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Boulding K E. *The image: knowledge in life and society.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1956. 175 p.

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The basic theme of *The Image* is that behavior, especially of humans, is not a product of a particular stimulus, but of the whole image of the world in the mind of the behaving person. Our images are accessible to us and we can communicate them to others. This idea is followed through the theory of organization, biology, sociology and the sociology of knowledge, economics, politics, history, and the study of subcultures. It is suggested that the concept of the image might become the basis of a new science named "eiconics." The work ends with some philosophical reflections on the relation between image and truth. [The SSC¹ indicates that this book has been cited in over 295 publications since 1966.]

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The Image was produced under unusual circumstances and has had some curious and unexpected impacts. My year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford (1954-1955) was a year of extraordinary stimulation. It was the center's first year of operation. There was a very remarkable group of people there, including the late Fred L. Polak, who had a great influence on me and my wife, Elise, who learned Dutch and translated his *Image of the Future*.¹ During that year I learned how to use a Dictaphone. In about the last nine days that we were at the center (it was around the end of August and almost everybody else had gone home), I dictated virtually the entire text of *The Image*, a very intense experience, reflected in the book's format. There are virtually no footnotes and no bibliography. I simply transformed my own image—part of the content of my own mind—into the English language. The secretarial staff at the center transcribed the manuscript, it was published with only a modicum of editing, and it is still in print after a third of a century.

The Image could almost be thought of as a generalization of the way economists like me tend to look at human behavior in terms of decision. Decision involves images in the mind of alternative futures, with varying degrees of probability, related to certain acts

or behaviors of the decision maker, which are then ordered in terms of preference—first, second, third, and so on. Behavior then consists of acting in a way that is expected to realize the image of the most preferred future.

This is a very different view of human behavior from that of the behaviorists, who think that behavior follows a stimulus. The idea behind *The Image* is that human behavior is the result of all previous stimuli, both internal and external, resulting in conscious images of the future. It seems the height of absurdity to an economist to suppose that behavior only comes out of immediate stimuli, even though these are certainly part of the total picture.

The Image, as far as I know, has had very little impact on psychologists, even cognitive psychologists, who still shy away from the study of consciousness. One exception is the book by G.A. Miller, E. Galanter, and K.H. Pribram, which was apparently stimulated by their picking up *The Image* in the library at the center.² The word "eiconics" never got off the ground. The book, however, has had a variety of impacts in other areas. In 1971 I received a letter from a cognitive anthropologist, requesting permission to reprint the introduction from *The Image* in a book on this subject.³ *The Image* evidently had an impact there. A year later I was invited to write a foreword (which I did) to a book on cognitive geography, which is the study of the maps in people's minds.⁴

Even more interesting was the discovery that a group called the Institute of Cultural Affairs (centered in Chicago, begun over 30 years ago, and now operating in over 100 locations in over 30 countries) has made use of *The Image* in their endeavor to give people living in poverty better images of themselves that could lead them out of their present situation. Groups with somewhat similar concerns, like the YMCA and Training, Inc., have also used *The Image* in rather similar situations.⁵

It is clear that there are niches for *The Image* in our society, even if it has not had much impact on the social sciences. Perhaps this is because of the obsession of the social sciences with the Newtonian model. It is odd that it is the physical sciences that have most transcended this model of deterministic mechanics and now are very well aware that knowledge is impossible without a knower and that physics cannot be wholly dissociated from the consciousness of the physicist. It may be, therefore, that *The Image* was before its time in relating behavior to the context of the conscious mind.

1. Polak F L. *The image of the future.* (Boulding E, trans.) Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier Scientific, (1955) 1973. 321 p. (Cited 40 times.)
2. Miller G A, Galanter E & Pribram K H. *Plans and the structure of behavior.* New York: Holt, 1960. 226 p. (Cited 1,360 times since 1966.)
3. Spradley J P, ed. *Culture and cognition: rules, maps, and plans.* San Francisco, CA: Chandler, 1972. 400 p.
4. Downs R M & Stea D, eds. *Image and environment: cognitive mapping and spatial behavior.* Chicago, IL: Aldine de Gruyter, 1973. 451 p.
5. McClory R. "Listen, I can fly." *Discovery YMCA* 5:6-11, 1987.