

Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy and the Simulacra of Baudrillard

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Abstract

Baudrillard cites the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy as an example when describing the simulation and the implosion of meaning: The iconophiles broke the taboo of divine representation and identified the image with God. At the same time, the iconoclasts tried to keep the essence of faith. It is necessary to look at the iconoclastic emperors who were obsessed with the worship of the cross. The iconography of Byzantine uses the modest language of metaphor instead of simile in divine representation. The public who tried to depend on

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Palladia was in the anxiety of war; the desire for a peaceful world was the background of the emergence of the image cult in Byzantine. His analysis presents how human personality and desires are manipulated and fluctuate in a consumerist society. He warns that the truth disappears due to the disconnection between the signifier the signified. He despaired of the leap of desire from the point of view of rationality. As a result, he hinted at daily exercises to purify and illuminate 'desire' and soft touches of theology to uplift it toward the natural image.

- **Keywords**

Byzantine iconoclastic controversy, simulacra, iconoclasm, hyper-real, Baudrillard, consumerism, icon, desire

I. Introduction

Baudrillard argued that the heartless iconophiles of Byzantine brought about the hyper-reality of ubiquitous illusions, while the other party sought to preserve the truth.¹ But, in history, the destruction of the images of the iconoclastic emperors was selective, and they sought to extend their control through more direct, coercive, and easy-to-replicate symbols.² Where metaphors disappear and only similes and reasoning remain in divine representation, then militarism and authoritarianism may come, which insist on their direct connection to God. He assumed that the iconophiles devised simulacra; the images no longer referenced the Origin. Baudrillard describes iconophiles in the same sense of the phenomenon of hyper-reality where images overwhelm reality. However, considering the nature of theology, one cannot but rely on metaphors, analogies, and correspondences because he cannot directly describe the insensible God.³

Being influenced by the outflow theory of Neoplatonism, the discourse on visibility in Byzantine theology is that, as God incarnated into a human being, humans can evoke a transcendent existence through visible symbols.⁴

1 Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and simulation*. University of Michigan press, 2020. p.5.

2 Jung-Heum, Park. "Considerations on the Cause of Iconoclastic Controversy in the 8th-century Byzantine Era from the 'Image Ideology' Perspective." *The Church History Society in Korea* 47 (2017). p.332-335.

3 Adrahtas, Vassilis. "The Notion of Symbol as a Logical/aesthetic Category According to the Theology of St John of Damascus." *Phronema* 17 (2002). p.16-17.

4 Jeong-Ku, Lee. *Understanding Church Architecture* (Korean Academic Information, 2012) p.117-118).

Theology has had a deep relationship with efflux theory and has understood the entire universe as an imitation, or image, of the celestial original. At the center of the Byzantine ‘controversy over iconography’ lies the question of ‘how to approach holiness’. It was from the motive that the religious act of popular piety and the theology of the sacrament based on the analogy emerged. This thesis aims to reexamine the iconoclastic controversy’s theology, politics, and piety through Baudrillard’s insight into images.

II. Baudrillard: Images and Simulacra

Baudrillard is a social theorist who analyzed today’s society manipulated by non-communicative mass media as a consumer society dominated by signs and images according to the simulation order and is a representative post-modern philosopher who opposes the rationality of modern philosophy. He defined the consumer society as a world of simulacra where signs replace its reality and “the whole system is swamped by indeterminacy, and every reality is absorbed by the hyperreality of the code and simulation.”⁵ It is the phenomenon of image overload. Hee-Bong Kim summarized this phenomenon as follows:

From the flashy neon signs and advertisements that light up the city’s streets to computer monitors on desks and mobile phone terminals that have become part of one’s body, not to mention

5 Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Sage, 2016), p.2.

photography, film, television, and other video media. The innumerable images and signs that appear symbolize the mode of existence of our time. It is because such information, images, and signs become the environment itself that constitutes our daily life and the conditions of life that define our thoughts and actions while being produced, consumed, and possessed.⁶

Baudrillard said we live in a world with more information and less meaning. An image is a reflection that imitates or points to something and does not refer to an accidental form. It refers to an imitation in Greek like a figure statue, 'eikon', or in Latin for a death-mask, 'imago'. He can be said to be in the same lineage as Plato in that he postulates images or information that are subject to ideas or meanings. Plato divided world into three stages a) the real world or the world of idea, b) its first image or imitation, the world we live in, and c) the second imitations or images which belong to artists and poets who are heterogeneous elements of the people who make the world of unchanging truth and the nation's existence uneasy.⁷ Baudrillard eliminates Plato's celestial realm of metaphysics and regards 'the world of becoming' as the real. Thus, he simplified Plato's three-layered structure into two of reality and the copies. However, he did not consider these two realms to exist physically, but he saw them as nothing, but an arbitrary line drawn by linguists:

6 Hee-Bong Kim, "An Illusory Character of the Contemporary Society and J. Baudrillard's Concept of Simulacre," *Phenomenology and Contemporary Philosophy* 60 (2014). p.6.

7 Yong-Gyu Kim, "The Materiality of Simulacra and the Politics of De-Representation in Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, and Gille Deleuze," *English Language and Literature* 52 (2006). P.307.

Linguistics originates from the bar it has installed between the signifier and the signified, and their reunion spells its death which brings us back to conversation in everyday life.⁸

He saw science, philosophy, and religion as grounded in this distinction and contrasted with the dialectical barbarism that would challenge the superstructure based on this rationality:

Science is based on rupture... Dialectics makes endless formal adjustments to this rupture, it never resolves it. To dialecticise the infra- and the superstructure, theory and practice, or even signifier and signified, langue and parole, is merely a vain effort at totalisation...

This is indeed why current non-scientific practice, both linguistic and social, is revolutionary in some way, because it does not make these kinds of distinctions. Just as it has never made a distinction between mind and body, whereas every dominant religion and philosophy survives only on the basis of this distinction, so our, everybody's, immediate and 'savage' social practices do not make a distinction between theory and practice, infra- and superstructure.⁹

In fact, for Baudrillard, images, signs, and abstractions are the same, that is, a signifier pointing to something: images represent some nearer

8 Octave Manonni, *Clefs pour L'imaginaire* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1969). p.35. quoted in Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Sage, 2016). p.221.

9 Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. p.221.

to reality. The signified plays a dominant role as a norm, while the signifier must unilaterally follow it. Once Deleuze criticized such systems of representation operates as an excuse to exclude 'others'. He called good images 'copies', and bad images 'simulacra' which are to be excluded because they did not contain the originals.¹⁰ For representing means showing again what has already been or has been; a dichotomous division is always possible. "All human activities based on signs, such as art, science, and social organization, are impossible without the assumption of dichotomous division."¹¹ The collapse of this representation system based on rationality, unity, and stability occurs when this system accelerates and reaches saturation, which is hyper-reality of simulacra:

The image in the representation system is to reflect the original or reality. Then, the image that faithfully reproduces the original will be the perfect image. In the end, the original will be the best representation of oneself. Therefore, the stage in which the substance and the image become the same is the stage of simulation.¹²

This way, it becomes a world full of ghosts that drag meaningless signs that reproduce themselves without reproducing the referent anymore. Information explodes, but there is no medium with strict mean-

10 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (Columbia University Press, 1994). p.127.

11 Jean Baudrillard, Tae-Hwan Ha, *Simulacres et Simulation* (Seoul: Mimunsa, 2001). p.14.

12 Baudrillard and Ha, *Simulacres et Simulation* (Seoul: Mimunsa, 2001). p.15. (a quote from the translator's note.).

ing in the imploding world.¹³

Hyperreality, which is so raging and deviated from reality, no longer reflects meaning and truth but fills the entire space while conveying simulacra themselves, who are now a free sign and no longer bound by the norms of the originals. "A hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary."¹⁴ He formalizes the development process as follows: a) the image or symbol represents or points to the original but gradually obscures or distorts the original; b) they act independently without the original and become pure simulacra.¹⁵ He exemplified the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy as a typical example at the beginning of his essay on the simulation, as shown in the next chapter.

III. Simulacra and Iconoclasts

Baudrillard cites the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy as one of the examples, which began as an image representation of the divinity, but later progressed to an empty stage, independent of the divinity and self-replicating itself indefinitely, radiating brilliance everywhere.

But what becomes of the divinity when it reveals itself in icons, when it is multiplied in simulacra? Does it remain the supreme

13 Hyo-Chan Choi, *Baudrillard Reader: The Seduction of Simulacrum and the Reality of Hyperreality* (Sechang, 2013). p.114, 120.

14 Jean Baudrillard, Glaser, Sheila Faria., *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2020). p.4.

15 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.6.

power that is simply incarnated in images as a visible theology? Or does it volatilize itself in the simulacra that, alone, deploy their power and pomp of fascination – the visible machinery of icons substituted for the pure and intelligible Idea of God?¹⁶

From the latter point of view, he insisted that the iconoclasts had destroyed the omnipotence of simulacrum for “the faculty simulacra have of effacing God from the conscience of man”. On the other hand, the iconoclasts were merely satisfied with the crafted God, seeing the reflections in the images.

The icon worshipers were the most modern minds, the most adventurous, because, in the guise of having God become apparent in the mirror of images, they were already enacting his death and his disappearance in the epiphany of his representations (which, perhaps, they already knew no longer represented anything, that they were purely a game, but that it was therein the great game lay – knowing also that it is dangerous to unmask images, since they dissimulate the fact that there is nothing behind them).¹⁷

According to the quotation, the iconoclasts were faithful to divinity. On the other side, the iconophiles were just satisfied with the crafts, not only made God disappear instead of clarifying the images of God, but also claimed that there was no God in themselves and tried to hide

16 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.5.

17 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.5.

it in the images. The following chapter will trace the historical validity of these descriptions regarding Baudrillard's philosophical insight on the iconoclastic controversy, which seems to motivate his criticism on the paradigm of consumerist society: whether the iconophiles used images to cover up their lacking belief in the existence of God or not, whether the iconoclasts intended to remove the simulacra to recover the true faith or not.

IV. Representation of the Divinity

Baudrillard begins his argument on the simulacrum of divinity with the following proposition, which forbids the representation of God: "I forbade that there be any simulacra in the temples because the divinity that animates nature can never be represented."¹⁸ Then, the sacred icons break the taboo of representation and visualize God, which Baudrillard calls the sacramental order concerning the grace of the unsensible God, who has revealed Himself to man, who cannot perceive except the senses:

In the first case, the image is a good appearance – representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance – it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance - it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation.¹⁹

¹⁸ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.5.

¹⁹ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.6.

For Baudrillard, representation is, in principle, an equivalence relation between sign and reality. The simulation starts when the signs do not represent anything by escaping this equivalence relationship:

Such is simulation, insofar as it is opposed to representation. Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real (even if this equivalence is Utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the Utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference.²⁰

However, looking at iconophile's theology during the iconoclastic controversy, it is difficult to see that the image refers to God as an equivalent. Saint John of Damascus said the language for theology was metaphors, not similes. John understood the world as six layers of images: the natural, the conceptual, the mimetic, the figurative, the pre-iconic, and the commemorative. These are

- 1) The natural image is a term for the essential identity of the Trinity and must exist before other categories of images.
- 2) The conceptual image refers to God's foreknowledge of things, meaning the eternal existence of things in God's mind.
- 3) The mimetic images are human beings, who are to resemble God according to the image of God, and through imitation, it can participate in the divine.

²⁰ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*. p.6.

- 4) The figurative image shows the immaterial.
- 5) The pre-iconic image is an image that exemplifies the incarnation. For example, Aaron's staff has the characteristics of *Theotokos*.
- 6) The commemorative images are texts or icons of things that have already passed.

There is no hierarchy between the five images other than the natural image, and what they have in common is that the image participates in what it represents (points to). It can then be understood that "the icon of Christ participates in the divine essence".²¹ The image of John, who understands God as a natural image, is different from the image when God is the original, and the images are only copies; John's understanding of the representation, which means participation while pointing, is different from the representation of equivalently marking. According to Vassilis Adrahtas, in John of Damascus, theology is about images and symbols. For theology is founded on the absolute and unexplainable freedom of the Divine.²² Byzantine image theology did not start with pride and unbelief that an image could represent God, but on the contrary, it began with the acknowledgement that we could not know unless God revealed it: "Indeed, God has not abandoned us in our absolute incapability of knowing him."²³ Eva Braunstein quotes

21 Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). p.76.

22 Vassilis Adrahtas, "The Notion of Symbol as a Logical/aesthetic Category According to the Theology of St John of Damascus," *Phronema* 17 (2002). p.25.

23 Frederic Hathaway Chase, Saint John of Damascus (CUA Press, 2010). *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, pp.165-66. quoted in Adrahtas, "The Notion of Symbol as a Logical/aesthetic Category According to the Theology of St John of Damascus." p.25.

John Donne to explain the approach of Byzantine image theology:

Thou art also ... a figurative, a metaphorical God too; A God in whose words there is such a height of figures, such voyages, such peregrinations to fetch remote and precious metaphors, such extensions, such spreadings, such Curtaines of Allegories, such third Heavens of Hyperboles, so harmonious elocutions. ... O, what words but thine, can express the inexpressible texture, and composition of thy word.²⁴

Braunstein argues that John Donn reflects the richly allegorical nature of biblical texts, going beyond the biblical hermeneutic approach of direct, unambiguous, scientific disclosure of propositional truths, “polysemy” or “meaning”. He interpreted non-discursive; the poetic language called the “surplus of meaning” as “the sole choice of the best mode of communication for divine revelation” with “a metaphorical God”:

Additionally, the multiplicity of reference born out of poetic language exposes the way in which words themselves possess a sacramental character by manifesting more than what appears to be immediately present, often by means of sensory evocation. As sacraments mediate the presence of things greater than themselves through the liturgical means of sight, sound, smell,

24 John Donne, *John Donne's Devotions* (CCEL, 2011). *XIX. Expostulation*, quoted in Eva Braunstein, “Words and the Word: Metaphor, Analogy and Dialogic Discourse as a Theology of Language,” *Crux* 47, no. 2 (2011). p.17

touch, and taste, so words, and poetic words in particular, mediate meaning to us beyond their phonological characteristics.²⁵

Regarding the bar between the signifier and the signified by linguists, Baudrillard said that these divisions establish science, religion, philosophy, and social organizations and that there are 'savage' social practices that transcend this rational order. He called this dialectic, which regards the distinctions as vain efforts of totalization. Compared to the hierarchical representation of the signified and the signifiers subordinated to it, the world of analogies is indirect and multifaceted, so it is not well controlled. Plato thus discredited such artists and poets; the system of Byzantine image theology is on this side of ambiguity. As John Don said, the metaphor is the texture of the Bible, and it is also the way of Jesus spoken through parables. Therefore, images and imaginings are not very much unfamiliar or pagan surroundings. Reading divine representations with humble metaphors rather than similes depends on the attitude of distancing of the reader. The next chapter will find a case where the representation is close to the simile during the iconoclastic controversy.

V. Iconoclastic Emperors

Images replace and even become God when distancing from the divine representation fails; it is through the path of the simile than the

25 Braunstein, "Words and the Word: Metaphor, Analogy and Dialogic Discourse as a Theology of Language." p.17.

metaphor. The iconoclastic emperors shattered the images, but they maximized these simulations. They removed images selectively instead of removing all of them. An example of the selective destruction is a fresco painted with lime on the rock wall inside the rock monastery of Cappadocia during the iconoclastic period. The portrait of Christ or the figures of saints or angels disappeared from the wall, and non-figurative images such as geometric patterns, circles, semicircles, rhombus, triangles, leaves, and spirals appeared. Two Maltese crosses symbolize *Theotokos* and the Apostle John, two crosses pointing to St. Peter and St. Paul on the arch pedestal of Apps, and an ornate decorative cross surrounded by a wreath that replaced the icon of protection on the west side of the nave.²⁶ Patriarch *Germanus*, in a letter to Thomas of *Klaudioupolis*, calls emperors ‘friends of images’, referring to the crosses erected by Leo and Constantine, noted that emperors favored images.²⁷ The iconoclastic emperor Leo III was also an uncompromising image worshiper. Arbitrarily, he was engrossed in the former ‘worship of the cross’. He regarded the image of the cross as a symbol of the Christian faith and believed that it had more power than any other images.²⁸ Leo III’s letter to the enemy general Maslama who had attacked Constantinople is a dramatic expression of his cross cult:

O wicked heart, why do you rejoice in iniquity? If the staff of

26 Su-Jeong Cho, “Iconoclasm and Byzantine Art: The Cross and the Vision of St. Eustachius,” *Korea Church History* (2017). pp. 179-191.

27 Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, C. 680-850: A History*. (Cambridge University Press, 2011). p.124-125.

28 Stephen Gerö, *Byzantine Iconoclasm During the Reign of Leo III: with Particular Attention to the Oriental Sources* (Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1973). p.29.

Moses, the prototype of the Christian cross, turned Pharaoh into a water demon, my army with a much more powerful and holy Christ's genuine cross will destroy you.²⁹

While churches, monasteries, and individuals have no authority to create or own the image, only the emperor with one true cross has the divine image. There is no need to prove strength, virtue, or power of governance in this possession, and simply by holding the cross, he can monopolize the authority of God. The emperors of the Roman Empire, including Caesar and Augustus, sought to concentrate his power by deifying the emperor's image, and to do so, he had to prove his competence and moral persuasiveness. But now, regardless of the emperor's abilities, he will be able to exercise divine and absolute authority just by holding the authoritative image of the cross in his hands. Emperors justified their power through its insignia, which before Constantine I, refers to the rule of an empire, later to the power of a celestial ruler. By borrowing the authorization of another sovereign, the emperor asserts that he represents the supernatural authority.³⁰ However, this manipulation of the emperor's image itself does not seem to have the elements to fascinate the public. The next chapter will examine why a popular image cult emerged in the Byzantine Empire.

29 "Leo and Yazid in the Armenian Chronicles," in *Universal History*, by Stephen of Taron. quoted in Park, "Considerations on the Cause of Iconoclastic Controversy in the 8th-Century Byzantine Era From the 'Image Ideology' Perspective." p.333.

30 Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*. p.135.

VI. Eulogia and Palladia

In most aniconic religions, a place has a sacred meaning. It is a more profound manifestation of God's divine power or glory in a particular site. A pilgrimage to the holy place was where pilgrims could spread the sanctity by bringing soil, stones, relics, or clothing. In addition to these natural objects, they started making small souvenirs that they could carry, called Eulogia. Scott Ables pays attention to the development of portable relics, in other words, 'numenal' (objects with divine powers) from the middle of the 4th century. In the 6th century, at least three 'relic like images', i.e., "not made by human hands" *acheiropoieta*, were discovered. In the 7th century, in battles against mighty Arab armies, palladia appeared, "inheriting the characteristics of the *acheiropoieta*." In developing the Christian icon cult, the military aggression from the outside and the resulting tension played a decisive role as Palladia, a guarantee of protection and victory.³¹

Ables argued that the cause of the failure of the destructionists was that "maintaining the purity achieved by excluding those who would have easy access to the sanctity" was more difficult than justifying it. Advocates could assimilate the subversive status by theologically justifying their approach to holiness by "effectively explaining icon veneration in popular piety." The cult's history is short, but it rapidly grew strengthened with "the cult of saints, pilgrimage, and the long development of Palladianism."³²

The Christian image cult may have influenced the ceremonies that

31 Scott Ables, "The Rise of Icon Veneration." (A Celebration of Living Theology, 2012). p.1

32 Ables, *The Rise of Icon Veneration* p.7

received the emperor's image like an emperor, but for the public, ubiquitous access was possible, instead of going to a specific place to access the sanctity, by bringing or making objects from that place. It is the simulation that Baudrillard mentioned. What are genuinely pagan lies in fetishization, not in form-making. Invasion and threat from the outside aroused massive desire to depend on such a sacred and invincible power.

The excess of religious figures entails several problems. Popular miracle stories associated with images, guarantees of efficacy, manipulation and trading are folly. However, the heroes in the book of Judges also gained charisma through these kinds of miracles and proofs. After all, aniconism also assumes a sacred object of representation called a place. Regarding a place, time, or experience as blessed is the beginning of the mystical experience; it is meaningless and impossible to verify the quality of the representation with God. Instead, I would argue that focusing on the 'desires' for which they empathize better appreciate religious imagery. Baudrillard's criticism of the consumption system of today is that it is ultimately based on the code of taste and difference, not on needs and enjoyment. The explosion of information and implosion of meaning manipulate values and desires. There are elements in a consumerist society that draw people away from truth and meaning. It treats truth as a commodity and belief as a purchase rather than a matter of truth or falsehood. It seeks the pleasure of individuals over morals and beliefs and excludes those who cannot afford them.³³ However, there are also positive reviews of con-

33 Graham Cray, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context* (Canterbury Press, 2014). pp.6-11.

sumer society because it gives people the opportunity to choose.

The core value of society has moved from 'progress' to 'choice' - the absolute right of freedom to choose. 'Choice lies at the center of consumerism, both as its emblem and as its core value.'³⁴

Furthermore, everything becomes a consumer choice. Central to the future is the idea of 'personalized scale' - 'it must fit me exactly'. The world will be organized around giving people the sense, or perhaps the illusion, that they can have whatever they want. In the future, this approach to life will not just apply to consumer goods - it will be applied to all aspects of life... It is predicted that by 2020 personalized scale will also apply to health care, educational provision, patterns of work, of association and relationships, and of course to religion.³⁵

Jung-Heum Park introduces a frame of the 'image ideology' as a tool to read the history of the iconoclastic controversy and today's culture. Milan Kundera portrayed the Czech totalitarian society in the 'Unbearable Lightness of Being' and later dealt with the French consumerist society in the 'Immortality'.³⁶ Freedom and dignity of individuals have a significant difference between the two societies. But where the ideology has disappeared, the more superficial and

34 Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang, *The Unmanageable Consumer* (Sage, 2015). p.26.

35 Cray, *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. p.9.

36 Park, "Considerations on the Cause of Iconoclastic Controversy in the 8th-Century Byzantine Era From the 'Image Ideology' Perspective." p.322.

baseless image ideology has more sophisticated manipulation and control. Kundera compared ideology to a gigantic wheel that moves a rotating stage. Some movements change the entire stage, such as war, revolution, and reform, and ideologues can fill an era with their ideas. In comparison, the Imagology wheel rotates without any effect on history, peacefully constituting the rotation of its systems “in (maintaining) vivid seasonal rhythms”. To paraphrase Paul, “Ideology belongs to history, but the reign of imagology begins at the end of history.” Where history ends like this:

Imagologues sometimes create ideal systems, sometimes semi-ideal ones. In short cycles, new systems replace old ones, which replace our actions, our political views and aesthetic tastes, carpet colors and book purchases as before a system of ideologues have dominated (imagologues dominate us in this way).³⁷

Baudrillard delved deeply into the problem of desire by exploring the issue of consumption today. The consumerist society is already dealing with desires without being based on logic. The eruption and manipulation of desire are already old phenomena; not to be bewildered that they are not in the hierarchical representation of the signified and the signifier, but to contemplate the movement of desire itself instead of logically confirming that there is a leap a break. It would be the context of Baudrillard searching for the dynamics of the society in hyperreality.

37 Milan Kundera, *Immortality* (Grove Press, 1991). p.116.

VII. Conclusion

Visualizing the image of God and the faith is, as much as theorizing on the divinity, beyond the human ability, and it requires God's grace and human humility. In that sense, Baudrillard's awareness of the representation of God and the pursuit of inner truth agrees with the basic flow of Christian faith. However, his assumptions about both sides of the controversy have slight misconceptions from the perspectives of the history: the iconoclasts selectively crushed images and concentrated their control over the images; the iconophiles' metaphorical construction of theology implies vague lines of polysemic representation rather than definitive identification of the images as divine.

Image cult stems from visitations or pilgrimages, the traditional approach to holiness, to a ubiquitous approach of objects toward human dwellings. The public's desire for peace and stability had played a significant role in the emergence of the cult. Baudrillard's social analysis of the representation system recognizes two attitudes: rationality and the savage. His critics on the hyperreal seem closer to the former, which is, like Plato, against poets and artists.

The complementary relationship between Paul Ricoeur's internalized ideology and utopia could reinforce his frame of reason and savage: "ideology without utopia is blind, and utopia without ideology is empty."³⁸ It is necessary to imagine something else that never exists,

38 Jean-luc Amalric, "Événement, idéologie et utopie." *Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricoeur Studies* 5.2 (2014). p.18. quoted in Se-Won Kim, "An essay on Ideology and Utopia as two Modes of Narratives: a Link between Time and Narrative and the opinion about 'Ideology and Utopia' of Ricoeur," (Korean Society of Contemporary European Philosophy 38, 2015). p.80.

to criticize the concealed and false ideology. It is the fundamental function of utopia. It must be aided by giving it something like a narrative identity. "In a sense, human creativity is always a response to the regulating order. Imagination operates based on established laws, and it is the task of Imagination to make them function creatively – either by ingeniously applying them or by subverting them, or both. ... Imagination does not dwell in what is never said."³⁹ Considering the two axes of reason and desire, we can also refer to the frame of Sarah Coakley, who understood the universe as an outburst of divine desire and developed the concept of the training of human desire.⁴⁰

Baudrillard gave reasonable cautions on the visualization in which faith could be formalized and quickly exhausted, though he made too radical simplifications of the controversy. Park Jung-Heum also mentioned the danger of such a verbal icon and dogma in today's church.⁴¹ His analysis of consumer society based on false desires implicitly foreshadows the necessity of analogy and metaphor-based theology that opens the frontier of the mission of desire.

39 Se-Won Kim, "An essay on Ideology and Utopia as two Modes of Narratives: a Link between Time and Narrative and the opinion about '*Ideology and Utopia*' of Ricœur," (Korean Society of Contemporary European Philosophy 38, 2015). p.80.

40 Sarah Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender and the Quest for God* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015). pp.1-99.

41 Park, "Considerations on the Cause of Iconoclastic Controversy in the 8th-Century Byzantine Era From the 'Image Ideology' Perspective." p.321.

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