



## Augustine's Theory of Imago Dei in Ming and Qing China\*

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**Abstract:** Augustine's theory of the renewal of God's image in man looks at *imago Dei* from a soteriological perspective. This article investigates the history of the eastward transmission of Augustine's theory of *Imago Dei*, identifying two schools within it: one is the mainstream, upholding the traditional Augustinian "memory—understanding—love" theory of the image of God, and the other is a branch, leaning towards Thomas Aquinas's "mind—understanding—love" theory of *imago Dei*. In the Chinese context from the Ming and Qing dynasties on, these schools each, in their own way, suggest admonitions for how to renew the image of God in man.

**Keywords:** Augustine, theory of *imago Dei*, St. Thomas Aquinas, Giulio Alenio, Lodovico Buglio

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According to the teachings of Christianity, mankind was created according to God's own image, therefore, if one wants to understand God and mankind, then one must first understand this image. In Augustine's view, the image of God (*imago Dei*) should be sought in the most advanced place in a human being, that

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is, in the human mind. In *De Trinitate* (On the Trinity), he investigates this problem specifically, in the end recognizing two images: the first is the mind's "memory, understanding, and love" of the self (Augustine, 302), and the second is the mind's "memory, understanding, and love" of God (*Ibid.*, 429). Regarding the first image, he believes, the mind always remembers the self, understands the self, and loves the self; at the same time, it can be said that memory is the equivalent of the mind; and it can also be said that understanding and love are the equivalent of the mind. Memory, understanding, and love, these three things mutually encompass one another. However, the sum of any two of these added together is not necessarily bigger than each individually, but is of the same size. Likewise, the sum of these three things is not greater than the mind itself, but is equal to it. This is precisely similar to the situation of the Trinity: although there are three hypostases that are completely equal in their divine nature, God is not three, but only one God. In the mind, then, if the mind would understand the self, it must first have a memory of itself. Memory then gives rise to "the inner word" (*verbum interius*). This is akin to God the Father begetting God the Son. Once the inner word has been given expression, it then becomes the external word, and is heard and seen by others. This is akin to the word becoming flesh and coming to dwell on earth. Memory begets the internal word, demonstrating that between memory and thought there is a kind of love, which connects the two together; this is similar to the love that connects God the Father and God the Son, that is, the Holy Spirit. However, Augustine felt that simply finding this "image," that is, the mind's "memory, understanding, and love" of the self, was not enough, because the literal sense of "image" points to that which is archetypal. One must aim to approach and resemble that archetype, that is, God. Therefore he proposed a second image, a truer image, which is the memory, understanding, and love of God.

Before recognizing these two images, Augustine also once believed "the mind, self-knowledge, and love of self" (*mens, notitia sui, amor sui*) was also an image (see *Ibid.*, page 261). He said that, when contemplating itself, the mind gives



rise to speech about itself (*verbum mentis*), much like God the Father begets the Holy Word (*Ibid.*, 270). However, he later abandoned this image because the mind is a substantive entity, and knowledge and love are actions. They are of different categories. So, in the end the “images” recognized by Augustine were only the former two mentioned above.

Augustine connected these two kinds of image with the history of soteriology, believing that people go through a process of “possessing *imago Dei*, the destruction of *imago Dei*, and the renewal of *imago Dei*.” The archetypal image, is good, but damaged because it was debased [in mankind]; for its restoration, one can only rely upon grace. The renewal of *imago Dei* is a process akin to the treatment of illness. Although the grace that causes people to convert is medicinal, one cannot hope for the disease to be cured all at once. Entering into a state of grace from a state of sin, one’s image is renewed, but it still is not sufficient; one must wait until later when His glory is directly perceived in heaven, only then will the image of God in man achieve perfection (see Augustine, 439–440).

However, Augustine also realized that among “memory, understanding, and love,” memory is not really an action; it is latent and static; however, understanding and love are manifest, or active, and therefore not of the same category. This makes for an unsuitable analogy (*Ibid.*, 427).

Peter Lombard’s *Book of Sentences* transmitted Augustine’s “memory, understanding, and love” theory of *imago Dei* through the medieval period. Thomas Aquinas on the one hand perpetuated the framework of Augustine’s theory of the renewal of the image of God, and on the other hand also made important revisions to it, primarily, replacing the “memory” in Augustine’s “memory, understanding, and love” with “mind.” In this way, the image then became “mind, knowledge, and love.” Facing the question “is the image of God in all people?” Aquinas proposed a doctrine of a three-level image of God; from low to high it is divided into three levels. The first level is the created image of God



that all people possess; every person naturally knows and loves the Lord. The second kind is the image of God found in recipients of grace; they are able to superbly know and love the Lord, but not yet perfectly. The third kind is the image of God found in the blessed; they perfectly know and love the Lord. This is realized only in the first hand experience of God's glory. (cf. ST I q. 93 a. 4; Aquinas, pp. 58–62). Louis Buglio translates this passage from Aquinas into Chinese as follows: “[It] is divided into three images: one is creation, the second is deliverance, and the third is resemblance. The first image is in all people; the second image is in good people; the third image is in divine sages who possess beatitude.” (Zhang Xiping, Volume 12, p. 611).<sup>1</sup>

Why did he want to implement this revision? Aquinas points out that memory is a kind of habit or power; it is not an actualized, intentional act, but understanding is an actualized, intentional act. Love is also actualized (cf. ST I q. 93 a. 7; Aquinas, pp. 74–77). In God there is nothing but pure actuality; it is not possible for there to be a thing that moves from latent to actualized, such as memory giving rise to words. In this way, although both Thomas and Augustine's theories of *imago Dei* emphasize the soteriological meaning of the “renewal of God's image,” they also have differences: Augustine upheld the formula “memory, understanding, and love,” emphasizing the mind's memory, understanding and love of God. Aquinas, on the other hand, maintained the formula “the mind, understanding, and love,” emphasizing the mind's understanding and love of God. Aquinas forgot “memory,” exchanging Augustine's “memory giving rise to words” for “the mind giving rise to words.” (cf. Lonergan, pp. 13–14)

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator's note] The Chinese of Louis Buglio's translation reads “分有三像：一曰受造，二曰救赎，三曰相肖。首像在众人，次像在善人，三像在享真福之神圣。”



## Part One

In 1548, the founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) published the *Spiritual Exercises* (*Exercitia spiritualia*). This is a four-week course on the exercise of the spirituality for devotees. Ignatius first wanted to discipline the soul, then control the body's behavior via the soul. He calls memory, understanding and will "the three powers of the soul." For example, in "The First Exercise: Meditation on Three Sins," through meditating on the sin of the fallen angels, the sin of Adam and Eve, and the sins of humanity, one will remember, realize, and be stimulated. After the soul's three powers have been trained, a person can then become a steadfast spiritual warrior.

In the late Ming dynasty, following the arrival of the Jesuit missionaries in China, Augustine's theory of *imago Dei* was also introduced to China. The earliest Jesuit missionaries to enter China were Michel Ruggieri (Ch. Luo Mingjian 罗明坚, 1543–1607) and Matthieu Ricci (Ch. Li Madou 利玛窦 1552–1610). Ruggieri's 1584 *Veritable Record of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shilu* 天主实录) did not yet mention the soul's three powers. Ricci's 1603 *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shiyi* 天主实义)<sup>1</sup> already remarks that the mind has "two offices, one governing desires, and one governing awareness" (*siyu, siwu er guan* 司欲、司悟二官, see Mei Qianli, p. 113). In 1605, Ricci undertook the compilation of the standard Catholic catechism, *Abbreviated Record of the Bible* (*Shengjing yuelu* 圣经约录), standardizing Chinese translations of a great many terms. For example, "The spirit has three offices," that is, the one governing memory, the one governing intelligence, and the one governing desire (see Huang Xingtao, vol. 1, p.

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator's note] This translation is adopted by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen, S.J., trans. *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985).



36). *Essential Teachings of the Lord of Heaven* (Tianzhu jiaoyao 天主教要), basically a set of teaching materials on regulations of the Catholic faith, was inherited by later arrivals and had far reaching influence. Augustine's theory of the renewal of *imago Dei* entered the Sinophone world through the disciplining of the three offices of the soul. For example, in *Discussion of the Four Last Things of the Sagely Catholic Faith* (Tianzhu shengjiao simo lun 天主教四末论),<sup>1</sup> besides quoting Augustine's more famous sayings at length, Alphonse Vagnoni (Ch. Gao Yizhi 高一志, 1566–1640) also begins to juxtapose the three offices of the soul with the consequences of its choices in life. He says that in Hell, the “three offices” of the souls of evil people will all receive severe punishment. Therefore, in life, it is necessary to discipline and regulate the three offices of the soul and the body's five offices (five senses).

If we say that Augustine's theory of the renewal of the image of God had only just started with Vagnoni, then it reached full development with Giulio Aleni (Ch. Ai Rulue 艾儒略, 1582–1649) and Francois Sambiasi (Ch. Bi Fangji 毕方济, 1582–1649). Aleni's *Crude Narration of the Study of Human Nature* (Xingxue cushu 性学概述) states that the soul “takes memory, intelligence, and desire as its original function” (*Ibid.*, p. 259). *Record of a Discussion of Study at Sanshan* (Sanshan lun xue ji 三山论学纪) records the content of a 1627 discussion on morality between Aleni and Grand Secretary Ye Xianggao 叶向高 at Sanshan (in Fujian Province). When discussing why people are good or evil, Aleni speaks of intelligence and desire. The Lord endowed man with intelligence and desire, “[But because] his original sin has not yet been eliminated, so the rectitude of his original nature has already been lost. Once his intelligence has been darkened, his desires will immediately become deviant. Because of this, the road avoiding evil

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<sup>1</sup> [Original author's note] The edition read by the author did not display publication information. This book is not included in the several collectanea consulted for this article.



gradually becomes more and more forked. This is one thing that divides the good from the evil.” Aleni, at this point, has yet to mention “memory.” Aleni points out that there are two further factors that result in the distinction between good and evil. One is the differences brought about by the body, or the flesh, that is, the “endowment of *qi*” (*bingqi* 禀气). Another is the differences brought about by one’s environment, custom, or habitual nature (see Ren Yanli, vol. 3, p. 82). Aleni, here, borrows the concept of “endowment of *qi*” from Neo-Confucianism, or, the “study of principles” (*lixue* 理学),<sup>1</sup> using Confucians’ own concept of the “nature of physical substance” (*qizhi zhi xing* 气质之性) from their theory of human nature as an explanation of the origins of evil. It can be said that this is particularly Sinified, because in Augustine and Aquinas there is no direct equivalent. Aquinas, when speaking of why man defies natural law (which approximates “heavenly principles” in Neo-Confucianism), proposes five reasons: lust, evil habits, evil natural tendencies (cf. ST I-II q. 94 a. 4), corrupt customs, and harmful fashions and habits (cf. ST I-II q. 94 a. 6). Here, “evil natural tendencies” can be explained by original sin and has nothing to do with the “*qi*” (physical substance) discussed in Chinese philosophy.

*Diary of Oral Admonitions* (Kouduo richao 口铎日抄)<sup>2</sup> is primarily Aleni’s collected conversations recorded by Li Jiubiao 李九标 and other followers. It records Aleni and other missionaries’ explanations of all kinds of topics and

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator’s note] Translation based on Benjamin Elman, “The Failures of Contemporary Chinese Intellectual History,” in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43.3 (Spring 2010): 377.

<sup>2</sup> [Translator’s note] Title translated following Erik Zürcher. *Kouduo richao. Li Jiubiao's Diary of oral admonitions: A Late Ming Christian journal*, translated, with introduction and notes by Erik Zürcher, 2 volumes, Monumenta Serica monograph series, 56 (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica; Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà, 2007).



questions regarding Catholicism given to followers while preaching across the province of Fujian between 1630 and 1640. In the fourth chapter, a disciple by the surname of Lin asks if what Mr. Aleni said before was true, that between memory, intelligence, and desire, one person usually cannot have all three. Aleni answers that these three things mutually promote one another. Although it is difficult for the average man to have all three, there have been extraordinary individuals who were able to have them all. He goes on to emphasize that it is necessary to remember beneficial content, fundamentally changing the content of one's thought:

Memory is like a storehouse; it is the repository in which principle is stored. Thus, the office of the memory must be pure and not complicated. Everything that the ear hears, and everything the eyes touch must all be made to agree with principle and the Way and memorized in the mind. From this [it follows] that what the mind understands is all things that are good, and so the desires will not have any reason to deviate from the Way. Otherwise, wrong and right will be haphazardly arranged; good and evil will crowd together, even though the two don't tolerate one another. Even when one is truly hardworking, still there will be other thoughts hidden within. It is more often than not just that the memory is unclear. For example, if what a storehouse stockpiles is entirely gold and jade, then one would definitely not allow an evil or vulgar thing to mix inside it. So, each thing that the mind knows, take it and use it; there is not one that is not pure gold or fine jade. (Zhang Xiping, Vol. 26, pp. 702–703)

Memory has an important function in Augustine because memory is connected with all past history, the unconscious mind, and the superconscious mind (divine illumination), much like the tainted and untainted seeds spoken of in Buddhism. Therefore, to correct one's memory thus implies the fundamental correction of one's mind. This is intimately related to the renewal of the image of God in the



soul.

A few days later, another disciple, Cong Chuo 从绰, asks if there is any difference between men and women's souls. Aleni responds that there is not. Cong Chuo asks further, that one often sees that women are not the equals of men in memory and understanding. How would Aleni explain that? Aleni answers him saying that there is no distinction between men and women's souls, it is only that there is a difference of sharpness and dullness:

Indeed, from their creation, the vitalities differ in their purity and turbidity. Thus, regarding the soul's being, originally each has the capacity for memory and intelligence, it is just that those whose vitalities are turbid, their memory and intelligence must also be dull. It is truly that their organ of efficacy is not sharp; it has nothing to do with the nature of the soul. Do you not see it in fire? The brilliance of fire is its nature. However, those burning pure oil, their light is always bright. If the oil is turbid, then the fire's light is necessarily lessened. How could it be that fire has a distinction between light and dark? Thus, the purity and turbidity of the oil is that by which it is separated. (*Ibid.*, pp. 714-715)

This question is actually a complicated one. Firstly, it is a question of whether or not men and women's souls are equal, and, secondly, it is a question of disparities between individuals. Although Augustine uses Adam to represent superior reason (intellect) and uses Eve to represent inferior reason (practical reason), he does not believe that men and women's souls are different in nature. The two are both God's image. Aquinas also believed this was so. In answering whether or not there is a difference between the image of God in men and women, Aquinas points out that the image of God in people only refers to the intelligence not the body (cf. ST I q. 93 a. 6). Aleni, believing that men and women are both made in the image of God, without a doubt carried on the views of Augustine and Aquinas. Scholastics



had discussed the problem of man's senses being the material substance of sensory reception, but on the topic of how to explain differences in individual capacity to reason, Aleni conveniently borrowed the concept of "the purity and turbidity of the vitalities [*qi*]" from Neo-Confucianism to answer this question.

The fourth chapter records the discussions of Yan Zanhua 严赞化 and another missionary, Lin Bendu 林本笃, on the distinction between the "birth" (*sheng* 生) of God the Son and the "sending forth" (*fa* 发) of the Holy Spirit. Lin Bendu inquired about Yan Zanhua's understanding of the difference between "birth" and "sending forth:" why is it that only God the Son can be said to have been "born," and the Holy Spirit is only said to have been "sent forth" and not born? Yan said to him what Aleni had taught him before, but Lin Bendu felt it was insufficient:

[Yan] said to him: "In saying 'birth,' it is that we must distinguish the existence of the Father, this is why we call it birth. Now, in *Feilue's* [i.e. God the Son] becoming incarnate, we know that *Badelei* [i.e. God the Father] is of one being with him. It is not like *Spiritus Sanctus* [i.e. the Holy Spirit], which is the sending forth of love. Therefore, one cannot call this being 'born.'" Mr. Lin said: "However, this does not exhaust the meaning of 'birth' and 'sending forth.' That the Lord of Heaven is three persons in one being, the meaning of this is difficult to make clear. Those who would explain it often use the three offices of the spirit as an analogy. God the Father is compared to memory; God the Son is compared to intelligence; and the Holy Spirit is then compared to desire. Memory gives birth to intelligence; it is not like when desire waits to be 'sent forth.' When we look at the character '*zhi*' here, we remember that there is the form of this character, then our awareness of this character is born; this is the memory's governing of intelligence. However, we cannot guarantee only love from the mind. Therefore, we [also] guarantee memory and intelligence. The



sentiment of joy is sent forth from them, and begins to become desire. This is the meaning of [the statement that] desire can only be said to be sent forth, and cannot be said to be born. Knowing this, then one can understand the two meanings of ‘birth’ and ‘sending forth’ spoken of in the Trinity.” (Zhang Xiping 张西平, vol. 26, pp. 718–720)

Lin Bendu vividly uses an example of “memory giving rise to words,” where once remembering the character “zhi” (之), one can truly recall it, to analogize the Father begetting the Word (i.e. the Son). When it comes to desire, only when memory and intelligence, these two things, are both in harmony can it be generated; otherwise, desire will not be generated at all. This can be used as an analogy for the Holy Spirit being the love between God the Father and God the Son. This is a classic Augustinian theory of the image of God.

In the sixth chapter of *Diary of Oral Admonitions*, someone again asks Aleni about the three offices of the soul. This time, it is connected with meditation:

Qixiang [Li Jiubiao] said: ‘I have heard that in the Catholic teachings there is a skill of meditation. May I ask for a summary of it?’ The teacher [Aleni] said: ‘If people do not meditate in the morning, then their spirit loses its nourishment. Meditation is the food that nourishes the soul. However, for the skill of meditation, one must use the memory, intelligence, and love, these three, to do it.’ Qixiang said: “What do you mean by this?” The teacher said: “First, purify the memory. If the memory is not pure, then miscellaneous things enter the brain. When one is meditating, one will then have the failings of messy thoughts and chaotic understanding. Thus, one must gather classics, taking from them what is fine, putting them in your bag, following selections you pluck out, and use them in order to stimulate the mechanisms of the intelligence. Second, one must enlarge the intelligence. When the mechanisms of the intelligence are stimulated, then



one can draw inferences about like things and fathom their secrets; rely on examining their actions for meaning, take them as a model, and feelings of adoration will be moved. Third, send forth love. Once you have understood this logic, then you will passionately honor [God], whether sending forth sentiments of great regret, or begetting thoughts of transformation, steady your will, beseeching the Lord to grant us divine strength, and resolutely enact it. This is the general idea of meditation. Although this is so, meditation hopes for action; to meditate without action, this is baseless. (Zhang Xiping, vol. 27, 87–88)

This kind of scene, a dialogue between student and teacher, greatly resembles the spectacle of late-Ming scholarly lectures; the content has simply been exchanged for Catholic subject matter. Neo-Confucians spoke of the skill of “preserving one’s heart and nourishing one’s nature;”<sup>1</sup> Buddhism and Daoism both had cultivation techniques like meditation; Catholicism instead emphasized prayer. An important aspect of prayer is silent prayer—communing with the divine. Aleni thus proposed demands on the soul from each of three facets—memory, intelligence, and desire—each of them should be cultivated, and knowledge and action made one according to the teachings of the Church.

Narrated by Francois Sambiasi (Ch. Bi Fangji 比方济 1582–1649) and transcribed by Xu Guangqi, *A Ladle of Words on the Soul* (*Ling yan li shao* 灵言蠡勺) is a work that introduces Western theories of the soul. There has always been controversy regarding its relationship to the text of Aristotle’s theory of the soul (see Mei Qianli, et al.). *A Ladle of Words on the Soul* is not a book on the philosophy of mind; it is, rather, a work of admonitions within the framework of the Jesuit

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator’s note] “Preserving one’s heart and nourishing one’s nature” refers to the Chinese phrase “*cun xin yang xing*” 存心养性, here “*cunyang*” 存养. The translation is from D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970).



theology of the time. It carries rich Augustinian overtones. Places in *A Ladle of Words on the Soul* that quote Augustine are numerous; from the start its understanding of the structure of the soul is Augustine's; it not only uses Augustine's "memory, intelligence, love" framework, but also adopts the concept of "the inner word." Its discussion of "memory, intelligence, and love" is carried out within the structure of the soteriological sense of the "renewal of God's image in man." This book's discussions of the soul as thing-in-itself, its functions, its status as the likeness of God, and its inclination to future perfection are all deeply influenced by Augustine's psychological theory of the Trinity and his theory of the image of God.

In his introduction, Sambiasi quotes Augustine to point out that philosophy can be summed up in two main branches: one discusses the soul, the other discusses God (See Huang Xingtao, vol 1., 319). They are intimately connected to the well being of people: "Augustine says: 'The Lord in Heaven created man's *animus* [soul]. In order to comprehend perfect goodness, one must understand and love it; having loved it, one then attains it; having attained it, one then takes joy in it' (Huang Xingtao, vol. 1, 322). The soul has three powers: they are divided into memory, intelligence, and love. Sambiasi believed that the soul's "abilities are three offices, not limited to just memory, but memory can be called an ability of the *animus*," thus emphasizing the function of memory (see above, 326). This is entirely the opinion of Augustine, who equated memory with the mind itself. It is very different from Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas who did not give priority to the status of memory.

Because the intelligence does not have form or substance, one of its unique qualities, therefore, is its ability to understand itself: "The intelligence can observe the ten thousand things; it can also reflect upon itself." Yet this kind of understanding of the self is not constant. This is because:

One: one must repeatedly reflect. If one self-illuminates one's intelligence,



one does not need to be liberated [saved], [and therefore] one should, unimpeded, become forever illuminated. However, in order to self-illuminate, one must reflect light back upon the self, thus it is not constantly illuminated. Two: the *anima* is in the flesh; it is constantly connected to things with form and substance in which there is much impurity. It does not reflect in a timely way upon the formless and substance-less self. Therefore it cannot attain constant self-illumination. (Huang Xingtao, vol 1,331)

This is similar to Augustine's claim that the soul cannot always truly be thinking of itself; moreover, it often mixes with external things, mistakenly believing itself to be an external thing. Therefore, external things must be stripped away; only then does it display its true colors. Love (or desire), thus, points in the same direction as the wishes of the soul: "That which it moves toward is the good that it has previously known." It is divided into three parts: the first kind is natural desire, referring to the desires of all things due to their basic nature, like water flows downward or fire soars upward. Here, Sambiasi quotes a famous line from Augustine's *Confessions* Chapter 1, verse 1: "Augustine says: Lord, [you] made man's mind so that he might revere You. Therefore, if he does not attain You, the myriad blessings are insufficient; he will never attain peace" (*ibid.*,334)<sup>1</sup>, the second kind is animalistic desire, the so-called "base desires". The third kind is spiritual desire that only people and the divine can have, the "superior desires". Base desires, without superior desires to control them, make humans no different than animals (*Ibid.*, 335).

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator's note] Usually translated from the Latin as, "...because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you," or similar. See Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, translation, introduction and notes by Henry Chadwick, Oxford World's Classics, (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1991; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3. The translation here preserves the sense of Sambiasi's Chinese: "亚吾斯丁曰：主造人心以向尔，故万福不足满，未得尔，必不得安也。"



Sambiasi primarily speaks of the soul as God's likeness—it resembled God. This resemblance is reflected in three aspects of the soul: its nature, its shape, and its actions. Its similarity in nature to God refers to its similarity in character: "Saint Augustine says: the *anima* is an independent entity without shape and without evil; it is much like the Lord of Heaven. Although it is originally without an image, it contains the image of the Lord of Heaven in it" (*ibid.*,339)." Its similarity in shape to God refers to the similarity of its form. Sambiasi here ties together Augustine's "memory—intelligence—love" model with St. Thomas Aquinas' theory of the three-level image of God in man. The former discusses the similarity of the soul with God from the perspective of structure:

"The intelligence of the *anima* comes from memory; the desires of the *anima* thus come from memory and the intelligence. Augustine himself posed and answered this question saying, 'How is the *anima* the image of the Lord of Heaven? It is that it can remember the Lord, understand the Lord, and love the Lord; therefore it is the image of the Lord.'" (*ibid.*,340.)

The latter attempts to understand *imago Dei* by placing it in the midst of the development of the Thomist interpretation of "the renewal of the image of God in man," namely, the three-grade theory of the image of God, "the naturally endowed image, the image of recipients of grace, and the image of the blessed" (ST I q. 93 a. 4). Of course, as we know from earlier in this article, Aquinas' understanding of *imago Dei* left out the element of "memory" (Huang Xingtao, vol.,340). Regarding the transformation of the mind, Sambiasi emphasized the effect of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit moves throughout the world like the soul moves in the body. The soul depends upon the grace of the Holy Spirit before it can become good or holy, resembling the Lord (*Ibid.*, 345). The similarity of its actions to God refers to the similarity of the patterns of their behavior. The Lord is the beginning and end of all things; the soul is like this with regard to its body. The Lord is able to know all things, and the soul is the same, though far lesser in degree. The Lord makes the



things of the world lively, just as the soul causes the body to have vitality. The author [Sambiasi] lists ten similarities in behavior, which I won't enumerate here. It is necessary to point out, however, that the author, following Augustine and Aquinas, brings up the analogy of "the inner word:"

As soon as the *anima* comprehends things, it so begets the inner word (The inner word is the meaning of a thing. For example when the external word leaves the mouth, it passes through the ear. If the *anima* does not first beget the inner word, then there is no way for it to completely comprehend the nature and principle of things). The Lord comprehends his own nature, and also begets the inner word (The Lord utterly understands his own nature, and so begets his own inner image as the second person, *Feilue* [God the Son]. This is the inner word of *Badelei* [God the Father]). (*Ibid.*, 342–343).

The last chapter of *A Ladle of Words on the Soul* is "Arriving at a perfect goodness" (Lun zhi meihao zhi qing 论至美好之情), meaning that God is perfectly good. If the soul is to achieve this perfect goodness, it must undertake specific steps and methods with the help of God's favor (grace) before it can become perfectly good:

"The spirit has three offices: one is the office of memory; one is the office of understanding; and one is the office of love. When it remembers this perfect goodness, the memory is at its most enriched; when it understands this perfect goodness, the intellect is at its brightest, its most noble; when it loves perfect goodness, the office of love is at its most upright, its most honorable." (*Ibid.*, 351).

Taking God as the standard, through training the three offices of the soul, one can then rise above the common and become a saint.

The Italian Jesuit Jerome de Gravina (Ch. Jia Yimu 贾宜睦, 1603–1662)



once mentioned the story of Augustine's profession of faith in the garden. He also spoke of memory, intelligence, and love, this triune *imago Dei*, and upheld a theory of the renewal of God's image in man. In *Compilation of Identified Corrections* (Ti zheng bian 提正编), he brings up the relationship between the corporeal body and the soul—people should not be controlled by the appetites of the body, but rather should make the body the servant of the soul. God's original purpose in bestowing bodies upon humanity was to have them assist the soul in service to God:

The soul has three functions in ruling the body. First, intelligence: the profundity of reason, the depths of human nature, and the study of discerning principle and rising above human nature, these all can be understood [by the soul]. Second, love: that is, whatever one understands, love it. Third, memory holds the most critical parts of intelligence and love; due to it, [they are] preserved without loss. These three are bestowed by the Lord. Without the omnipotence of the Lord, how could these things exist? (Zhang Xiping, Vol 33, 43–44)

De Gravina says that God the Son is the “inner image” of the Lord, but humanity is the “external image” of the Lord: “When the Lord made the first man, He said: ‘I have made man in my own image. From the original human's first sin, they spoiled the external image of God. Therefore, the inner image came down to live in order to make them whole again’ (*Ibid.*, 57). When men's minds were created, they originally looked to the Lord for direction:

The Lord bestowed us with souls so that we resemble him. No one can emulate His nobility; his mercy is without limits. Because of the weakness of their bodies, people mistake the direction of God, which causes their souls to fail to find peace. Now, one can determinedly transcend [the body] and not be dragged around by [it], and so return to the right track.



Accordingly, we know the nobility of our souls, which is truly in accordance with perfect goodness. (*Ibid.*, 291)

Once one has fallen into sin, it is difficult to free oneself from it. One can only rely upon the Word of God becoming flesh to gain redemption. Man should depend on grace to return to the original direction of *imago Dei* in himself at its creation. We can see that de Gravina had a comprehensive “theory of the renewal of God’s image.”

The authors discussed above clearly propose a theory of the renewal of God’s image in man and exhaustive requirements for the cultivation of the soul. This tradition remains unbroken in Catholicism. For example, *Essentials of the Catholic Faith* (Shengjiao qieyao 圣教切要), printed in 1935 by Shanghai Tushanwan Publishing House 土山湾印书馆, uses vernacular Chinese to give a detailed explanation of “the three offices of the soul” and simultaneously give specific admonitions (see Ren Yanli, vol. 5, 253–254).

Even more authors merely mention the “memory, intelligence, and love” image of God in their texts. Regardless of whether or not they give a clear explanation, these are all typical examples of Augustine’s view of the image of God. Examples include Jesuits such as Manuel Dias the Younger (Ch. Yang Ma’nuo 阳玛诺), João Monteiro (Ch. Meng Ruwang 孟儒望), Giacomo Rho (Ch. Luo Yagu 罗雅谷), Joseph-Anne-Marie de Moyriac de Mailla (Ch. Feng Bingzheng 冯秉正); Franciscans such as Carlo Orazio da Castorano (Ch. Kang Hezi 康和子)<sup>1</sup> and Fr. Francisco Peris de la Concepción (Ch. Bian Fangshi 卞芳世);<sup>2</sup> and Juan García (Ch. Shi Ruohan 施若翰) of the Dominican order. He Shizhen 何世贞 could also be

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator’s note] Roman Malek, *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ: Annotated Bibliography*, Monumenta Serica (New York: Routledge, 2015), volume 4a, 173.

<sup>2</sup> [Translator’s note] Kaijian Tang, *Setting Off from Macau* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 18.



included. Li Mei 李梅 even wanted to, building on the analogy of the three offices of the soul, use the concepts of “the five relationships, the four virtues, the six desires, the seven emotions; and the Supreme Ultimate (*Taiji* 太极) though one, contains three” to explain the Trinity (see Zhong Mingdan, vol 7., 43–44). We have yet to examine how the author’s *Divine Skill of Silent Prayer* (Modao shengong 默道神功) was possibly influenced by *Exercitia spiritualia*, requiring that the soul have memory, understanding, and love of God.

Regarding God the Father begetting God the Son, a particularly vivid metaphor circulated in the Ming and Qing dynasties: “gazing into a mirror, an image is born.” In *Essay on Replacing Doubts* (Dai yi pian 代疑篇), Yang Tingyun 杨廷筠 (1557–1627) uses the soul’s three offices to analogize the Trinity. He says, “The Lord is after all a soul in its most extreme form. It reflects the infinite wonder of its own being. An infinite image was born inside it, which is completely identical to it.” (*Tianzhu jiao dong chuan wenxian* 天主教东传文献 [Documents from the eastward transmission of Catholicism], 594–595). In addition, in *Continued Essay on Replacing Doubts* (Xu dai yi pian 续代疑篇), he repeats this analogy (see Zhong Mingdan, vol 6, page 20 in the original pre-modern edition). Fanciscus Brancati, (Ch. Pan Guoguang 潘国光, 1607–1671), in *Standardized Lessons on the God of Heaven* (Tianshen gui ke 天神规课), also says, “If you want to see your own true face, use a mirror to look upon it. In the mirror, then, an image of yourself is born. We can see it clearly. The Lord, first in time without beginning, gazed clearly upon his original nature, and thereupon gave birth to an image of his original nature, that is the second person, *Feilüe* [God the Son]” (Zhang Xiping, vol. 39, 121). The Spanish Augustinian monk, Tomas O. S. A. Ortiz (Ch. Bai Duoma 白多玛, 1668–1742), in *Concise Explanations of Essential Classics* (Yao jing lue jie 要经略解) writes: “People, when looking at themselves in a mirror, then beget their own image in the mirror. The Heavenly Father clearly looking at his own nature, in turn



gives birth to his own image,” etc. (see Zhang Xiping, vol. 38, 370). Even the Buddhist Shi Jiji 释寂基, in *Revealing Evil* (Zhao jian 昭奸), brings up this analogy; but only because he thought it the pinnacle of absurdity (See Zhou Yan, 2003–2004).

## Part Two

During the Ming and Qing, at least with regards to theories of *imago Dei*, it was almost a purely Augustinian world, but there were those who raised questions and different voices. Some people inexplicitly changed “memory, understanding, and love” to “mind, understanding, and love;” others clearly opposed the view of the three offices of the soul, and believed the soul only had intelligence and love, these two offices. In this we can see a Thomistic theory of *imago Dei*. It was a revision of Augustine’s theory of *imago Dei* and grew to constitute a branch of that theory.

In *Multitude of Omens Concerning the Governance of God* (Zhu zhi qun zheng 主制群征), Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Ch. Tang Ruowang 汤若望, 1592–1666) writes, “Anything that has understanding and love can be considered a soul” (Zhang Xiping, vol. 31, 627). In *Origins of the Catholic Faith* (Zhu jiao yuan qi 主教缘起), although he begins with mention of the three offices of “intelligence,” and “love,” and “memory” (see Zhang Xiping, vol. 32, 43–44), when discussing the relationship between the spirit and the flesh, he only brings up intelligence and love, and does not mention memory: “The flesh has offices, by which we mean the ears, eyes, mouth, nose, and body. The soul has offices; they are intelligence and love” (*Ibid.*, 125). In *Origins of the Catholic Faith*, Schall von Bell clearly uses “mind, knowledge, and love” to analogize the Trinity:



All men can reflect upon the self; relying upon this he gives birth to his own image. There are no men who do not love the self. The image, that is, his own image, he relies on this to send forth love. The image belongs to the office of the intelligence; love belongs to the office of love. As man's soul has these, how can it be that the Lord alone would not have them [too]? The Lord is the ultimate soul; His, intelligence and love are boundless. The intelligence thus gives birth to the image; love thus sends forth emotion. However, originally, man is created, [and so] his image and love depend upon [creation]. The Lord exists miraculously. His very nature is separate from all dependence, so that which he gives birth to and sends forth is completely independent. Man cannot compare. (*Ibid.*, 72-73)

In not mentioning memory, but only intelligence and love, Schall von Bell shows his Thomism.

Louis Buglio (Ch. Li Leisi 利类思, 1606–1682) translated the first series of *Summa Theologiae*, titling the Chinese translation *Essentials of the Study of the Supernatural* (Chao xing xue yao 超性学要). He also wrote, in clear-cut language, *Essentials of the Catholic Faith* (Zhu jiao yao zhi 主教要旨), what amounts to a primer in the “ABCs of systematic theology.” As a Jesuit, he should have adhered to the analogy of the soul's three offices, used since Ignatius of Loyola, to describe the Trinity. However, because he was so well versed in the *Summa Theologiae*, he therefore abided by the thread of St. Thomas Aquinas, and “forgot” the office of “memory.” In the chapter “The Lord is of One Substance but Three Persons” (Tianzhu ti yi wei san 天主体一位三) of *Essentials of the Catholic Faith*, Buglio says man's faculty of reason can only know that there is one God, but cannot understand the three personae of God through reasoning. Rather, man must be enlightened by God before he can comprehend. This, without a doubt, is consistent with “studying the low to attain the high,” the argumentative style of Aquinas's



cosmology. How, then, can one know even a little of the divine Trinity?

One must know that anything that has a spiritual nature [i.e. the soul] innately has intelligence and also has love. The office of intelligence, first guides [it] and causes it to know; the office of love later follows and causes it to act. The office of intelligence illuminates objects and so must give birth to images of those objects and preserve them. These are the marvelous workings of the spiritual nature. All those that have a spiritual nature are like this. The Lord is a ultimate spiritual being; in what way does He possess intelligence? Once [it, i.e. the intellect] completely illuminates the marvel of His nature, [it] gives birth to His image. Because it is the complete image sent forth from inside God, this image therefore must have the same nature and substance as the Lord, but their persons are different. In this there is an order to giving and receiving. Take the one who gives and call it the Father; he is the first person. Take the one who receives and call him the Son; he is the second person. Moreover, because the Father understands the Son to whom he has given life, He must love Him. The Son understands the Father who has given him life; He must cherish Him. Because they love and cherish one another, this is that from which the emotion of love is sent forth. This sentiment of love, because it is sent forth from inside the Lord, therefore it must be of one substance with Him. But because it is enacted through the mutual affection of two persons, it cannot but be different in order. It is called the Holy Spirit, and is the third person. Although the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, [at] their birth and their procession, without a moment lost, [they] unite into one true God with no beginning. There is only first and second according to essence, there is no first and second in time. (Zhang Xiping, vol. 22, 673–675)



This excerpt is saying that in man's faculty of reason there is intelligence and love. For God, who is a perfect divine being, when he engages in self knowledge, God the Father's own image is then born and becomes "the true image of his being," that is, God the Son. God the Father loves God the Son; this love is sent forth from the Father, and the Son in turn has love that he returns. Because this love is in the being of the Father and Son, it therefore also becomes a person, and is the third person. Buglio, in particular, explains that here, being born or sent forth first or second does not refer to being first and second in time, but rather refers to being first or second according to logic (or, "essence," *yuan xian hou* 元先后). Those in the Ming and Qing who could make this distinction were few. The Spanish Franciscan, Augustin de San Pascual (Ch. Li Anding 李安定, 1637-1697), in *Capital of Eternal Blessings* (Yong fu tianqu 永福天衢) writes that because God is without beginning, birth and procession can only be "first and second in terms of essence" (first and second according to logic), and cannot be "first and second in terms of time" (Zhang Xiping, vol. 40, 393).

Buglio here doesn't emphasize the function of memory; what he says here is not "memory gives birth to words" but "the soul [the spiritual nature] gives birth to words." This adopts the results of the Thomist understanding of *imago Dei*. Thomist theology emphasizes rationality and is highly abstract. When translating such texts by Aquinas, Buglio himself is very clear on these issues, but we might doubt whether, during the Ming and Qing, Chinese people with no training in patristic or scholastic philosophy understood what he was saying. On this score, it seems that Buglio's work was not as relatable nor as vivid as that of Aleni.

Another work of Buglio, *Brief Omens of Orthodox Catholicism* (Tianzhu zheng jiao yue zheng 天主教约征) written around 1669, was presented to the Kangxi Emperor. Buglio says that people possess two virtues, intelligence and love.



Of the world's religions, only Catholicism is able to foster the virtue of intelligence, to cause it to know God and the origins of all things, and the fate of man. It is also only Catholicism that is able to foster the virtue of love and cultivate practical, virtuous people whose words match their deeds. In the midst of the Rites Controversy, Buglio, here, is speaking for the Church, and maintains an exhortatory tone. As he begins to write, he starts out with the teleological "Theory of the renewal of God's image in man:"

That by which men are differentiated from animals is their possession of a soul. In it are intelligence and love, two virtues; one can maximize its innate goal, and one will enjoy eternal blessings. The office of intelligence infers the origins of things and the nature and status of all things, [and in doing so] attains knowledge of the original soul's ultimate goal. The office of love follows the ultimate goal to which the office of intelligence points and cherishes it accordingly. This is the innate conscience bestowed at creation; it need not be taught; one follows one's original nature and attains it. It is only because one's nature is mixed with endowed substance [i.e. the flesh] and attacked by both external things and seductions that its innate goodness is damaged. The office of intelligence is blind to what it ought to know; the office of love lacks the heart for what it ought to do—how can the soul thus attain its ultimate goal and be at peace? This is the origin of the Faith. Although the Faith indeed has many branches, there is only one true Faith, a single Lord who created human nature, who can cure diseases of human nature, who can put an end to its blindness and add light to what it should know, who can supplement its weaknesses and add strength to what it should do. (Zhang Xiping, vol. 33, 601)

This is clearly the Thomist version of the theory of the renewal of God's image in man: when the first people were created, intelligence and love were both untainted. After the fall, intelligence and love were both damaged. Human nature



fell ill, trapped in the crooked ways initiated by original sin. Therefore, man needs God to treat the illness, causing intelligence and love to fall back into the correct place and man's nature to be cured.

Because this was given to Emperor Kangxi to read, Buglio loads a neo-Confucian framework with Catholic content, specifically, the following: "what heaven endows is called 'human nature,' to follow that nature is called 'the Way,' and the cultivation of the Way is called 'instruction.'"<sup>1</sup> According to Buglio's neo-Confucian framework, the Lord bestowed man with "innate conscience" (*liangzhi liangneng* 良知良能, i.e. intelligence and love); this he equated with "human nature' endowed by heaven." If it were not for the Fall, man originally could have acted "according to his nature" (*shuaixing* 率性) and nothing would have been contrary to "the Way." But because of the Fall, man deviated from the "right Way" (*zhengdao* 正道) and therefore needed to "cultivate the Way" (*xiu dao* 修道), or "instruction" (*jiao* 教). In explaining the reason man deviated from the right Way, it was not convenient for Buglio to directly refer to the story of Adam, and so he only used neo-Confucian terms to inexplicitly say, "It is only because one's nature is mixed with endowed substance [i.e. the flesh] and attacked by both external things and seductions that its innate goodness is damaged." Man's "innate conscience" (intelligence and love) was damaged, and only then did he need God to save him. And whether it was on the question of "intelligence" or "love," Catholicism outperforms other religions, so one ought to recognize and convert to the Catholic faith. We can see that Buglio speaks in response to his moment: his language is highly adapted to his circumstances. His words, "interference in one's nature by the endowed substance," where "endowed substance" is "*qibing*" 气禀, are similar to those of Aleni, where "*qi*," or the body's material substance, is used

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator's note] Translation adapted from James Legge, trans., "Doctrine of the Mean," in *The Four Books* (Taiwan: Wenyan shuju, 1962), 2.



to explain damage to man's original goodness. However, he seems to not consider whether or not this strategy changes the original meaning of Thomism and simultaneously misleads Chinese readers (using the neo-Confucian concept, "the nature of one's physical substance," to explain Catholicism's doctrine on the origins of evil). There were intersections in the lives of Buglio and Schall von Bell; perhaps their thought also interacted intimately.

The Dominican Raimundo del Valle (Ch. Lai Mengdu 赖蒙笃, 1613–1683) published *True Meaning of the Body and Spirit* (*Xing shen shi yi* 形神实义) in 1673, expounding on the human body and soul from a Thomist stance. Himself a Dominican, del Valle consciously defended the thought of the great master of the same brotherhood, Aquinas. In the "Notes on Usage" for this book, he expresses opposition to the ever-present method of dividing the soul into three offices (in China, first proposed by the Jesuits). He writes, "Other compilations take memory, intelligence, and love, separating [them] into three powers. Here we connect memory and intelligence; it is unnecessary to mention them separately. This is because memory is fundamentally a function of the intelligence" (Zhong Mingdan, vol. 3, page 3 of the original pre-modern edition). In the section "Discussion on memory as an endowed ability of the intelligence" (*Lun mingwu shou neng you jihan* 论明悟受能有记含) of the fourth chapter, he reiterates this opinion (see *Ibid.*, *juan* 4, pages 8–9 of the original pre-modern edition). Differing from the Jesuit's adoption of the formulation of memory, intelligence, and love as the three offices of the soul beginning with Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, del Valle, as a conscious Thomist, rejects the place of "memory." Just as Li Jiugong writes in a preface to *True Meaning of the Body and Spirit*, del Valle's profound theory of the soul originated in Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. We have not been able to find works by del Valle that discuss the Trinity or God's image. If they exist, then they would certainly be in the Thomist vein of "mind, understanding, and love."

Even though the Jesuits also held Thomism as their official theology, we



should recognize that the Jesuits and the Dominicans differed in their understanding and explication of Thomist thought. The two sides engaged in a long-term controversy on this topic (cf. Cessario, pp. 72–78). Regarding theories of *imago Dei* and the soul, because of the personal interest of the Jesuits' founder, Loyola, in Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine and its tradition (i.e. Lombard), the Jesuits somewhat deviated from and modified so-called "authentic" Thomism, thus causing a subtle difference in the theologies of the two orders.

In comparison with Catholics, Protestants held no interest in Augustine's theory of the image of God. They placed focus on the Bible and God's authority, and therefore did not set much store by the far too human-centric theory of the tripartite soul. However, this did not mean they were unfamiliar with Augustine's theory of the image of God. For example, Peng Bide's (彭彼得) *Exposition of Christian Doctrine* (Jidujiao jiaoyi quanshi 基督教义诠释), republished in 1936, introduces Augustine's analogy for the soul (See Ren Tingli, vol. 16, 627). Moreover, Yang Yuanlin's 杨苑林 translation and explication of H. Maldyn Hughes' *Christian Foundations* (Chinese title: *Xinyang de jichu* 信仰的基础) specifically uses a chapter of "analogies" (*leiqu* 类取) to introduce Trinitarian analogies in the history of Christianity, with focus on Augustine's formulation of image as "memory, understanding, and will." He believed that

"this kind of metaphor for mankind's consciousness easily leads people to the point of holding Sabellian views. We cannot find three persons in one consciousness; we can only find the three aspects of the mentality behind one person's actions. However, he is certainly not as precise or clear as what is given us by the Bible." (Ren Yanli, vol 17., 334–335)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Translator's note] The author has quoted Yang Yuanlin's Chinese translation of H. Maldwyn Hughes's English original. In an effort to preserve elements of how the Chinese translation reads, the English here is based on Yang Yuanlin's Chinese translation. H. Maldwyn Hughes's original reads: "The objection to this kind



This, we can say, represents 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century Protestantism's fundamental attitude towards the Augustinian theory of *imago Dei*. It is very different from Catholicism's enthusiastic transmission of the philosophy of the church fathers and medieval philosophers.

In summary, in Christian views on *imago Dei* transmitted to China in the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Augustinian tradition was the mainstream perspective, but Thomist branches also existed therein. As such, differing branches of explication appeared. In the Chinese language context, the two versions of the theory of the renewal of God's image in man both emphasize the cultivation of the soul, carrying overtones of both religious admonition and the real-life application of faith, and reflect a degree of flexibility in the use of some neo-Confucian terms.

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of analogy, which depends on an analysis of human consciousness, is that it leads to a Sabellian view of the Trinity. We cannot find three persons in consciousness, but only three modes of the one person's activity. We have to accept the fact that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be completely rationalized. Neither argument nor analogy can make it perfectly comprehensible to the reason. The doctrine is given by revelation...." H. Maldwyn Hughes, *Christian Foundations: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (London: The Epworth Press, 1927), 213.



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