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KNOWLEDGE AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

Abstract. Up till now two fundamental concepts of faith (religion) and knowledge (science) have been used in Christianity. In this way the Greek tradition, and especially old-Christian one, is followed, the tradition that distinguished the world of knowledge that is a product of the cognizing mind from the world of revelation that accepts God's non-scientific gift. Christianity's whole effort was directed at indicating the differences between science and revelation, and then at showing harmony, or at least non-contradiction, between them. This is why Anton Grabner-Haider (*1940), an Austrian philosopher of religion, had to take into consideration also the world of thought comprising science and the world of the experience of faith, including revelation. In turn, he presented the mutual relations between these worlds, understanding science on the ground of the neopositivist conception and faith on the ground of the Church's popular contemporary understanding of faith. It is a pity he does not use the strictly theological concept of faith, and especially the more modern personalist conception, despite verbally referring to personalism. However, making modern attempts at shifting the problem of faith and knowledge as well as of their mutual relations onto the basis of the language is exactly Grabner-Haider's achievement. In this way a new situation arises, in which not so much the world of ideas and thoughts opposes the world of religious experience and revelation, as the world of one or two languages does.

Key words: faith, knowledge, religious language, theology, A. Grabner-Haider.

Classical theology, connected with philosophy, Augustinianism and, above all, Thomism, used to base its scientific status on creating a deductive system of claims from revealed premises, making use of strictly scientific rules of logic in its realm. This state of affairs changed as soon as the development of biblical and patristic studies had brought about the necessity of a more diversified treatment of theological sources. This was further influ-

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enced, above all, by the research and methods of historical kind. Under such circumstances, systematic treaties gave way to biblical, positive, speculative, as well as historical explanations of particular issues. The newly created approach made theology more closely related to the humanities, making it more lucid, but less precise. The problem of a suitable scientific method needed to be dealt with anew.¹ The majority of theologians turned to hermeneutic philosophy, associated mainly with M. Heidegger and H.G. Gadamer. This was determined by the fact that the movement in question, soon after its creation, had shown strong affinity with theological problems of interpretation of the texts of the Revelation and Tradition. Therefore, the methods of hermeneutics, having recently been the subject of intensive reflection in the scope of the humanities, have given theologians hope to provide their discipline with a new scientific status.

The situation presented above defines the direction that the Austrian theologian, Anton Grabner-Haider, presented in his main works: *Semiotik und Theologie* [1973], *Sprachanalyse und Religionspädagogik* [1973], *Theorie der Theologie als Wissenschaft* [1974], *Glaubenssprache* [1975], *Vernunft und Religion* [1979], etc. Grabner-Haider adopts scientific hermeneutics and assumes, first of all, the necessity of using precise, formal language, governed by specific rules, which leads to verifiable claims. The point of departure for his reflections is the premise of both conformity of knowledge and faith that create one religious language.

Thus far two basic concepts of faith (religion) and knowledge (science) have been used in Christianity. It has been so because of the Greek tradition, and specifically the Old-Christian one, which differentiated the world of knowledge, being the product of the cognitive mind, and the world of revelation, understood as accepting the non-scientific gift of God. The whole effort of Christianity was put on indicating the differences between science and revelation, and then the harmony, or at least the lack of contradictions, between them. Hence, Anton Grabner-Haider had to take into consideration the world of thought that comprises science, and the world of the experience of faith that contains revelation. Afterwards, he presented mutual relations of these worlds, trying to comprehend science on the ground of neo-positivistic concepts, as well as faith on the ground of the contemporary, colloquial understanding of faith accepted by the Church. The pity is that he has not

¹ Cf. the entire issue of *Studies on Theological Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences*, dedicated to the methodology of theology [2 (2007): 9-380].

incorporated strictly theological understanding of faith, especially a more recent concept of personalism, despite the fact that he verbally mentioned it. This aspect needs to be refined. The credit must be given Grabner-Haider, however, for making clearer the contemporary attempts of placing the problem of both faith and knowledge, and their mutual relations, in the realm of the language. In this way, a new situation arises, where it is no longer the world of ideas and thoughts that is pitted against the world of religious experience and revelation, but rather the world of one or two languages.

Therefore, knowledge (science) and faith (religion) serve as the basis for the language of religion. What needs to be expressed then is the mutual relationship between knowledge and faith, the intersection of their co-influence, epistemological differentiation of various degrees of their existence, as well as, after presenting their similarities and differences, their particular meeting place that is undoubtedly to be found in language.

1. THE NOTION OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge, ever since it began to exist, has assumed various shapes, not only because it emerges from colloquial experiences in a number of ways and is expressed differently, but also because it applies to a lot of separate realms. Thus, the number of the disciplines of knowledge is vast and still keeps growing. This diversification of scientific cognition entails the necessity of its classification.

The number of degrees and complexities of this peculiar work of culture that knowledge seems to be, as well as its constant transformations, do not allow for a simple and adequate description thereof. This may be the reason why some speak of a scientific sense (*l'esprit scientifique*), scientific attitude, scientific knowledge, scientific method, or scientific language, rather than knowledge. All the descriptions of such aspects, components, factors, forms and methods of scientific cognition would eventually provide a full description of what science is.

The notion of science is ambiguous, oftentimes entangled in the systemic and philosophical context.² As we know, Aristotle defined science as the

² Cf. Rudolf Wöhlgenannt, *Was ist Wissenschaft?* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1969), 33-70; Jarl Hemberg, "Theologie und Wissenschaft," *Neue Zeitschrift für Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 12 (1970): 165-174; Anton Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie. Religiöse Rede zwischen analytischer und hermeneutischer Philosophie* (München: Kösel 1980), 53 and 209.

cognition of necessary and universal causes of things: *scientia est cognitio rei per causam ob quam res est et non potest aliter se habere*.³ This is how the classical metaphysical concept of science came to be. Neo-positivism narrowed down that concept of science to a set of reporting judgements that can be verified empirically. However, the majority of methodologists opt for a broader meaning of the concept of science.⁴ The Austrian philosopher and methodologist, currently working as professor of the philosophy of religion at the University in Graz, Anton Grabner-Haider (* 1940), also joined them.

Nowadays, we normally differentiate the following meanings of the term “science”: social, functional, subjective and objective.⁵ Science, taken sociologically, is a social environment of practising knowledge, a group of indispensable means of creating science, such as libraries, laboratories, universities, etc., as well as the entire department of culture and social life. Science, approached functionally, is an entirety of science-generating activities of people who work in a corresponding field. Science, understood subjectively, is the achievement of methodological knowledge and certain competence in carrying out research. On the other hand, science, seen objectively, is a product of scientists’ work, as well as the whole society.

Being more specific, we may divide science into four levels, namely: a form of cognition (a), cognition itself (b), the entire realm of culture that comprises both cognition and what is directly connected with it (c), or a specific state of social consciousness (d).⁶

a) To consider science as the forms of a specific kind of cognition appears most frequent. This is what we call methodological cognition. This is the premise that Etienne Condillac († 1780) incorporated, writing that science is nothing else than a well constructed language.⁷ Hence, when we

³ S. Kamiński gives the following definition of science according to Aristotle: “science est certa cognition essentiae rerum causas id est per demonstrationem;” Cf. Stanisław Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk* (3rd ed. Lublin: TN KUL, 1981), 65. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, “Koncepcje nauki i filozofia,” in *Wprowadzenie do filozofii*, ed. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec et al. (Lublin: KUL, 2003), 22. The author claims, as Kamiński, that “Aristotle must be given credit for (...) creating the first moderately rational concept of science.”

⁴ For example, Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki*, 11-43; cf. Krąpiec, “Koncepcje nauki,” 18-29; Piotr Jaroszyński, *Człowiek i nauka. Studium z filozofii kultury* (Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasz z Akwinu 2008), 15-65.

⁵ Stanisław Kowalczyk, *Podstawy światopoglądu chrześcijańskiego* (Warszawa: ODISS, 1979), 327-337.

⁶ Johannes Hessen, *Wissen und Glauben* (München: Verlag, 1959), 7-24.

⁷ Etienne Condillac, *La Langue des calculs*, vol. 1 (n.p., 1798), 16.

define science as a set and way of behaviour, what we mean is, above all, a scientific language and scientific method.

b) By “science” we also understand only the activities of cognition that may be twofold: revealing – as long as we get to know something relatively new when it comes to the content or form, or non-revealing – if it is deeper or better ordered cognition of something that in fact is already known. Revealing cognition may be understood as either an activity of arriving at knowledge, i.e. cognition, or a result of this activity. Non-revealing cognition, on the other hand, is most frequently an “object,” process and result of teaching and learning.

c) The term “science” also comprises the whole realm of culture that is made up of not only aforementioned cognitions, but also the scientists themselves, institutions, tools and means of practising science, as well as all that is directly connected with scientific cognition.

d) And, finally, science signifies something that used to be overlooked – a certain state of consciousness of a social group. What we mean here is mainly a consciousness inseparably connected with a specific language that is methodologically ordered. The societies in question are generally communities of scientists and educated classes, but they can also be applied to broader social subjects.

The variety of types of referents of “science” that we have mentioned does not exhaust all the way of using the term. Its referents may be further simplified and we thus speak of two main types of the “science” referents: the activity of cognition and products thereof.⁸ The former presents the functional way of understanding it, the latter – a static one.⁹ Science, taken either functionally or statically, may in turn be treated either concretely, i.e. under normal assumptions, or ideally, as if under formal assumptions. Hence, speaking of science in the former case, we take into account either a group of activities of a scientist that take place in a particular time and space or a set of judgements that are formed in him or her, or a set of actual claims; whereas in the latter case, science is considered a certain hypothesis – either as a system of research and systematising operations or logical judgements.¹⁰

Speaking of a concrete and ideal take on science, we cannot help but notice some flaws and merits, depending on the fields of science studies that

⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹ Depending on whether we mean a subjective or objective result of practising science, we speak of subjective or objective take on science.

¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

it is made use of in. For instance, in the humanities, we need more concrete takes on science, i.e. meta-sciences. Hence, it seems just to claim that science is, first of all, a realm of human experience and reflections, as well as the ideas that are constantly controlled by practice.¹¹ Nevertheless, while handling the notion of science, it is more convenient to treat it as a certain *hypostasis*. Therefore, none of the takes on science under scrutiny can be perceived as the only one, nor should any of them be treated as absolutely basic, but only in relation to a given kind of reflection on science.

What we then need to bear in mind is that every kind of science has its own ordered reflection on itself, i.e. its own methodology and theory; what we may call “meta-science.” Moreover, both science and meta-science are subject to continual historical changes, refinement and development. One of the results of this process is a constant multiplication of scientific disciplines and concepts of science itself.¹² In this way, all sciences are serving man in a better and better degree. We must pay attention to this anthropological and personalistic character of each science. The latter aspect refers specifically to theology, which is part of the humanities *par excellence*.

Anton Grabner-Haider alludes to an analytic theory of science. By doing so, he does not intend to introduce a sharp distinction between the humanities and natural sciences. The latter are based, as W. Dilthey¹³ put it, on elucidating by causes (*Erklären*), whereas the humanities – on spiritual understanding (*Verstehen*). Currently, a number of scientists differentiate two basic types of science: nomothetic-scientist, which is based on explanations, and hermeneutic, which provides, first of all, understanding. Grabner-Haider, in fact, wishes to unite these two types of science, but generally prefers the first one, explanatory and nomothetic, which provides legal norms. Hence, he is closer to an analytic and logical theory of science, though he attempts to understand science quite originally as an “entirety of systematic knowledge” or “adequately ordered system of experience.”¹⁴

Science is then, in the opinion of the Austrian methodologist, cognition and research carried out while paying special attention to causes and rules

¹¹ Cf. Ernest Nagel, *Struktura nauki*, (Warszawa: PWN, 1961).

¹² Cf. Marian Rusecki, “Możliwość pluralizmu w teologii fundamentalnej,” *Roczniki Teologii Katolickiej* 25 (1978), vol. 2: 31-54.

¹³ Cf. Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie*, 90; as well as his later works: “Verstehen und Erklären als theologischen Problem,” *Wissenschaft und Vorbild* 25 (1972): 296-304; *Sprachanalyse und Religionspädagogik*, (Zürich: Bezniger, 1973), 32.

¹⁴ Cf. Czesław S. Bartnik, Review of *Theorie der Theologie als Wissenschaft*, by Anton Grabner-Haider, *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 19 (1976), vol. 3: 99f.

that govern phenomena. It stems from human experience. However, what we mainly mean here is cognition, whose main goal is knowledge (*Wissen*), i.e. learning of things through causes in light of rules and more general laws. Obviously, what we have in mind here are not causes in the metaphysical sense, but rather empirical, i.e. scientifically verifiable. Science, according to Grabner-Haider, possesses three main features: it must claim something, the claim must be characterised by a certain degree of certitude, and this certitude must be somehow accounted for, i.e. “justified,” and finally that all must be oriented toward the truth.¹⁵ It may also be expressed in a formal language: I know of S, when I am sure of S (a), because I have an appropriate justification for this certitude (b) and thanks to this I attain true cognition (c).

The Austrian scientist attempts to refer his analytic and logical theory of science to Catholic theology as well. Although in our study we do not deal with the theory of theology specifically, putting emphasis mainly on faith and its language, we must partially take into consideration theology, because it is the most organised form of the language of faith.¹⁶ What Grabner-Haider claims is that the analytic and logical theory of science may well be applied to Catholic theology. Therefore, theology is a science in the strictest sense. Theology attains knowledge (a), has criteria of verification and justification of its claims (b) and leads us to religious truth (c).

The philosopher does not forget that theology, even though it is an exact and explanatory science, is constructed in a detailed way. First of all, the role of scientific axioms is played by revealed claims, the Bible, and the Tradition handed down by the Magisterium. This set of axioms is bound by the faith of man. Faith in turn helps us to create further religious propositions, claims, and, thus, a whole religious language is created. Religious language has all kinds of propositions encountered in other sciences. Therefore, our author defines theology as a “systematisation of the religious language of faith.”¹⁷ This is a way of reconciling the concept of theology put forward by St Thomas with an analytic and logical theory of theology. According to Thomas, the role of the basic axiom of theology is the revealed knowledge of God (*scientia Dei revelata*); properly theological inquiries were to consist in scientific deduction from this knowledge of God made by

¹⁵ Anton Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie als Wissenschaft* (München: Verlag, 1974), 122: „Es muss bestimmte sein von Gewissheit, von einer entsprechenden Rechtfertigung der Wissensgewissheit und schließlich von der Intention der Wahrheit.”

¹⁶ Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie*, 155.

¹⁷ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 123.

a theologian. Thus, the knowledge of God was “superior knowledge” (*scientia subalternans*) and the knowledge of a theologian was “subordinated” (*scientia subalternata*). Grabner-Haider opines in a quite similar way that the basis of theological science in question is made up of the entirety of the language of revelation, faith and religion. The tools of logic, rules of verification, systems of deduction and all other methodological operations, whose intention is to get to know an objective religious reality of God and man, may be fully applied to this language. Theology is then a science that consists in making conclusions (*scientia conclusionum*) from the language of faith in a scientific way, heeding all the limitations of science.¹⁸

We need to state in advance that Grabner-Haider’s take on theology is overly positivistic. Christian theology will never be a science in the same vain as natural sciences. It has to get ever closer to the humanities, It is a special kind of mental and cognitive relation of the entire believer to God¹⁹. Nevertheless, the attempt must be thought of as ambitious and beneficial in the interactions with the world of scientists.

2. THE NOTION OF FAITH

Faith is understood as a virtue, a certain condition (*habitus*). It was defined by the Council of Trent: “Faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and root of all justification,”²⁰ or as an activity of a human subject (*actus*). Here we shall mainly use the latter understanding, which was further elucidated by the First Vatican Council. The act of faith (*actus fidei*), as a work of an entire man, comprises all his or her spiritual powers, considerably influencing mental and sensory life.²¹ Uttering the words “I believe” with conviction, we fulfil one of the basic and greatest religious activities. As an activity of the spirit, it is in fact simple, yet coming from man – a driving force of numerous powers, activities and conducts – it has a complex structure and is subject to various analyses.

¹⁸ Ibid., 149f.

¹⁹ Cf. Gerhard Sauter, “Theologie – Eine kirchliche Wissenschaft,” *Jenseits vom Nullpunkt* (n.p., 1972), 297ff.; Bernhard Casper et al., *Theologie als Wissenschaft* (Freiburg: Herder, 1970).

²⁰ “*Fides est humanae salutis initium, fundamentum et radix omnis iustificationis*” (DH 1532).

²¹ Cf. Krzysztof Góźdź, “Struktura aktu wiary,” in Czesław S. Bartnik, *Apologetyka personalistyczna* (Lublin: Standruk, 2004), 217-221; Krzysztof Góźdź, Review of *Credo. Przedmiotowe wymiary aktu wiary*, by J. Królikowski, *Roczniki Teologiczne* 50 (2003), vol. 2: 249-254.

In relation to the act of faith, we may make use of a psychological, phenomenological or theological analysis.²²

a) A psychological analysis of the act of faith has the religious experience related to a given activity as a subject. What belongs here are mental preparation for faith, its realisation, confession, revelation and a number of other volitive and affective feelings that accompany it.

b) A phenomenological analysis of the act of faith aims to detect its essential elements so as to set it aside from feelings, or non-religious experience, and from religious activities that are beyond the scope of faith.

c) A theological analysis is fundamentally distinct from the two previous ones, since as a basis for interpreting the activity of believing it chooses not only empirical data, but also principles revealed by God.

Hence, a strictly theological analysis goes beyond empirical knowledge, because it aims at a supernatural nature of faith. Nonetheless, a prerequisite that precedes faith in its Christian meaning is to possess a natural conviction of the existence of a personal God, as well as to deem a supernatural revelation possible in order to “hear” God talk to man as a consequence. Only after stating those two main natural judgements, i.e. faith – the worthiness of revelation and obligation of faith, can the theological act of faith, which is worthy of man, be uttered judiciously.²³

The act of faith is inseparable from certain meanings or truths. As a result, it takes on the character of a judgement which looks like a scientific statement. Therefore, the act of faith itself contains, above all, a judgement that expresses a revealed truth, e.g. “Jesus is Son of God.” Furthermore, the judgement in question is uttered with conviction that the given relationship reflects the reality.

The act of Christian faith has been understood in various ways throughout history. Numerous concepts of faith have been created. Contemporary Catholic thinkers have paid more and more attention to the personalistic nature of faith. We should mention here authors, such as J. Mouroux, J. Mouroux, A. Brunner, R. Guardini, C. Cirne-Lima, R. Aubert, A. Liège, W. Bulst, J. Alfaro, H. Lais, W. Granat, E. Kopeć, as well as A. Grabner-Haider, whose ideas are under analysis here.²⁴ Their views may be summarised by the following points:

²² Wincenty Granat, *Teologiczna wiara, nadzieja i miłość* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1960), 47.

²³ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁴ Edward Kopeć, *Teologia fundamentalna* (Lublin: KUL, 1976), 9; cf. Grabner-Haider, *Glaubenssprache*, 10.

a) The essence of the act of faith as personal cognition does not consist in “simply accepting as true something that God revealed and Church proposes to believe,” but also in the real contact with the person of Christ God, which we call God’s meeting with man.

b) In this personal take on faith, God is the initiator of the meeting.

c) For such an act of personal meeting to come into being, we need to acquaint ourselves with the fact of God’s calling and its verification, as well as a certain disposition of will on the part of man.

d) The subject of faith does not merely consist of information about God and the supernatural world, but a personal God.

e) The goal of God’s revelation to man is his calling to be led to salvation.

The act of faith as cognition is not exclusively and primarily an intellectual act, but it engages an entire man. A believer responds and affirms with his or her whole life, with the integrity of the whole being.²⁵ We do not overlook grace or a certain unknown personal dimension here. Today even the lack of faith has become more personal²⁶, let alone faith.

In the traditional treatises on faith, such as W. Granat’s († 1979), only the *habitus* of faith and the structure of the act of faith are included. Less emphasis is put on the formal analysis of the subjective content of the faith in question. What is dismissed altogether is the language of faith, i.e. faith as language. It is true that a long time ago J. Salamucha († 1944) contemplated forming logically basic theological statements, but it cannot be considered a proper analysis of the “language of faith,” for which the credit must be given to neo-positivism and M. Heidegger († 1976). Hence, we have faced the third broad issue – the analysis of the language of faith.

Anton Grabner-Haider assumes that the concept of faith is man’s attitude and a salvific act, but does not deal with it in detail. His methodological interest turns to the analysis of the entire phenomenon of the language of faith. Consequently, to define religious faith, he departs from linguistic creations, in which faith is uttered. In our language we are able to determine statements and utterances that we may understand as “religious.” We say that they express religious faith. On the one hand, we are dealing here with linguistic content; on the other, an attitude toward life of a speaker-listener. What we may also do is refer religious faith to a defined religion and ask what constitutes the specific content and practical attitude of the religion we

²⁵ Ibid., 10.

²⁶ Por. Michel de Certeau and Jean-Marie Demyenach, *La Christianisme éclaté* (Paris: Le Deuil, 1974), 119.

encounter.²⁷ Subsequently, we encapsulate them by means of a given language, religious talk, or the so-called religious language. In this case, the class of the utterances that such religious language is composed of is called religious faith, and we also speak of a “class of the statements of faith” by analogy with a scientific language.²⁸

Religious faith concerns a certain scope of the contents of the statements of faith. The content of the faith itself is, in a theoretical and cognitive dimension, a religious object that is, above all, God. So as not to define a religious object for all religions, we shall limit ourselves to the Christian religion, where the content of religious faith has been relatively exact, by means of which we may also be able to determine an attitude to life that stems from this faith. “In this case, as Grabner-Haider writes, we are partially dealing with a linguistic system, or at least with a certain language that has a form that might be captured in a consistent and coherent system. Religious faith contains here both the aforementioned epistemological components – the content and the attitude of a speaker-listener. On the one hand, it consists in accepting something as true; on the other, it is a certain faith, a certain trust in someone.”²⁹ In other words, we accept a given content of faith, its statement and, at the same time, its veracity. This way, the act of faith plays a part which lies in accepting the statement as true, as revealed by God in reality.³⁰ Hence, the role of faith is to verify, but Grabner-Haider primarily emphasises the formal structure of the statements of faith with respect to its contents.

3. KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO FAITH

Having briefly described what religious knowledge and faith are, we shall now delineate the relations that occur between the realities determined by the given terms. With colloquial language as a point of departure, we not only come across the sentence type “I know that,” but also “I believe that.” We therefore say: “I know that Columbus discovered America,” “I know that fire burns,” “I know that two and two make four,” etc. However, we speak of

²⁷ Cf. Anton Grabner-Haider, *Die Bibel und unsere Sprache* (Wien: Herder, 1970).

²⁸ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 115.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

³⁰ Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie*, 203: “Faith and language are of God’s initiative are made by Him.”

a reality of knowledge alongside a reality of faith. We say: "One believes that it will rain soon," "One believes that the toadstool is poisonous," etc. In that case, the word "to believe" is replaceable; it may be replaced by such words as "to opine," "to presume," "to suppose," "to assume," "to think," "to be convinced," etc. These are all the expressions of natural faith, which are not distant from knowledge. Yet, we also say: "He believes God," "He believes in God," "He believes in eternal life." In this case, we cannot exchange the word "to believe" for any other word. It is now clear that there is a special relation between faith and knowledge. "The goal of the traditional theory of cognition, as the Austrian methodologist writes, was to find a criterion in order to tell knowledge (*episteme*) from pure judgement (*doxa*). For that reason, not every kind of faith we possess is at the same time knowledge. Faith is motivated by a particular way of "life of faith," while we may speak of knowledge only if we think of a sensible judgement and not of being. Its criterion is veracity. Knowledge itself, however, cannot be the criterion of truth. Only a substantiated and well-tried belief is knowledge."³¹

Knowledge and faith were distinguished in a different way by G. Ryle († 1976)³². In his opinion, faith is an active tendency or an attitude. Knowledge in turn is an ability to get to know something in a suitable and methodological way. Only scientific judgements, as opposed to faith, cannot be denied. Despite this, the scopes of knowledge and faith coincide. Faith may be explained in the terms of knowledge and, *vice versa*, faith may be expressed in the terms of faith.

Natural language has at its disposal, first of all, faith, belief, judgement, statement, concept, etc. The next and stricter category is knowledge. Faith takes up incomparably more space in language than knowledge in the strict sense. For if we choose a narrow criterion for knowledge, in which strict verification and authentication are required, knowledge turns out to have little room in our language and our thought. It so happens usually when we are satisfied with confirming a given state of affairs with other users of speech, e.g. competent researchers. An ordinary user of speech is then "doomed" to faith, i.e. faith in the competence and knowledge of the researcher. Moreover, faith often tends to serve as an inspiration for scientific activities, intentions and plans. Hence, among other things, it has a remarkably creative function in the creation of practical and scientific hypotheses.

³¹ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 113.

³² Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Collins, 1949), 133-135.

Knowledge and faith appear to have closely intertwined in the natural functions of our language, yet they mutually expose their own limitations.³³ A number of scholars dedicated to the language of science and language of faith are convinced that faith is a one-of-a-kind example of this common natural faith that we are given in our natural linguistic competence. Nevertheless, we must state that knowledge and faith are of different epistemological degrees and are of different chronological orders.³⁴ First of all, knowledge is more like cognition, whereas faith is rather acceptance of something as a truth; it is, as H. Newman put it, “confidence.” What is more, knowledge and faith play different practical functions for users of language. If faith, in the first place, has a communicative function or an aesthetic one, knowledge more frequently plays a technical role, the one that processes the world.

Religious and natural, colloquial faith are connected in a particular way. They both have determined contents and are “limited.” However, the degree of certitude in both instances is different. “When it comes to religious faith, we read, it is incomparably higher than in the ordinary faith of our language, so all the statements of knowledge are temporary and changeable; to put it more mildly – correctable. The statements of religious faith are in turn unchangeable (at least in their basic condition), uncorrectable and infallible. For this reason, a clear difference can be detected in relation to knowledge.”³⁵

We shall now consider the question of how religious faith is related to empirical knowledge. Let us begin with the issue of whether there may be a certain scientific system for this faith, whether the faith may be the domain of a science. The central and factual problem here is the relation between knowledge and faith. What can the answer of methodological knowledge to this question be? Or else, how can the method of critical verification help?

According to Grabner-Haider, the answers may be grouped in three classes³⁶:

a) What is defended is the existence of God, what is needed are the arguments in favour of it, and what is refuted are the opposite arguments. This is the answer of theism.

b) What is defended in the non-existence of God and what is needed are the proper arguments and counter arguments. This is the answer of atheism and anti-theism.

³³ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 114.

³⁴ Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie*, 130: “Wissen und Glauben werden dann auf zwei verschiedenen epistemologischen Ebenen gesehen.”

³⁵ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 116.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 116f.

c) Finally, the question of the existence of God is posed on the basis of the state of arguments posed in an uncertain way. This is the answer of scepticism or agnosticism.

What can be said of the plausible answer to the question posed in each of the mentioned stances? Analytic agnosticism, relying on its method, accepts two sides of a symmetrical lack of knowledge, both affirmative and negative. From the epistemological point of view, we shall arrive at the solution in the sense of either atheism or theism. "And thus, says Grabner-Haider, from analytic agnosticism stem two conclusions that may have a decisive meaning for religious faith:

a) When it comes to knowledge, we have the strict renouncement of philosophical and scientific cognitive possibilities.

b) Faith has an absolute guarantee of freedom in deciding about faith. Its decision is seen in the theoretical and cognitive respect, both in theism and atheism."³⁷

The logical status of the statements of both stances is the same. What is decisive for a believer is the act of faith, which is free. If the existence of God were proved in a scientific way, there would not be freedom of either believing or disbelieving. Still, scientific cognition organises faith, or rather it may organise it. Even if a scientific possibility of confirming the existence of God is constantly denied, it does not mean that the existence of God, existential in nature, must be negated. The pity is that existential cognition does not have a scientific status.

What results from these statements is that knowledge, taken as scientific cognition, and religious faith cannot be perceived from the same epistemological point of view. The chance of the question of either existence of God or lack thereof is equal, because the question is scientifically insoluble. Thus, the one who participates in a scientific process of cognition has absolute freedom of religious faith or lack thereof. What he or she is equipped with is the existential cognition of God, otherwise less perfect.

What still needs to be further clarified is the relation between knowledge and religious faith. It transpires that faith implies and comprises some knowledge. The analysis of religious language shows that it possesses a set of statements that directly refer to a religious object, and another set that consists of colloquial statements of the language pertaining to the world. We have seen that natural language comprises knowledge and is permanently

³⁷ Ibid., 118.

enriched by it. Similarly, the religious language does not exclude knowledge, but it does not play an significant role there.³⁸ In the religious language, a religious object, along with various relations to it, is of more decisive meaning. All that we “know” in natural language, or that is conveyed as known, must be put in a relation to a religious object. In other words, the articulated world is in the relation to “God” in a given language.

Let us, however, reverse the question. Can knowledge, understood as a process or product of scientific cognition, contain religious faith? The answer will definitely be negative. Indeed, knowledge contains common views, but such common faith is by no means religious faith, since it does not refer at all to a religious object.³⁹ Religious faith did play only a small role in the history of the creation of knowledge, namely the role of inspiration for certain research, especially of formulating hypotheses and theories. Nowadays, however, it has been widely accepted that knowledge must “free” itself from religious faith, which oftentimes ends with conflicts. These disagreements should not take place, but they do wherever a contradiction between knowledge and religious faith is presupposed. We must then say that knowledge does not entail any religious faith, but it by no means opposes it. Religious faith, nonetheless, out of necessity comprises knowledge as well, as long as we utter (say) in no other way than through colloquial speech.⁴⁰

Therefore, occasional conflicts between knowledge and religious faith may pertain to this domain of the statements of faith that implies some knowledge, a system of natural cognition. This conflict most frequently consists in that the knowledge, taken for granted in a given religious language, undergoes some corrections by means of a new knowledge. The new knowledge may, as a consequence, change its relation to a religious object without changing the religious object itself. It occurs many times, because the relations to a religious object in religious language are generally uttered in colloquial terms or in a pre-scientific language. Then, if scientific cognition is applied to such a language, a kind of “revolution” takes place. This process is unavoidable on the path to the “scientification” of the language of faith. If these relations, however, are uttered in a systematic way, in a scientific language, the religious language of faith turns into a theological language.

³⁸ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 119: “... nur hat das Wissen in dieser Sprache keine bestimmende Funktion.”

³⁹ Cf. Jean Ladriere, *Rede der Wissenschaft – Wort des Glaubens* (München: Verlag, 1972).

⁴⁰ Grabner-Haider, *Theorie der Theologie*, 120.

We are still left with an issue of stricter describability of religious faith. This faith may form a class of spiritual phenomena and events with other human methods of behaviour. It plays an immense role in the field of spiritual phenomena. Nevertheless, how can the spiritual phenomena in question, which are normally described by psychology, be defined in a cognitive and logical respect? How can they be scientifically conveyed? From the philosophical point of view, there have been a number of answers. Some draw on their own experiences and refer them analogically to others; others, like behaviourists, attempt to treat spiritual phenomena as natural almost by means of physics. “Analogical” approach is non-scientific and “physicalism” misses a spiritual object. An original view on this was presented by Wittgenstein, Sr († 1955). He opines that the experience of spiritual events is transferrable in language⁴¹, i.e. they might be conveyed linguistically. Spiritual states may be expressed in a general way, because they have a distinct relation to the events of the “official” world. Without the possibility of acting in the world, it would be impossible to define spiritual events. Therefore, the concept of a spiritual event, such as faith, hope, anticipation, conviction, etc. needs to be related to the notion of action. The environment of these events is understood as a complex relationship between a situation and action. “Appropriate relations between a situation and action are part of a general, entire context of a life or a form of life. One spiritual experience binds in itself a number of external manifestations of life. It is connected in various ways with other events and enrooted in a world of official models of behaviour and objects in cultural rules and intersubjective language.”⁴² Hence, there is an analogy between intentionality of language and intentionality of spiritual events in relation to functional relations of these events to objects, behaviours, attitudes and linguistic events. It seems impossible for intentional, spiritual events, referring to the wholeness of a practical life, not to find its real reflection in the external behaviour; such a communication between internal events and external world is absolutely possible.

Grabner-Haider wishes to make use of Wittgenstein’s theory in relation to the possibilities of scientific expression of a part of the language of faith. “Religious faith is also expressed in models of behaviour and forms of life. Hence, this kind of communication relating to faith is possible and can be described scientifically. By means of this alone, there is a possibility of

⁴¹ Ibid., 121: “... dass die Erfahrung seelischer Ereignisse sprachlich vermittelt ist.”

⁴² Ibid., 121f.

a strict knowledge about this faith, pertaining not only to its linguistic manifestations.”⁴³

Grabner-Haider is, consequently, a stout adherent of the view that an exact science concerning faith is possible, i.e. the one dealing with the truths contained in faith. He refutes not only agnosticism in this respect, but also the convergence of the two realms: faith and science. After all, he does not opt for the complete separation of these two fields. He decides on a kind of “existential” knowledge about the truths of faith. He calls this approach “critical cognitivism.” By this stance, he endeavours to unite the traditional Thomistic approach, which treats the things of faith indirectly with a “certainty of resulting from premises,” with a contemporary, reductionistic approach, which is based only on reason and experience, reducing religious truths to mere subjective convictions, feelings and religious conduct. There exists a kind of meeting place for faith and knowledge that is so close that the contents of Christian faith, comprehended by a personal and internal act of faith, may be in a way scientifically verified with “direct obviousness.” This “scientificity” of faith allows us to reach a theological truth in both subjective, internal, and objective, external aspects. Grabner-Haider’s approach differs from other Catholic stances when it comes to scientific possibility of dealing with Catholic faith.⁴⁴

4. KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH IN LANGUAGE

Anton Grabner-Haider, who has thus far spoken rather about the act of faith, poses a very original question of the relationship between faith and knowledge on the basis of language in general as well. Therefore, having determined what we understand by the notion of knowledge and religious faith, as well as demonstrated its mutual relations, we have arrived at yet another point of their convergence, that must be language. Let us define the birthplace of religious language. We are not concerned with its historical

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mieczysław A. Krapiec, “Konfesyjność uczelni a wolność nauki,” *Zeszyty Naukowe KUL* 1 (1958), vol. 1: p. 5-19; Jacques Maritain, “Bóg i nauka,” in *Studia z filozofii Boga*, vol. I (Warszawa, 1968), 48; Paul Ricoeur, “Człowiek nauki a człowiek wiary,” in *Nauka i technika a wiara* (Warszawa, 1969), 52ff.; J. Abelé, *Niezależność metody naukowej oraz wolność badacza w stosunku do problemów wiary*, in *Nauka i technika a wiara* (Warszawa, 1969), 75-81; Michał Heller, “W kręgu nauki i wiary,” *Znak* 29 (1977), vol. 271; Stanisław Kowalczyk, *Podstawy światopoglądu chrześcijańskiego* (Warszawa, 1979), 341.

origins, but its formal beginning. What is the religious language of faith and how is it constituted? This time, by the notion of religious faith we understand a personal and universal reference of a language user to a given object of religion.⁴⁵ The language of faith thus becomes an ordered system of things, through which this reference is expressively articulated.⁴⁶

Let us begin with a pragmatic analysis. A speaker of religious language lives in a given environment of the situation of life. An appropriate fragment and temporal limitation of this environment becomes the situation that provides man with the facts from his surroundings, creating impulses to react to these experiences. We have a cohesive entity. All that takes place based on a “lay” language as well, either colloquial, or “scientific.” This is how an environment that is expressed in an empirical language is made.

The empirical state of affairs at a given moment discovers in itself a “depth” – some spiritual conditions that in turn must be described by a speaker using another language. The speaker begins to feel amazed at what he has come across, or felt in this empirical situation, and seeks a way of expressing it in language. He then needs to go beyond empirical knowledge and empirical language.⁴⁷ He starts to refer this to his own life and is completely animated. Finally, he reaches the meta-empirical reality. He approaches a certain situation of faith. He turns to this Something or Somebody, uttering a question that comprises his whole life, or he does not find a language commensurate with what he has experienced and of what he has learnt, or he says “God,” at least with amazement.

We are dealing here with a language different from either scientific or empirical one. We utilise this language, but, as it were, on a different level, which enriches it with an additional dimension – meta-empirical knowledge, a reference to the Absolute, God. This is religious language.⁴⁸ A linguistic sign “God,” who has become answer to a given situation, must have existed in the colloquial language of the speaker. This time, however, this sign has

⁴⁵ Grabner-Haider, *Glaubenssprache*, 13: “Unter einem religiösen Glauben verstehen wir eine personale, gesamt menschliche Hinbeziehung eines Sprechers auf ein Objekt der Religion.”

⁴⁶ Ibid., 13: “Glaubenssprache ist dann das geordnete Zeichensystem, durch das sich diese Hinbeziehung artikuliert.”

⁴⁷ The English theoretician of language Ian T. Ramsey (*Religions Language. An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases* (London: Macmillan, 1957)) terms this kind of situations “disclosure situations.” A new dimension, which governs empirical knowledge, is here made available to a speaker. Cf. Grabner-Haider, *Semiotik und Theologie*, 172.

⁴⁸ Cf. Anton Grabner-Haider, *Sprachentwertung in der Kirchen* (Zürich: Verlag, 1971), 10: “Religious language exists outside the Church and without her as well.”

found the reason for its use, so to say. An odd phenomenon is at hand here – speaking ceases to be just information, a claim of a dull fact, but the actualisation of speaking, a special act of using speech (*Sprechakt*). This linguistic act is at the same time the act of religious faith.

What will the exact answer of the speaker to this disclosure situation be, since he has met the point that lies beyond his life and his world? He may relate all of his life to God without any linguistic articulation. He may as well, which is the case most frequently, express this reference by definite forms of life, existence, behaviour or action. Here the following degrees can be put forward, according to Grabner-Haider⁴⁹:

a) A non-descriptive linguistic act of faith that may vary from the word “God” to the utterance “God, I praise you,” or “God, how great you are.” God becomes man’s partner on the grounds of language, listener of human words, and, further on, also speaker of those words, interlocutor of the same language. The act of faith becomes a personal, gradual course of events, a personal event.

b) The next degree of language are accounts, utterances, opinions in the form of sentences. Here we wish to inform other speakers and listeners of the situation of faith; we want to communicate with them on the basis of the situation of faith. What is therefore created are statements about God that spring from primitive acts of the language of faith. This is how a non-descriptive linguistic act “God, I praise you” may give rise to the utterance “God is good.” Utterances of this kind are subsequently formally ordered. In this way, the contents of faith, or the language of faith, are created.

c) Another step of the language of faith is the norms of faith. They regulate behaviours and actions of believers. It can be said that they regulate and order the shape of the whole life. Those norms also stem from the primitive act of language. And thus the linguistic act “God, how good you are,” gives rise to the norm “I ought to be good as God.”

To sum up, it might be claimed that the primitive source of the language of faith is the “disclosure situation.” This may include situations of suffering, or joy, happiness and love, etc. A believer refers them to God. He calls God sense and goal of his or her life. In these situations man comes up against the boundaries of empirical knowledge and begins to transcend them. “By doing so, he even transcends himself; his life is given a point of reference that lies beyond himself. Thanks to this, man becomes aware of his or

⁴⁹ Grabner-Haider, *Glaubenssprache*, 16.

her own self in a new way. They respond to this situation partially by means of their life and language. Owing to this, their language of faith has enrooted in the shape of existential faith.”⁵⁰ In this way, the whole man’s knowledge and their religious faith meet on the linguistic level. Language becomes a special place and way of meeting of God and man. At the same time, two languages are formed – natural, empirical language and meta-empirical language of faith. Or rather, it is one colloquial language that breaks down to those two; hence, the “kinship” of these languages. Consequently, they seem “parallel,” “*connaturales*,” and may be interpreted into each other.

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The traditional problem of knowledge and faith has been given the form of a linguistic problem. It turns out that knowledge and faith are a reality expressed in language, signified by language and communicated by means of it. In this issues a basic problem is outlined: are we dealing here with one and the same language, or two distinct languages that have different structures, or at least substructures? Grabner-Haider chooses the latter solution. He therefore treats knowledge and faith as substructures of one and the same language, colloquial language.

Having the basis of language prepared in this way, Grabner-Haider sketches the theory of religious language. He sets off with specifying the theory of theology. He sees theology as a “entirety of systematised knowledge” or as “the highest form of systematising religious language.” By doing so, he begins with claiming that a science concerned with religious language is possible. He proposes “critical meaningfulness” of religious language as the most suitable theory. He, subsequently, develops this theory as a basis for theology. He states that theology may be based on the entire language of faith that possesses a number of “meaningful” structures that are entitled a direct or indirect meaning. Therefore, theology will also have structural (sentence) and semantic (meaning) nature.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 18.

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