Edward Nieznański, Urszula Chlebińska

A Myth about Myths

EDWARD NIEZNAŃSKI, WARSAW

A MYTH ABOUT MYTHS[1]

„At best, cosmos is a pile of garbage scattered at random" – used to say Heraklit in 6th century B.C..[2] „And so everything is deserving of contempt and here is the final moral" (0 173)[3] – Leszek Kołakowski is summarizing after twenty five centuries of Heraklit's thought heritage, his significant contribution in philosophy of general variabilism. But there is also – in his opinion – a cubterfuge for constance in philosophy of religion and practise in a cult itself. One just has to follow a trail of total and confident acceptance of self-existing authority of sacrum (J 242), and nothing else. With just one maybe adminition, to have a volition willing to accept, what the mind denies.

1. INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

1.1. Metaphilosophy of religion

Philosophy of religion by Leszek Kołakowski – like all such philosophies of this kind – is by necessity a tangle of languages of different levels. If sacrum is an object of this philosophy, then language of sacrum and language about sacrum have to belong to the object language. If however, a philosopher says anything about language and system of his philosophy, he practices metaphilosophy. Differentation between levels of language, even if it was not a very important interventation during creation itself, it turns out to be helpful for analysing and estimation of the philosophy discussed.

1.1.1. Principles of acceptance

For each philosophy there is a key of metaphilosophical principles, which the philosopher's works both control and are submitted to. A few of

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[1] From „Studia z filozofii Boga" (edited by Bohdan Bejze) V. 5: O filozoficznym poznaniu Boga dziś, Warsaw 1992, p.250-261, translated by Urszula Chlebińska.

[2] One of the subsisted sayings of Heraklit (cf K. Popper, Open Society and its Enemies, 1962, 1966; Polish edition by „Krytyka", Warsaw 1987, 11).

[3] Put in brackets signs j.e. (0 173) or (J 242), consisted of one letter and one digit are reference marks of works of Leszek Kołakowski, where a letter is an abbreviation of a title of a proper work, according to the key given at the end of this article, and a digit is a number of quoted page.

such leading principles, rules or laws of acceptance, seem to make together a foundation of language and philosophical system of Leszek Kołakowski.

(1) Law of infinitive horn of plenty.
First, Leszek Kołakowski inclines towards acceptance of law of infinitive horn of plenty, which says that there is never a shortage of arguments to justify a doctrine, that one wants to belive in, for whichever reason (cf J 13). At the same time each doctrine is proof against objections, and its mechanism of explanation can work on and on (cf J 227). Besides, the same refers to an excess of counterarguments and there is no truism so banal, that philosophers at some point would not think of questioning it (cf H 129).

(2) The overwhelming course of a *vicious circle*.
In Kołakowski's opinion, every rational investigation for fundamental foundations – whether in methaphysics or in philosophy of religion – must, in its final phase, fall into *a vicious circle*. Because if somebody wants to discover God for example from His sings, he must first find these signs (cf J 221). And if God gives us principles of right and wrong, we accept Him, such that He would give us these principles (cf J 221). We accept, at last revealed word as the truth, because the Church testifies for it, and the testimony of the Church is true for us, because its authority is based on revelation (cf J 238). Simultaniously, Kołakowski explains (cf H 41) that the curse of the *vicious circle* is overwhelming in any kind of investigation for the fundamental foundations, just because we cannot start our inquiries at an epistemological zero point, meaning without any assumptions.

(3) The law of equal arbitraries of contrary options.
In Kołakowski's opinion both in metaphysics and philosophy of religion, the law of equal arbitraries of contrary options is obligatory. It is a principle which the ancient Sceptics, as far back as the 3rd century A.D., made known as a balance of statements. And so the philosopher is being swayed by contradictions:

(3.1) either metaphysically empty metaphilosophy or commitment to some metaphysical perspective (cf H 126/127);
(3.2.) either investigations for the fundamental foundations or denial of validity of such investigations (cf H 42);
(3.3.) domain of science or religion (cf J 177);
(3.4.) option of a phenomenalist or a metaphysicist (cf J 101/102);
(3.5.) mythical or phenomenal order (cf M 131);
(3.6.) option for a myth or against it (cf M 47);
(3.7.) option of understanding faith or explanatory science (cf M 15);
(3.8.) *profanum* or *sacrum* (cf J 240, 247);
(3.9.) God or emptiness (cf J 235, 248/249);
(3.10) either belief in original sin or belief in universal synthesis (cf C 150-153, 157, D 193);

And regardless of how many more such condradictory pairs there would be, both options of each pair are equally strong or better equally weak, and the choice of one of them is an arbitrary decision only.

(4) *Credo ut intelligam.*

Leszek Kołakowski unreservedly accepts the princple of St. Anselm *credo ut intelligam,* although he understands.and uses it differently, since his credo has no connection with reference to dignity of personal authority. For Kołakowski an act of understanding – both in philosophy and religion – is undisitnguished from an act of faith, and maybe even preceded by it (cf H 121/122). Therefore every follower of philosophy or religion, thanks to initiation of its kind, understands myths in an act of acceptance itself (cf H 122).

(5) Autonomous authority of *sacrum.*

At last, because the contents of religious beliefs are not – in Kołakowski's opinion – of empirical or analytical origin (cf J 175) and are not submitted to dichotomy of truth and falseness (cf M 46), then their irrational (cf M 16) base of acceptance has to be referred to the whole sphere of *sacrum,* which includes both mythical reality and acts of cult (cf J 180) and finally rests, by the strength of alien transmission (cf M 30), in autonomous authority of *sacrum* itself (cf J 242).

1.1.2. Epistemological restrictions

The principles of myth's acceptance assumed by Kołakowski have determined the character of his philosophy. Namely, they have left an impression of scepticism, relativism and practicism on it.

(1) Scepticism.

If one was to qualify Leszek Kołakowski as a partial sceptic, it would be only in the sense, that he fights for the truth within the sphere of science, but not beliefs (cf J 84), because he holds a firm epistemological, and methodological scepticism within the field of metaphysical and religious beliefs. In comparison with the ancient Sceptics he represents some moderation only in metaphysical recognition, accepting the metaphysical *puzzles* as allowed, and the experience of fact of existence as possible (cf J 74-75, M 57), although in the cognitively unessential sense as formulation of qualification of communication process, and not the things themselves (cf H 20). What myths say is conceivable, but even if it is as they suggest, one cannot be sure of it, if his knowledge, by necessity, starts from sensorial perception and goes back to it (cf J 66). And myth never is and cannot be a conclusion, that one comes to on the grounds of the register of experienced events (cf M 60). Therefore religious beliefs are empirically empty (cf J 177). Also every attempt to establish criteria of validity of knowledge leads both to an *infinite regress* or a *vicious circle* or at last to a *paradox of self-reference* (cf H 13). Similarly every effort to justify truth of faith in a rational way – as it has been already spoken – cannot get out of

the *vicious circle*. And so there is not any recognition within the field of beliefs. And even if there was, its transmission would still be impossible, because in Kołakowski's philosophy a cancer of scepticism eats up dialectics also. It is not possible to come to the agreement about criteria of validity (cf H 135), so it is impossible to be convinced about myth (cf M 16). Neither side has been and ever will be convinced by arguments of the contrary side (cf J 14) and this is *questio juris*, and *not facti* (cf J 80, 211/212).

(2) Relativism.

In the same sense as scepticism, cognitive relativism of Leszek Kołakowski is also partial. It spares natural sciences but one can clearly see it within the sphere of beliefs. Then it is as universal, as much as the myth is omnipresent. And before the law of equal arbitraries of both options: an option for the myth and against it (cf M 47/48, J 221), and since no myth is submitted to dichotomy of truth and falseness (cf M 46), the real is what people actually desire (cf J 248).

(3) Pragmatism.

Cognitive scepticism and relativism in metaphysics and philosophy of religion, in Kołakowski's opinion, do not lead to inertia of volition and final suspension of proposition. Universal pragmatism or practicism – which is opposed to realistic epistemology (cf P 34) – is to determine definitive mechanism of acceptance both in science and religion. In other words, cognitive validity is finally defined by pragmatical qualities (cf H 33). The truth, on the other hand, as a value different from effective applicability, is a part of myth (cf M 46). However, the criterion of effective applicability with reference to empirical knowledge and mythical beliefs has diametrically opposed sense. Scientific methods namely turned out to be trustworthy in anticipation of events and may be practically used with considerable success (cf J 82). And emprical knowledge is verifiable in a sense that eventually it always refers to commonly attainable acts of perception (cf J 177). Meanwhile, nothing that could be said about God and Povidence of God, about creation of the world and sense of human life, about purposeful order of things and ultimate destiny of the world, is neither falsificated or provided with prognostic power (cf J 175). And no doubt both of these fields, knowledge and religion, fundamentally are unreducible to a common set of experiences (cf J 177). However, religious beliefs have their own pragmatical value: they make life worth living (cf J 178), they form world's perception in terms of order created by God (cf J 223), and in the light of faith the world becomes more understandable than without it, or rather without this light it is not possible to understand it at all (cf J 233). These beliefs are irremovable part of culture (cf H 42), and myths included in them have cultural reality, that is cultural independence or autonomy (cf J 248). After all, what is real for us and what is unreal, is a matter of practical rather than philosophical committal (cf J 249).

1.2. Philosophy of the cult of eternal reality

Notions of *religion, sacrum, God, faith* and *myth* are the main points of reference of Leszek Kołakowski's philosophy of religion. He intentionally avoids formulation of definitions of these notions, while their sense, as he imagines, appears by itself from the whole of his work (cf M 7).

(1) The notion of religion
Every definition of religion has to be arbitrary to some extent (cf J 5). However, it may be stated immediately, that religion is not a set of statements, but a domain of cult (cf J 180, 190). More precisely, it is a socially settled cult of the eternal reality (cf J 9). This cult by necessity is placed in a specified civilization (cf J 198), and religious truth connected with it is being protected and handed down in a continuity of common experience (cf J 230). Religion is not a set of sentences, but a way of life in which understanding, faith and acceptance of obligation are merging into one act (cf J 328). Religion is an experience of *sacrum* (cf J 5) from which common sense derives only (cf D 173) and it is also a living affiliation to order tabu (cf J 211), breach of which arouses a feeling of guilt (cf J 214). One indivisible act of cult contains a „factual" theorem, estimation of this „fact" in the whole context of faith, and besides personal emotional attitude (cf J 194). It brings to mind that religious myths might be understood so to say from the inside, because of real participation in religious community only (cf J 192).

(2) *Sacrum* and *profanum.*
In religious discourse – in Kołakowski's opinion – one can distinguish some characteristic properties which differentiate it from a laic language. The language of *sacrum* is first of all some part (cf J 185) and language (cf J 179) of a cult. If at the same time in a colloquial and scientific language, acts of understanding and acts of faith are being clearly separated, then in the domain of *sacrum* et is different: here, the understanding of words merges into one with a feeling of participation in reality, to which these words refer (cf J 180, 182). Comparing languages of *profanum* and *sacrum*, first one has to state, that they are mutually untranslatable to each other without any distoretion, although they remain semiotically imperfect to the same degree (cf J 194). However, the purposes to which these languages serve are different: the former is used as a device for response to our natural environment and for manipulation of it, the later, on the other hand, gives this environment sense (cf J 196). Besides, language of *profanum* is universal in the meaning that elements of this language which have clear empirical reference, may be transferred from one culture to the others, whereas language of *sacrum* is not universal, because acts of cult do not keep their sacral sense in different civilizations (cf J 196/197). Between *sacrum* and *profanum* also occurs a secular and thoroughly overwhelming antagonism (cf J 247/248), and an explanation of this conflict is not possible in categories of logical misunderstanding, confusion of notions, or

improper understanding of boundary between science and faith; as it is not a logical but cultural conflict (cf J 240, M 12). And irrefutability of *sacrum* comes from the fact that it does not have and does not have to have any support both in empirical experience or in mind or in any personal authority, because it refers to transcendental and in relation to time transcendent way of existence (cf A 29) and it is an impersonal autonomous authority for itself (cf J 242).

(3) Search for two Ultimia.

Behind the search for two *Ultimia* must lie – according to Leszek Kołakowski – some mental pressure. One then searches first for the creator of the world, and secondly – for a necessary foundation of everything that exist accidentally. The first *Ultimum* explains the beginning of the world, the second makes it all possible. The former appears in religious myths, the later one can come to by philosophical investigations (cf H 40). However, both of these conceptions do not have any empirical or analytical justification (cf J 70, 175). Because neither so called metaphysical experience or experience of *sacrum* makes sensorial perception. Metaphysical rules of inference are also futile invention (cf J 71). And as long as one complies with the rigours of logic, that are accepted in scientific investigations, we cannot talk about trials of God that could be infallibly discovered in the world, nothing that we could with conviction identify as His signs (cf J 77).

(4) The notion of faith.

Leszek Kołakowski in his philosophy is constantly using only one notion of faith, linking it closely with a notion of myth. The only subject of faith is namely a myth, and myth may only be „taken for granted". He also assumes that faith is not an act of intellectual recognition of some sentences but an act of moral involvement, linking up in one integral whole, intellectual acceptance with infinite faith, that no facts can deny (cf J 51).

(5) The notion of myth.

Kołakowski is especially liberal with a word „myth" and he uses it in different stylistic figures. So we have mythical conviction (cf M 32), mythical reality (cf M 32), mythical event (cf A 89), mythical foundation (cf M 33), mythical consciousness (cf M 35, 40), mythical intuitions (cf M 40), mythical values (cf M 54), mythical project (cf M 131) etc. Mythical consciousness is anyway omnipresent, although most often incorrectly revealed (cf M 35, 61, 131). Myth-making acts are common (cf M 13). First of all in epistemology, where just the distinction of consciousness from a thing, distinction previous to perceptive situation, is a myth (cf M 25). An idea of truth, as a quality different from effective applicability, is also a myth (cf M 46). Empirically empty and hopelessly impossible is also metaphysics searching for a reason for a myth, because the myth is organically unable of rising out of grounds applicable within the bounds of experience only (cf M 61). Its principle of sufficient condition is mythical (cf

M 69). And the world of values – in philosophy, religion, culture – is a mythical reality (cf M 32). Myths of the beginning fill the religion (cf M 7). Myth appears even in logic: in radiance of mythical consciousness at imperatives of our mental work, in mythical intuition in our understanding of rules of logic (cf M 40) and in the myth of Mind in general (cf M 47).

Then what is – in Kołakowski's understanding – omnipresent and omnipotent myth? Well, he calls mythical any conviction that transcends and takes a relativistic view of every possible experience, refering it in an understanding way to realities, essentially unable of having their verbal description linked by a logical tie to a verbal description of experience (cf M 32). Contrary to hypotheses, myths do not explain anything; they interpret everything. And so the affirmation of purposeful order of the world, in relation to data of experience is an understanding interpretation of them (cf M 12). And just an understanding elucidation of the world is myth's work (cf M 49, H 137). At the same time, myth is not subbmitted to dychotomy of truth and falseness (cf M 46) and every trouble to rationalize myth must seem caricatural (cf M 16). Therefore mythical project is a lie, if it searches for tools, which will turn it into a conclusion based on register of experienced events (cf M 60). Because myth cannot have conditions; it has motives only (cf M 60-61), such as the necessity of purposeful order, persistence of personal values and continuity of changes (cf M 14).

2. A MATTER OF A PHILOSOPHY WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Leszek Kołakowski's philosophy of religion is such a dense tangle of historical, linguistic, cultural, metaphysical, metatheoretical and other trains, and it is so much entangled in its own intricacy of mechanism of self-acceptance, that a thorough study and introduction of it is probably more important than an attempt to criticize it. First we must say though, that all – mentioned above in the part discussing metaphilosophy of religion – rules of acceptance standing in Kołakowski's philosophy, prove irreversible epistemological collapse of the philosopher in biasses against cognitive apparatus in the matter of the possibility of its extrapolation outside the limits of empirical prognoses. But doctrine which prefers prognostic knowledge only, which accepts explanation with the help of mathematical functions only is a priori unsuccessful. One only needs to point at the theory of sets, meaning its use. It is known, that in every nonempty finite set X, set of all functions f.i.: X^X is just a simple subset of the set of all two-place relations 2^{X^2}. If e.g. set X has 2 elements then there are 16 possible relations in it, and only 4 functions among them. When X has 3 elements then there is no more than 512 relations in it, and only 27 functions among them. When X has 4 elements then there are 65536 relations possible in it, and 256 functions among them. Therefore if for example in a set of 5 elements there may be no more than 3125 functions, which warrant anticipation of value of dependent variable from value of

independent variable, it does not mean at all that remaining 33551307 relations cannot be a subject of study, just because relations which are not functions, do not have any prognostic value.

But we do not intend and it does not seem purposeful to use the law of *infinitive horn of plenty* to fight against scepticism, relativism or practicism in the name of and from the point of view of a philosophy without prejudice. We will rather content ourselves only with pointing out important moments because of which philosophy of Leszek Kołakowski cannot satisfy us. We would like to emphasize, as a significant, the fact, that the principal trait of this philosophy is its self-annihilative way of function. The mind is used in it only to show its uselessness; it cannot get to know a being anyway, although it understands it, in a free way. Kołakowski's philosophy is a general myth about all myths. And if these myths are fictitious, then it is a fairy-tale about fairy-tales.

Mentioned opinion, if we left it at that, would still be too generous for this philosophy, if we consider a fact that in this philosophy myth is not submitted to dichotomy of truth and false (cf M 46). Because a contradiction appears; myth as an indicative proposition (or their conjunction) has logical value of truth or false, but as just a myth – it does not have such value at all. And at last, what actually is supposed to be accepted in myth, when it has been already accepted, that a myth can never be either truth or false, but at the very most it can be an effective applicability only? Myth's acceptance, although motivated, is always logically unjustified and arbitrary. So it is not surprising, that from this philosophy point of view everything is contemptible (cf 0 173)

3. A MATTER OF FAITH WITHOUT MYTH

In philosophy of Leszek Kołakowski *faith* and *myth* are complementary notions: there is no faith without myth or myth without faith. This predicate of faith is two-place predicate: the first is a name argument and the second – sentence argument, and it has logical form Vxp, that is to say: *(a person) x believes, that p*, but in accordance with Kołakowski's intention, we understand as an expression: *(a person) x accept opinion that p*. However semantical fact, that Kołakowski's philosophy of religion refers this generalized notion Vxp also to religious faith is a mistake of vital importance, a mistake which annihilates Kołakowski's philosophy of religion. Meanwhile there is a different, relevant and classical, although ignored by Kołakowski, sense of faith, described by three–place predicate $Wxyp$, that is to say: *(a person) x believes (a person) y, that p*. And although there are also derived two-place predicates: predicate W_2xp *(x believes, that p)*, which can be defined with the help of functor W in accordance with the definition: $W_2xy \rightleftharpoons \exists y \; Wxyp$, and predicate W_3xy *(x believes y)*, understood in accordance with designation: $W_3xy \rightleftharpoons \exists \; p \; Wxyp$, but their sense,

absolutely different from (indefinable with the help of functor W) the meaning of predicate V, are being shown just by above mentioned definitions. If however $Wxyp$, which means if person x believes person y, that p, it is like that when person y is an authority for person x[4]. Because faith „we call an acceptance of some theses as being true [...] because, we admit an authority of someone, who gives us these theses and who guarantees their truthfulness"[5]. Let us try to explain sense of functor W more precisely. For this purpose one can arrange first, that variable α will be used to represent non-empty sets of indicative propositions. And one can define – with the help of original predicate: *x says, that p – how we understand the notion of credibility of person x in domain* α:

credible $(x, \alpha) \rightleftharpoons \forall\, p\ \{[\ p\in\alpha \wedge \text{says}\ (x, p) \rightarrow p]\}$

On the grounds of introduced notion of *credibility* and with the help of original functor of *knowledge* (firm recognition) one can already define the notion of *authority* (epistemic) and *faith* (in a classical sense)[6]:

authority $(x,y,\alpha) \leftrightarrow$ knows$(y,$ credible$(x,\alpha))$;

$\wedge\, Wxyp \rightleftharpoons \exists\alpha\,[authority\ (y,x,\alpha) \wedge knows\ (x,\ (p{\in}\alpha)) \wedge knows\ (x,\ says\ (y,p))]$.

It is regrettable affair, that just this, the most important and the only essential for philosophy of religion elements of notion of faith, that is the notion of personal autahority, *faith* in Kołakowski's version, understood in a way expressed by predicate V, completely ignores. That's why philosophy of religion which, following the example of Kołakowski, revolves its arguments about sense of notion V instead of W, makes an error *fallatium elenchi*, that is, misses fire. Because notion of personal authority does not participate in understanding of predicate V, nobody is surprised by the fact, that Kołakowski does not draw either philosophical or logical analysis of this notion, and by saying casually just a few sentences about it, he incidentally accuses it of „primitive vicious circle" and puts off with a joke (cf J 238). However one would be mistaken, if he expected, that an empty space in philosophy of religion, after the personal authority has been removed, will not be taken, of Kołakowski's free will, by impersonal authority. Myth being sublime by itself can dazzle many, and even blind some. Even if such a magical opinion with irresistible power of *self–authority* of *sacrum* is sincere, but this doctrine of acceptance of dreams aroused from passion for myth, repels because of complicated darkness of the matter and by no means can compare with the level of

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[4] Logical analysis of notion of authority is demonstrated by: J. Bocheński, *The Logic of Religion*, New York 1965; the same, *Was ist Autorität? Einführung in die Logik der Autorität*, Freiburg 1974; A. Menne, *Zur formalen Struktur der Autorität*, „Kant – Studien" 60(1969), 289-197; the same, *Einführung in die formale Logik*, Darmstadt 1985.

[5] P. Chojnacki, *Podstawy filozofii chrześcijańskiej*, Warsaw 1955, 18.

[6] Logical analysis of notion of faith is demonstrated by: E. Nieznański, *Logika a wiara oświeconych*, „Studiae Philosophiae Christianae" 21(1985) 1, 157-162; the same, *Axiologische Aspekte der Autoritäten* von Wissenschaftlern un der Wissenschaftler als Autoritäten, in: F.M. Schmölz, P. Weingartner (edit.), *Werte in den Wissenschaften*, Innsbruck 1991, 43-53.

precision and clarity, with which St. Thomas of Aquinas managed to concentrate in one sentence, actually the whole methodology of justification of the truths of faith: „What belongs to faith, one does not have try to prove in any other way, but only by reference to an authority towards those, who accept authorities: towards the others one has to confine oneself to defence, that what faith says, is not impossible" (*Summa Theologica* I, q. 32, a. 1).

4. A MATTER OF PROOF WITHOUT FALLACY

Leszek Kołakowski's arguments about Thomistical proofs of God's existence terrifies with especially unfortunate kinds of simplification. Though he admits that behind searches for autonomous and logically necessary foundations of everything that exist accidentally must lie some mental pressure (cf H 40), still at the same time he proclaims his message, that mind is helpless when it comes to solution of the „problem of God" and that in effect such „problem" does not exist, as „God is not an unknown quantity in equation" (cf J 225). Because the whole perception of the world – in which there are not any signs of God (cf J 77) – from the point of view of a believer, is based on an unascertainable faith in the person, whose very existence at best cannot be proved, and at worst it turns out to be internally contradictory (cf J 232). Every attempt of such argumentation are anyway vain and unconvincing (cf J 76), they are based on ideas, which do not have any empirical basis (cf J 70), and their value is not guaranteed by logical principles (cf J 71). And this is where (cf J 62) Kołakowski demonstrates the „artistry" of his logical apparatus to show an incurable fault in logical construction of cosmological arguments. So he states – refering to anonymous critics and Kant – that these arguments assume, that if every link of a chain (of movements or reasons) has to be preceded by a former one – so there must be a link which precedes all of them. But it is logically unacceptable – Kołakowski emphasizes – because (in reference to chain R) from the expression with a form of $\forall y \, \exists x \, Rxy$, the expression with inverted order of quantifiers, that is $\exists x \, \forall y \, Rxy$ cannot be derived.

And once more we are facing phenomenon of Kołakowski's selfdestructive philosophy, which the same readiness produces and devours myths. We are not able, within the bounds of common sense, to explain the fact, that historian of philosophy, who knows that St. Thomas of Aquinas assumes the finiteness of sequences of reasons and movements, that is he accepts exactly that $\neg \, \forall y \, \exists x \, Rxy$, simultaneously not thinking twice, he suggests that in cosmological arguments St. Thomas bases himself on a premise about infinity (meaning – without the beginning) of chain R, so that $\forall y \, \exists x \, Rxy$. If Kołakowski is already convinced (nobody knows how), that relations R considered in cosmological arguments, for St. Thomas are at the same time irreflexive, transitive and connected within the field of all real beings, that means that they are a chain, then he should immediately

notice that logical structure of understood in such a way cosmological arguments is based on a well-known from the set theory, trivial formal relation, that every finite chain has the first (and at the same time minimal) element. If, on the other hand, against St. Thomas, one assumes additionally, that chain R is continuous in its field, and thereby infinite, then instead of implication $\forall y \exists x \, Rxy \rightarrow \exists x \forall y \, Rxy$, one should rather state an implication analogous to this, which compares situation of a chain of minority relation in an open interval (0,1) with its state in a closed interval [0,1]:

$$\forall_{x \in (0,1)} \exists_{y \in (0,1)} \, y < y \rightarrow \exists_{x \in [0,1]} \forall_{y \in (0,1)} \, x < y,$$

because the first being, in accordance with intentions of philosophy of St. Thomas, never belongs to the same category of beings, to which accidental beings belong. But the idea of the chain R – as Francesca Rivetti-Barbó has shown[7] – is empirically pointless, and in relation to Thomistical opinion – inadequate.

The run of Thomistical thought and its logical structure are fascinating, when one would soundly go in for it. Thomism first of all states that essence and existence of every being are defined by factors contained inside or outside it. These definable factors are called necessary conditions or reasons of being. Relation R (of which symbol Rxy that is to say: x is a reason of existence of y) undoubtedly has a number of formal properties, which at the beginning we can omit. Now, one can take a sign A_t for a symbol of all beings actual at the moment t. It can be noticed at once that one will have to consider a set of all „actual worlds", that is a family $\{A_t\}_{t \in T}$ (where „T" means *continuum* of time). There is also maybe even general approval of philosophers of any orientation, that there is a standing principle of being's maintenance:

(1) $\forall t \neg (A_t = \emptyset)$ (No actual world is an empty set).

One can define now a relation σ between world A_s and A_t as a relation of inclusion of set A_t in R-image of set A_s that is to say:

$$\sigma A_s A_t \rightleftharpoons A_t \subseteq R \, (A_s).$$

Now one can notice first of all, that, relation σ is a dense chain in a family $\{A_t\}_{t \in T}$, that is to say:

(2) $\forall t \, [A_t \subseteq R \, (A_t)],$
(3) $\forall t \, \forall s \, [A_t \subseteq R \, (A_s) \wedge A_s \subseteq R \, (A_t) \rightarrow A_t = A_s],$
(4) $\forall t \, \forall s \, \forall u \, [A_t \subseteq R(A_s) \wedge A_s \subseteq R(A_u) \rightarrow A_t \subseteq R(A_u)],$
(5) $\forall t \, \forall s \, [A_t = A_s \vee A_t \subseteq R(A_s) \wedge A_s \subseteq R(A_t)],$
(6) $\forall t \, \forall s \, \{A_t \subseteq R(A_s) \rightarrow \exists u \, [A_u \subseteq R(A_s) \wedge A_t \subseteq R(A_u)]\}.$

[7] F. Rivetti-Barbò, *La struttura della prima via per provare l'esistenza di Dio*, „Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica" 52(1960), 241-320. Information about variety of achievements of logical analysis and formalisation of Thomism are obtainable in following works: E. Nieznański, *Logical Analysis of Thomism*, in: J. Srzednicki (edit.), Initiatives in Logic, Dordrecht 1987, 128-155; the same, *The Beginnings of Formalisation in Theology*, in: G. Schurz, G. Dorn (edit.), *Advances in Scientific Philosophy*, Amsterdam 1991, 551-559.

Surely it is also a common opinion of philosophers of all orientations, that all beings of an actual world are determined, in their essence and existence, by beings of an earlier world, that is:

(7) $\forall t \, \forall s \, [s < t \rightarrow A_t \subseteq R(A_s)]$.

Intriguing for some philosophers matter, whether chain σ has the first and minimal element, is related only with the answer of a question, whether the intersection of all actual worlds itself is an element of the family of these worlds, that is to say, $\cap_{t \in T} A_t \in \{A_t\}_{t \in T}$? The one who accepts that $\exists_t \, \forall_{s \leqslant t}(A_s = \cap_{t \in T} A_t)$, will get coming from it the conclusions, that chain σ has a minimal element, that is to say that $\exists_t \, \forall_S \, [A_t \subseteq R(A_S) \rightarrow A_t = A_s]$ and also that it has the first element, $\cap_{t \in T} A_t$ that is to say $\forall_t [A_t \subseteq R(\cap_{t \in T} A_t)]$. The vital problem though does not lie in the question whether $\cap_{t \in T} A_t$ itself is one of the actual worlds, but whether this product – even if it is not an element of family $\{A_t\}_{t \in T}$ – is a non-empty set of elements, existence of which finally explains why generally there is something rather than nothing? A philosopher knows that an explaining process of a follower of universal variabilism, that is of myth, that $\cap_{t \in T} A_t = \emptyset$ suspends itself in infinity. A fact of being has a sensible explanation only when $\neg \, (\cap_{t \in T} A_t = \emptyset)$ and when $\cap_{t \in T} A_t = \{x \, : \, \forall y \, Rxy \wedge \forall z \, (Rzx \rightarrow z = x)]\}$. But then of course one does not think anymore of a philosopher who states that „there is nothing absurd about the opinion that world is absurd" (J 223).

Bibliographical abbreviations for works of Leszek Kołakowski

A = *Angelus Silesius. Die Antinomie des Panhteismus,* in: N 89-127.
C = *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony,* in: K 149-164
D = *Diabeł,* in: K 174-193.
H = *Horror metaphysicus,* Warsaw 1990.
J = *Jeśli Boga nie ma... O Bogu, diable, grzechu i innych zmartwieniach tak zwanej filozofii religii,* Kraków 1988.
K = *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony i 27 innych kazań,* London 1982.
M = *Obecność mitu,* Warsaw 1986.
N = *Narr und Priester. Ein philosophisches Lesebuch,* Frankfurt a. Main 1987.
O = *Odwet sacrum w kulturze świeckiej,* in: K 165-173.
P = *Der Priester und der Narr,* in: N 9-44.