Jacob Böhme, the German philosopher.” The imago has the sophisticated character of a complex pictorial composition. The subscription, usually short, in this case takes four pages, and unlike poetic emblems, does not require the reader to guess the complex symbolism and play on meanings, but to contemplate it deeply, to understand the divine plan that the author of the work reveals to the reader. In addition, the subscription refers directly to the *Holy Scripture*, indicating that the lemma and the imago remain in the closest connection with it. The subscription is also a summary of the main theses of Böhme’s theosophy.

Speculations on German Idealism

In the eighteenth century, the exuberant forms of Baroque aesthetics and the visualization of metaphysical content, mentioned above, slowly disappeared; and even if they were present, they were usually sparing in graphic form. Even the editions of books, including the German *Fraktur*, took on more simplified forms, becoming easier to read, especially for us today. Philosophy increasingly focused on the word-concept, on an abstract and scientifically justified description of reality. Nevertheless, until the time of the Napoleonic Wars, in the German states, but also in France and Russia, various currents of secret knowledge (Rosicrucians, esoteric Freemasonry) developed quite intensively, which continued to cultivate old esoteric knowledge and image symbolism. Therefore, they referred to the contemplation of classical Hermetic figures, their complex symbolism, and the knowledge that was hidden behind them (Geffarth, 2007, pp. 225–241).

The philosophers of German idealism, Hegel in particular, were above all a sublime abstraction referring to the essence of the world and cognition.

Philosophy, then still identified with science, *de facto* meant an ordered system of abstract concepts derived in accordance with the rules of classical logic, such as in *The Science Of Knowing* by Johan Gottlieb Fichte. Hegel was a master of abstraction, for whom concepts resulting from successive abstractions ultimately led to the absolute, i.e., the conceptual approach to the process of objectification of freedom and spirit in the world, i.e., the truth that can be realized in only one way: “The true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of that truth” (Hegel, 2018, p. 5). Another formulation, “the true is the whole” (Hegel, 2018, p. 11), defined the whole as the conception and realization of the absolute. But even in this extreme rationalist idealism based on dialectical thinking there is a trace of emblematics and metaphysics of figures. This is commonly referred to as the metaphysics of the triangle—“God’s Triangle”—with the word “spirit” i.e., the spirit, repeated three times, and with a sequence of mysterious magico-astrological symbols that Hegel had among his papers. Whether he took it seriously or not is unclear (Knapp, 2001, pp. 317–318).

Arthur Schopenhauer was one of the first to notice the cul-de-sac into which philosophy tends to seek salvation in conceptual abstraction. He aptly noticed that philosophers willingly created complex structures of abstract concepts and had the impression of their compatibility with reality; and it seemed that through concepts, one came to the essence of the world. A simple thought experiment proves that it is possible to create abstractions in relation to reality, but it would not be possible the other way around—it is impossible to reconstruct the world from abstract concepts. Schopenhauer presented a graphical diagram illustrating a certain weakness of general concepts. Namely, while observing all the rules of correct thinking, reasoning, and even logic, it is possible to construct a procedure for moving from one abstraction to another, to finally obtain a paradoxical result—the transition from the general concept of “Good” to its opposite, “Bad” (Schopenhauer, 2010, p. 74).

Schopenhauer proposed a “true philosophy”—the antithesis of Hegel—whose essence would be a model of mystical cognition, a state of quietism, exactly like that developed by Baroque mysticism (de Guyon, Fénelon, Böhme) (Schopenhauer, 2010, pp. 417–418). To achieve this state, conceptual abstraction is unnecessary ballast. “True Philosophy” also postulated the rejection of the vague concept of the absolute and the recognition of the will as the driving force of the world and—this is the key moment—opposing the

will to live through the act of negation and the ethical reorientation of humankind. The will can be defined as a negative absolute: a dark force, unreasonable, acting without purpose. The *World as Will and Representation* ends with the significant statement: “[F]or everyone who is still filled with the will, what remains after it is completely abolished is certainly nothing. But conversely, for those in whom the will has turned and negated itself, this world of ours which is so very real with all its suns and galaxies is—nothing” (Schopenhauer, 2010, p. 439).

The attempt to build philosophy only on abstraction and concept was not fully successful because it faced strong opposition. Schopenhauer was only one of many opponents, but a very interesting one, because he was able to see all the weaknesses of contemporary philosophy. Much more important was the very strong philosophical and artistic current—Romanticism—which programmatically dissociated itself from Enlightenment rationalism and focused on the so-called inner view, introspection, poetic fantasy, penetration of myth and the sphere of language, and even unconscious “viewing”—quite the opposite of Hegel.

Particularly noteworthy is Schelling, whose thought was creatively developed over different phases. In the context of these considerations, the moment when Schelling, at the stage of the philosophy of identity, made a radical interpretation of the absolute as the identity of “ideal” and “real” in the Spinozian spirit deserves attention: “Neither A or B can be posited in itself, but only the same {identity} with predominant subjectivity, alongside {predominant} objectivity and the quantitative indifference of the two” (Schelling, 2002, p. 364). This quite intricate abstraction was vividly expressed in the following way (Schelling, 2002, p. 365):

$$\begin{array}{ccc} + & & - \\ A = B & & A = B \\ \hline & & A = A \end{array}$$

In the period of the so-called philosophy of freedom, Schelling went even further—justifying the moral choice between good and evil, he took over the entire structure of Böhme’s metaphysical description of the world: the emanational concept of God, the original form of being as the *Ungrund*, and the principle of light and the principle of darkness as the poles of ontological processuality. What attracts attention is the language of the dissertation

on freedom, a language full of obscure metaphors and dark images that are difficult to understand for a reader unfamiliar with the context of Baroque theosophy:

The yearning is not the One itself but is after all co-eternal with it. The yearning wants to give birth to God, that is, unfathomable unity, but in this respect there is not yet unity in the yearning itself. Hence, it is considered for itself, also will; but will in which there is no understanding and, for that reason, also not independent and complete will, since the understanding is really the will in will. Nevertheless it is a will of the understanding, namely yearning and desire for the latter; not a conscious but a divining will [*ahnender Wille*] whose divining is the understanding. We are speaking of the essence of yearning, considered in and for itself, that likely must be brought into view, although it has long been repressed by the higher things that have arisen out of it, and although we cannot grasp it by the senses but rather only with the mind and [in] thought. After the eternal act of self-revelation, everything in the world is, as we see it now, rule, order and form; but anarchy still lies in the ground, as if it could break through once again, and nowhere does it appear as if order and form were what is original but rather as if initial anarchy had been brought to order. This is the incomprehensible base of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which with the greatest exertion cannot be resolved in understanding but rather remains eternally in the ground. The understanding is born in the genuine sense from that which is without understanding. Without this preceding darkness creatures have no reality; darkness is their necessary inheritance. (Schelling, 2006, pp. 28–29)

The publishers of the translation of *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* have rightly included a few supplementary texts by the leading philosophers of the time (Böhme, Baader, Lessing, Jacobi, Herder), which allow the modern reader to better understand the broad context of the discussion on the absolute (Schelling, 2006, pp. 81–130).

Romantic philosophy turned to the creative language of the Baroque with its evocative imagery. Other types of images begin to play a key role, namely, “linguistic images,” through which, in a different way from Baroque iconographic representations of a symbolic nature, they also sought to “directly represent the world.” In this sense, “The linguistic image would be a metaphor for the living, pictorial properties of language, a metaphor for

trying to get language as close as possible to the directly representational power of images” (Borgards, 2003, p. 10).

This tendency, i.e., language images, characterized the whole of German Romanticism. In this way, one fundamental thought was explicated, in contrast to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, that it is not only about the mathematical and physical description of the world, but also about its metaphysical sense. In this case, the word “metaphysical” did not mean thinking that was theologically marked, but one that “was, is and will be before and after physics” (Goethe, 2016, p. 70). Goethe emphasized one more element in particular, namely the complementary and multifaceted understanding of the world: “ideal-real-symbolic-identical” (Goethe, 2016, p. 156).

Romanticism reached out to Böhme, mysticism, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and Theosophy to broaden the spectrum of philosophical and artistic experience, to go beyond a purely external description of reality: “If you want to penetrate into the heart of physics, then let yourself be initiated into the mysteries of poetry” (Schlegel, 1991, p. 103)—this is Friedrich Schlegel’s diagnosis. Romanticism—philosophy, poetry, and prose, as well as art—sought a seemingly paradoxical representation of the unrepresentable—the absolute. The construction of complex linguistic images is best seen in the poetry of Novalis (*Hymns to the Night*, 1800) and in his poetic novels (*Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, 1802; *The Novices at Sais*, 1802). In painting, however, the transformation of language images into painting images was perfectly realized by Philipp Otto Runge. His visualizations of Böhme’s theosophy are noteworthy, in particular the unfinished series *The Four Times of the Day*, of which *The Morning* (1808) was completed (Roob, 2014, p. 241).

Final Remarks

The synergistic unity of lemma, imago, and subscription was the basis of Baroque iconology, and it was also, from a contemporary point of view, an interesting and original attempt to build a synthesis of word and image, an “iconic turn” specific for that time. The effects of this turn are best seen in various currents of German idealism, especially in Romanticism. Romantic language images were a tool that allowed attempts to penetrate areas that had not hitherto been focused on, or at least no attempts had been made to integrate them into the cognitive structures of the subject: myth,

unconscious, fantasy. Human orientation, human existential dilemmas, and cognitive dilemmas gave hope of crossing the border between the possible and the impossible, between life on this side and death on the other, as in Schelling's dialogue *Clara* (Schelling, 2002).

From time immemorial, humankind has used images to express complex abstractions that could not be expressed in words, because such words had not yet been invented. Abstraction appeared along with the progress of civilization and the development of science, especially mathematics (geometry), and now inseparably accompanies humanity. The question is, do abstract concepts solve all problems? They certainly solve the problems of science and are necessary for its further development. Images, on the other hand, have little influence on the development of science; but they are necessary for humans. Romanticism drew attention to this key fact.

Today, when the merits of the dispute over the absolute only marginally occupy the attention of specialists, another important issue remains open—the possibility of visualizing abstract content. Here, a huge perspective of modern research and applications opens up: psychology (treatment of developmental disorders); pedagogy (viewing methods); statistics (graphs); the didactics of individual sciences, including multimedia presentations in PowerPoint. The use of imaging in the teaching of philosophy opens up new possibilities for the perception of complex philosophical problems. In this context, attention is paid to modern propaedeutic books containing illustrations and various forms of depicting abstract content, difficult to capture in verbal communication.

To the question asked in the title, can philosophy visualize abstractions? The answer seems clear. Abstraction and image are the two poles between which our thinking and understanding of the world in which we live lie. Thus, this dilemma can be solved in the formula: image and word.

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Author Note

Leon Miodoński—Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wrocław. His research interests include, in particular, German idealism and the reception of German thought in Poland.

Address for correspondence: Institute of Philosophy, University of Wrocław, ul. Koszarowa 3/20, 51-149 Wrocław, Poland.

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