

Mieczysław Gogacz's anthropological explanation for the existence of angels

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Introduction

Professor Mieczysław Gogacz, the renowned philosopher and founder of the recent version of Thomism – the Consistent Thomism¹, claims that angels are the final causes (*causa finalis*) of human soul. He derives his conception from the

principle, characteristic not only for Thomism but also for the entire classical philosophy, which says that for the existent results we respectively search the prior causes. Ultimately, such established

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¹ Gogacz introduces the term „Consistent Thomism” in his *Elementarz metafizyki* and enumerates the following features: „1) Recognition of statements of Avicenna and excluding them from the Consistent Thomism. 2) Essence is understood as created principium which initiates the existence of separate being. 3) Experiencing the essential principles on the level of the “speech of the heart” (*verbum cordis*). 4) Following the essential order of causes and results along with consistent observing pluralism with regard to essential principles. 5) Differentiating between existential and essential relations and assigning the experience of the act of existence with existential relations and next, assigning the experience of the unity of essential principles with essential relations. 6) Drawing from the conception of subsistence when the topic of person is concerned”, M. Gogacz, *Elementarz metafizyki*, Warszawa 2008, p. 139.

philosophical stance regards searching for causes and asking about causes.

Hence in analysing the problem of final causes understood as the external causes which constitute the essence of human being, it is worth to define the scope of the research. First of all, we search for the answer to the question about the causes of human being, therefore metaphysics of real beings is the area of our study, what results in further implications. Primarily, we need to acknowledge that each essential state or activity inevitably must possess its real cause in another being. When we notice there is no such cause it means that we encounter the subsistent being (*ens subsistens*). It belongs to the essence of the method of metaphysics to demand the-

ses cause to be indicated. Metaphysical methodology, when applied consequently, allows to claim that within the area of human being, reality is that what the essence exclusively receives from its existence (*esse*). Consequently, there must be some other causes that constitute the essence in its internal content, endowed with an act and potency (*potentia*), both spiritual and material. The aim of this paper is to follow the thought of Gogacz exactly in the area of discovering the role of angels as causes for the particular development of human soul. Therefore Gogacz's proposal becomes the „proof for the existence of angels”, on the basis that each thing in order to act and cause results must, first of all, exist.

I. Path to recognise the final causes as external causes in the process of shaping the essence of human being

According to Gogacz, we come to the issue of external causes of man when we consider associations and dependencies between internal causes of man as a being (*ens*). Such proceeding is by the author called the genetic approach². In analysing the internal causes of man, from the perspective of their mutual dependencies and relations, we may notice that nor man neither none of his structural elements, can be the cause of itself. Human activity cannot precede the act of his existence. In the genetic approach-

as Gogacz explains- we observe the act of existence as the first principle that initiates the existence in human being³. This existence makes the being (including human being) real, and simultaneously encompasses with reality the other principles which constitute this being. Hence, from the beginning, the act of existence is an act of a particular essence and is dependent on it. The essence plays the role of potentiality to the existence, then potentiality is the sphere which is

² M. Gogacz, *ibidem*, p.39.

³ M. Gogacz explains that principium is that what co-creates, co-constitutes a separate being and evokes – causes- a result proportionate to itself”. The aforementioned author distinguishes principium into intrinsic- and that is co-matter of being, when extrinsic- it is a separate or dependent being (accident). See: M. Gogacz, *Elementarz metafizyki*, Warszawa 2008, in: *Słownik terminów*, s.163.

shaped and is under the influence of existence.

At the same time, the act of existence within the area of the essence causes a proportionate to itself result which is a form and a cause for the identity of being. It releases (initiates) for human being the results like: intellectual- sensual cognition, motion, dimensions. In the area of the essence of man we may thus differentiate form as an act and immaterial and material potentiality, what finally gives us the composite of the intellect and body. Each of these elements demands its cause. So, there must exist some external causes initiating the existence and influencing the process of shaping the human body and soul. Hence, the human potentiality is influenced by a form and made a spiritual-material subject. Consequently we understand a matter in human being (and in every separate being) as the result of the influence of form on the matter. We may then conclude that internal associations within structural elements of man indicate that man has to possess some external causes.

They regard to both their act of coming to existence and to the essence specifically shaped as the spiritual-material sphere. Hence, we search for causes for the result we encountered as a composite of the essence. These internal causes cannot be included in the internal structure of man as they would co-formulate the internal essential content of man, along with existence and essence. When analysing the issue of the external causes of man Mieczysław Gogacz differentiates between: the efficient cause of human's existence and final causes which shape the essence of being. The efficient cause is the Subsistent Act of Existence (Being), while compound in itself, it can initiate the result such as non-subsistent existence of separate being. The Subsistent Act of Existence, which is God, creates the existence of being when, however, the entire set of causes, indispensable for the existence of being, are present. Moreover, the efficient cause cannot be the final cause as it is only the one. Complexity of the essence demands at least three external causes of this differentiation.

2. Characteristics of final causes

Next, the final causes develop the essence of human being (into particular, unique essence of a particular man) when human existence is initiated by an act created by God. The final causes act simultaneously along with the efficient

cause, and these are final causes developing the essence of being. Hence, similarly to the efficient cause which initiates a being to exist, the final causes develop the concurrent internal content of being which is substance⁴. They act

⁴ The author speaks of the substantial character of human soul. Thus soul, while being a form related to the intellectual potentially, is a substance, that is a separate being. Both human and angel soul and are under the influence of the act of existence. "Human and angel soul does not perish, it is (...) immortal, therefore it is encompassed by the act of existence as spiritual potentiality which

on a being through assimilation, becoming a pattern and aim of that assimilation. It is essential not to confuse final causes with the aim attached to already existing being. This is something toward which we all proceed when we initiate relations. Meanwhile, final causes represent the picture of that which that particular essence is supposed to be⁵. They are non-intrinsic, what means that they owe their existence to the creative act of God. Hence, the final causes are external from the perspective of being, non-intrinsic and they really exist.

Gogacz, when employing consequently the method of metaphysics, also on the path of developing the topic of final causes, demands proper causes for results already observed. He points out at the effect (result), which is the internal complexion of the essence, in the structure of human being and turns attention to the fact that for each element of this composite we must find their causes respectively. Hence for body- it will be parents and various material substances (such as food, genetic code etc.). Thereby parents will influence- as beings consisted of act and potency- on the psychical sphere of human being they themselves conceived. In the process of developing of human soul, the crucial role will be played by beings who are both devoid of material potency and equipped with immaterial one. Let us focus on the final causes of man.

Human soul, in order of existence, is a reasonable separate being. It is not, ho-

wever, independent in the order of species, as devoid of body is unable to perform all its activities. For example, it cannot create new notions without sense faculties as an agent. Although soul does not exist prior to body (there must simultaneously appear all causes for man to come to existence), however, it is not body that decides about the moment of appearance of soul in human being. So, if soul is independent from body in its existence, it means that final causes who are shaping the body are unable to reach and influence the soul. Also the soul itself is unable to cause its own essence for the fact that none being can be the efficient cause to itself. The internal composite of soul can be signified by spiritual final causes spiritual in its existence-being (*existentia*). The external causes of human soul are contingent beings, similarly built, independent in its existence from matter and body. They exist without essential link to the body and are entirely spiritual in their essence.

This is how the angels are composed. According to Gogacz we might confirm that the angels exist because that what indicates their existence is a result of their activity recognised by us- that is- the internal composite of human souls. Therefore, it is the structure of human souls as a being, which shows the structure of an angel as a being. Human soul is in its essence the intellectual form and potency. Form incorporated in the essence of angel is directed not to angel's existen-

individuates the soul. Structure consisted of act of existence and essence equipped with spiritual elements only, cannot be destroyed". See, *ibidem*, p. 147.

⁵ *Idem*, *Elementarz metafizyki*, p. 44.

ce, but to corporeal form, as angels never essentially unite with body. Also, angel cannot in its essence be a form only. If angels did not possess potency, they would not potentially be able to gain knowledge. Moreover, due to individual role of potency, angels are not only species but also separate beings. Hence, the activity of human soul is its essential part and is shaped and protected by angels. And the very essence of soul—directly after it has been created—is being sustained in its being by angels⁶.

The author of the anthropological proof for the existence of angels also claims

that more comprehensive influence of angels as finite causes is possible when a man initiates relations of love and friendship with them. As a result of their structure, angels, contrary to man, are unable to grasp that which is cognizable sensually. So angels do not grasp human souls distinctively and need to be informed about them by God. Therefore angels, are present where non-subsistent being which actualizes its essence, comes to existence. In other words, where the effect of the efficient activity of the First Cause, God, is observed.

3. Implications

The aforementioned author when analyzing the topic of angels, turns attention to the fact that predominantly this question is placed in theological context, not philosophical. This is so, because in a domain of philosophy there are no sufficient arguments given for the existence of angels. The author attempts to show that it is a domain of philosophy that allows to speak of angels as real existing beings. Thereby, excluding angels as real existing accidental beings, which are the final cause of human being, would, on the ground of metaphysics of human being, render to show how a particular being is transformed into a human person.

Therefore, to show necessity for the existence of angels on the ground of philosophy there should be distinguished two research paths: philosophical and theological. Next, on the ground of philosophy it is necessary to stick consequently to the research method proper to metaphysics. It means that we are striving to search these external causes for man as accidental being, which are necessary condition for essential identity. Such proceeding must, according to Gogacz, lead us to a topic of immaterial beings understood as final causes of human soul.

⁶ Were the act of sustenance in effective cause lacked it would result in isolation of the essence of a soul. See: M. Gogacz, *Człowiek i jego relacje (Materiały do filozofii człowieka)*, Warszawa 1985, p. 44.

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Mieczysława Gogacza antropologiczny argument za istnieniem aniołów

Słowa kluczowe: antropologia, tomizm, aniołowie, przyczyny celowe

Mieczysław Gogacz, twórca tomizmu konsekwentnego, zaproponował własne, oryginalne uzasadnienie istnienia aniołów. W ramach tego uzasadnienia, uważa, że o zewnętrznych przyczynach człowieka możemy mówić wtedy, gdy ujmiemy strukturę bytu ludzkiego genetycznie (od strony powiązań i zależności między wewnętrznymi elementami strukturalnymi człowieka). W ten sposób dochodzimy do stwierdzenia, że specyficzna struktura człowieka daje się wyjaśnić tylko przez dostrzeżenie przyczyn

zewnętrznych jego wewnętrznych pryncypiów (istnienia oraz istoty). Inne przyczyny powodują jego istnienie i inne wpływają na kształt istoty. Skoro w obrębie istoty człowieka dostrzegamy złożenie z duszy i ciała, to oznacza, że przyczynami celowymi duszy – na miarę niematerialnego skutku – muszą być jakieś substancje niematerialne (podobnie jak niematerialna jest dusza człowieka). W ten sposób możemy mówić o aniołach jako realnie istniejących bytach i przyczynach celowych ludzkiej duszy.