On the Distinctions between Thought and Speech and Conceptuality and Terminology

Although in some of my writings I have distinguished between "conceptuality" and "symbolism" (or "concepts" and "symbols") in strict correspondence with my distinction between "thought" and "speech" (or "thinking" and "speaking"), I should have distinguished instead between "conceptuality" and "terminology" (or "concepts" and "terms"). Why? Well, because, in addition to the precedent set by the traditional correlation between "concepts" and "terms" in the language of logic, "symbolism" (or "symbols") in the modern theological context normally has the more restricted connotation of nonliteral discourse, or discourse used in its relatively secondary, as distinct from its relatively primary, sense. Thus, while all symbols are terms, not all terms are symbols, because some terms are literal in meaning rather than symbolic, insofar as they are used in their relatively primary, as distinct from their relatively secondary, senses.

If a term is wanted in place of "symbol," perhaps "image" will do as well as any. In that event, one could say that, while all images are concepts, not all concepts are images, because some concepts are correlative with terms used literally rather than symbolically. This presupposes that one can appropriately distinguish between a broad and a strict sense of "concepts," "conceptuality," "thinking," "thought," etc. In their broad sense, such terms cover *all* the essential units on the "logical," as distinct from the "grammatical," side of the correlation, where "terms," "terminology," "speaking," "speech," etc. have the same comprehensive scope. In their narrow sense, on the other hand, "concepts," "conceptuality," and so on cover only *some* such essential units, "concepts" in this narrow sense being different from "images," "conceptuality" from "imagery," "thinking" from "imagining," "thought" from "imagination," etc.

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