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POSSIBILITY — ACTUALITY — GOD

Introduction

In „Forum Philosophicum" vol. 7 (2002) a paper has been published in which J. R. Spitzer's proof for the existence of God has been analysed. The proof proceeded from the disjunction: The independent Being exists or does not exist[1]. The objective of the paper in „Forum" was to analyse the relation of dependence which was the central point to Spitzer's proof. Since in September 2001 the second part of the american Jesuit's disquisition appeared in the same periodical[2], it seems suitable to react to this new text too. Spitzer has presented there three new arguments for the existence of God: (1) from the past time, (2) from the distinction between actuality and mere possibility and (3) from a Lonerganian interpretation of the same distinction. While he named the proofs presented in the part I metaphysical, he qualified the proofs brought forward in the part II as cosmological, in view of the facts belonging to inanimate nature, such as: time, space, the velocity of light, etc. which serve him as starting-points. It is worth stressing that Spitzer's method is conducive to discussion, because he adduces concrete examples, something which makes his mind more comprehensible. Had he used some vague descriptions or general definitions, discussion would have been more difficult. So let us analyse the new proposed proofs.

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[1] Cf R. J. Spitzer SJ, *Proofs for the Existence of God, Part I: A Metaphysical Argument*, in „International Philosophical Quarterly", XLI, N^0 2, June 2001, p. 161-181.

[2] *Proofs for the Existence of God*, Part II.

1. Is it possible to prove the existence of God from the past time?

Spitzer starts by adducing the following valid statement formulated by David Hilbert: „The infinite [in the sense of 'an achieved infinite succession' or 'an infinite number of definite objects in a real set or collection'] is nowhere to be found in reality."[3] When referred to time this statement implies the proposition that infinite past time is impossible. Further — Spitzer says — the last assertion brings us to admit the necessity of the existence of God, Creator of infinite past time. Spitzer's reasonning recalls the medieval discussion on the eternity of the world. The XIII century philosophers sought to examine whether the views of the ancient thinkers on an eternally existing world were compatible with the Christian dogma which asserts that the world has been created in a definite moment of time. It was generally known that Aristotle admitted eternal persistence of species and perpetual circular movement, and that nevertheless he asserted that this movement depends on the First unmoved Mover (in fact as a final rather than as a moving cause).

St. Bonaventure in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* tried to show that it is possible to prove that the world began to exist in a definite point of time. The argument consisted in the following series of statements: If the world had had no beginning, there would have exist an infinite number of circular turns of stars, which means that the present day would have had before it an infinitely long time. But the next day would have had also just as long a time as the former one. Yet between to-day and to-morrow there is a time interval. That's why a contradiction arises which consists in that equally long past time precedes the temporarily distant two different days. In order to avoid this contradiction — Bonaventure says — we must admit a first moment from which we begin to count the length of the world's time. Thus the world does not exist eternally. The other philosophers disagreed.

First of all St. Albert the Great argued this point and criticized this type of argument. In his commentary to the 6th book of Aristotle's *Physics*, the objective of which is the continuity and divisibility of time, St. Albert proposes the distinction between actual and potential parts. Only actual parts can be counted and summed up. Yet time possesses no actual parts. Therefore a day is not a very part of time. Moreover,

[3] *On the Infinite*, in: *Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed. by P. Benacerraf and H. Putnam, Englewood Cliffs 1964, p. 151.

even if the world had no beginning it would be possible to get to the present day.

A similar standpoint was held by Bonaventure's contemporary, St. Thomas Aquinas. He treats the problem of the world's eternity in several books. And so, in the commentary on Peter Lombard's *Liber sententiarum* he enumerates 14 reasons, usually set forth by philosophers in order to prove the world's eternity. Three of them are related to time:

– Since the only real is what is now and „now" consists of the beginning as well of the end, it had always a time before it. Therefore the time is eternal;

– Because „now" is a flowing reality, it had always before itself some other „now". Therefore time is eternal;

– Because God dominates the world, being its cause, and because the world is an effect of God's activity, therefore the world must exist in paralell with God, i.e. eternally.

Then he enumerates 9 reasons against the world's eternity, but only the third and fourth of them are related to time:

– Admitting that the world is eternal, an infinite number of days would have had to occur till now. But infinity is not realisable. Therefore the world has existed for only a finite time;

– Nothing can be added to infinity, whereas incessantly new days follow upon former time. Therefore the number of days which have gone by is finite. Thus the world does not exist eternally.

St. Thomas is more cautious than his predecessors when dealing with the reasons listed above and he makes none of them his own. He affirms only that neither eternity nor finite duration of the world can be proved, because no one may draw conclusions from the present time about the moment when the world arose. The passing „now" can be first without a former time and can be last without a next time. We can count time starting from the present „now" and come to no beginning in the past, but also we can count forward and come to no end in the future. We also *can* add something to infinity, because if we start counting back, beginning with 100, we have before it an infinitely great series of numbers, as much as we do if we count back beginning with 10, though we have before it the same infinitely great number, but increased by 90.

In St. Thomas' opinion the important way to solve the problem is the distinction used formerly by St. Albert between an actual infinity and a potential one. Only God has actual infinity. Yet potential infinity consists in a sequence of segments, either of time or movement, going

in a forward or backward direction.[4] We find a similar way of thinking in St. Thomas' *Summa contra gentiles* (CG, II, 38), though in this book Aquinas appears more prone to Bonaventure's point of view, i.e. to the admission of a finite duration of the world.[5] In *Quaestiones disputatae* St. Thomas still thinks that it is impossible to prove either eternity or a limited duration of the world.[6] Also in *Summa theologica* (I q. 32, a. 1; q. 46, a. 2) we find the same reasons for and against the eternity of the world, respectively:

– every „now" has its before and after; and the world without beginning would have had to exist an infinite number of days, while the actual infinity is impossible. St. Thomas discusses once more the problem of the world's eternity in the opuscule *De aeternitate mundi contra murmurantes* (Opusc. 27), but surprisingly he does not deal in it with time.

J. R. Spitzer following F. van Steenberghen[7] tries to mitigate the Thomistic point of view on this topic. He asserts that „the very concept of infinite past time is intrinsically contradictory and mathematically paradoxical, and it poses impossible conditions for history and a changing world order."[8] He tries to prove his proposition that past time is finite, whichever world we consider, analytically, i.e. from the mere meaning of words, as well as mathematically.

In order to prove analytically the finiteness of past time, he starts by asking for the meaning of: „past time". He answers: it means that the time has occurred (existed), i.e. has been achieved. On the contrary, the future time must be unachieved, since it could not have yet occurred. Then again he asks how matters stand with infinity. Infinity of dependent successive parts must be unachievable, for if an infinite succession were achievable, there would be no way of analytically distinguishing it from a finite succession. Thus eventually the formulation: „infinite past time" reduces to „achieved inachievable" which is contradictory. The final conclusion of this argument is: Since the formulation: „infinite past time" is contradictory, such a time cannot occur either in an actual or in whatsoever possible world.

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[4] Cf. A. Antweiler, *Die Anfangslosigkeit der Welt nach Thomas von Aquin und Kant*, Trier 1961, p. 9, 11, 22. Similar distinction was introduced by David Hilbert. He divides infinity in potential (no limit *ad quem*) and in actual (no limit *a quo*). Actual infinity leads to paradoxes, while potential infinity involves no problem.

[5] Ibid., p. 33.

[6] Ibid., p. 60, 107.

[7] Cf. *Le 'Processus in infinitum' dans les trois premières 'voies' de saint Thomas*, „Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia", 30 (1974), p 128.

[8] *Proofs for the Existence of God*, Part II., p. 306.

In the argument named mathematical[9] Spitzer beginns with the assertion that past time must be constituted by constituent (building blocks) parts, e. g. seconds. The seconds in his opinion are not merely imaginary, but something real. One cannot arbitrarily remove them, since the removal of seconds would affect the whole of history and even cause contradictions within history (e.g. somebody would be at the same time living and dead). „The seconds are ingredient to real events. To remove the seconds from real events in real history would imply removing a real temporal separation between events in history. The former invalidates what happened in the past, while the latter produces contradictions." We would have temporally sequenced causes coincident with their effects. People would be in vastly different places at one and the same time.[10]

Time must be, according to Spitzer, a real, non-contemporaneous separator of the opposed states inherent to change. Inasmuch as these real „separators" form a succession, they must be real building blocks of the unity of changing occurrences, i.e. of history. On the other hand, if the past time were infinite, and composed of an infinite number of parts, these parts could not have constituent parts because the removal of such parts does not reduce the size of the whole. Therefore, if one maintains the reality of an infinite number of parts, these parts cannot be true building blocks but only imaginary or theoretical constructs. Thus the proposition „past time is infinite" emerges as an inherent contradiction. This requires past time to be finite.[11] This would not be the case for infinite future, for future time implies only a potential to keep adding parts *ad infinitum*, which means that it does not fall prey to an inherent contradiction.

Let us evaluate Spitzer's opinion. First of all we must notice that his argumentation makes some unfounded assumptions: (1) that time consists of instants, (2) that events are strictly connected with time, and (3) that time flows from past to future. We will explain our objection. Time is strictly connected with local movement.[12] In modern physics time is viewed as one of the parameters possessed by momentum, which when correlated with the other momentum makes the kinetic energy. This energy was named unfortunately in ancient times as local

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[9] Ibid., p. 309.

[10] J. R. Spitzer refers to his paper *Definition of Real Time and Ultimate Reality*, in *ultimate Reality and Meaning*, „Interdisciplinary Studies in the Philosophy of Understanding", 23 (2000) 3, (without indicating the pages).

[11] Ibid., p. 310.

[12] Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, Δ 11, $219^{b}1$; $220^{a}24$; 12, $220^{b}8$; 14, $223^{a}33$; Θ 1, $251^{b}12$, etc.: „Time is a measure of movement according to succession."

movement. Time itself has no direction. It does not run. In physical equations no direction of time is favoured. All the elementary processes can go symmetrically this or the opposite way. „The laws of classical dynamics and electromagnetism, as well as of quantum mechanics, are all expressed by time-symmetrical differential equations."[13] The psychological impression of „running" time is due to a projection of our macroscopic experiences onto the elementary phenomena, whereas the irreversibility of the macroscopic processes results from their statistical features. We distinguish from the statistical point of view the microstates and macrostates. „Though any microstate is as probable as any other, this is not so with macrostates, and given the information that a body is in a macrostate A, it is highly probable that it will turn into a macrostate B rather than vice versa if B corresponds to an ensemble of microstates corresponding to A."[14] „We conclude that microscopic phenomena have no intrinsic time-direction, at least if this can only be defined in relation to internal entropy increase."[15] „It is the *contents of the world*, the «collective quality of complex systems» that have asymmetry, not *time* itself."[16]

This interpretation coincides with the opinion of many philosophers who say that the local movement is a sort of quality in a substance. It means that it does not fall under the definition of change, thought of as reduction from potency to act. Let us adduce some statements on this topic:

„A purely inertial motion would not be a motion of a body, since there is no reduction from potency to act."[17] „Inertial motion is thought of as a state of a body, a state that is an unchanging state of a body, it is equivalent to rest, for in neither state is there any change."[18] Thus the local motion is a state which is ruled by the principles of inertia, formulated by Aristotle in his *Physics*: „Nobody can say, why what

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[13] J. J. Smart, entry „Time" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, t. 8, New York – London 1967, p. 130.

[14] Ibid., p. 131.

[15] M. S. Bartlett, *Probability, Statistics and Time. A Collection of Essays.* London 1975, p. 17.

[16] S. Happel, *Metaphors and Time Asymmetry*, in *Quantum Cosmology and the Laws of Nature. Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, ed. R. J. Russell, N. Murphy, C. J. Isham. Vatican – Berkeley 1993, p. 108.

[17] Th. McLaughlin, *Aristotelian Mover-Causality and the Principle of Inertia*, „International Philosophical Quarterly", vol. XXXVIII, June 1998, N^0 2, p. 139.

[18] Ibid., p. 140. Cf. also S. Ziemiański SJ, *Arystotelesowska koncepcja ruchu jako punktu wyjścia dowodu kinetycznego* [Aristotelian Conception of Movement as the Starting-point of a Proof of the Existence of God], „Studia Philosophiae Christianae", 5 (1969) n. 2, p. 179-197.

moves should stop somewhere: since there is no reason, why it should stop here rather than there? So, it will be at rest or necessarily will move as long as something more powerful does not interfere with."[19]

Having reinterpreted the concept of movement, we must also reinterpret the concept of time. But first of all we must distinguish ahistorical and historical time.[20] Ahistorical time is related to elementary movements. In such a time there is no direction. There is only duration of movement. Since the velocity of whatever movement is limited, every movement has its own pace. No moment, no section of it is privileged. In order to measure time, we chose arbitrarily the segments of time, proper to the uniform movements, e.g. circulation of the earth around its axis or on the terrestrial orbit, and we make of it units of measure. We can divide these segments arbitrarily again and again in smaller parts. To say that ahistorical time changes is nonsensical. But it is possible to say it of motion. If a kinetic energy (i.e. momentum in a reference system) becomes a potential energy state, which is a possibility of kinetic energy, time disappears, because of disappearance of velocity. The kinetic energy can be recovered, if other, no matter how tiny, kinetic energy acts on the unstable equilibrium system. Yet the sum of kinetic and potential energy in the universe is stable.

Historical time is related to the changes in the macroscopic systems. The changes occur when events take place. The events are interferences of the physical objects on the different planes of aging, i.e. fields of forces. For example, if a malicious boy throws a stone against a window pane, the contact of the stone with the pane is an event, where the inertial movement of the stone, (which is unity of atoms held together by the electromagnetic fields of forces), gets in contact with a pane which has a momentum of zero-value (and is also an unity of atoms bounded by the electromagnetic fields of forces as well). The difference between the momenta of both objects constitues the kinetic energy. This energy actuates the momenta of the particular parts of the pane, to such a degree, that the inner forces cannot withstand and stop the movements of particles. So the pane breaks. The energy disperses, which equals increasing entropy. Coming back to the former state, without other acting undispersed energy, though theoretically possible, still it is so improbable that it never occurs in the macroscopic conditions.

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[19] *Physics*, Ä 8, 215ª19-22.

[20] Cf. S. Ziemiański SJ, *Czas i jego implikacje filozoficzne* [Time and its philosophical Implications], „Rocznik Wydziału Filozoficznego Towarzystwa Jezusowego w Krakowie", 1999, pp. 102-115.

Only on the plane of historical time, where the net of relations is significant, we can produce calendars. We take some existentially important events as the points of departure of our counting the „running" time. The microscopic i.e. elementary time does not run, as before. There remain only transitory events „stringed" on time as the coral beads on a file and between them the periods of rest stretch out, when no movement exists or the inertial one only.

If we want to save anything of Spitzer's proof from finite past time, we must abandon ahistorical time and take an interest in historical time, i.e. in the domain of changing entropy. The entropy is nothing but a mathematical representation of the relations between the sets of particles, characterized by different parameters. These relations are described in the theory of information with the terms of order and disorder, as well as in the theory of probability with the terms of macro– and microstate. The ordered macrostate consists in the state where no element of a set has got among the elements of the other set. If the number of microstates which can realize a macrostate is great, the probability that the macrostate will be realized is great too. If there is only one such microstate, we have got a well ordered macrostate, and it is an extreme, the least probable case. So the proof from historic time reduces into the well known argument from increasing entropy. In the first premise we state the contingent connexion of the order with the particles. The contingency manifests itself in the fact of spontaneously decreasing order. In the second premise the principle of sufficient reason is applied. What is contingently connected with a subject does not result from it. Therefore there must be an external reason for the connexion. In a case of a series of subordinate reasons, such a series cannot be infinite, because even an infinite series of subordinate facts cannot become by itself independent. So, unless we act irrationally, we must assume the first ontic immaterial reason of the still existing order in the world. This reason is identical with the Creator, who caused before a dozen or so billions years the coming into existence of the world in a singular state of nearly zero volume, with nearly infinite density and temperature. The universe was then composed exclusively of energy which „bursts". Being gradually cooled the energy has allowed the breakdown of its primitive symmetry and the differentiation of the hidden planes of forces. Then the possibility of originating material particles appeared. Matter being uniformly distributed gave the possibility of gravitational condensation. Gravitational potential energy was transformed into kinetic energy, characterized then by minimal entropy. Newly, it has been proved that this scenario cannot be played twice. In this sense historical time is definitely past time. The cosmological calendar has its starting-point and the direction of its time is

determined by the grades of density as well as by the size of the volume of the universe. The greater volume and the smaller density, the older is the world. If the direction of the world's evolution were reversed, i.e. if its volume contracted and the density grew, it would mean that historical time had reversed too. But it is very improbable.Yet since real time is ahistorical time, which has neither future nor past, Spitzer's warning against exchanging past time for the future time and vice versa the future for the past, as well as against identifying them is nonsensical.[21]

2. God as a cause which actualizes potency

The second of Spitzer's proofs has five steps:

I. A cause is necessary for the emergence of an actual state of affais from a virtual infinity of equally logically possible states of affairs.

II. An infinite number of causes cannot have been achieved and therefore cannot ground the emergence of actual states of affairs from a virtually infinite range of merely possible ones.

III. The First Cause of the emergence of actuality out of mere possibility cannot have any intrinsic restriction (i.e. must be absolutely simple).

IV. The absolutely simple First Cause must be absolutely unique.

V. The one absolutely simple First Cause is the ultimate cause of all actual states of affairs.[22]

Spitzer illustrates his proof with some exemplary facts, which are the starting-points of argumentation. The constant c (the velocity of light in vacuum) is an actual pervasive, controlling factor in all aspects of energy and momentum in the universe. The question is: Why is one equally logically possible value actual, and the other virtual infinity of equally logically possible values merely possible?

The causes can come in many forms: the parameters of an electromagnetic field, the geometry of space-time, the momentum and position from a previous moment, the peculiar dynamics within a quantum system, and even the intention of human beings. Everywhere there is a selection of one value from the many possible. „Determining realities can be structures, positions, fields, universal constants, interactions, interrelationships, space-time coordinate structures, human intentions, and so forth." The universe would be a collection of possibilities, if it were not for causes which elevate one logically possible state of affairs

[21] Cf. *Proofs for the Existence of God..., p. 311.*

[22] Ibid., p. 314.

over the rest of its equally possible alternatives. An example of such an elevation is an electron which has taken a specific position (x,y,z) around the nucleus of an atom. There are billions of other equally logically possible positions, which could have been actualized. The real determining reality which caused its particular position, is the laws of physics or the presence of other electromagnetic fields in the area.

A question arises at this point. Spitzer enumerates together at one sitting things belonging to the different categories. It may be well to set them in order. Thus the fields of forces count as the classical formal causes, which stabilize a system.[23] The forces bond the parts into atoms, atoms into molecules, celestial bodies into galaxies and clusters of galaxies, whereas impetus or momentum are dynamic causes which disturb the fields of forces. The space between the parts of the world owes its existence to the momenta (or kinetic energy).

Spitzer's reasoning reminds us of that of G. W. Leibniz and of J. K. Dorda SJ. Dorda presented his proof in the *Study* quoted in the footnote 23 above. Leibniz formulated a proof from contingency for the existence of God in his *Theodicy*. Contingency of a being is thought there as an admissibility of its different states. Leibniz's opinion is testified at least by a texte such as the following: „God is the first reason of all things, because these, limited as all that we see, are contingent and have nothing in themselves which would make their existence necessary. It is evident that time, space and matter, compact, homogenous and indifferent to all circumstances could have had other movements and forms and have been ordered otherwise.[24] Leibniz adds: „Of course all existing things emanate incessantly just from this source. They are and were his creatures, because it is impossible to understand how this rather than another state of the world, to-day than to-morrow one, should proceed from the world alone."[25] In the second letter to Samuel Clark Leibniz writes: „Nothing namely occurs without some reason, owing to which something occurs rather this than other way."[26]

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[23] Cf., J. K. Dorda SJ, *Studium o przyczynowości sprawczej z zastosowaniami w kosmologii i w teodycei,* [Study of Efficient Causality as Applied to Cosmology and Natural Theology], Cracow 2001, pp. 171, 262, 270, 359, 362.

[24] *Théodicée. Essais sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine du mal.* I, n. 7, in *Oeuvres philosophiques de Leibniz avec une introduction et des notes par M. Paul Janet.* Paris 1866, vol. II, p. 104. Cf. *Réflexions sur l'ouvrage que M. Hobbes a publié...,* n. 5, ibid., p. 429; *Monadologie*, ibid., p. 599.

[25] *De l'origine radicale des choses*, ibid., p. 550; *Principes de la nature et de la grâce fondés en raison*, n. 7, ibid., p. 612; n. 10, ibid, p. 613; *Monadologie*, n.33, ibid., p. 599.

[26] Letter to Samuel Clarke, y. 1715/16, in *Die philosophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz* , ed. C. J. Gerhardt. Leipzig 1931, vol. VII, p. 356: „C'est que rien n'arrive, sans qu'il y ait une raison pourquoy cela soit ainsi plutost qu'autrement."

Dorda has reinterpreted the classical concepts of potency and act in the terms of sets and their elements. In his interpretation potency (possibility) takes place when a subject is ascribed to a non-unitary set, while act takes place when a subject is ascribed to an element in the set. Dorda uses Van der Waals' equation of state for perfect gases to illustrate his suggested definition of causal influence: $(P + a/V^2).(V-b) = R'.T$, where P signifies pressure, T – temperature, V – volume, a,b,R'– constants. The three variable parameters P, V, T represent three sets of specific numerical values which determine the gas' potentiality in a threefold range of specific values. Each specific value, an element of a particular set, is one of the possible acts of pressure, volume or temperature. Eventually, applying the concepts elaborated he describes causal influence as the attribution of a specific value to general independent variables.[27] Dorda formulates similarly the principle of causality: „If a subject S is ascribed to an element of a non-unitary set, then there is something (C) different from a subject (S) which selects this element excluding the other elements of the set." The same principle formalized looks as: $a.(a \mid b) \supset [\sim (C \supset \sim C) \supset C]$.[28]

Having arrived at the conclusion that God, the First Cause, exists, Spitzer deduces his attributes. This Cause must be absolutely simple. It results from the fact that all limited beings stand in opposition to the innumerable possibilities or alternatives, while the First Cause is unique. It cannot be limited in any way, neither externally nor intrinsically. This opinion agrees with St. Thomas' doctrine on God as pure act, whose essence is existence. At the same time, in this conception God appears as absolutely transcendent. Since he cannot be qualified or described, we must use, to grasp his nature, so-called negative theology. This art of theology has a long-lasting Christian tradition. Thus the nature of God can be expressed as follows: „It is purely inclusive, pure being (power) which is not conditionned by anything allowing for restriction, partiality, quantification, or qualification."[29]

In the third section of his paper Spitzer presents a similar proof, but in a new garb. He refers here to B. Lonergan's philosophy. Its important element is asking „Why?". In fact the proof in this section differs only superficially from that in the former. The difference consists in the style: The first proof was formulated directly in the affirmative sentences. The second one was formulated in the context of asking

[27] *Studium o przyczynowości...*, pp. 208-214.
[28] Ibid., p. 226.
[29] J. R. Spitzer, op. cit., p. 319.

„Why?". This conception reminds us of some elements in the Aristotelian method of science. Aristotle uses the formula διὰ τί which signifies either the question „Why?" or the answer „therefore". Thus Spitzer's argument goes: Since the continuous questioning, even if infinitely repeated, does not bring us closer to an answer, there must be an originative answer to the question „Why?", because a finite, dependent series must begin at some point." [...] „The originative [...] answer to the question „Why?"must be ontologically grounded in an intrinsically and extrinsically unrestricted reality", which is the First Cause.[30]

Recapitulation

As may be seen from the above presentation, while the argumentation in the first section of Spitzer's paper (part II) demands correction, the proof in the second and third section arouses no doubts.

Moreover, it reminds us of St. Thomas' „quarta via" formulated in the *Summa theologica,* q. I, s. 3,, as well as the proofs presented here and there in the *Summa contra gentiles* and in *De potentia.* Aquinas says that if some factors are distributed between different subjects, they do not belong to them necessarily. Therefore they demand existence of the unique common cause which should have these factors within itself in the highest and absolute grade. The most interesting element in Spitzer's proof is the reasoning arguing that the First Cause must be unique, simple and completely transparent to itself.

It would be helpful, in order to examine the methodological correctness of reasoning, to explain more penetratingly what is meant by „a metaphysical" proof (part I) as opposed to „a cosmological" one (part II). There is still a controvertible problem: if and how far we can apply the data specific to the sciences, to the proofs for the existence of God, to the proofs which on principle should be done within metaphysics.[31] It seems that the following procedure is right: It is permissible to take as the starting-point of metaphysical arguments for the existence of God

[30] Ibid., p. 326.

[31] Cf. F. Van Steenberghen, *Le problème philosophique de l'existence de Dieu,* „Revue Philosophique de Louvain", vol. 45, N^0 5, Février 1947, p. 5-10; N^0 8, Novembre 1947, p. 301-313. He maintains that only the metaphysical argument from the finite being is reasonnable. The same F. van Steenberghen presenting in the paper: *La physiqe moderne et l'existence de Dieu,* „Revue Philosophique de Louvain", vol. 46, N^0 11, Août 1948 opinion of M. Whittakker, states that this philosophizing physicist is very doubtful, if it is possible to convince the majority of to-day people by means of the proofs for the existence of God, without reference to the sciences. Cf. also S. Kowalczyk, *Filozofia Boga* [Philosophy of God], Lublin 1993, p. 81-82; S. Ziemiański SJ, *Teologia naturalna, Filozoficzna problematyka Boga,* [Natural theology. Philosophical Problems of God], Kraków 1995, p. 135.

the facts recognized in scientific inquiry, on condition that one presents them in a philosophical guise. The philosophical approach to scientific data consists in treating the phenomena not only as formulated in mathematical equations, but in stating their existence in the reality expressed by these equations. Thus physical laws in a philosophical guise not only are related to our sense-data, described by subject-predicate sentences, but should also be interpreted as the expression of the existing reality composed of substances and accidents and affirmed in existential propositions. The metaphysical principles, such as ontologically formulated principle of sufficient reason or principle of efficient causality, would refer to a reality conceived in just this way.

What remains is to solve the problem: which facts are self-evident and plain, and which demand an ontological explanation. Beyond dispute, the contingent connection of factors within the beings of this world demands the existence of an external reason for them. But are we allowed to look for such a reason for the ordinary facts which do not manifest in themselves any contingency? As we have seen, Spitzer as well as two other philosophers mentioned, Leibniz and Dorda, seem not to distinguish these two kinds of facts. Still disquieting is the problem of reasonability of the question asked by W. G. Leibniz and echoed by M. Heidegger: „Why there exists something rather than nothing?" Leibniz proved the priority of being faced with nothing, saying that „nothing is simpler and easier than something" and Heidegger agrees with him.[32] If this argument is right, Spitzer's proof is right too. But if Leibniz' and Heidegger's reasoning were wrong, and in fact it seems to be a paralogism, Spitzer's proofs presented in his two sections of *Proofs for the Existence of God, part II* would leave much to be desired.

The final conclusion is the following: It is good that philosophers try to clear the paths in metaphysics, in order to get at the Absolute. And even though these paths are not quite right, but rather devious, none the less they are somehow useful, because they stimulate other philosophers to define more accurately their concepts and to be practised in finding the proper threads which lead us out through the labyrinths of human thinking. And this is, one way or another, a gain.

[32] G.W. Leibniz, *Kleinere philosophische Schriften. Mit Einleitung und Erläuterungen deutsch herausgegeben von R. Habs.* Leipzig 1883, p. 143; M. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* Frankfurt am Main 1949, n. 381 and 383, p. 42: „Warum ist überhaupt Seiendes und nicht vielmehr Nichts?"

Stanisław ZIEMIAŃSKI

MOŻLIWOŚĆ — AKTUALNOŚĆ — BÓG

Streszczenie

Okazją do napisania tego artykułu było opublikowanie przez J. R. Spitzera II. części jego rozprawki pt.: *Proofs for the Existence of God* w: „International Philosophical Quarterly", t. XLI, nr 2, w czerwcu 2001 r. Treścią tej rozprawy są trzy nowe argumenty za istnieniem Boga: (1) z czasu minionego, (2) z odróżnienia czystej możliwości i aktualności, (3) z tego samego odróżnienia w ujęciu Bernarda Lonergana.

Autor obecnego artykułu przedstawia w 1. punkcie historię średniowiecznego sporu o odwieczne istnienie świata, aby na tym tle ukazać poglądy Spitzera. Św. Bonawentura jest w owym sporze za czasowym początkiem, święci Albert Wielki i Tomasz z Akwinu twierdzą, że nie można wykluczyć odwieczności świata. Ponieważ Spitzer opowiada się za stanowiskiem św. Bonawentury, autor podjął się zadania rozstrzygnięcia sporu za pomocą odpowiednich argumentów. Główną racją, jaka przemawia przeciwko stanowisku finitystycznemu, jest zakwestionowanie założeń, za jakich się ono opiera. Autor odróżnia dwa ujęcia czasu: ahistoryczne i historyczne. Czas w ujęciu ahistorycznym, rozpatrywany na poziomie procesów elementarnych, szczególnie na poziomie mikroskopowym, nie implikuje sam z siebie podziału na przeszłość, teraźniejszość i przyszłość. Jedynie na poziomie makroskopowym uzyskuje cechę historyczności. Tym samym traci sens założenie o „płynięciu" czasu i istnieniu skończonego czasu przeszłego.

W 2. punkcie autor omawia argument Spitzera z aktualizowania możliwości. Dostrzega przy tym podobieństwo między tym argumentem a ujęciem W. G. Leibniza i J. Dordy. U wszystkich tych trzech filozofów dowodzi się istnienia Boga na drodze poszukiwania racji dostatecznej dla przeprowadzenia bytów z wachlarza możliwości do konkretnego istnienia. Jeśli takich racji jest więcej, to wymagana jest ostatecznie jedna przyczyna pierwsza, która nie może być ograniczona ani wewnętrznie, ani zewnętrznie. W trzecim odcinku swej rozprawki Spitzer omówił wariant powyższej argumentacji w koncepcji B. Lonergana. Chociaż B. Lonergan posługuje się ciągle stylistyką pytań, to jednak jego koncepcja implicite zawiera odniesienie do odpowiedzi na nie. Bóg jest w tym wariancie argumentu źródłową odpowiedzią na pytanie „dlaczego?".

Autor w *Podsumowaniu* wskazuje na potrzebę bliższego wyjaśnienia różnicy między argumentacją metafizyczną a kosmologiczną, rozstrzygnięcia sporu o stosunek metafizyki do nauk przyrodniczych, oraz ustalenia kryteriów oddzielających fakty, które nie potrzebują wyjaśnienia od tych, które wyjaśnienia się domagają.