

JAN WOLEŃSKI

## On Analogical Concepts (Transcendentalia)<sup>1</sup>

ABSTRACT. The adjective “transcendental” has two different meanings. In Kant’s philosophy, it means “transcending all possible experience”. It is an epistemological meaning. The method of transcendental deduction was proposed by Kant to cope with problems of *quid juris* in our concepts. Quite another sense of the adjective “transcendental” was (and still is) associated with scholastic (neo-scholastic) philosophy. The schoolmen say *ens omnia genera transcendit*. It means that the concept of being is transcategorical, where “categorical” refers to categories in Aristotle’s understanding. One theory of transcendentalia, developed in the most mature form by Thomas Aquinas, distinguished several transcendental concepts, in particular, the mentioned *ens*, further, *verum* (truth), *bonum* (goodness), *res* (thing), *aliquid* (something), *unum* (unity) and, sometimes, *pulchrum* (beauty).

The theory of *transcendentalia* leads to many interesting logical and ontological problems which can be analyzed by tools derived from logic and set theory. Clearly, *ens* is the most important transcendental concept. Is the collection of beings a set or a proper class? Or perhaps a category in the mathematical sense? Other questions pertain to truth. Is it ontological or epistemological concept? How to interpret the idea that the essence of truth consists in a correspondence of truth-bearers and the reality? As far as the issue concerns *bonum*, is it really co-extensional with *ens* and *verum*? The paper tries to answer these questions.

KEY WORDS: analogy, transcendentalia, Kant, Aquinas, Scotus

The adjective ‘transcendental’ has two basically different meanings, both of a very deep philosophical relevance. In Kant’s critical philosophy, it means the same as the phrase ‘transcending all possible experience’.<sup>2</sup> This sense is almost exclusively associated with epistemological issues. In

---

<sup>1</sup> I use in this essay some material published in my earlier papers [Woleński, 1992], [Woleński, 1997], [Woleński, 2004, repr. in: Woleński, 2011], [Woleński, 2008, repr. in: Woleński, 2011], [Woleński, 2013].

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of ‘analogical’ in this context will be explained below.