

QUANTIFICADOR EXISTENCIAL, LÓGICA E O MONOTEÍSMO CRISTÃO TRINITÁRIO: UMA INVESTIGAÇÃO SOBRE UMA RELAÇÃO ENTRE CIÊNCIAS FORMAIS E A FILOSOFIA DA RELIGIÃO

EXISTENTIAL QUANTIFIER, LOGIC AND THE CHRISTIAN TRINITARIAN MONOTHEISM: AN INVESTIGATION OF A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL SCIENCES AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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Resumo

Este artigo discute uma relação entre a *ciência formal* da lógica semântica e algumas noções monoteístas, politeístas e cristãs trinitárias. Essa relação aparece no uso do quantificador existencial e noções lógico-modais quando alguns conceitos monoteístas e politeístas e, principalmente, o conceito do Dogma da Trindade são analisados. Desse modo, algumas noções modais pressupostas irão aparecer em algumas proposições monoteístas, tal como a noção de “logicamente necessário”. A partir daí, será mostrado como o termo “Deus” é um termo polissêmico e é frequentemente *tratado tanto* como sujeito *quanto* predicado. Isso tornará claro que não há justificativa intelectual plausível para acreditar que o termo “Deus” possa apenas ser usado como um nome e nunca como um predicado, e vice-versa. Depois dessa análise, irei mostrar que a conjunção do “Dogma da Trindade” com algum tipo de “posição monoteísta” irá necessariamente implicar alguma classe de absurdidade e/ou “esquisitice” semântica.

Palavras-chaves: Lógica; Monoteísmo; Politeísmo, Trindade.

Abstract

This article discusses a relation between the *formal science* of logical semantics and some monotheistic, polytheistic and Trinitarian Christian notions. This relation appears in the use of the existential quantifier and of logical-modal notions when some monotheistic and polytheistic concepts and, principally, the concept of Trinity Dogma are analyzed. Thus, some presupposed modal notions will appear in some monotheistic propositions, such as the notion of “logically necessary”. From this, it will be shown how the term “God” is a polysemic term and is often *treated as both* subject and predicate. This will make it clear that there is no plausible intellectual justification for believing that the term “God” can only be used as a name and never as a predicate, and vice versa. After that analysis, I will show that the conjunction of the “Trinity Dogma” with some type of “monotheistic position” would necessarily imply some class of absurdity and/or semantic “oddity”.

Keywords: Logic; Monotheism; Polytheism; Trinity.

I INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, I perform “a semantic-modal analysis” of some definitional characteristics of the “conceptual monotheistic core”. Specifically, a logical analysis of the allegation of the conjunction of the “Christian Trinity” with the allegation of “Christian monotheism” will be implemented.

Some of the definitional characteristics of “monotheism” are: (i) the “uniqueness of a Deity”, in a sense in which it is only permissible to claim that “there is only one being who belongs to the logical God-type¹ in an absolute sense”; (ii) the admission of the logical-metaphysical impossibility of any other being belonging to the logical God-type in an absolute sense. The concept of monotheism (iii) derives from (i) and (ii): aside from the one being belonging to the logical God-type in an absolute sense, it would be logically impossible for any other to exist; that is, it is not *contingent* that there is only one being who belongs to the logical God-type in an absolute sense.

By carrying out a semantic-modal analysis of these definitional characteristics, I focus on the fact that there is a *strong polysemy* in the semantic meanings of the terms “God”, “Deity” and/or “Divine”. This polysemy reveals itself quite peculiarly in the doctrine of the “Christian Trinity”. I will show how some formulations of the Christian Trinitarian doctrine, in order to avoid possible paradoxes, end up causing semantic oddities, *apparently precisely to avoid any kind of polytheism*.

At the end of the article, the reader will be able to evaluate for themselves that traditional Trinitarian Christians will be faced with only two alternatives: to embrace a kind of “polytheism” or to maintain the “Doctrine of the Trinity” in the logical inconceivability, since any expression through thought and language of such “Doctrine” will entail semantic oddities and/or possible paradoxes. In this sense, even the dogma should not be formulated.

In the first section, I will present some general notions of “monotheism”, “polytheism” and some notions of logic.

¹ If one wishes, one could read “God-type” as “Divine-type” in a *restricted way*. In other words, in this case, one should understand the expression/term “Divine-type” just as a term referring to the logical domain of the Gods. A set theorist would probably say, “set of the Gods”.

II POLYTHEISM, MONOTHEISM, MODAL NOTIONS AND LOGICAL QUANTIFIERS

There can be several categories of polytheistic positions². Some polytheists might be devotees of a particular Deity, but believe in the existence of other Deities. This alternative is possible within any polytheistic position. Others could be devotees of a single Deity, while only accepting the *possibility* of the existence of other Gods. Another group could hold that the number of Deities *could be infinite*. Regardless of the variety of positions, all polytheists would agree that the number of “absolute singularities” (if one prefers, “Gods” or “Deities”) is not necessarily and only 1.

Atheists would affirm that the number of Deities is 0 (STEINHART, 2012). If monotheists and polytheists accepted that Gods could be counted³ in some sense, then monotheists would claim that the number of elements in logical God-type is 1, whereas polytheists would state that number is at least 1+n, or they might affirm that it is infinite.

Are there several monotheistic positions?⁴ It is possible. However, it would be strange, because the monotheistic position does not merely affirm that “there is one Deity”, since the polytheistic one could claim that too. In symbolic logic, the proposition “there is one Deity” could be formalized this way:

$$(i) \exists x(Dx)$$

The reader can note that in this logical formulation, “being a Deity” (Dx) is treated as a first-order⁵ predicate, that is, here it is a predicate and it is not a logical

² About a polytheistic philosophy of religion, see Butler (2014).

³ If it is asserted that “there is continuity in God (or Gods or in Divine Reality), so it does not make sense to allege a number of Gods”, then the reader should draw their attention to the fact that the concept of “continuum” *per se* does not guarantee such assertion for itself. *Extra argumentation* is necessary for that proposition, because it is possible to affirm that there is a continuum in Divine Reality and yet it would make some sense to argue for a *possible* numeric multiplicity in the Divine Reality –, even if a specific number is not given. If it is asserted that it could not make sense to allege a number of Gods, for such Deities are measures, not measured –, then it is possible to argue that the fact they are measures does not mean *per se* that it does not make some sense to argue for some possible numeric multiplicity in this context. For example, it would make sense to claim a numeric multiplicity in natural numbers, and that would not imply that *the natural numbers ceased to be treated as a measurement standard and not as a measured object*.

⁴ This question is specifically related to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. I am aware of the differences between these religions, but I refer to the common monotheistic “core” shared between them. I am also aware that Christianity is a *peculiar case* because of the notion of the “Trinity.”

⁵ About First-Order Logic, see Smullyan (1995).

object/individual or logical subject of predication. We can better understand this by observing the scheme below:

Table 1

Level	Order-level	Examples
Level 1	(predicates)	“Being a Deity”, “being blue”, “being solid”, “being gentle”, etc.
Level 0	(objects, beings)	“Persons”, “computers”, “sofas”, “stars”, etc.

Source: Created by the author.

Also, in this formalization, there is the existential quantifier “ $\exists x$ ” expressing “there is x ”, and this x has a certain property – in this particular case, the property of “being a Deity” (Dx)⁶. However, nothing in this assertion prevents polytheists from also agreeing that it *could be* true. In short, polytheists could state that, “In fact, there is 1 Deity.”

For a monotheist to be able to allege what s/he would like to cognitively express, s/he would need more semantic expedients. Which ones? *S/he would need a uniqueness clause presupposed in the existential “ $\exists x$ ”.* After all, both polytheists and monotheists agree with the statement

(ii) “There is x , such that x is a Deity”

For monotheism to be logically expressed, in a way a “polytheistic” interpretation of the statement “ $\exists xDx$ ” could not be possible, it would be *necessary* to make the “uniqueness” property explicit. Nevertheless, it seems that even that would not be sufficient, since polytheists could claim something like, “There is a Deity x , and x is unique and x is Apollo” and, at the same time, “There is a Deity x , and x is unique and x is Athena,” for example. That uniqueness property would be a reasonable necessary

⁶ I am aware that this kind of formalization, which presupposes the distinction between “being a Deity” and “existence”, is controversial.

characteristic⁷ of a monotheistic position. In symbolic logic, it could be expressed in the following way:

$$(iii) \exists!x(Dx)$$

The exclamation point “!” placed after the existential quantifier serves precisely to show that the “x” that has the “D” property is an absolutely “unique” object in the universe of that logical type. However, as I claimed in the last paragraph, a polytheist could have a different semantic interpretation of that affirmation too, that is, a polytheist could also agree with that affirmation, without any kind of logical problem. For example, a polytheist could formalize, “There is x, x is absolutely unique; x is a Deity and x is Apollo”:

$$(iv) \exists!x(Dx \wedge Ax)$$

Here, we can note that in this logical formulation “being a Deity” (Dx) and “being Absolute” (Ax) are treated as first-order predicates, that is, as a predicate and not as a logical subject of predication. One could formalize, “There is x, x is unique; x is a Deity and x is Athena”, in the same fashion:

$$(v) \exists!x(Dx \wedge Ax)$$

There is another semantic expedient presupposed in the monotheistic claim:

$$(vi) \text{“There is a unique } x \text{ that has the property of being a Deity”}$$

In addition to asserting that “there is only one x” expressed by “!”, it must also be the case that:

$$(vii) \text{“} \textit{There can be no other} \text{” or “} \textit{It is logically impossible that there be any other} \text{”}.$$

A polytheist could not sustain that clause of “*logical impossibility* of the existence of other Gods”. In modal symbolic logic⁸, a polytheist could not sustain that:

⁷ It is clear that each Deity *per se* is unique, but “uniqueness” does not mean that there is just 1 being of the divine type. For example, to clarify: each human individual is unique in their own way, but that does not mean that there is just 1 human being.

⁸ About some basic concepts of modal logic, see Zalta (1995).

(viii) $\sim\Diamond\exists x(OGSx)$ ⁹

Nonetheless, as it is perceivable, a polytheist does not necessarily have a problem with the idea of “uniqueness of a God”, because according to polytheism, each God is a unique being in *an absolute way*. It is not sufficient to assert that a monotheistic position merely expresses the property of “uniqueness”, because a polytheistic one could also claim that each God is unique in an absolute way as, for example, “Thoth is a unique God in an absolute way.”

For what reason do monotheists believe they are right in asserting, “It is impossible for any other God to exist?” It is possible to believe in the existence of one God, but when someone asserts, “There is only one and it is impossible that there be any other God,” the logical modal commitment requires a modal *proof*. It seems very reasonable to affirm that it does not make sense to believe with reasonable justification in “the impossibility for any other God to exist” without such modal proof.

In the following section, I will discuss the question of the “Trinity Dogma” by using some formal logical notions.

III THE QUESTION OF “THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY”

The Christian religion is a monotheistic one, but besides the monotheistic position, the “nature of God” is understood in a *peculiar* mode. In the case of Christianity¹⁰, there is that strange question of the “Trinity”, concerning which it is ostensibly not possible to be clear about what one wants to express *cognitively*.

There are discrepancies among Trinitarian Christian theologians in the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no reason to deny that. I do not doubt that there are increasingly sophisticated formulations of the notion of the “Trinity”. Regardless of those sophisticated formulations, a Trinitarian Christian will still claim the *logical impossibility*

⁹ The modal symbol “ \Diamond ” means “it is possible”. Read it as: “it is not logically possible that x exist, such that x means other Gods”. For a monotheist to prove that claim, it would be necessary a modal proof or a reasonable and intellectual modal justification of some kind.

¹⁰ About a discussion between platonic and Christian views on logic and the “Absolute”, see Sherrard (1973).

*of a manifold of Deities outside their own religion*¹¹. Nevertheless, such a claim would only have its supposed “justification” in the dogma discovered in the revelatory divine *datum* and not in an intellectual justification.

Unlike Jews and Muslims, who claim that, “There is only one Deity,” that is, there is only one being who belongs to the logical God-type, Trinitarian Christians seem to want to express something quite different:

(ix) “There are only three Beings who participate in the divine nature and no other.”

For example, Boethius asserts the following:

The belief of this religion concerning the Unity of the Trinity is as follows: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God. Therefore, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, not three Gods. (BOETHIUS, 1968. p. 7).

First, I interpret that the sentence, “The Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God”, which Boethius mentions, could mean the following:

$$(x) \exists f, s, sp!(Df \wedge Ds \wedge Dsp)$$

In this case, it seems very clear that Boethius underlines that: the Father is God; the Son is God; the Spirit is God. Boethius perhaps does not believe that “God” can be treated as a “property”. However, if “God” is not treated as a predicate, then it must be treated as a logical subject; that is, “the Father” and “The Son”, in a strange way, would need to be named as the same subject, the same way that “Hesperus” and “Phosphorus” both name the planet Venus. Nonetheless, I do not believe a Trinitarian Christian could accept this as a traditional alternative. I cannot see another logical alternative to either the idea of “three names applied to the same reality” or the idea of “three Gods”. This seems to be intuitive. However, Boethius also claims that:

For the essence of plurality is otherness; apart from otherness plurality is unintelligible. In fact, the difference between three or more things lies in genus or species or number. (BOETHIUS, 1968. p. 7).

¹¹ The traditional Trinitarian Christian response to the challenge of the existence of Gods of other religions would be either that such Gods are Demons/Idols (in a derogatory way) or that they cannot exist. See, for example: Bible, Psalm 96, 5 (PSALM, 2003, p. 649).

The difference between two things lies in distinct properties. For example, the human Paul is different from the human Manuel, but not just because they are two, but rather because they have different properties. Noticeably, numeric difference is important, but it is not the only thing that matters, regarding the question of difference. Boethius also highlights important things about that:

Similarly difference is expressed by genus, species, and number. Now numerical difference is caused by variety of accidents; three men differ neither by genus nor species but by their accidents, for if we mentally remove from them all other accidents, still each one occupies a different place which cannot possibly be regarded as the same for each, since two bodies cannot occupy the same place, and place is an accident. Wherefore it is because men are plural by their accidents that they are plural in number. (BOETHIUS, 1968. p. 7).

Boethius discusses the difference caused by “accidents” as, for example, the property of “living in Goiânia”.

In the case of the Trinity, there is at least one property that Jesus has, but the Father does not, and it seems, to me, that such predicate could be a *contingent* property. For instance, the Son has the property of “incarnation” and the Son also has the property of “being human”. For Christians, the Son was a human being, who incarnated, and just from that property it is possible to deduce several others. It seems that a traditional Christian could not disagree with that. However, in this case, a traditional Christian must agree with the idea of “different properties” existing between God’s persons.

In the following section, I present the idea of “persons of the Trinity as pure relations” relating it to the idea of “polyadic properties.”

IV THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN FOCUS ON THE IDEA OF “PURE RELATION”

In order to avoid some logical and semantic difficulties, one could approach the idea of “persons” in the Trinity as “*pure relations*”. For instance, the idea of Ratzinger (1970) is to focus on the concept of “relation”. It seems that the author seeks to explain the Trinity by understanding the persons of the Trinity as pure relations in God. One could understand such relations as “polyadic properties.” In fact, *in logic, relations can be called polyadic properties*. For example, “love” can be *treated* as a polyadic property. In logic, we could formalize it as:

(xi) $L(x,y)$

That is, “love” is a polyadic predicate applied to two things: x and y . Love is a peculiar predicate, because x could love y , but y would not necessarily need to love x :

(xii) $(L(x,y) \wedge \sim L(y,x))$

However, in what sense could one believe that “person is relation” as Ratzinger¹² does? For example, how could we perceive Jesus *as* a relation? Perhaps the reader can conceive Jesus as, for instance, the relation between the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, Jesus is not *the* relation, but he *has* a relation, a polyadic property. Even though person is relation, for Ratzinger, it must be a relation between two things. These things can be identical to each other or not. If x and y are not identical to each other, then the relation obviously is not of one thing with itself.

Is the ‘is’ in “person is relation” an ‘is’ of identity or an ‘is’ of property? It seems that a person could have some polyadic properties. One could claim that one person is an effect of some kind of relation. In fact, there could be several¹³ answers to what one means by “person is relation” in the context of the Trinity.

Christians claim, “There is one God” – as do Jews and the Muslims –, though they differ in the interpretation of the term “God”. Nonetheless, in such Trinitarian allegations, it does not seem to be clear whether “God” is treated as a subject or a predicate. In this context, if “God” is treated as a predicate, then one could claim: “there is not *I* unique God”. However, if it were treated as a “name”, then it would be the name of at least three persons. Is it possible to affirm that the persons of the Trinity are “forms”, “modes” or even “emanations” of the same Deity? That is what apparently happens. Nevertheless, it does not seem that a traditional Christian would feel comfortable to express it in that way. One would probably claim that they are different persons. If they are distinct, they are distinguished in monadic or polyadic properties of some type. According to Ratzinger (1970), each person of the Trinity would need to be a relation of some kind, that is: they

¹² I do not intend to give a critique of Ratzinger’s work. I just focus on the logical-semantic analysis of what the meaning of “divine people *as pure* relations” is.

¹³ There are some proposals that could be considered here. Jesus could be a relation, but if so, that means that the Son, Jesus, is a divine person due to something else; the Father, Yahweh, is a divine person due to something else; and the Spirit likewise.

– the persons of the Trinity –, can be treated as polyadic properties. In this case, it seems logically intuitive that the divine persons have different polyadic properties.

In the following section, I present the idea of “semantic shift” and “logical God-type”, as a result of the logical analysis implemented.

V THE LOGICAL “GOD-TYPE” AND THE SCHEME OF “SEMANTIC SHIFT”

It is perfectly possible to assert that “God” is used in some contexts as a “logical type” of some predicate and/or also as the “attribute” of a singular being. It seems quite reasonable and intuitive to state that a “God x”, for example, “God Thoth” *belongs* to the logical God-type. This is possible without compromising in any way the question of the number of Gods. In logic, we could affirm:

$$(xiii) \exists x [\text{in Dt}] (Tx)$$

That is: “There is x, in the God-domain/type, and x is Thoth”¹⁴.

It is also possible to ask, “What is the logical type of the being Jesus?” The answer could be something like, “It belongs to the logical God-type”. It is also possible to use the “individualized” form of the expression “Divine” or “Deity”, since it is possible to state, “Jesus is a Deity.”

The question seems to be a sort of “grammatical inquiry” à la Wittgenstein¹⁵. *The term “God” can be treated as a “polysemic” term, like most terms in any natural language.* It is plausible to recognize that here: such term can be treated sometimes as a predicate, but sometimes as a subject. For instance, it is *possible* to assert, “Jesus is a God.” However, in order for a Christian to express uniqueness, they could claim, “Jesus is *the* God” – although, as we have seen, this allegation of uniqueness property alone does not imply monotheism.

¹⁴ I am not making a strong distinction between “domain” and “type”. Besides that, the question of how many beings belong to such type/domain is unrelated to the question of whether it makes sense to identify an instance of a type with its own type.

¹⁵ For the reader to access a general treatment on philosophy as grammatical investigation and grammatical method, see: Dobler (2011).

Considering the question of the Trinity, in the context of “God” as a first-order predicate, it must make sense to claim that:

(xiv) “Jesus is the God and so are the Father and the Spirit”.

In this case, the semantic oddity begins to appear in the attempt to express a concept that seems to lack perspicuity/articulativeness.

For what reason should a Christian bother to sort out all this “linguistic” confusion? A Trinitarian Christian could answer, “Because of the revelatory datum.” It is natural for some religions to consider the information provided by the revelatory datum as the highest authority, even if it does not make either intellectual or intelligible sense. In the following two tables, the reader can compare the likely responses of Jews, Muslims and Trinitarian Christians to the question “What is the number of Gods?”, in relation to the term “Absolute Being”:

Table 2

Religion	Likely response
Jew	1
Muslim	1
Trinitarian Christian	3

Source: Created by the author.

If a Christian interprets the term “Absolute Being” as a “Divine Person”, his/her likely response would be 3. Nevertheless, if a Christian interprets the term “Absolute Being” as a “God”, then s/he would probably answer 1:

Table 3

Religion	Likely response
Jews	1
Muslims	1
Trinitarian Christian	1

Source: Created by the author.

They all indicate that there is only one Deity (or “God”, if the reader prefers). For instance, a Muslim could name him “Allah”. A Jew has several names for him, as “Yahweh”, which is one of them. However, how can a Christian name God? In fact, s/he could name Him as a Jewish theologian would, for example, as “Yahweh”, but Christians distinguish divine persons *in* God.

Christians seem to make some kind of “semantic shift”, depending on the terminological interpretation. *The answer to the question asked in the previous paragraph depends on this interpretation, and the answer is altered, depending on the interpretation.* If by “Absolute Being” a Christian means “God,” then s/he would have to agree with the assertion, “There is just one that belongs to the logical God-type”. Nonetheless, if by an “Absolute Being” a Christian means a “Divine Person”, then s/he would have to claim, “There are only three that belong to the logical God-type”. I call *that* a form of “semantic shift”.

What does “logical God-type” mean here? It is worth emphasizing that the notion of the “logical God-type” *could* mean that a certain “being” has a “property” of an “Absolute Being”¹⁶. It is even possible to formalize the term “Absolute Being” in symbolic logic, so *we can clearly see what we are treating as subject and as predicate* – and that should be very important if one is preoccupied with semantic clarity. In first-order logic, we say that a being is absolute this way:

$$(xv) A(b)$$

The predicate is represented by the uppercase letter “A”, and the subject by the lowercase letter “b”. However, although the subject/predicate distinction is visible in language, as I stressed, it is still possible to use “Absolute” as a “name” as, for example, in “Jesus, the Absolute” or “Apollo, the Absolute”¹⁷. The possibility of using a term as a

¹⁶ The concept of “God” is vast and meaningfully variable. For example, what a Christian understands as a God is very different from what a Buddhist understands as a God. For a Buddhist, a God is what they call a “Deva”, which means a being that has reached a determined *level of realization of Reality* through Wisdom, Virtue and Merit. Moreover, that being has failed to reach the most transcendent and desired Buddhist level, that is, the *Buddhic state* (about the topic on the Cosmological levels in Buddhism, see: Sadakata, 1997). Thus, we have to consider a strong semantic *distinction* among terms, notions and concepts.

¹⁷ It is very important to avoid confusion between logical “infinity” and concepts such as “infinite space.” A God is infinite, but not in the spatial sense. Spatial analogies are possible, *but they cannot escape the domain of analogy.*

name – or the same term as a predicate – does not provide proof (or any justification) of the idea that “there is just one Absolute Being and there cannot be any other” in any sense.

Regarding the logical God-type and semantic distinctions, it is relevant to formulate the term “Absolute Being” (i.e., “A(b)”) with the existential quantifier for semantic distinction purposes too:

$$(xvi) \exists b(Ab)$$

On the other hand, we could also claim:

$$(xvii) \forall b (Ab \rightarrow Db)$$

Christians would agree with this statement, that is, “For all x, if x is absolute, then x is divine.” Jews and Muslims would presumably as well. Obviously, each of them could make philosophical *metaphysical improvements* in the meaning of “being” in this statement. There is no problem with that.

Concerning the Trinity, the “logical God-type” and semantic distinctions, one of the central questions here is: Would Christians agree with the claim, “There is only one Absolute Being”, as Muslims and Jews presumably would? *It depends on the interpretation* of the term “Absolute Being.” If the term “Absolute Being” is interpreted as in general they interpret the term “God”, then yes: there is only 1 Absolute Being. If “Absolute Being” is interpreted as in general they interpret the term “Divine person”, then no, there is not only 1 Absolute Being – for according to the Christian Trinity, there are several divine persons; and, they know *exactly* how many persons exist only through a revelatory *datum*.

In polytheism, it is possible for the term “God” to be treated both as a name and as a predicate, depending on the context. Christians also seem to make room for the use of the term “God” both as a name and as a predicate. Naturally, from a certain point of view, that room has space *only* to try to explain the Trinity Dogma.

Apparently, when they want the Trinity to make some kind of sense, *they would have to treat the term “God” as a name of the logical God-type*. Nevertheless, when it

comes to affirming that polytheism could not be true, then they seem to treat “God” as a name of one being¹⁸.

The term “God” is more commonly used as a predicate. For example, “Jesus is God” or “Thoth is God” – something analogous to “being human”, although it would seem strange to call someone “human” in this way, but it is possible.

Consider that a Christian could claim that there is the “logical God-type” – to which the divine persons of the Trinity belong – and that such type is expressed in the use of the term “God” as a predicate of the persons of the Trinity. If this were the case, then it would make sense to state that “there are three persons, for they belong to the logical God-type”. However, apparently Christians in general would not accept this formulation, because this position could be interpreted as a polytheistic position and not as a monotheistic position. After all, because of some revelatory *datum*, they could not accept the polytheistic position. Although, it seems that this would make logical sense.

The “Christian linguistic *mix-up*” can be expressed in the following way: Is Jesus God? Is the Father God? Is the Holy Spirit God? The answer to all three questions, according to traditional Christians, would be yes. Nonetheless, they would still argue that, “Although Jesus is God, the Father is God and the Spirit is God, yet there is only one God”. One could add, “revealed in the three persons of the Trinity”. In brief, the formulations seem to culminate at least in a kind of *semantic oddity*.

What Christians apparently seem to indicate is that when the questions, “Is Jesus God? Is the Father God? Is the Spirit God?”, are answered, then the term “God” is *treated* as a predicate; as long as the term “is” in “The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God” is *treated* as an “is” of predicate, then *logically and necessarily there would have to be three “objects/beings” with the predicate “being a God”*. Nevertheless, a traditional Christian would not agree with the claim, “then logically and necessarily there would be three ‘objects’ with the predicate ‘being a God’.” In all cases, a Christian would assert that there is only one God. However, when Christians have to answer the question “how many Gods are there?”, then they seem to treat the term “God” as a proper name: a

¹⁸ One could *treat* the divine persons of the Christian Trinity as *emanations* of God. However, if this were the case, then there would be no intellectual or rational reason to deny other possible emanations of God.

name that *would have to refer* to a unique object in a domain that *only has this object and there could be no other*.

Safeguarding the dogmatic notion of the Trinity and staving off any category of polytheism necessarily results in a semantic oddity. Even if Christians manage to clear up the semantic confusion, there is still no rational reason against polytheism, other than the Christian revelatory *datum*, since polytheists do not disagree with the property of “uniqueness” in an absolute way. What does this mean? Presume that a Christian accepts expressing the Trinity in the following way: “There is the logical God-type and three persons belonging to such type”. In what sense would a polytheist disagree with this? A polytheist could understand the polysemic character of the term “God” and its absolute singular instances. For polytheists, in fact, there is some kind of logical God-type, and a multiple of beings belong to such type. According to polytheism, the number of such beings in their totality is at least $[1+n]$ or maybe $[\aleph_0]$.

In order to conclude, what do polytheists¹⁹ and Trinitarian Christians disagree on? It is known that polytheists in general and Jews and Muslims disagree on the following: for Jews and Muslims, there is only one being who is either called “God”, “Allah” or “Yahweh”, or who has the predicate of “being God”. Even for polytheists, such beings could even exist, but there would also be others, that is, an n or maybe an infinite multiplicity of such beings would be possible. Regarding what then would polytheists disagree with Christian on, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity? If it were possible to make a semantically reasonable formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, such as the idea that “there is the logical God-type and some beings belonging to such a logical God-type”, then polytheists would disagree on the possibility of existence of only three, or that there could be only these three persons.

However, *a position that accepts the existence of only three divine persons*, also accepts, nevertheless, *the distinction between logical God-type and instances of the type*,

¹⁹ I know that there is a vast plurality among polytheists regarding what concerns the understanding of “God” as a predicative semantic expedient in the context of intellectual treatment of the concept of “logical divine type”. I share this concern. However, my objective in this article is restricted to the treatment of the concept of “Trinity” and the problem of the polysemy of the term “God” in the context of the logical-metaphysical possibility of the existence of other Gods. In short, this problem of the relationship between the concept of “divine genus” and “God” – as a predicative semantic expedient – is unrelated to the question I address here.

and hence it would no longer be a monotheistic, but rather a polytheistic position. The central idea here is: the *logical conjunction* of the idea of “Trinity” and some genus of “Monotheism” necessarily imply some class of “absurd” or at least “semantic oddities”. Thus, in formal logic:

$$(\text{Trinity Dogma} \wedge \text{Monotheism}) \rightarrow \perp$$

As a consequence, I highlight that traditional Christians would have just two ways of dealing with the matter: either accepting an intelligible formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity – therefore necessarily becoming some kind of polytheist – or lapsing into silence, in thought and language, in the intellectual debate over the question of the number of Gods.

As my final thoughts, I make some remarks on what I cogitate to be the aim attained in this work and some of its logical limitations.

FINAL THOUGHTS

My aim in this article is materialized when I try to *explicit* some *presumed* modal notions embedded in monotheistic and polytheistic propositions. In fact, *the whole question is to shed light on the logic of language in the context of modal use of some monotheistic, polytheistic and Trinitarian Christian propositions*, specifically, to shed light on the modal compromises of such propositions. In other words, I tried to show that “monotheistic positions” in general tend necessarily to assume a very strong logical-modal *compromise* to affirm that, for example, “there is necessarily 1 God and the existence of another is *logically impossible*.”

With respect to the matter of notion of “unicity” or “uniqueness”, represented in this article by “!”, there seems to be a kind of underestimation on the philosophical debate. One could never *per se* imply logically and necessarily the proposition “such being is *unique to its own logical domain/type*” solely because there is a *specific* “being” of its own logical domain/type. This kind of allegation could *just* be sustained in an intelligible modal form through the demonstration that “to assume the possibility of another God” would imply logically and necessarily some kind of contradiction or likewise. It would

be harder to advocate for that position in the face of natural semantic polysemy of the term “God” and *comparable* terms, such as “Deity”, “Divinity”, etc.

Furthermore, in the context of the discussion of the “Trinity Dogma”, I tried to show that the conjunction of the “Trinity Dogma” and some kind of “monotheism” would imply some category of semantic paradox or, at least, some kind of semantic oddity. In this case, I tried to demonstrate that there are “semantic shifts” when a Trinitarian Christian has to face questions related to the use of the term “God.” This indicates that it would be implausible to argue solely for unique and possible uses of terms such as “God”, “Deity”, “Divinity”, etc.

The use of logical formal signs were implemented in order to demonstrate who performs the role of “logical subject/object” and who performs the role of “logical predicate/properties.” The aim of logical formal signs and logical distinctions between “subject/predicate” has demonstrated that if one wishes to express determined propositions, then, one should be aware that this “propositional expression” should occur within the logical limits of language. The logical limits of conceivability of language, for example, appear in the allegation presented in this article, in which, if one desires to defend, in a logical and semantic way, the “Trinity Dogma”, then one should either assume some kind of polytheistic position or be in absolute silence concerning the theme, from a logical point of view. Accordingly, the Dogma could not be expressed or conceived either in thought or in language.

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