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OMNIPOTENCE AS A PERFECTION OF GOD[1]

This article deals with the concept of omnipotence very important for contemporary analytic philosophy of religion. Within the analytic tradition it is usual to uncover an apparent tension between God's omnipotence and other divine attributes. In response, some authors have proposed their own ideas on how classical problems of omnipotence can be solved in terms of possible worlds theory. In this paper we aim to consider the approaches developed by Geach, Adams and Plantinga. While admitting that each of them has made a significant contribution to the refinement of the concept of omnipotence, we still point out a number of important challenges that these authors were not able to overcome.

Keywords*: God, omnipotence, Adams worlds, possible worlds semantics, Leibniz, Plantinga.*

A number of analytic philosophers (including A. Plantinga) believe that the exclusive nature of God is determined by His specific attributes such as omnipotence, omnibenevolence and omniscience. According to the Western theistic tradition these three perfections make God unique and worthy of worship. The present paper focuses on the first of them.

The question of omnipotence is one of the most elaborated among the questions about the attributes of God. There are a lot of debates, for example, concerns the so-called "paradox of the stone". It is the following: Is God capable to create a stone that He is not capable to lift? If He is, then God is not omnipotent, as much as there is a thing that He cannot do — He cannot lift the stone. If is not, then

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God is evidently not omnipotent. Unfortunately some authors obscure the problem by adding superfluous details such as *weight of stone*, *time of creation*, etc. There are substantial grounds for belief that such concepts are applicable only to the phenomena of the physical world and their mechanical transfer to the domain of the divine is not valid, because it leads to categorical confusion.

The contradiction that is described in this paradox becomes even more dramatic if the notion of omnipotence is considered with respect not only to physical objects such as stone, but with respect to mral agoents, endowed with free will[2]. For example J.L. Mackie puts it this way:

> Can an omnipotent being make things which he cannot subsequently control? […] It is clear that this is a paradox: the questions cannot be answered satisfactorily either in the affirmative or in the negative. If we answer 'Yes', it follows that if God actually makes things which he cannot control, or makes rules which bind himself. he is not omnipotence he has made them: there are then things which he cannot do. But if we answer 'No', we are immediately asserting that there are things which he cannot do, that is to say that he is already not omnipotent [7, p. 210].

If you believe that God is omnipotent in the absolute sense it means that He is able to do anything He wants without any restrictions. This paradox seems insoluble. However, if you accept the premise that God is so powerful (more absolute than one usually supposes) that He does not obey even the laws of logic, then He will have no

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[2] Lidia Ivanova, a daughter of famous symbolist poet Vyacheslav Ivanov, recalls that when she was a little girl, she addressed her father with the tricky question about God and the rock, and she was worried whether her wise father could answer it. Vyacheslav Ivanov took the question very seriously and said: "God created such a stone – it is a man".

problems with creating (or not creating) a stone He cannot then lift. Only those who dare to investigate such an object in a received rational way will run into difficulties, for He is subject to apparently some other laws than those that govern human mind. That is why some analytic philosophers are seeking to resolve the paradox of the stone in another way, trying to avoid the contradiction in the concept of an omnipotent being.

The concept of omnipotence in the analytic tradition

Richard La Croix in his work "The Impossibility of Defining 'Omnipotence'" following in some sense "apophatic" logic, suggests that the definition of omnipotence to be discarded if it entails at least one of the following statements:

i) an omnipotent being is able to bring about that it is logically impossible;

ii) an omnipotent being is able to bring about that is logically impossible for an omnipotent being;

iii) an omnipotent being is not omniscient (not omnipresent, not omnibenevolent, etc.);

iv) an omnipotent being is obviously not omnipotent.[3]

"Any such definition of omnipotence is inadequate and must be rejected because if it entails (i) or (ii) then it leads to logical absurdities, if it entails (iii) then it is theologically irrelevant, and if it entails (iv) then it is vacuous" [4, p.183]. La Croix went on arguing that any definition of omnipotence brings about at least one of the above effects, and hence this concept could not be defined.

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[3] Recall, for example, a well-known character named MacEar, who, according to some analytical scholastics, can only scratch his left ear. Assuming that any other opportunity in his world is excluded, MacEar should be considered as omnipotent.

The idea of omnipotent God who can do everything He wants is not new (the word "can" is used here in its naive meaning, and in the theological language such statements are always being formulated in a much more precise way[4]). For example, Augustine believed that God can not die or be deceived; Anselm argued that God cannot lie or turn the truth into a lie; Thomas Aquinas insisted that God cannot change (cancel) the past, etc. What can be done to make a statement about the omnipotence of God consistent and meaningful at the same time? To put a line for the notion of omnipotence such a way that paradoxes like the paradox of stone cannot make the notion of omnipotence inconsistent seems obvious. However those who do not believe in God, keep returning to such paradoxes. For example, Russian logician Bocharov writes about the concept of omnipotence and the paradox of the stone as follows:

> … question of the omnipotence of God just shows that the predicate "Omnipotence" should be regarded as self-contradictory, since any answer to this question — "Yes, He can," or "No, He cannot" — entails that one to whom attribute the omnipotence, does not have this property. However, such question cannot be considered as sophistical, incorrect or provocative [...] Thus God as an omnipotent being is a logically impossible object. [13, c. 150]

Relying on the papers of McTaggart and Hobbes, Prof. Geach [3, pp. 7–20] came to the conclusion that the attribute 'omnipotent' was first time applied to God only in medieval scholasticism, and this word meant no more than the expression of additional honors addressed to God. But today it is quite inappropriate. First of all it

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[4] As St. Thomas notes, "we say, 'God cannot' is not in the absolute sense, but conditionally, that is, at a certain given condition", *Summa Contra Gentiles,* II-25. This clarification is important for all of medieval authors

emerges various misunderstandings and is unprofitable for the true Christianity because the very essence of the Christian faith is a claim that God can not be able to do everything. God has been limited from the very beginning; in the Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, God clearly says He cannot break given word[5]. However if we believe that God can do everything (that is not logically contradictory) therefore He must be capable of such things, because to break the word did not mean to do something that is logically impossible.

Geach deeply investigates the question of what exactly is meant by the term 'omnipotence' and comes to the conclusion that this term can convey several concepts which are significantly different from each other:

1. God can do absolutely everything;
2. A proposition "God can do so-and-so" is true if and only if "*so-and-so*" represents a logically consistent description;
3. A proposition "God *can* do so-and-so" is true only when "God does so-and-so" is logically consistent proposition;
4. Whenever a proposition "God *will* bring so-and-so about" is logically possible, "God can do so-and-so" is also true.

Geach refers to Rene Descartes as a supporter of the first approach; the second being represented by Thomas Aquinas. Perhaps Leibniz falls into the same category with Thomas, as an essential part of his argument (including the very proof of the existence of God) is similar to the argument of the 'angelic doctor'.

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[5] To be more precise, in Hebrews we read: "Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18 God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure", *Hebrews* 6: 17-19.

Geach considers all concepts — from (1) to (4) — and comes to the conclusion that none of them can be regarded as satisfactory: "... all four theories of omnipotence [...] break down. Only the first overtly flouts logic; but the other three all involve logical contradictions, or so it seems; and moreover, all these theories have consequences fatal to the truth of Christian faith [3, p. 18]. Thus, the statement "God is omnipotent" cannot serve as a premise of any theological arguments, it does not help to prove that God can do everything. But that is exactly what the theologians are trying to explain for many, many centuries:

> When people have tried to read into 'God can do everything' a signification not of Pious Intention but of Philosophical Truth, they have only landed themselves in intractable problems and hopeless confusions; no graspable sense has ever been given to this sentence that did not lead to self-contradiction or at least to conclusions manifestly untenable from a Christian point of view [3, pp. 7-8].

Geach strongly believes that for a Christian it is quite enough to believe that God is almighty but not omnipotent. He treats the term 'omnipotent' as representing the ability to do everything, and 'almighty' as representing a power over all things, "God is not just more powerful than any creature; no creature can compete with God in power, even unsuccessfully. For God is also the source of all power; any power a creature has comes from God and is maintained only for such time as God wills" [3, p. 8]. In order to radically solve the puzzle Geach simply replaces the old term by a new one. However it does not eliminate the problem. In fact, he just considers the term "almighty" as referring exclusively to the domain of faith, not knowledge. According to him this notion has a little value

in philosophy. Nevertheless in the proposal to replace 'omnipotent' by 'almighty' Geach implicitly introduces another vague term — 'might'. Since he gives no clear definition of this new term the proposed replacement does not clarify the problem, but, on the contrary, obscures it.

Obviously, the difficulty with the concept of omnipotence is an only problem of definition. The point is that the correct pragmatically real definition is still not available.

Many twentieth century researchers being under the influence of the analytic tradition came to the conclusion that this issue should not be discussed in terms of entities or features, but in terms of the states of affairs which God can bring to reality. It was recognized that He cannot bring to reality an inconsistent state of affairs, as well as the states of affairs that contradict each other. Thus, retaining the epithet "omnipotent" God would be shielded from some of the problems concerning the power. For instance, there would be no sense to ask whether God can *create* everything or *destroy* himself.

Best of all possible worlds and "Adams worlds"

The problem of omnipotence is closely linked with the question of what kind of world God could have created. In fact if He is omnipotent, He could create any world; but if his omnipotence is not absolute the world in which we live may be far from being perfect. Empirically the second point of view seems well justified, but not all philosophers (including, of course, some analytic philosophers) agree with such decision.

It is well-known that Leibniz considered our world as the best of all possible worlds. He recalls this idea repeatedly and elaborates the ground for this approach in his works. According to the principle of sufficient reason, everything happens for a reason. The cause of all causes

has to go beyond the world and be the cause of itself (*causa sui*). This very reason is God. Leibniz believed that God is a necessary being, possessing the fullness of perfection. The whole world is the result of the creative activity of a perfect being. Each thing received from God a degree of perfection. Imperfection is the result of the fact that these things do not coming from God, who alone has an absolute fullness of being, and that's what makes him perfect. Precisely because His is excellent (and is not able to be another), God created the world choosing it out of the infinite number of alternatives; this world is an ordered whole, where there is order, which is the foundation that sustains the world. Therefore our world is the best of all worlds. Leibniz justified it in two ways:

Direct proof.

Since God is omnipotent, He can create any possible world, but being also omnibenevolent, He chooses to create the best: "So one can say that no matter how God had created the world, it would have been regular and in some general order. But God chose the most perfect order" [5].

Indirect proof.

If due to the infinite number of possible worlds for any possible world *W* would be another possible world *W+1*, better than *W*, that is, God would not have the opportunity (despite His omnipotence) to select the best, then He would create no possible world at all; because He would not be omnibenevolent if He does not create the best.

As mentioned above, the concept of omnipotence is difficult to give a correct definition. While some researchers believe that it is feasible task, most think that this definition is impossible in principle. Analytic philosophy itself often creates new problems by creating new mental or logic structures. One of the most widely known concept of such a type is the so-called "Adams worlds". Adams [1, pp. 317–332] posits three fundamentally important

points (the third of them later was called "Adams worlds"):

1. God does not have any moral obligations to any possible being to bring it into existence (in particular, this refers to the inhabitants of the best of all possible worlds);

2. there is no reason to believe that there is the best one of an infinite number of possible worlds (i.e. always for any world W can be specified world $W+1$, which is better than W);

3. God could create the world that has the following characteristics:

a.   None of the creatures of this world would not exist in the best of all possible worlds;

b.   This world contain no creature whose life is not worth living;

c.   Each of these creatures are happy in this world at least at the same rate how much it would be happy in any other possible world.

Adams argues that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the number of possible worlds is not infinite with every next world being better than previous one. Moreover "even if there is a best among possible worlds, God could create another instead of it, and still be perfectly good" [1, p. 317].

Leibniz would not agree with the statement (2) on the ground that the best of all possible worlds does exist, and it is our world; because he believed that if it was not the best of all possible worlds, then God would not bring any world into existence. There is a possible objection: for all-good God it would have been worse not to create any world at all than to create not the best one; because any thing being created is better than any uncreated, hence all-good God must select the best of the possible. Besides Leibniz himself claimed that evil is often the cause of good, the later would not exist without the former. However this

argument can be turned against Leibniz: if God cannot create the best of all possible worlds (because there is none), it is still preferable for Him to create some world, demonstrating thus His own omnibenevolence. But in this case Leibniz clearly would not agree with the opponents: fore mentioned principle applies only to the created beings and cannot be applied to God and His actions. So it is clear for him that our world is optimum (i.e. the best):

> It is true that one may imagine possible worlds without sin and without unhappiness, and one could make some like Utopian or Sevarambian romances: but these same worlds again would be very inferior to ours in goodness. I cannot show you this in detail. For can I know and can I present infinities to you and compare them together? But you must judge with me *ab effectu*, since God has chosen this world as it is [6].

But does Leibniz really maintain that God is omnipotent? Not at all. As already has been mentioned, Leibniz reasons just as St. Thomas. Although the latter claimed that God can do anything, he understood the quantifier 'any' as a restricted one[6]. Moreover, this limitation follows from the very nature of God. The argument in this case goes as follows:

> Every perfect power reaches out to all those things to which the effect possessed by it through itself and proper to it can extend […]. Now, God's

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[6] According to *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, 5 God cannot "do those things whose possibility entails passive potency", "be changed with respect to the various kinds of change", "lack nothing", "neither repent, nor be angry or sorrowful", "do whatever is contrary to the nature of being as being, or of made being as made", "make one and the same thing to be and not to be", "cannot make a man to be without a soul", "make the past not to have been" and so on.

power is through itself the cause of being, and the act of being is His proper effect […]. Hence, His power reaches out to all things with which the notion of being is not incompatible […]. Now, the opposite of being, namely, non-being, is incompatible with the notion of being. Hence, God can do all things which do not essentially include the notion of non-being, and such are those which involve a contradiction. It follows that God can do whatever does not imply a contradiction [12].

In this regard, the most important is the fact that any attempt to describe omnipotent being one way or another imposes some restrictions by the very fact of his omnipotence. Otherwise we have to admit that the omnipotent being has the qualities that seem unacceptable for one reason or another. Consider the example. Leibniz says about God that He encourages to the best with the necessity, He contains as much reality as possible. Nevertheless as soon as any property is ascribed to God, He immediately loses His omnipotence. It is easy to see (turning by contraposition the arguments above) that God *cannot* be encouraged to anything but the best, *cannot* contains the reality is less than absolute, *cannot* exist without the necessity. Otherwise He just is not God. Thus, we can conclude that cataphatic Theology rule out the possibility to formulate a consistent concept of omnipotence.

On the other hand apophatic way is no less problematic than cataphatic. To say *what God is not,* one should necessarily have some (at least one) criterion according to which attributes that cannot be assigned to God, will be discarded. This criterion should be positive, that is, one cannot avoid going beyond pure apophatic theology. The only except seems to be Aquinas' claim that proposition *God is simple* is the apophatic, i.e. negative.

It seems that the dilemma might be solved by referring to Descartes' ideas of omnipotence. Descartes supported the idea according which divine omnipotence is absolute. This approach makes God not only contradictory but also unknowable. However, Descartes believes that difficulties caused by the "absolutization" of omnipotence are not insuperable. Assuming that God can do anything, we can (like Descartes) ask "Can God create a man who hates Him?"; and correctly answer "*Now* He cannot". "*Now*" means that something important has happened, whereupon the old criteria and concepts are not applicable. Some action has executed, and its very execution adds a new aspect to the previous state of the world[7]. Thus, God does not need to be available to human understanding in advance, and thereby to be a few less powerful than He could be. It is sufficient for Him to be so powerful as is needed to become at least partially or indirectly conceivable for His creatures. This approach can turn "God" into an empty term from a logical point of view. But it does not prevent neither the consideration of Him within the framework of logic, nor the idea that He is above all logic. Moreover, it is consistent with Vasiliev's approach, according to which the absolute power of God is not limited by the fact that He obeys a metalogic, since such obedience can be attributed only to His free will.

Which worlds can omnipotent God create?

Prof. Plantinga starts with Leibniz's argument about the best of all possible worlds since some contemporary philosophers, the so-called 'natural atheologians', use this argument in order to prove non-existence of God. Plantinga is trying to turn their arguments against themselves.

His point is to refute the pompous objections of opponents by rigorous logic. Opponents' arguments against

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[7] Contemporary philosophy of language calls such act 'performative'.

the omnipotence of God are very similar. Consider the following passage as a classic example:

> If you were all-good, all-knowing and all-powerful, and were going to create a universe in which were sentient beings — beings that are happy and sad; enjoy pleasure; feel pain; express love , anger, pity, hatred, — what kind of world would you create? Being all-powerful, you would have the ability to create any world that is logically possible for you to create, and being all-knowing, you would know how to create any these logically possible worlds. Which one would you choose? Obviously you would choose the best of all possible worlds because you would be all-good and would want to do what is best in everything you do. You would, then, create the best of all possible worlds, that is, that world containing the least amount of evil possible. And because one of the most obvious kinds of evil is suffering, hardship, and pain, you would create a world in which the sentient things suffered the least. Try to imagine what such a world would be like. Would it be like the one which actually does exist, this world we live in? Would you create a world such as this one, if you had the power and knowhow to create any logically possible world? If your answer is "no", as it seems it must be, then you should begin to understand why the evil of suffering and pain in this world is such a problem for anyone who thinks God created this world; then, it seems we should to conclude that it is improbable that it was created or sustained by anything we would call God. Thus, given this particular world, it seems we should conclude that it is improbable that God — who if he exists, created the world — exists. Consequent-

ly, the belief that God does not exist, rather than the belief that he exists, would seem to be justified by the evidence we find in the world [2, p. 341].

Considering the claim that "omnipotent God could create any world", Plantinga calls it 'Leibniz's Lapse' and strongly rejects as unacceptable from both a logical and an ontological points of view. According to Plantinga it is extremely naive to believe that an omnipotent being can make absolutely anything. There are a variety of things (events, phenomena, worlds), which none is able to bring to reality, even being omnipotent.

Plantinga strongly believes that the concept of omnipotence requires clarification because its arbitrary interpretation leads to paradoxes such as the paradox of the stone. He states that no acceptable definition for the term 'omnipotence' have been formulated yet. American philosopher sequentially examines several increasingly strict in the logical sense definitions of 'omnipotence' and finally concludes that it is impossible to provide such a definition of this term that it could be considered satisfactory. Then he decides to take another look at the problem. He tries to resolve this difficulty by *clarifying the statement* "God is omnipotent", without offering any attributive definition of omnipotence:

(Df_1) God is omnipotent, if and only if He is capable of performing any action *A* such that the proposition *God performs A* is logically possible.

However, Plantinga is not satisfied by this definition, because he believes it is possible, for example, to think about *the action to create a round square*, and then God would not create the action, although the statement *God creates the action of our thinking about (that's the whole point of)* is completely contingent.

Thus, despite the ambiguity of the concept "omnipotence" and the statement *God is omnipotent*, Plantinga comes to a conclusion: for the correct description of the theistic God it is necessary to impose some restrictions on the concept "omnipotence":

1. God cannot create anything He wants;
2. God cannot create logically impossible;
3. God cannot create anything that would become logically impossible when created[8];
4. God cannot create anything that is logically impossible for God, even though it is logically possible by itself[9].

This restrictions are not unobvious or extra new. Many other philosophers and theologians, both before and after Alvin Plantinga arrived at similar conclusion. In general it can be formulated as follows:

(Df₂) God is omnipotent only if God is capable of performing any action of those that are possible for him[10].

Perhaps the most important result of Plantinga's analysis of the concept "omnipotence" is that it shows how to introduce this concept without saying a word about tasks and powers, but just in terms of states of affairs.

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[8] For example, God cannot create the state of affairs, according to which he would not create this state of affairs.

[9] For example, to create a state of affairs in which God would not be omnipotent.

[10] St. Aquinas says about omnipotence: "All confess that God is omnipotent; but it seems difficult to explain in what His omnipotence precisely consists: for there may be doubt as to the precise meaning of the word 'all' when we say that God can do all things. If, however, we consider the matter aright, since power is said in reference to possible things, this phrase, "God can do all things", is rightly understood to mean that God can do all things that are possible; and for this reason He is said to be omnipotent", *Summa Theologica,* I, 25-3.

Consider then the ontological aspect of the "Leibniz's Lapse". Some explanation is needed here. Firstly, Plantinga argues that God didn't create any world (neither possible nor actual): "What God has created are the heavens and the earth and all that they contain" [9, p. 169]. By this he means that the term 'creation' can be attributed only to material objects. As for the state of affairs, God does not create but actualizes them: God *created* Socrates as object, but He just *actualized* the fact of Socrates' existence. In addition, there are states of affairs which do not need to be actualized even by God, because they correspond to the objects which have no beginning. For example, these are such situations as: 1) the existence of God himself, 2) God's possessing of His properties, 3) the existence of numbers, and 4) the necessary states of affairs. Consider, e.g., how Plantinga argues that God does not create any properties: "Properties are not creatable: to suppose that they have been created is to suppose that, although they exist now, there was a time at which they did not; and this seems clearly false" [10, p. 541].

It should be noted that Plantinga distinguishes between the existence of states of affairs and their presence in the actual world — he uses terms 'to exist' (weak existence) and 'to obtain' (strong existence) respectively:

> That is, there is such a thing as the state of affairs consisting in the existence of God and there is also such a thing as the state of affairs consisting in nonexistence of God, just as there are the two propositions *God exists* and *God does not exist*. Theist believes that the first state of affairs is actual and the first proposition true; the atheist believes that the second state of affairs is actual, and the second proposition true. But, of course, both state of affairs *exist*, but only one *obtains* [8, pp. 38–39].

So Plantinga considers God not as a creator, but as an actualizator of the states of affairs. Moreover, there are many states of affairs God cannot actualize. Plantinga discerns various reasons for such inability (including the inability to actualize some maximal states of affairs, i.e. — possible worlds):

1. God as a consistent object cannot actualize impossible (contradictory from a logical point of view) possible worlds;

2. God depends on the circumstances and cannot actualize those possible worlds in which He does not exist;

3. God cannot actualize those worlds which have different past from already actualized world[11];

4. if in the world there is a being possessing free will, it also limits the ability of God to actualize this world.

What could be said now about α — the actual world? God actualized states of affairs that obtain in α. However, this does not mean that God actualized all states of affairs that obtain in α. In addition to the state of affairs that God actualized in α, there are other two kinds of states of affairs, namely: a) the states of affairs which do not need to be actualized, because they obtain perennially, and b) those that are not actualized by someone else. The issues require further consideration: who (other than God) can actualize the states of affairs and how is it possible.

However, before we turn to the question of the kinds and agents of actualization, let's come to the bottom line in Plantinga's system God is able to perform activities of two types — He *creates* and *actualizes*. The former refers to "the heavens, the earth and all what is on them", the later — to a certain subset of the set of states of affairs. Such voluntaristic division of the God's abilities cannot remain without consequences. It is known that Plantinga considers exist-

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[11] Plantinga adds this point in order to "complete the picture", because he believes that God certainly exists in all worlds.

ence of states of affairs as a 'primary', and existence of objects as the 'secondary' (i.e., relativized to worlds) only. At the same time, God is a simple object, i.e., He also has a 'secondary' existence. Then, in view of above circumstances, we have to conclude that God cannot have any impact on the states of affairs in general.

On the types of actualization

As Plantinga strives to justify the idea that God cannot actualize arbitrary state of affairs, he introduces additional division of actualization into two types: 'strong' and 'weak' actualization. Strong actualization implies a state of affairs directly caused by God, while the second one implies a state of affairs indirectly dependent on Him (i.e. such state of affairs which is caused by another, 'strong' actualized state of affairs).

Suppose there is some state of affairs A that is the result of free choice of human being. Then God cannot actualize A. However, God has actualized world W in which happened A. At the same time God actualizes some part of the world W in the strong way. Let T be the largest state of affairs in the world W that is strongly actualized by God (that is, it contains all the states of affairs strongly actualized by God in W). Hence, *If God strictly actualized T in W, then A.* Formally, this can be written as follows:

$$GT \to A \qquad\qquad (1)$$

The relevance of «→» between the left and right side is questionable: since A is a result of the free choice of a human being, at best it would be natural to accept that GT implies such state of affairs in which a human being is compelled to choose between A and $\neg A$, but not just A itself. Formula (1) suggests that a human being was not yet completely free to choose, while Plantinga regards the ina-

bility of God to create some of the worlds as a problem precisely because God Himself endowed some beings with a free will, which allows them to independently make certain decisions and (weakly) actualize some states of affairs, which do not directly depend on the will of God.

Statement (1) is either true or false. In other words, the existence of a state of affairs either depends on whether God strictly actualized T in W, or does not[12]. Plantinga continues considering two alternatives:

I. Suppose (1) is true.

$$A \not\subset GT \qquad\qquad (I.1)$$

because if it were otherwise, A would not be a result of a free choice, because it would depend on the divine will. Hence, there is a world W^* that verifies

$$T \subseteq W^* \qquad\qquad (I.2)$$

and T again is such that

$$GT \to W^* \qquad\qquad (I.3)$$

It is worth noting that in the world of W^* is true

$$GT \to \neg A \qquad\qquad (I.4)$$

It follows that W^* is a possible world that God could not actualize. In other words GT can imply both A and $\neg A$ only if GT is contradictory (false). Two points remain vague: 1) Why in the world W^*, as well as in the world W, T is a maximum state of affairs, strongly actualized by God, and 2) Why at the same time GT cannot precede of A and $\neg A$ in different possible worlds, if A is a result of the free choice of a human being. Indeed, precisely because of this fact, no strong actualization of T by God cannot determine $\neg A$ or A.

To complete the picture Plantinga considers a situation in which God can actualize W^*, despite that already has been actualized W. Let C^* be a state of affairs that

$$GC^* \to W^* \qquad\qquad (I.5)$$

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[12] Once again, we note that in fact it may not be so, and A may not depend on GT.

Then, using (I.3):

$$GC^* \to GT \qquad\qquad (I.6)$$

In fact, on the basis of (I.3) and (I.5), it can also be argued that

$$GT \to GC^* \qquad\qquad (I.6)'$$

Strictly saying it would be correct to conclude that

$$GT \,\&\, GC^* \to W^* \qquad\qquad (I.6)''$$

However, Plantinga arrives only to (I.6).

Consider then the following dilemma:

Either $GC^* \not\subseteq W^*$ or $GC^* \subseteq W^*$.

This statement looks very strange. The question of inclusion of the state of affairs, which actualization entails the actualization of the world W^*, in this very world does not arise at all, as it is obvious that $GC^* \subseteq W^*$. It is difficult to imagine the conditions under which it might be otherwise, since then two possible worlds would have this state of affairs in common. Moreover, this state of affair is such that God strongly actualizes it at least in one of the worlds; and thus provides an actualization of this world as a whole. For this reason Plantinga concludes that the situation $C^* \not\subseteq W^*$ is inconsistent. For if

$$GC^* \not\subseteq W^*, \text{ then } GC^* \text{ prevents } W^*,$$

that is

$$GC^* \to \neg W^* \qquad\qquad (I.7)$$

Prof. Plantinga considers that (I.5) and (I.7) contradict each other, but in fact they can be simultaneously true if and only if GC^* is impossible, and therefore God cannot actualize C. That is, (I.5) and (I.7) are just opposite, but do not contradict each other.

Then it should be the case that $GC^* \subseteq W$. But since

$$C^* \subseteq T^{13} \qquad\qquad (I.8)$$

and

$$GC^* \subseteq GT \qquad\qquad (I.9)$$

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[13] Considering this statement paragraph (I.6) is even more doubtful.

(recall that T is the maximum state of affairs which has been actualized in W^*). On the base of (1), we can conclude that[14]:

$$GC^* \ \& \ GT \rightarrow A \qquad (I.10)$$

But now we see that (I.6) and (I.10) imply that

$$GC^* \rightarrow A[15] \qquad (I.11)$$

Herewith, Plantinga notes that A prevents W^*, because in W^* (I.4) is true; hence,

$$GC^* \rightarrow \neg W^* \qquad (I.12)$$

That is, in any case we shall arrive at the conclusion (I.12). "But then, says A. Plantinga, C^* is not such that if God had strongly actualized it, W^* would have been actual — unless GC^* is impossible, in which case, again, C^* is not such that God could have actualized it. So if (8) is true, then God could not have actualized W^*" [11, p. 547].

II. Suppose (1) is false, that is,

$$\neg(GT \rightarrow A) \qquad (II.1)$$

Then, in Plantinga's opinion, God could not actualize W, since T (which is strongly actualized by God) leads to A in W. If now it is not the case, then God cannot actualize W[16]. This argument reinforces our doubt in (1), because now Plantinga, in fact, admits that A is not a free action.

Suppose, however, that God still could actualize W, despite (II.1). If so, says Plantinga then, again, there is such state of affair C, that God could strongly actualize it, and, if He would do this,

$$GC \rightarrow W \qquad (II.2)$$

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[14] The idea is that the same conclusion (I.11) can be made on the basis of (1) and (I.6), so step (I.10) is redundant.

[15] Plantinga uses here the following form of reasoning which is intuitively correct in Lewis-Stalnaker semantics:

$$A \rightarrow B$$
$$\underline{A \ \& \ B \rightarrow C}$$
$$\therefore A \rightarrow C$$

[16] Note, however, that 'has been actualized' and 'could be actualize' are different concepts, what Plantinga says repeatedly.

If we admit the truth of (II.2), we must consequently admit the truth of

$$(GC \,\&\, GT \to W) \lor (GC \,\&\, \neg GT \to W)^{17} \quad (II.3)$$

That is, there are two further alternatives. Either the first or the second part of (II.3) is true:

$$GC \,\&\, GT \to W \qquad\qquad (II.4)$$
$$GC \,\&\, \neg GT \to W \qquad\qquad (II.5)$$

According to Plantinga, (II.4) and (II.5) cannot be both true. He argues as follows:

II.I. Consider (II.5).

$$GT \subseteq GC \lor GT \not\subseteq GC \qquad\qquad (II.I.1)$$

Suppose that

$$GT \subseteq GC \qquad\qquad (II.I.2)$$

Since *T* is the maximum state of affairs, wich God actualized in *W*, then

$$C \subseteq T \qquad\qquad (II.I.3)$$

and

$$GC \subseteq GT \qquad\qquad (II.I.4)$$

Then from (II.I.2) and (II.I.4) we obtain

$$GT \equiv GC \qquad\qquad (II.I.5)$$

But it means that (II.2) is true only if

$$GT \to W \qquad\qquad (II.I.6)$$

In addition, it is known that

$$A \subseteq W \qquad\qquad (II.I.7)$$

so, adding (II.1) to that, we come to the conclusion that (II.I.6) is false. Hence,

$$GT \not\subseteq GC \qquad\qquad (II.I.8)$$

Then *GC & GT* is possible. But

$$GT \subseteq W \qquad\qquad (II.I.9)$$

Hence

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[17] Plantinga here again refers to the form of reasoning, which, he argues, is intuitively correct in Lewis-Stalnaker semantics:

$$\frac{A \to B}{\therefore (A\&C \to B) \lor (A\&\bar{C} \to B)}$$

$$\neg W \subseteq \neg GT \qquad\qquad\text{(II.I.10)}$$

Therefore

$$\neg W \subseteq GC\ \&\ \neg\,GT \qquad\qquad\text{(II.I.11)}$$

Now (II.I.10) and (II.I.11) since *GC & GT* is possible, imply that (II.4) is false.

The same is true for (II.4). Since

$$GC \subseteq GT \qquad\qquad\text{(II.I.4)}$$
$$GC\ \&\ GT \to W \qquad\qquad\text{(II.4)}$$

are true only if it is the case that

$$GT \to W \qquad\qquad\text{(II.I.6)}$$

However, given that

$$A \subseteq W \qquad\qquad\text{(II.I.7)}$$

if (II.1) is true, then (II.I.6) is not.

On this ground Plantinga concludes that if

$$\neg(GT \to A) \qquad\qquad\text{(II.1)}$$

is true, then neither

$$GC\ \&\ GT \to W \qquad\qquad\text{(II.4)}$$

nor

$$GC\ \&\ \neg GT \to W \qquad\qquad\text{(II.5)}$$

is true, and this, in turn, means that God could not actualize *W*.

To sum up the argument in general Plantinga points out that whether (1) is true or false there must be possible worlds that God cannot actualize.

It is worth noting that there are some important difficulties in Plantinga's argument:

1) The relevance of «→» is highly questionable. As mentioned above, assuming the existence free will agents , Plantinga just guarantee that *ceteris paribus* in one world will be true $GT \to A$, while in another will be true $GT \to \neg A$. This is not a contradiction. Perhaps these worlds would have to be inaccessible from each other by definition, but it is hardly consistent with *S5* framework which Plantinga takes by default;

2) The assumption that several worlds can be simultaneously actualized needs to be properly explained. It's important to clarify that we are talking about different types of actualization. As mentioned above, only the world α is actual in the absolute sense. However, Plantinga sometimes uses term "actual" in the sense which allows every possible world to be actual "in itself". In order to be consistent he would have introduce two types of actualization in each world: the strong and the weak one. Thereby, Plantinga's system implicitely has four types of actualization: 1) absolute-and-strong actualization — for those states of affairs that are directly actualized by God in the world α; 2) absolute-and-weak actualization — for those states of affairs that are *in*directly actualized by God in the world α, and 3) relative-and-strong actualization — for those states of affairs that would have been directly actualized by God if this world had been actual (i.e. α), and finally, 4) relative-and-weak actualization — for those states of affairs that would have been *in*directly actualized by God if this world had been actual. This conglomeration of types of actualizations seems redundant, but it is so due to the problem of "free will defence".

3) The question "what kind of worlds God can actualize *now*" is quite misleading. It would be correct to assume that He has chosen once the best world and has actualized it. This world is α. Following the logic of Plantinga, God (as He has already actualized the world α) is no longer able to actualize any other world in absolute sense. Moreover, the assumption of the existence of such states of affairs, which has not been actualized yet but can be actualized in the future is contrary to the basic definition of a possible world as a maximal state of affairs. If some state of affairs can be supplemented by other states of affairs such state of affairs cannot be called maximal (i.e. complete).

Conclusions

Summing up the paper it is worth noting that (1) The concept of omnipotence not only lack a precise definition, but the very possibility of such definition is disputed by many contemporary analytic philosophers; (2) "Leibniz's Lapse" cannot be fixed by the concept of "Adams worlds", at least in such a way that would be consistent with the philosophy and theology of Leibniz himself; (3) Plantinga's attempt to show (in contrast to the "Leibniz's Lapse") that God cannot create *the* best but only *a* best one faces him with serious difficulties: a) the distinction of two types of actualization in the world is inefficiently and intuitively opaque, and b) the concept of a weak actualization suggests that possible worlds can be supplemented by other weak actualized states of affairs, but that is inconsistent with the definition of a possible world as a maximal (complete).

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