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ON THE LOGIC OF RELIGIOUS TERMS

The present study starts from the question if there can be any logic of religion. The answer is affirmative for logic in a wide sense. The attempts from the logic of beliefs account for this. However, the study focuses on the specific of the logic of religious terms, a less approached domain by logicians and philosophers. In this line issues like those of the logic of analogy, of the distinctions between the specific, general and total content of terms, between logical distributive and collective conjunctions, etc are brought into discussion. In the end, dogmatic concepts are analyzed, as the core of religious concepts.

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Is there any logic of religion? This is a simple question, but the answer is not simple at all. J. M. Bochenski wrote a book just with this title: *The Logic of Religion*¹. Still he specifies that it concern only a logic applied to the religious language, not to the religious states. In other words, understood in this manner, the logic of religion studies just those aspects of the religious phenomena that are accessible to logic. Thus, we remain within the framework of Kantian program: religion within the bounds of reason.

Yet an entire choir of voices is rising against this program, emphasizing that one cannot reduce religion to reason, that the essential ground of religiousness is to be found in the irrational, in the mystique. For the direction imposed by Rudolf Otto², religion must be separated from reason, which means that “the logic of religion” remains without object since there is no room for logic where one encounters mystical experience.

Nevertheless, such an extremely rigid separation of reason from religion is not productive at all. It is not necessarily either to reduce logic to reason. The Mediaeval Catholics too were themselves very good logicians, the scholastic philosophy often identifying itself with theology. After all, as Hegel thinks, “belief is itself knowledge, but a direct knowledge”³. Actually, things are quite shaded in Kant as well, because the intellect connects with sensibility, thing confirmed by J. Piaget’s genetic psychology, which speaks of “pre-rational intellect”, of “verbal intelligence”. Therefore, on the one hand, the intellect is extending his activity towards sub-rational, and on the other hand, reason, in its speculative dimension, as Hegel conceives it, is able to embrace even the mystique. This is the reason why one should accept any “logic of religion” as one important scientific research on this field, alongside with the sociology of religion, psychology of religion or religious anthropology⁴.

The logic of beliefs

Referring to religious experience, Leszek Kolakowski emphasizes that we have no concept to define such phenomena in a precise manner. Still he compels attention that the term “religion” is neither better nor worse than the concepts of “society”, “culture”, “art”, “politics”, etc⁵. In addition, the term “philosophy of religion” has at least two meanings. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the task of the philosophy of religion is that of testing the aspirations for truth for religious beliefs, whereas in the “continental” tradition, the philosophy of religion has the task of inferring the meanings of religion in different historical contexts. If in the first case religion is thought as a set of sentences regarding God and other subjects of the same kind, in the second case, the historiosophical meditation is better in emphasizing the cultural relativity of the religious concepts. As Kolakowski thinks, it would be ideal to combine the two kinds of analysis⁶.

Concerning the interpretation of religious beliefs, there have been outlined several directions, such as⁷:

- a) *The cognitive view*, within the framework of this direction it is considered that different religious beliefs bear some sort of knowledge;
- b) *The affective view*, which dwells on the fear of death and grief, on the desire to keep some order in the chaos around;
- c) *The social view*, in which the stress is set on the social value of the religious beliefs, on the social cohesion;
- d) *The cognitive-intellectualist view*, a sort of relapse into the former direction, yet with a stress on the idea that the religious beliefs are unveiling a hidden structure, some mental, intellectual tools, which are not consciously perceived by the believers, helping them out to organize and explain different natural and social laws.

In the following lines, we will take into account especially the first direction. In this view, “the logic of beliefs” is any “logic” in a very wide sense, studying the patterns of consistent believing and willing⁸. We can have *descriptive* and *imperative* belief formulas. As a rule, when our beliefs generate prescriptive consistent norms, the formulas become imperative. If we represent general terms with large letters, individual terms with small letters, and we underscore the imperative terms, we can take as example of descriptive formulas:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| $u : A$ | You believe that A is true. |
| $u : \sim A$ | You believe that A is false. |
| $\sim u : A$ | You don't believe that A is true. |

and as imperative formulas:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| $u : OAu$ | Believe that you ought to do A. |
| $(x) x : OAx$ | Let everyone believe that they ought to do A. |
| $(u : A \supset \sim u : B)$ | If you in fact believe A, then don't believe B. |

For instance, as an application, if we are taking into consideration the belief in God (there is a God) we could build formulas like:

$u : G$ You believe that there is a God (You're a theist).

$u : \sim G$ You believe that there is no God (You're an atheist).

$\square (u : G \supset \sim u : \sim G)$ Necessarily, if you're a theist, then you aren't an atheist.

Taking into consideration the logically philosophical researches in the domain of belief, in the last years there have been imposed many approaches, from which we especially emphasize the following ones:

The approach from the validity view. The study set a stress, in this case, on the valid inferential process of some belief formulas from other belief formulas. For instance, from the formula

$u : A$ (You believe A).

one could infer a formula like

$\sim u : \sim A$ (You don't believe not-A).

Referring to this kind of approach, Harry J. Gensler notices that when specific beliefs are given, we are in the situation of being unable to infer anything or we are inferring very little about what the persons involved believe. Therefore, that kind of approach is doomed from the start⁹.

The approach from the complete believers consistence view. About a person X, we are saying, in this approach, that it represents a complete consistent believer if and only if¹⁰:

- X believes some things;
- The set of things that X believes is logically consistent, and
- X believes anything that follows logically from set S

J. Hintikka¹¹ had especially followed this perspective. Trying to answer to the question of what is the condition for a person to be consistent according to his or her beliefs, Hintikka reasons in this way: Let us suppose that a person says the following sentences:

"I know that p_1 "

"I know that p_2 "

.....

"I know that p_k "

"It is possible, for all that I know, that q "

Starting from here we could set the following rule for consistency: If a set λ is consistent and if “ Kap_1 ” $\in \lambda$, “ Kap_2 ” $\in \lambda$, ..., “ Kap_k ” $\in \lambda$, “ Paq ” $\in \lambda$, that the set {“ Kap_1 ”, “ Kap_2 ”, ..., “ Kap_k ”, “ q ”} is also consistent¹².

The approach from the justificationist view As Risto Hilpinen proceeds, we could accept that a system of beliefs represents a set of sentences that express the doxastic state or the belief state of a person at a given moment¹³. In this case, a person could adopt the following attitudes towards a sentence or a proposition p :

to believe that p or to accept that p : Bp
 not to believe that p or to reject that p : Rp
 to suspend judgment concerning p : Sp

If we take into consideration that the rejection of p means accepting the negation of p ($\neg p$), we will have:

$Rp \leftrightarrow B \neg p$

and the suspension of judgment could be transcribed thus:

$Sp \leftrightarrow \neg Bp \wedge \neg B \neg p$

Normally, the belief in something or of something (Bp) implicitly expresses a satisfying answer to some question. Therefore, one could formulate the following condition (C_1): some sentence is satisfying if it brings enough information in relation to the question asked. Then, one could consider a sentence satisfying (C_2) if in his quality of being an answer, it expresses something true (or believed to be true). A third condition (C_3) tells us that a sentence is satisfying if it is justified (or it is believed to be justified). The three conditions constitute basic rules for the justificationist analysis of knowledge and beliefs.

The approach from the imperative consistence view. This approach – proposed by Harry J. Gensler – is closely related to Hintikka’s approach, but, at the same time, it sees itself like a different one, reason enough to present it as a self-sustained variant. Gensler thinks that Hintikka’s approach is functional, yet he notices that the stress should not be set so much on the believer’s behavior consistency, as on the imperative consistency that derives from a belief formula. The basic request in this approach is that of avoiding the inconsistent combinations. For instance, “Don’t combine *believing* A with *believing* not- A ” ($\sim u : A \wedge u : \sim A$). The request presupposes the implicit premise of consistency for arguing from belief logic. “So, when we call an argument «valid in our belief logic», we’ll mean that it’s valid if we assume this additional premise”. One could formulate the implicit premise: “You ought to be consistent”¹⁴.

Starting from the basic request, we must take into consideration two consistency norms:

1) Don't combine inconsistent beliefs

$$(\sim\Diamond(A \wedge B) \supset \sim(\mathbf{u} : A \wedge \mathbf{u} : B))$$

If A is inconsistent with B,

then don't combine *believing* A with *believing* B.

2) Do not believe something without believing what follows from it.

$$(\Box(A \supset B) \supset \sim(\mathbf{u} : A \wedge \sim\mathbf{u} : B))$$

If A logically entails B, then don't

combine *believing* A with *not believing* B¹⁵.

As we could notice, the consistency norms help to realize the coherence of some beliefs with others, thus enabling us to form universes or consistent belief worlds.

From the logic of beliefs to the logic of religious terms

The logic of beliefs represents the general framework in which a logic of religion could be developed, meaning a logic of religious concepts. The different approaches of this framework offer, as we have seen, some logical means and formalizations for the realm of beliefs, opinions in general, the religious beliefs being a species of these. Unfortunately, the interests for the philosophy and logic of religion still did not grant the same importance to the study of religious terms, to the logic of religious concepts. In fact, this seems to be a more general feature of the contemporary logic. In the logical treatise chapters dedicated to logic or theory of concepts are hardly encountered. This is paradoxical in the context of explicit or tacit acceptance of the concept as the fundamental unit of thinking. In the next lines, we will take into consideration the results obtained in philosophical researches on the religious language and the tendencies of applied logic on this field. As we have shown even from the beginning of this study, a logic of religion must admit, together with the rational, a series of non-rational elements or even irrational, taking into consideration that the facts of belief are facts of experience. Yet the religious experience is not pure subjectivity, because one could objectify this experience through language. Otherwise said, we could reach through language to the belief facts. Since Wittgenstein, we have known that, in general, language does not work univocal, on the contrary, that there is a large diversity of "language games". In addition, a "language game" is "a form of life" implicitly, which means it is inseparable from a context.

This is the reason why, as Jean Ladrière also emphasizes¹⁶, we must ask ourselves an important question, the question of the specific way of signifying of the religious language. In this direction, a crucial merit belongs to Austin¹⁷, who enriched the theory of meaning inherited from Frege, compelling the attention to three dimensions of the meaning:

a) the locutionary dimension of an expression (that is the aspect referring to the denotation and connotation of the expression);

b) the illocutionary dimension (that is the force aspect of an expression or of what it does, a finding, a promise, a command, an attitude, a verdict, an estimation, etc.);

c) the perlocutionary dimension (that is the effect the expression produces on those it was addressed).

Through the intercession of the concepts, we intend specific domains of the real or ideal world, properties or relations. In Ladrière's view, which we mentioned before, there are three sorts of sciences with specific concepts. Firstly, there are formal sciences as mathematics and logic, of which concepts preeminently fulfill an explanatory function. Secondly, there are the empirical-formal sciences, following the model of physics. Here things are more complicated, because in fact in this case we are speaking of two languages or of two sub-languages, a theoretical and an empirical one. For this sort of sciences it is specific the methodological circle: the theoretical construction presupposes a pre-comprehension of the object, that is of a "given", yet, on the other side, we cannot reach to the object but through the intercession of an interpretation. Then we have, in the third place, the hermeneutical sciences, where the hermeneutical circle prevails: this circle differs from the methodological one, because in this case we are speaking of the fact that the knowledge the subject acquires about the object modifies the object, and in his turn the interpreting subject modifies himself. Therefore, we encounter an intentional dynamism in hermeneutical sciences and concepts, which is a sort of privileged language concerning the self-clarifying of the interpreting subject.

Starting from Wittgenstein theory of "language games", it is the merit of analytic philosophy to explore different species of languages, including the religious language. As we have already mentioned, Austin introduces important nuances connected to meaning, and he introduces the notion of "performative language" too (in contrast with constative language). The performative utterances do not describe something, but they *do* something, they realize an action, which means they are constitutive for some operations.

Perhaps the most successful application of Austin's ideas about performative language in the field of religious language is that of Donald D. Evans¹⁸. Applying the theory of performative language to the biblical language, Evans thinks that here we are speaking of a self-involved language, because the language of revelation is not just enunciative, but a self-involved one (a language in which God commits Himself toward man, and man, in his turn, commits himself toward God).

We must make an explanation here. In Austin's case, we could observe two theories connected to the term "performative". According to the first theory, the utterances can be constative ("they say something") or performative ("they do something"). In a second theory, all the linguistic acts are illocutionary, therefore they have illocutionary force and are divided in performative acts and constative acts. Donald D. Evans will use the term "performative" with the meaning of linguistic acts with illocutionary force. In Evans' conception, there are five categories of

performative acts: 1) the constatives; 2) the commissives; 3) the exercitives; 4) the behabitives; 5) the verdictives. For Evans the constatives can come under performatives, because in this case as well, “something is done”, evaluated, asserted, inferred, etc. Yet, comparing them with the other performatives, in constatives case one could separate the illocutionary force from the content and they could be true or false according to their content.

Among the five performative acts, the behabitives and the commissives are especially found among the self-implicative sentences.

From our study’s perspective, the important issue is the issue of the logical relations that one could establish among the performatives. In Evans’ conception, if we have two utterances p and q , as performative quality, then two conditions are requested, in order to speak of a determination relation between the two (p entails q):

- 1) the performative forces of p and q are the same;
- 2) the abstractable contents cp and cq are such that cp and not- cq are incompatible when cp and not- cq are given the same performative force¹⁹.

Then we must consider the fact that there could be three sorts of performative-entailment:

- a) where the explicit performative force is the same in each utterance;
- b) where the performative force of the premise is non-explicit, but the performative force of the conclusion is explicit;
- c) where the explicit performative force in the utterances is not the same²⁰.

Let us take some examples. For the case a) it could be formulated a sort of syllogism like:

1. I predict that I shall make all x ’s f .
2. a is an x .
3. I predict that I shall make a, f .

As one can notice, (1) and (2) entail (3), and, for (1) and (2) are incompatible with not-(3).

For the case b) one of Evans’ examples is the following:

I will go \rightarrow I promise to go.

In premise (I will go) the performative force is non-explicit; instead in the conclusion (I will promise to go) the performative force is explicit.

In the case c) an expression p cannot determine an expression q just with the condition that the expression p , which has the performative force F_1 , to determine the expression that p has also the performative force F_2 (normally to p is assigned F_1 , and to q is assigned F_2). In Evans’ example: “«I decree that all spies be executed» entails «I command that some spies be executed»; for « p was a decree» entails « p was a command»”²¹.

The analogy and the religious terms. With Evans' theory concerning the logical relations between performatives, we are still at the level of "logic of beliefs" (of sentences and expressions). Our objective is yet to "get down" to the level of concepts, of religious terms. We think we can take a step forward in this direction if we consider the role of analogy in religion. As a starting point, we could still use Donald D. Evans' work that we mentioned until now. We are thinking of Evans' theory about "onlook". "I have coined – says Evans – the word «onlook» as a substitute for what it is to «look on x as y». It is necessary to coin the word, for no existing word is quite appropriate"²². This "onlook" theory is very important for the religious language, because, with its help the different attitudes in which to "see x as y", in general to "look on x as y" can be described. However, one can distinguish two important onlook categories: 1) analogical onlooks and 2) parabolic onlooks. For example, in the expression "I look on music as a language" we have an analogical onlook, whereas in the expression "I look on Henry as a brother" we have a parabolic onlook. The difference between the two categories is essentially the following: while in the case of analogical onlooks the similarity between x and y is independent of the backward attitudes, counting on the contents, in the case of parabolic onlooks the similarity between x and y is grounded on the similarity of attitudes.

In religious language, we find analogical onlooks as well as parabolic onlooks. The analogical onlooks are useful in order to study the religious terms. In Evans' conception, acknowledging the holiness of God in the world, God's glory in world-creation depends on an onlook. In this respect, Paul's argument from Romans I: 18-32 concerning the knowledge of God through the world intercession is considered crucial. "In the biblical context – emphasizes Evans – religious knowledge is a sort of *doing*"²³. To know God means to acknowledge Him, but the acknowledgement requires a knowing-that or a believing-that. Thus, the knowledge of God is possible through the intercession of an onlook in the basis of the analogy between the nature of God and the nature of creation.

Naturally, an extremely positivistic attitude could not accept but a constative language, but a less radical positivistic attitude, a more moderate one, could accept at least the analogical onlooks, even if it rejects the parabolic ones²⁴. Thus, Evans' ideas suggest a development of the logic of analogy.

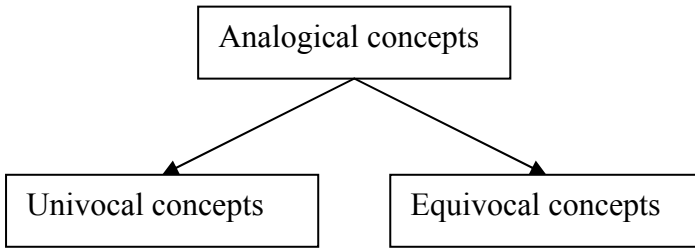
The use of analogy is universal. We use it in common thinking, in the scientific one, artistic, religious, moral, etc. We consider that its universal use is due to the role of imagination in knowledge. The similarities between different objects of thinking are established through analogy, with the aid of imagination. Of course, the resemblance rapport "can be poetic or scientific"²⁵. If the parabolic onlooks are rather poetic, the analogical onlooks can be accepted by a scientific rationality in a large sense. As it arises from Evans analysis, it should be mentioned that the

analogical onlooks do not so much express so much express a constative language, as they represent an action language (of illocutionary force), through commitments, behaviors or verdicts.

In a particular way, we can consider the analogical language to be primordial. We have two sorts of paradigms and two sorts of codes attached to those paradigms in approaching the existence: the digital paradigm and the analogical paradigm. The digital paradigm operates with clearly separated units, whereas the analogical one presupposes a continuous scale. Yet nature, existence in general is “composed of analogical elements”²⁶, therefore we can say that the analogical language is primordial. In the digital language the binary opposed categories are prevalent: A or B. For instance, the biblical Genesis can be “read” also in digital code, for example when we say that God separated the darkness from the light, the earth from the water, etc. However, when we speak about God’s existence, about divine creation through which God is revealing Himself, the digital language is no longer helpful, and we need to appeal to the analogical language. The analogy is necessary because “nature itself is rather a series of analogical continua, then a series of clear categories”²⁷.

The analogy implies a sort of ambivalence, because it passes beyond each binary category and takes over features from each. For this reason, the analogical concepts can be too strong, owning an “excess of meaning”. Numerous religious or mythological figures, which mediate between gods and humans, are in such a situation. For instance, in biblical Genesis, the snake is neither a land animal, nor a fish from the sea, but he combines the features of both. That makes the snake to have a complex significance in the Judeo-Christian culture, being “too strong from a semiotic point of view”²⁸, and thus it ought to be controlled by declaring it a taboo.

Nevertheless, one can use the analogical code in a double perspective: static and dynamic. From a static point of view, the analogy can be logically-conceptually assumed²⁹, because through its intercession we can observe the similarities and differences. From the dynamic point of view, the analogy allows us to pass from a determined object to a thematic knowledge through a dialectical process. Thanks to the special situation of the analogy, we can then assert, in agreement with Emerich Coreth, that analogical concepts represent the condition of possibility for the conceptual thinking as such³⁰. Without this ultimate, all-encompassing unity there would not exist but a conceptual chaos. From Coreth’s suggestion, from analogical concepts it can be derived, on one side, the univocal concepts (which applies to their objects in the same meaning), and on the other side, the equivocal concepts (which applies to their objects in different meanings). That means that analogical concepts apply to their objects partly in the same meaning, partly in different meanings. The scheme that follows visualizes better this situation:



In their quality of ultimate condition of possibility of the conceptual thinking, the analogical concepts possess two characteristics: a) they cannot receive supplementary determinations from outside, but only from themselves, that is they are self-determined; b) those concepts are unconditioned. Such characteristics remind us of the forms status from Platoon's theory. When a thing is valid, not only in connection with an entity but also with his opposite, when a form can "communicate" with other forms, including the opposite ones, it means that the internal structure of those forms cannot be but analogical³¹.

Aristotle showed that the maximum difference that one can notice among things is the one named contrariety. One also calls contrariety perfect difference. Therefore, contrariety presupposes the difference and exists only where we have division. Between the extreme terms of contrariety, we find intermediate terms inside an interval. Aristotle emphasizes that in the field of colors black and white are contraries. Between white and black, we have a series of intermediate colors. If we "want to pass from white to black, we will pass through red and gray before we reach black; and the same thing also happens in other domains"³².

The status of the intermediate is thus very interesting. The intermediate things simultaneously contain contrary properties, because the red colored things from Aristotle's example, as well as the gray colored things, contain white as much as black. In general, the contraries "have the possibility to belong to one and the same thing, but they cannot belong to one another"³³. If we take into account this "world of intermediates", where the properties of things are being melted, and do not have the purity of the contraries, we can agree with Constantin Noica's statement. He compels attention that classical logic is not sufficient, that a "logic of Hermes" is needed, a logic in which we must take into account the relations of "interpenetration"³⁴ between things, not only of settling them in simpler "collection of things" (as it happens in classical logic of sets and in ordinary logic).

Because of the interpenetration and of the property transfer from a contrary to another, in the intermediates' world the unity must be searched in difference and the difference in unity, this line of thinking being in fact that of analogy. As it could be noticed also from the scheme

hereinbefore, the univocal and the equivocal concepts are contrary, the intermediates being the analogous concepts, which are neither pure univocal, nor pure equivocal. Moreover, since the contraries are the result of division (the dissociation being in fact the first logical operation³⁵, as Noica compels attention about), the analogous concepts represent also the possibility for the existence of the univocal and equivocal concepts.

The theorizing of this situation is largely rooted in Thomas Aquino's conception. Taking into consideration the knowledge of God based on the direct relations between God and his creations, Thomas concluded, "the names given to God and his creatures are neither in univocal, nor equivocal sense". If we are thinking of God as "universal cause", as "universal agent", then he is neither purely univocal, nor purely equivocal, yet "he can be denoted *agent* through analogy"³⁶. According to Thomas³⁷, one can realize the analogy (or the proportion) in two ways: 1) either by reporting many terms to a single one (for instance, *sanus* = healthy can be said about a medicine as well as about a patient's urine); 2) or through the correlation of a term with another (for instance, sane medication and sane person).

One can consider the analogy a kind of "the third way" or "the middle way"³⁸ between the univocal and equivocal, respective between anthropomorphism and agnosticism. For, if we follow the way of univocal language, then we fall in anthropomorphism, because we cannot speak of a language about God; if we follow the equivocal way, we reach to the agnosticism, and again we will not have a language about God. Therefore, in order to speak about God there is nothing left for us but the analogical language.

Within the framework of theism, as F. Ferré compels attention, we encounter two kinds of analogies: a) *the analogy of attribution*, which relates the two analogates, which can be very different under many aspects. In this case, the prime analogate asserts one of his characteristics in a "formal" modality, that is in a proper univocal sense, and the second analogate asserts a "like" characteristic, but in a derivate sense. For instance, one can assert the characteristic "healthy" not only in connection to "human", but also to "mountain". Referring to man, the characteristic "healthy" is asserted in a proper "formal" sense, and referring to mountain, the same characteristic is asserted in a derived sense, with the meaning of "a healthy place" (the mountain is healthy)³⁹; b) *the analogy of proportionality*, in which the formal characteristic is common to the two terms, yet it is applied to different natures. For instance, the characteristic "blue" can be applied in the same proper "formal" sense as well to the sky, as to a woman with blue eyes.

One must consider the second kind of analogy, the proportionality one, fundamental for the meaning of religious language, as it follows from the entire scholastic tradition. For, in the virtue of the possibility of the knowledge of God through the intercession of his creatures (as St. Paul

suggests in *Romans*), a term asserted about God in a proportional way with His nature is analogous with a term asserted in a proportional way with its nature about one of his creatures.

An example of proportional analogy can be formulated as follows⁴⁰:

$$\frac{\textit{God ' s wisdom}}{\textit{God ' s infinite nature}} = \frac{\textit{Socrate ' s wisdom}}{\textit{Socrate ' s finite nature}}$$

Numerous critical observations were made and could be made referring to the knowledge through this kind of analogy. However, it should not have been asked for a proportional analogy from the religious domain, as it is the case with the former example, to provide a mathematical kind of knowledge. Sometimes the proportional analogy of Thomas Aquino, in its sense of theory of meaning for religious terms, was mistaken for a theory of inference⁴¹, which, evidently, is not the case.

Of course, in a literal way, we can say, together with M. Foucault that “until the end of the XVIth century, the resemblance played a constitutive role in the sort of knowledge specific to the occidental culture”⁴². For Foucault, there are four essential figures of the resemblance:

a) *the convenience*, which is a resemblance connected with the space, under the form of “from closeness to closeness”, arising new resemblances from the contact;

b) *aemulatio*, which allows imitation without proximity in the entire Universe;

c) *the analogy*, in which the first two figures of the resemblance overlap each other;

d) *the sympathy*, which holds an enormous power of assimilation and transformation, being a principle of mobility. Of all the four figures of the resemblance, the analogy has a privileged character, possessing “a universal field of application”, because the similarities that it treats are not visible, but it usually catches “the more subtle resemblances between rapports”⁴³.

Even though many authors consider that the religious phenomena can be better understood from the symbolic language perspective, the analogy and the analogical concepts also, must be preferred to the symbolic, as it is emphasized by Charles Hartshorne: “I think here the old term «analogical» is best, rather than «symbolic». God is symbolically ruler, but analogically conscious and loving, and literally both, absolute (or necessary) in existence and relative (or contingent) in actuality – that is, in the concrete modes of His existence”⁴⁴.

Naturally, accepting the analogous language and concepts as the most adequate for the religious domain, we must also take into account, from a logical aspect, the weakness of the analogical terms. Therefore, we cannot

forget that the relation of resemblance – on which the analogy is founded – is a vague one. Within its frame are admitted degrees of resemblance, which make of it a form of equivalence weaker than identity. Considering these statements, Gheorghe Enescu underlines the following properties for the resemblance relation (\approx)⁴⁵:

- a) $a \approx a$
- b) $a \approx b \rightarrow b \approx a$
- c) $a \approx b \ \& \ b \approx c \rightarrow a \approx c$
- d) $a = b \rightarrow a \approx b$

The identity is just the highest degree resemblance. Yet the identity does not admit degrees. The issue of the identity relation is nevertheless simple. Aristotle, as it is well known, compels attention over the fact that identity is attributed to the things in many senses:

- 1) a numerical sense (numerical identity), when a thing has many names, yet it is only one thing (for instance, “coat” and “mantle”);
- 2) a specific sense (specific identity), in which case the identical expresses more than a thing, but without a difference under the respect of species (for instance, the man is identical with the man, the horse is identical with the horse);
- 3) a generic sense (genre identity), when we identify things that fall under the same genre (for instance, man and horse).

In most cases, it is a matter of numeric identity. But even this, in its turn, has many senses: a) the numerical identity of the definition, the strongest case (e.g. “coat” and “mantle”); b) the numerical identity of the proper (e.g. “capable of science” and “man”); the numerical identity through accident (e.g. “Socrates” and “to be musical”)⁴⁶.

We find in Aristotle a significant theory of identity, a theory which J. M. Bochenski⁴⁷ does not avoid to qualify as more profound than that from *Principia Mathematica*. Only that, as it has been noticed, the identity relation, the numerical one in the first place, does not admit degrees. This situation entails a series of consequences, as the following: 1) because it does not admit degrees, the numerical identity does not allow the content modification of a term; 2) the numerical identity cannot explain the plurality of qualities. On the other hand, in the religious language the impossibility to add new qualities will contradict the idea of perfection.

Based on those presented so far in connection with the importance of analogy for the logic of religious terms, with the logical aspects of the resemblance relation and the identity as a limit case of resemblance, we can formulate some observations on which we can further rely.

The characteristics’ transfer on the base of analogy. With analogy’s help, more precisely with the help of the analogy’s onlooks, the similarity of contents allows us to look at x as y . In religious language, starting from God’s creations, we see God as a man, like a father toward a son, etc. We saw that there is ambivalence in the analogical context, the analogical

concepts having an “excess of meaning” because the characteristics are transferred between the contrary existences, request can have general validity, general-logic, because the characteristics from and even that they interpenetrate. Thus we have characteristics that are transferred from “man” to “God” and conversely. For this reason, one appreciates the divine wisdom as being similar with the human one, the kindness case being the same, etc.

The terms' content is the totality of characteristics and not the sum of them.

For a hermeneutical logic, as the domain of religion requests, we must take into account the interpenetration of characteristics and properties (C. Noica). This of the terms do not represent a simple collection, but a totality in which they “are mutually penetrating and unifying each other”⁴⁸. The totality does not mean to add together, but an integrative composition, a unifying one. The term “square”, as exemplified by Titu Maiorescu, does not add together the characteristics of “a rectangle with four sides and with right angles” and “a rectangle with all four sides equal”, but expresses their totality, their unity. Since the concept makes out the unity in the likeness⁴⁹ content, it is understandable that this unity results because of the characteristics integration processes, such as positional, functional, relational or existential integration⁵⁰.

Moreover, if we consider the different meanings of the identity, we must emphasize the term “content” of a term itself. Depending on the meanings of the numerical identity through which the characteristics of content are settled, we can have:

a) *the general content* of a term, a content based on generic identity (terms like “man” and “horse”, for instance, find their generic identity in the term “mammal”, which means that the general content of the term “mammal” includes the characteristics of the terms “man” and “horse”, but includes other characteristics also);

b) *the specific content*, that is the set of characteristics which express the proper, the specific for a set of objects (for instance, “rational being” for the set of humans);

c) *the total content* of the terms, which is that content which includes also the accidental characteristics, not just those of the genre and of the species.

The law of the conversed intension-extension rapport is not generally valid.

Since the beginning of the XXth century, based on Aristotle syllogistic, it has been thought that the law of the conversed intension-extension rapport is functioning in a universal way: as long as the content of a term increases, its extension reduces itself, and conversely. On this basis, one could conceive a “conceptual pyramid”, having on the inferior part the largest content, and on the superior part the most reduced content, at the limit, “the nothingness”. In religion’s case, this pyramid will lay us in the

situation to possess the particular, individual beings on the base, and the Supreme Being, God, which will possess the poorest content or even a blank one on the top, which is an inadmissible situation.

We can surpass this paradoxical situation if we consider the fact that the law of the conversed intension-extension rapport has a limited validity, only in the case of ordered terms from the same series. Ernst Cassirer⁵¹ has doubted the validity of this law in the general way since 1910. Also in 1910, the Romanian logician Ion Petrovici⁵² made a nuanced analysis of this law and presented the limits in which it is valid, namely just in the case of the ordered notions from the same series, and Edward Goblot⁵³ made the same sort of observation in 1917. The conclusion imposed is that we could have situations in which, when the content of a term increases, then its extension increases too. Alternatively, the content variation can be accompanied either by an extension preservation, a conservation of it, or by a conversed variation⁵⁴.

The differences between general and collective terms, between distributive and collective conjunctions. There are numerous methods and criteria for classifying terms. The diverse operations through which one obtains terms (abstractization, generalization, comparisons, analysis, determinations, specifications, divisions, etc.) contribute to this situation. For the needs of our study, the terms' classifications in general and singular terms, respective in divisive (distributive) and collective terms are especially interesting. Teodor Dima compels attention that in terms' classification we must also consider the contexts in which we find ourselves, respectively the predicational contexts or the semantic ones⁵⁵.

In general, the terms can designate individuals, relations or functions⁵⁶, usually named "things". In predicational context we are interested about the method in which the predicate-term rapports itself to the subject-term. The predicates must always sit near certain "things". Therefore, for instance, an expression like "everything is round" (in the sense that all the things are round) cannot be expressed like " $(\forall) r$ ". Only the expression " $(\forall x) Rx$ " is correct. (For any x , if x is a thing, then x is round)⁵⁷.

Considering these observations, a subject-term is a *general-term* if the predicate-term (either actual or potential) is predicable about each element of the subject's class. On the contrary, we are speaking of a *singular-term* in its quality of subject-term, whenever it denotes a determined object (not a class)⁵⁸, respectively when one makes the predication about a subject regarded as an indivisible unity. If we pass to the semantic context, then it can be said that general terms have divided references, and singular terms have undivided references⁵⁹.

However, we must notice that the distinction general terms-singular terms is not a rigid one, but a relative one. Any general term can be transformed into a singular term if it is used an individualization prefix

(demonstrative pronoun, definite article, etc.). The moment a class of objects (a general term) is individualized, it becomes a singular term. For instance, in the expression “Physicians are scientists” the term “physicians” is a general term. This expression can be individualized in the following way “The physician x is a scientist”, the subject-term being a singular term.

The general and singular classification of the terms is very closely related to divisive (distributive) and collective classification of the terms. This closeness is due to the use of the notion of “class of objects”. If one sees the class of objects as a “collection” of objects, it expresses a general term. Moreover, if only properties that are valid for each element of the class are attributed to the respective class of objects, then the respective subject-term (general term) is also a *divisive* or *distributive term*. On the contrary, if that class of objects is viewed as a “whole” (not as a simple collection), as a “totality”, in which case the class properties are not also valid for its components, then the respective subject-term will be a *collective term*. This means that in predicational context any general term can be divisive or collective. On the other hand, because one can convert general terms into singular terms, it follows that the last ones can be viewed also as collective terms. We remark that, if we allow for the semantic context, then we can encounter collective terms determined thus by their reference. If the reference is unique, if it is a totality, then one cannot appreciate it under the genre-species rapport, but only under the whole-part rapport (which is dealt by the partitive logic, also named mereology)⁶⁰.

The division of the logical conjunction operator in *distributive* and *collective conjunction* is strongly connected with the divisive (distributive)-collective terms distinction. While the distributive conjunction plays the role of *rigid* (one-dimensional) *indicator* for elements (characteristics) of a term, the collective term expresses rather a *generator* for all the latent possibilities of that term⁶¹. Although the distinction’s theorizing between distributive and collective conjunctions is meager and of recent date, we consider this distinction essential for the understanding of the religious concepts. Through the intercession of the distributive conjunction, the elements or the characteristics in a class are correlated in a sense of “collection”, in which context each element has properties predicated. Instead, the collective conjunction allows also the integration of other kind of properties, which can be particular or accidental.

The logic of dogmatic concepts. Dogmatic concepts take a particular place in the domain of religious concepts. We could say that these are typical for religious phenomena, presupposing complex operations that overcome the limits of traditional logic. The preoccupations for the study of those concepts from the logical view are less numerous, and when such enterprises are taken, usually they only touch the paradoxes problems. An

exceptional attempt in Romanian specialty literature was that of Lucian Blaga, on which we will focus in the next lines⁶².

Following an all-encompassing foundation of dogmatic method, Lucian Blaga points out the great historical moments, which favor the appearance of dogmatic thinking. These were as it follows: Philo of Alexandria's conception, Christian patristic efforts, and in modern times the challenges that come from science, with its generating structures of "paradoxes" (the just on the line theoretical structures, those of the infinite logical process, contrary errors' method, mathematical analogies of the dogmatic, or transfinite structures).

We assist, with Philo of Alexandria, to a true "spiritual invention" of his time⁶³. Philo will postulate the dogma, the following "paradox": the prime substance emanates secondary existences without any loss at all". This dogma is in contrast with Heraclitus' ideas (who considers that the prime substance divides itself in a "pure" part, which preserves itself as such and a part that transforms itself in "world"), and with the stoics, which sustain the idea that the prime substance in its wholeness transforms itself into "world".

Such an idea is incomprehensible, bizarre, and mysterious for the ordinary logic. Because "commonly logic", in everyone's understanding, means that from the term of "prime substance", being taken some "characteristics", "the prime substance" should diminish itself, should become "poor". Nevertheless, the Philo's substance keeps itself the same. How is it possible? Things can become "intelligible" if we consider some statements aforementioned. Respectively, we must step aside from the common mistake of those who think the content of a term as a "sum of characteristics". Instead we should think it as "a totality of characteristics". This means that we must view the term, in its content, in this case from a "collective" angle, not from a distributive one. A trivial example could be helpful: let us say that if from the term "school" we subtract the characteristic "the color of the walls", the term "school" will not impoverish at all by this, preserving itself as such.

In other words, we must not imagine the road covered from the prime substance to the derived substances as from a "sum of individual characteristics" to other individual characteristics, but from "groups-totalities" to other "groups-totalities", in which case the individual characteristics cannot have an influence.

However, Philo also complicates his emanation dogma with the idea (another dogmatic formula, as Blaga will consider) that the emanations remain united with the prime substance. Besides, the Christian doctrine emphasizes dogma's complications when it sustains that "the derived itself is something unborn and equal in everything with the spring, the origin. The Logos is no less than the Father is"⁶⁴. In order to understand these formulas we need new nuances.

Let us exemplify. Usually, in different logic handbooks, the term “man” appears under the heading “distributive terms”. Explanation: the characteristics from the term’s content apply (distribute) to each human individual. If by the word “man” we understand “rational being”, then the appellative “distributive notion” shows us that the characteristic “rational being” functions as a one-dimensional *indicator*, partly applying to each human individual. However, we can view the same term from a collective perspective. In this case, through the term’s content of “man” we must understand the definitive characteristics in their totality, which means that we will have new properties, valid for the term’s content “man” viewed as a whole, which are properties of properties, for instance, “art creator”, “religion creator”, etc. Such characteristics express properties of the characteristic “rational being”. Respectively, thought as totality, the term’s content will not indicate a unique dimension applicable to each individual, but rather a characteristics *generator* for the latent possibilities of the term. Such characteristics are no longer valid for each individual in part, but at the level of wholeness, the term “man” appears, in this case, as a “collective” one.

If we are returning to the complication of the emanation’s dogma formulated by Philo (the emanations remain united with the prime substance), one could interpret things in the following way: the general content of the prime substance logically *implies* the emanations, but not conversely. The emanations are valid “characteristics” for the prime substance, represent “attributes” which enter the prime substance’s content and they even can surpass the area of prime substance. Being “characteristics” implied by the prime substance, it results that emanations are united with the prime substance through a bound as from the principle to the consequence.

This connection of the principle-consequence kind is not valid when we have in view the whole content of a term. For the understanding of the whole content, we need the idea of potential, of the new that can appear as a variation in the specter of characteristics. In this case, any manifested peculiarity to an individual that enters into the term’s extension will become a characteristic for the total content of the term. Thus, the part can rise (through its potentiality) at the level of the whole, as it happens with holomers. Reckon with the idea of “total content” can also bring, on this path, a certain clarification of the Christian dogmatic complication, according to which the Logos is no less than the Father is.

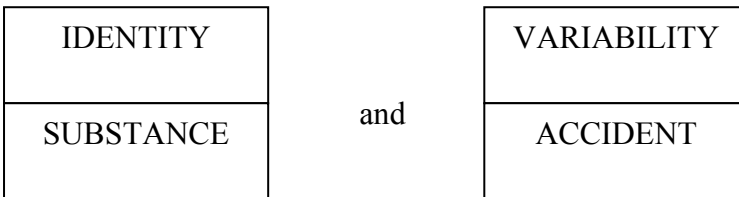
Although the Logos remains equal with the Father, the Father logically represents, as Kant would say, the knowledge principle⁶⁵ for the derived term. Yet in this way, through the total content’s potentials of the term “Logos”, this term appears no more impoverished than the term that has as a total content, “the Father”.

However, for ordinary logic dogmas appear in a clear way as paradoxes, respectively as paraconsistent terms. The whole remains

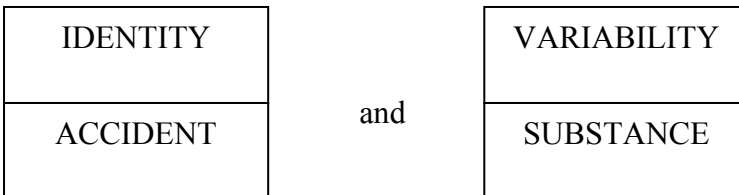
identical and at the same time does not remain identical with itself, the part is and is not part, because it can be the equal of the whole, etc. Lucian Blaga is not interested simply in pointing out these dogmas, but also in the logical mechanism through which one is reaching to these. Synthetically said, dogmas are born in the framework of a two steps logical movement: a) the settlement of an antinomy and, b) the antinomy's transfiguration, which is the scission of the integrated concepts⁶⁶.

In the framework of this mechanism, the second moment seems the mistiest, the less intelligible one. It aims as much the content-area rapport from the terms' logic, as the rapport between terms. The terms "transfiguration" and "scission" possess a rather suggestive-metaphoric role and one needs to settle certain precise meanings for Lucian Blaga's aimed operations. Since one realizes antinomy's transfiguration through the scission of the concepts' solidarity, the accent must be on this "scission" process. We think that when Blaga speaks of the scission of the concepts' solidarity, he allows for the destruction of normal-logic connections between the contents of the two concordant notions. When these connections are affected, one will reach paradoxical situations. Two situations appear to be typical from a series of Lucian Blaga's analyzed examples in *Eonul Dogmatic*: a) the Transubstantiation Dogma; b) the Trinity Dogma.

The Transubstantiation Dogma. This dogma refers to the Eucharistic transformation of the wine and bread in the blood and body of the Lord. According to normal logic, there are two situations of concepts that are in a relation of subordination, which are logically integrated in Blaga's terms, respective concordant notions:

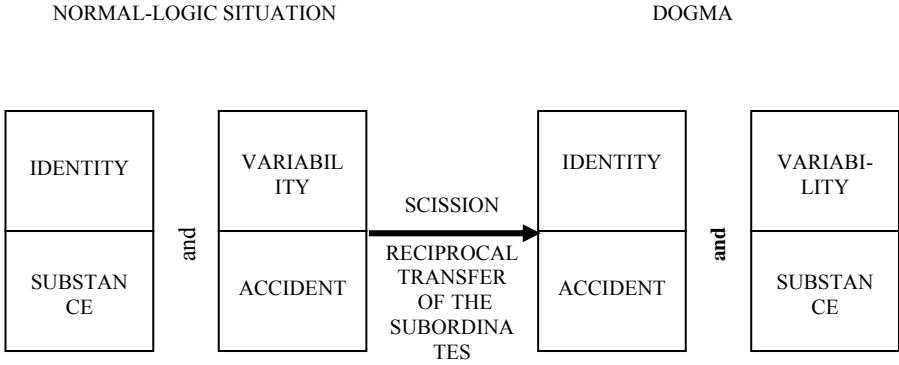


Yet the dogma tells us that a substance transforms itself in another substance, and the normal logical situation transfigures itself in a new situation, an antinomic one:

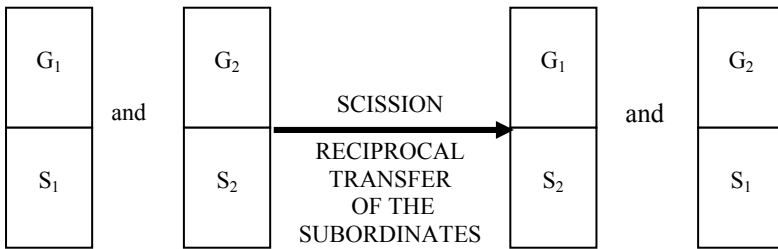


This new situation is antinomical since what is accidental is in the same time perennial, identical, and what is substance, is also attribute,

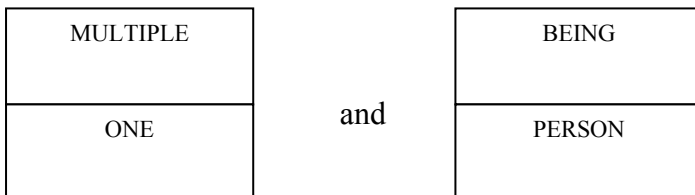
variability. One has reached this state through the destruction of solidarity, of normal rapports' concordances among terms, as in the hereinafter schema:



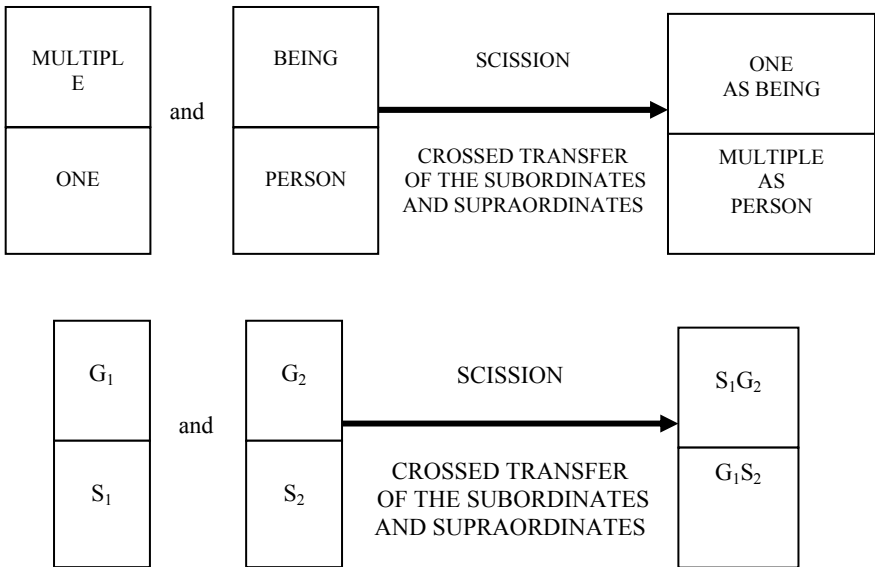
Generalizing, one can depict this situation according to the hereinafter scheme, where G signifies the general term and S the subordinate term:



The Trinity Dogma. In the case of this dogma, the notions that are in normal logic situations would be those of multiple and one, respective being and person:



At least under numerical aspect, emphasizes Blaga, the subordination of “one” toward “multiple” is logically normal, as well as the subordination of the term “person” toward “being” is a natural one. Yet here too the dogmatic method produces unexpected effects, because the Trinity dogma will postulate the one as being and the multiple as person.



In the end, let us make some observations on the edge of the two dogmas presented hereinbefore. In the Transubstantiation Dogma, the accent falls on *the rapports among terms*. The normal logic situation between the concordant notions identity-substance is transformed, within dogma, in a new situation, where the identity notion is set in a new rapport with the accident notion. The procedure is likewise with the other couple of notions: from the variability-accident rapport one reaches to the paradoxical one of variability-substance. From the schemas presented hereinbefore, we hope that things have become formally clearer. Yet how are these transformations justified? We are asking the question because, as Lucian Blaga suggests, is not simple combinatorics that is all about, a groundless mind game, but a profound method of cognition, extremely subtle. In the light of those presented in this study, the issue presents itself as follows: the normal logic situation (in which the couples of notions are in concordance rapport). This situation presupposes the implicit functioning of the distributive conjunction, which proceeds by a one-dimensional indicator from identity to substance ("and-and" connects here characteristics of the same sort, what is "perennial" is distributed from identity to substance as from general to particular). Likewise happens in the case of the couple of notions variability-accident.

What dogma brings new against the normal considered situation is the lapse from the distributive conjunction to the collective conjunction. In the collective modality, the conjunction does not correlate just the same kind of characteristics, but different characteristics, opposed ones

included, contradictory ones, therefore alongside identity we will find again the accident, and alongside variability will stay the substance, the identical, too. Briefly: the logical secret of the Transubstantiation Dogma resides in the inexplicit lapse from the distributive conjunction of the characteristics to their collective conjunction. This is the way one obtains the paradox, respectively the paraconsistency situation.

In Trinity Dogma's case, the accent moves to the *intension-extension rapport*. In normal logic situation, the couple of notions multiple-one (at least under numerical aspect) and being-person submit the law of the conversed rapport between content-extension from the same series. In the spirit of the theological thinking, it is important to imagine a hierarchization of the wholeness of beings. Where will we arrive by submitting to the logical "normality"? The one will have the richest content and the Being, the Supreme Genre, will have the poorest content, even a blank one, viz. Being will be the same to the Non-Being, as Hegel masterly showed.

Let us notice yet that things happen this way at a logical level, just as long as we remain to the general content and to the specific content of the notions. If we took into account *the total content* of the notions (that is not to allow only for the determinative characteristics, but also for the variable ones), then the law of the conversed intension-extension rapport would desist from functioning. Thus we would have the situation noticed by E. Goblot, according to which the content increases and decreases in the same time as the extension⁶⁷. By using here the collective conjunction also (because the total content cannot be obtained through distributive conjunction), the One will become Supreme Being, but not as a total reality. Therefore, the logical secret of the Trinity Dogma consists in the inexplicit lapse from the general content of the notions to their total content.

With the dogmatic logic that Blaga recommends in *Eonul Dogmatic*, the great Romanian philosopher senses that logic must also become a science of notions as totalities.

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Notes

- ¹ J. M. Bochenski, *The Logic of Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 1965).
- ² To be seen Rudolf Otto, *Sacrul* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1996).
- ³ G. W. F. Hegel, *Prelegeri de filosofia religiei* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei, 1969), 20.
- ⁴ See Alexandru Surdu, “Logica religiei”, in *Astra*, anul I. 2 (1998) : 39.
- ⁵ Leszek Kolakowski, *Philosophie de la religion* (Paris : Fayard, 1985), 12.
- ⁶ Kolakowski, 15.

⁷ Kolakowski, 18.

⁸ Harry J. Gensler, *Introduction to logic* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁹ Gensler, 208.

¹⁰ Gensler, 209.

¹¹ Jaakko Hintikka, *Knowledge and Belief* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1962).

¹² Hintikka, 16-17.

¹³ Risto Hilpinen, „Beliefs Systems. Knowledge and Reasoning” (paper presented at Summer School Warsaw-Madralin, August 1997). (Romanian translation by Cornel Hărănguș and Gheorghe Clitan).

¹⁴ Gensler, 209.

¹⁵ Gensler, 209.

¹⁶ Jean Ladrière, *L'articulation du sens. Discours scientifique et parole de la foi* (Paris : Éditions du Cerf, 1970).

¹⁷ See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁸ Donald D. Evans, *The Logic of Self-Involvement* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1963).

¹⁹ Evans, 59.

²⁰ Evans, 60.

²¹ Evans, 64.

²² Evans, 125.

²³ Evans, 197.

²⁴ Evans, 254.

²⁵ Cecile Vigour, *La comparaison dans les sciences sociales* (Paris : Éditions La Découverte, 2005), 9.

²⁶ John Fiske, *Introducere în științele comunicării* (Iași: Polirom, 2003), 91.

²⁷ Fiske, 152.

²⁸ Fiske, 153.

²⁹ Emerich Coreth, *Metaphysics* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 111.

³⁰ Coreth, 114.

³¹ In connection with the use of analogy in religious knowledge, there is an extremely rich literature, according to which we cannot rest here. For the present study we are only interested in the aspects concerning the specific of analogical concepts. For supplementary aspects one can consult a series of papers such as Frederick Ferré, *Languages, Logic and God*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); E. L. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949); D. J. B. Hawkins, *The Essential of the Logic of Perfection* (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1991); etc.

³² Aristotel, *Metafizica* (București: Editura IRI, 1996), 391.

³³ Aristotel, *Organon*, vol. I (București: Editura IRI, 1997), 356.

³⁴ Constantin Noica, *Scrisori despre logica lui Hermes* (București : Cartea Românească, 1986), 142.

³⁵ Noica, 43.

³⁶ Toma de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae* (București: Editura Științifică, 1997), 198.

³⁷ Aquino, 197.

³⁸ Frederick Ferré, *Language, Logic and God* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 67.

³⁹ Ferré, 70.

- ⁴⁰ M. Peterson et al., *Reason and Religious Belief* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- ⁴¹ Peterson, 140.
- ⁴² Michel Foucault, *Cuvintele și lucrurile* (București: Editura Univers, 1996), 58.
- ⁴³ Foucault, 62.
- ⁴⁴ Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection* (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1991), 140.
- ⁴⁵ Gheorghe Enescu, *Fundamentele logice ale gândirii* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1980), 116.
- ⁴⁶ Aristotel, *Organon*, vol. II (București: Editura IRI, 1998), 310-311.
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