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Argumentation of the Philosopher Franjo Šanc on the Problem of Evil in the World

Argumentacija filozofa Franja Šanca o problemu zla v svetu

Abstract: This paper¹ deals with the philosopher Franjo Šanc's reflections on the problem of evil in the world. After some introductory remarks, the second chapter briefly presents the life and main works of Franjo Šanc. The third chapter, which is also the central chapter of the article, is structured around five themes. The first theme is the basic assumption from which Šanc starts, and that is: there is a personal God, and he is the Christian God, the creator and ruler of the world. The second theme is Augustine's concept of evil as *absentia* or *privatio boni*, the framework within which Šanc reflects on evil in the world. The third theme is Šanc's central idea that in both physical and moral evil, God has a good purpose in mind, which does not always have to apply only to the individual, but can also apply to the whole world, and that evil does not necessarily exist. The fourth theme is Šanc's argument that the existence of evil is proof of the existence of God, and not the reverse, as many authors claim and advocate. The fifth theme is Šanc's answer to the question of the origin of evil. He says that evil exists for the greater glory of God. The conclusion of the paper briefly recapitulates Šanc's philosophical thought and presents the author's conclusion that his philosophical position is acceptable to Christians, but not to those who are not familiar with Christianity.

Keywords: God, philosophy, Franjo Šanc, Christian theism, problem of evil

Povzetek: Prispevek obravnava razmišljanja filozofa Franja Šanca o problemu zla v svetu. Po uvodnih opombah drugo poglavje na kratko predstavlja življenje in glavna dela Franja Šanca. Tretje poglavje, ki je tudi osrednje, sestavlja pet tem. Prva tema je osnovna predpostavka, iz katere Šanc izhaja, in sicer: obstaja osebni Bog – to je krščanski Bog, stvarnik in vladar sveta. Druga tema je Avguštinov koncept zla kot *absentia* ali *privatio boni* – okvir, znotraj katerega Šanc razmišlja o zlu v svetu. Tretja tema je Šancova osrednja ideja, da ima Bog tako v fizičnem kot moralnem zlu v mislih dober namen, ki se ne nanaša vedno le na posameznika, am-

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pak lahko velja tudi za celoten svet – in da zlo ne obstaja neizogibno. Četrta tema je Šančev argument, da je obstoj zla dokaz za obstoj Boga in ne obratno, kot trdijo mnogi avtorji. Peta tema je Šančev odgovor na vprašanje o izvoru zla: pravi, da zlo obstaja za večjo slavo Boga. V zaključku je na kratko povzeta Šančeva filozofska misel in predstavljen avtorjev sklep, da je njegovo filozofsko stališče sprejemljivo za kristjane, ne pa tudi za tiste, ki s krščanstvom niso seznanjeni.

Ključne besede: Bog, filozofija, Franjo Šanc, krščanski teizem, problem zla

1. Introduction

It is not uncommon to witness a plethora of malevolent and distressing phenomena on a daily basis. This naturally gives rise to the question of its origin, its purpose, and, in the context of a benevolent and omnipotent God, its justification. “The question of the compatibility of suffering of the innocent and the idea of a benevolent God has been a significant point of contention within Christian thought since its inception. Consequently, it has consistently sought to provide a comprehensive and coherent response to the dilemma posed by evil to the Christian faith, both in its philosophical and theological manifestations.” (Tovlajčić 2023, 14)

One of the philosophers who addressed this issue, among others, was Franjo Šanc, a Slovenian-born Jesuit. The concept of the Christian God prompts the individual to engage with the most challenging questions of human existence, including the question of evil. In addressing this question, Šanc demonstrated considerable courage and presented insights and proposals derived from centuries of Christian theological and philosophical reflection. Given the paucity of research conducted on Šanc’s philosophical work and the dearth of evaluations of that research, we are confident that our study will make a contribution to the field.

In order to provide an introduction to the philosopher Franjo Šanc and his most significant published philosophical works for readers who may be unfamiliar with him, the initial chapter offers a concise overview of his life trajectory and a list of his most notable works. Subsequently, the following chapter was dedicated to the central aspect of this research, which was presented in a systematic manner in five points. In conclusion, we present our observations regarding the philosophical reflection of Franjo Šanc on the relationship between the existence of God and evil in this world.

2. A Brief Introduction to the Philosopher Franjo Šanc: His Life and Work

Franjo Šanc, a Slovenian-born philosopher, was born in Javornik nad Laškim, Slovenia, on 2 February 1882. He completed his secondary education in 1902. Subsequent to his graduation from secondary school, Šanc proceeded to pursue his

tertiary education at the university level. He commenced his studies in Maribor and entered the Jesuit order in 1903. He undertook studies in philosophy in Bratislava (1906–1912), theology in Innsbruck (1912–1915) and at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome (1922–1924) (Štivić 2022, 1055). From 1920 onwards, Šanc was also a professor of philosophy at the recently established Jesuit College in Zagreb, Croatia. In addition to his role at the Jesuit College in Zagreb, Šanc also taught philosophy at the Vrhbosna Theological Seminary in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) during the 1919/1920 academic year and from 1924 to 1937. On 21 September 1937, the philosopher Šanc finally relocated to Zagreb, where he proceeded to pursue his active teaching career and fruitful philosophical endeavours. The philosopher, priest and Jesuit Franjo Šanc passed away on 31 January 1953 in Zagreb (Macut 2018, 266–267).

During his lifetime, Šanc published a substantial corpus of philosophical works, including several books and a considerable number of articles. These were primarily disseminated in the philosophical journal *Život*.

In the field of bibliography, the following books by the author are listed: *Sententia Aristotelis: de compositione corporum e materia et forma in ordine physico et metaphysico in elementis terrestribus considerata; solutio eorum quae in primis ab E. Zeller Aristoteli opponuntur* (1928);² *The Creator of the world, his existence and nature, and his relationship to the world*;³ *History of Philosophy, Part I: Philosophy of the Ancient Greeks and Romans*;⁴ and finally, *History of Philosophy, Part II. From the Renaissance to Kant*.⁵

In this section, we will provide a representative sample of the most significant philosophical and scientific articles published by Šanc: “Positivism – the source of modern misconceptions”;⁶ “The Creator of the World and the Problem of Evil”;⁷ “Militant atheism – its methods and means”;⁸ “The philosophy of militant atheism”;⁹

² Franjo Šanc, *Sententia Aristotelis: de compositione corporum e materia et forma in ordine physico et metaphysico in elementis terrestribus considerata; solutio eorum quae in primis ab E. Zeller Aristoteli opponuntur* (Zagreb: Hrvatska Bogoslovska Akademija, 1928). Miljenko Belić states that, according to Šanc's own testimony, this work was so innovative and unconventional that even two reviewers, Dr. Aleš Ušeničnik (1868–1952) and Dr. Karlo Grimm (1898–1952), declined to respond to the invitation to provide their assessment. Consequently, the requisite favourable opinion was authored by professors from the Pontifical University of Rome at Gregoriana (Belić 1994, 453–454).

³ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Stvoritelj svijeta njegova egzistencija i narav i njegov odnos prema svijetu* (Sarajevo: Nova tiskara Vrećek i dr., 1935).

⁴ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Povijest filozofije. I. dio: Filozofija starih Grka i Rimljana* (Zagreb: Knjižnica Života, 1942).

⁵ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Povijest filozofije II. dio. Od renesanse do Kanta* (Zagreb: Knjižnica Života, 1943).

⁶ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Positivizam – izvor modernih zabluda*, *Život* 9 (1928), no. 2:4–81.

⁷ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Stvoritelj svijeta i problem zla*, *Život* 13 (1932), no. 3:122–129.

⁸ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Borbeni ateizam – njegove metode i sredstva*, *Život* 18 (1937), no. 5:201–217.

⁹ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, *Filozofija borbenog ateizma*, *Život* 18 (1973), no. 3:97–108.

“Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. On the fortieth anniversary of his death”,¹⁰ “Hans Driesch – about the origin of every philosophy”,¹¹ “Hans Driesch – about the fundamental theses of his philosophy” – article in two parts.¹² Additionally, he engages in the rigorous examination and critique of dialectical materialism, as evidenced by his published series of articles on this subject: “At the sources of dialectical materialism”,¹³ “Dialectical materialism”,¹⁴ “Philosophy of Marxism”¹⁵, etc.

3. Analysis of the Concept of Evil and Its Resolution in the Philosophical Thought of Franjo Šanc

In his philosophical article entitled “The Creator of the World and the Problem of Evil”, published in 1932, the Jesuit and philosopher Franjo Šanc considers the problem of evil in the context of reflection on the existence of God and the relationship between God – the Creator and evil. Subsequently, he published this philosophical article in a somewhat abridged form as part of a book entitled *The Creator of the World*, in a chapter entitled “The Creator and the Problem of Evil”.

3.1 The Fundamental Premise: A Personal God Exist

In his reflections on the problem of evil, the philosopher Šanc begins with the assertion and philosophical conviction that God exists as the starting point and framework from which he proceeds to develop his argument. The philosopher Šanc presents a series of critiques and objections to a number of positions and claims pertaining to the existence of a God. Such views include the assertion that God is unknowable and the notion that God is an impersonal entity, as postulated by pantheists¹⁶, etc. Conversely, Šanc endorses and promotes the Christian theistic concept of God as a personal entity, a benevolent creator of the universe.¹⁷ He also dismisses all other positions regarding the nature of God as untenable. It is

¹⁰ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche: Uz četrdesetu godišnjicu njegove smrti, *Život* 21 (1940), no. 8:363–385.

¹¹ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Hans Driesch – o ishodištu svake filozofije, *Život* 20 (1939), no. 7:401–411.

¹² Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Hans Driesch – o temeljnim tezama svoje filozofije, *Život* 20 (1939), no.8:467–476; Franjo Šanc, Hans Driesch – o temeljnim tezama svoje filozofije, *Život* 20 (1939), no. 9-10:545–565.

¹³ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Na izvorima dijalektičkog materijalizma, *Život* 18 (1937), no. 8–9–10:420–433.

¹⁴ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Dijalektički materijalizam, *Kršćanska škola* 41 (1937), no.7–8: 93–99.

¹⁵ Original title in Croatian language: Franjo Šanc, Filozofija marksizma, *Hrvatski socijalni tjedan* 3 (1939):75–88.

¹⁶ “It would be a profound detriment to humanity and a significant setback for global progress if pantheism were to gain widespread acceptance as a dominant religious tradition.” (Šanc 1935, 22)

¹⁷ Šanc writes: “It is a profound source of joy for us to know that the Creator of the universe loves us. Given that we are human, it stands to reason that His love for us must also be immense.” (Šanc 1931a, 332)

noteworthy that Šanc constructed his arguments regarding the theistic God on the foundation of Aristotle's philosophical principles, or more accurately, on his own interpretation of those same principles. In the opinion of Šanc, it was Aristotle who, in his writings, advanced the position that he was convinced of the existence of God and that there existed no possibility of there being more than one deity in addition to the one God.¹⁸ Šanc's interpretation of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is such that he posits the existence of a true, personal, and living God,¹⁹ as opposed to a pantheistic deity (Šanc 1935, 30–33). In examining the tenets of Aristotle's philosophy, Šanc reaches the following personal conclusion:

“We have examined the principal chapters of Aristotle's doctrine of God. It was not the intention of this study to present a comprehensive account of all the questions in detail. From this outline, it is evident that Aristotle, arguably the most influential philosopher in history, arrived at the conclusion that there is a God through a process of scientific inquiry, independent of any revelation. Aristotle postulated that this God is a singular entity, a living, personal, and purely spiritual being. This entity is the cause of all that occurs or changes in the universe and is, itself, unchanging. The entire universe depends on this God, who governs it as a father governs his family or a commander governs his army. This God is the purpose of the entire universe. Aristotle's doctrine of God can be characterised as scientific theism.” (Šanc 1935, 35)²⁰

Given that the philosopher Šanc is unequivocally aligned with the Christian theistic perspective on the nature of God as the creator of the world and the source of love (Šanc 1935, 17), it is evident that he also addresses the question of evil within the confines of this assumption.

3.2 Framework of Reflection: Evil as *Absentia* or *Privatio Boni* (Augustine)

Šanc is aware that the issue of evil in the world is one that has been the subject of philosophical debate since ancient times. Setting aside considerations of reli-

¹⁸ In his analysis of Aristotle's understanding of the divine, Šanc posits that: “/.../ The greatest philosopher of all time, unaided by revelation, arrived at a scientific understanding of the true, living, personal God. This God is the foundation of the entire world, to whom the world is dependent. The philosopher viewed God as the father of a family and the commander of an army. Furthermore, the philosopher saw God as the purpose of the entire world.” (Šanc 1924, 32)

¹⁹ In one place, Šanc writes: “It follows that an uncaused cause must exist, with the reason for its existence inherent in its essence. It follows that the concept and definition of this first cause encompasses existence and, consequently, individuality. It thus follows that the essence of the first cause cannot be conceived as one among many, but rather as a singular entity.” (Šanc 1931b, 210)

²⁰ It should be noted that there are alternative interpretations of Aristotle's philosophy. For example, the American philosopher and theologian Diogenes Allen explicitly states in his work *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* that Aristotle's first cause or first mover (also referred to as the unmoved mover) is the most perfect and supreme being in the universe. However, it is important to note that this being is not external to the universe, but rather a constituent part of it. The existence of this phenomenon can be inferred from the observation of motion on Earth and in the cosmos (Allen and Springsted 2023, 17).

gion, Šanc is convinced that the issue of evil in the world can be resolved through philosophy. This can be achieved by answering the following question: if the Creator is the source of every being, the absolute master of the world, omnipotent and wise, love and goodness without end, how is it possible for evil to exist? (Šanc 1932, 122). The foundation of Šanc's response is the philosophical tenets espoused by St. Augustine following his rejection of Manichaean doctrine and its associated teachings on the existence of evil (1935, 113).²¹ Šanc posits that the following opinion is erroneous: if God is the creator of all that exists outside of him, then evil in the world is not possible. Alternatively, if evil in the world is a reality, then it follows that God is not the creator of all that exists outside of him. The issue for Šanc in this assertion is the concept of evil as a tangible entity. He is unequivocal in his rejection of this notion, citing the tenets of Zoroastrian and Machiavellian thought as the basis for his stance. In his analysis of the concept of evil, Šanc draws upon the teachings of St. Augustine to argue that evil is a lack of perfection, or a deficiency in the quality of being. This implies that evil cannot be considered a fully actualised entity in itself. Additionally, another prominent Christian theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas, posits that evil is not a tangible entity or intrinsic quality. By aligning with the perspectives of both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, our philosopher, Šanc, draws a logical conclusion: "It can be reasonably deduced that the term 'evil' signifies the 'absence of good' (*absentia boni*), or, as he subsequently posits, the 'deprivation of good' (*privatio boni*). Consequently, evil can be defined as a deficiency inherent to a given entity, manifesting as a lack of that which it ought to possess." (114)²² Šanc posits that a thing that lacks something it should possess is not inherently evil; rather, it is the absence of a quality that is morally reprehensible. In this context, it is essential to differentiate between an evil thing and the quality of evil, or a thing and its moral turpitude. Although a material entity may be designated as "material evil" (*malum materialum*), the concept of evil can be defined as "formal evil" (*malum formale*) (1932, 123).

3.3 Central Idea: In Both Physical and Moral Evil, God Has a Good Purpose in Mind That Does Not Always Have to Apply Only to the Individual, but Can Also Apply to the Entire World, and Evil Does Not Necessarily Exist

If it is indeed the case that evil is not a tangible entity, nor can good be the catalyst for evil, but rather, it signifies the absence of something that a being should inherently possess, an even more complex question than that of the genesis

²¹ In his work on St. Augustine, the patristic scholar Marijan Mandac, an expert on the thought of St. Augustine, addresses the subject of evil in depth: "Augustine was profoundly and meticulously engaged with the question of the genesis of evil, or malum, within the world. For him was very hard to identify the root cause and sources of evil. /.../ One of the reasons Augustine converted to Manichaeism was because it offered a solution to the problem of evil. The doctrine posited the existence of an eternal malevolent principle. It is posited that this entity created the fundamental substance from which all evil is believed to originate. It became for him evident that this doctrine could not be upheld in a logical and reasonable manner." (Mandac 2019, 111)

²² Philosopher Tovlajčić correctly writes: "His insights constituted the foundational framework for all subsequent generations of Christian thinkers in their examination of evil." (Tovlajčić 2023, 15)

of evil now emerges. This leads to the question of whether, if the Creator is the source of all beings, it follows that no being can exist without the qualities that it should possess. This raises the question of how an individual can commit a sin. The question thus arises as to how such a being can become subject to eternal suffering? (Šanc 1935, 114–115)

Before moving on to the search for an answer in the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas, Šanc emphasizes that it is necessary to be careful and understand that this is not a question of why God must send misery and suffering upon his creatures but rather that he can do it. Specifically, while some argue that evil is an inherent aspect of the world, Šanc believes this perspective is unduly problematic in the context of addressing this issue in a comprehensive manner (115). In this section, Šanc begins by referencing the thoughts of St. Augustine, as presented in his work *Enchiridion ad Laurentium sive De fide, spe et charitate*. In the eleventh chapter, right at the very beginning, St. Augustine states the following: “The Almighty would not – even unbelievers admit this writing that God possesses the highest power over realities – because He is the best being, in any way allow any evil to be found in His works if He were not so strong and good that He could turn evil into good.” (Augustin 1990, 164)

In his *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas addresses the concept of divine providence. Šanc also draws upon this line of reasoning. In his work, Šanc makes reference to St. Thomas, stating that it is God’s providence to manage things according to their purpose and above all, the good that exists in things themselves is the perfection of the whole world. This would not exist if all the degrees of being were not found in beings. It can therefore be posited that the providence of God is responsible for the creation of all degrees of being (Šanc 1935, 115–116). In this context, Šanc places emphasis on the idea that God’s action is free and not a matter of necessity. This is because he presents a critique of Leibniz’s optimism, which, as is well-known, posits that this world is the best of all possible ones.²³ The argument that God necessarily creates a world that would be the most perfect possible is not regarded as convincing by the philosopher Šanc (1932, 125).

In reflecting on these problems and starting from the fundamental assumption that there is a personal God, Šanc arrives at a point where he is compelled to pose the central question and provide a meaningful response. The question thus arises as to how a personal God could will evil? The fundamental premise upon which Šanc’s line of reasoning is based is the assertion that evil exists as a consequence of God’s will. This implies that, were it not for the divine will, evil would not exist.

²³ In another paper, Šanc demonstrates, firstly, a comprehensive familiarity with Leibniz’s philosophy and, in particular, his teachings on optimism. Secondly, he presents a compelling argument for rejecting this doctrine. In addition to other considerations, Šanc posits that Leibniz’s optimism is predicated on the fallacious assumption that God invariably elects the optimal order and that God inherently desires the best for all. Consequently, Leibniz’s optimism is founded upon his subjective comprehension, particularly upon the erroneous philosophical premise that God is bound to select the optimal option amongst all possible alternatives. This assumption is erroneous insofar as it posits that God is bound by the necessity of creation; rather, it is a free act. Given that He is infinitely perfect and that His happiness is unchanging, it follows that nothing can increase or diminish it. (Šanc 1934, 145)

Šanc is aware of the gravity of this issue and here he draws upon the previously mentioned philosopher and theologian St. Thomas Aquinas and his work *Summa Theologiae*. If we accept the assertion that evil can be defined as a lack of something that, by its very nature, should be present, then it follows that evil always presupposes a subject that has its nature or essence and, consequently, its essential perfection and goodness. However, the same thing, in addition to essential perfection, can also have numerous accidental perfections that are not necessarily related to each other a way that one accidental perfection could not exist without another accidental perfection. In conclusion, Šanc posits that a thing must possess its essence, as without it, the thing would be devoid of existence. As St. Thomas Aquinas, Šanc also posits, the subject of evil is always and necessarily some good. In this context, the concept of evil can be considered as an object of both human and divine will. However, the underlying reason or motive for this will is not inherently evil, but rather a manifestation of a positive force that is intertwined with the negative aspect. Šanc concludes: "If God wants us to have defects, pain, illness, ignorance, and even to have to die, God only has in mind good what is connected with these various kinds of evil." (1935, 117)

It is a well-established concept in moral philosophy that there is a distinction between physical evil and moral evil. In the context of physical evil, the term is used to describe a range of physical defects and illnesses. It is possible for God to will physical evil for the sake of some good. In this instance, Šanc makes reference to the writings of St. Thomas, who states: "And therefore God is the originator of evil, which is punishment, but /.../ he is not the originator of evil, which is guilt." (1990, 352) In the context of moral evil, Šanc makes a clear distinction between sin and divine will. He asserts that God cannot will sin, as this would be a contradiction in terms, given that it would entail willing what He has forbidden. However, like physical evil, sin can be associated with some good, and then God may allow it or not prevent it for the sake of the good (Šanc 1935, 118). In this context, our philosopher Šanc makes the following significant observation: "It can be posited that there is a benevolent intention underlying every malevolent act, whether physical or moral in nature. However, our limited cognitive abilities render us incapable of discerning the precise purpose behind each occurrence /.../." (1932, 126) Šanc proceeds to cite the views of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, who align with the former's perspective. They posit that, from an individual's standpoint, and in view of inherent constraints, the world may appear to be devoid of any discernible order. Similarly, the prevalence of malevolence in the world may lead an individual to perceive a lack of order. Šanc, drawing upon the insights of St. Thomas Aquinas, asserts that this assertion is erroneous because the perfection of the universe necessitates the existence of entities within it that are capable of losing their inherent goodness, and on occasion, do indeed do so. Evil, in its essence, can be defined as the loss of goodness (1935, 119).

The following key issue that Šanc addresses is the question of whether the good achieved through evil is always of an individual nature, or whether it can also apply to a larger number of people, or even to the entire world? For Šanc, the answer

is this: the good that God wants to achieve or for which he allows some evil does not have to be an individual good in every single case for the benefit of some single created being. Some evils may also be for the benefit of the whole world (119). In conclusion, Šanc presents his argument from a theological perspective: "Once the blessed vision is initiated, God will reveal the intricacies of His providence to us. We will then perceive that God's will was always benevolent, despite our initial perception that His providence was absent." (1932, 127)

Šanc points out that evil does not necessarily exist. God is free, either in creating the world or in choosing order in the world. The concept of moral evil or sin would not exist in the world if human beings did not engage in sinful actions. Therefore, God necessarily prohibits moral evil. In the case of physical evil, however, it is not sufficient to view it as a mere punishment for sin. It is equally plausible that God intends evil for the sake of some other good. (1935, 119–120)

3.4 The Existence of Evil as Proof of God's Existence

Philosopher Šanc, after presenting the answers and basic premises to the question of the existence of God, evil, etc., posits that the question of evil, despite being an exceptionally challenging issue within the context of the Christian theistic understanding of God, can be regarded as evidence for God's existence. One might designate it as evidence from the existence of evil in the world. The argument of the existence of evil in the world is often employed by scientists, philosophers and others as evidence that God cannot exist, or that a good and omnipotent God cannot exist if he simultaneously allows evil in the world. However, philosopher Šanc puts forward an opposing viewpoint, namely that the existence of evil in the world is proof that God also exists. "The existence of evil in the world is contingent upon the assumption of a supreme Being who is responsible for the creation and governance of the universe. This Being, must be served by evil in order to achieve the purpose for which it was created." (1935, 120) In accordance with Šanc's perspective, this entity is identified as the Christian God.

The same philosopher argues that it is erroneous to infer from the premise that God is infinitely good and omnipotent that God is therefore obliged to protect humankind from all evil. Nevertheless, the attributes of God extend beyond goodness and omnipotence. Furthermore, it can be posited that God is also infinitely wise. Even in situations where we, as limited beings, perceive only evil, it is possible that God can achieve good. To substantiate his viewpoint, Šanc once more cites St. Thomas Aquinas, who, in a similar vein, posits that one should differentiate between an individual who prioritises a singular entity, namely humanity, and one who encompasses the entirety of the universe, that is to say, God.²⁴ While humanity endeavours to eradicate imperfections in all things, God permits the existence of such flaws in order to facilitate the greater good (121).

²⁴ Similarly, in the work entitled *Providence of God*, Šanc posits that God, by virtue of his omnipotence, governs both the minutiae of individual beings and the entirety of the universe (Šanc 1939, 31).

3.5 The Solution to the Question of the Existence of Evil: Evil Exists for the Greater Glory of God

In conclusion, considering Šanc's preceding arguments concerning the problem of evil, he presents a definitive response to the question of why God permits suffering and evil. It is evident that Šanc was aware of the numerous potential philosophical perspectives on the question of God's permission of suffering and evil. However, as a Christian philosopher, Šanc adheres to a solution that is consistent with the tenets of Christian theology concerning the nature of God and the world. In accordance with the insights articulated by the philosopher Otto Zimmermann in his work *Warum Schuld und Schmerz?*, Šanc posits that the existence of suffering is a necessary condition for the manifestation of God's eternal glory and our own eternal joy (1935, 121).²⁵

This solution for Šanc is, firstly, in complete harmony with Christian philosophy, which is the epitome of philosophical truth,²⁶ and secondly, it is in complete harmony with the Christian faith as expressed either in the Holy Scriptures or at the First Vatican Council in the dogmatic constitution "Dei Filius" (24 April 1870). The concept of God as the creator of heaven and earth represents a fundamental tenet of Christianity. The nature of God is perceived as immeasurable and benevolent, manifesting as a caring entity for all creation (Šanc 1935, 121).

4. Conclusion

It can be argued that the work of philosopher Franjo Šanc, which encompasses both philosophical works and philosophical reflections, situates him within the canon of 20th-century neo-scholastic philosophers. A comprehensive examination of his oeuvre reveals that he is a philosopher who is perspicacious in formulating questions and meticulous in articulating his arguments. He offers a rebuttal to opposing perspectives while simultaneously defending his own philosophical stance. Furthermore, he demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of both foreign and domestic philosophical literature pertinent to the subjects he discusses.

In addressing the question of the existence of evil, Šanc evinces a commendable familiarity with the subject matter. As has been demonstrated, he addresses the issue in a comprehensive and systematic manner, guiding the reader through

²⁵ In reflecting on the work *Warum Schuld und Schmerz?*, theologian Josip Pazman write as follow: "It would be a fallacy to assume that evil is an inherent aspect of the world. Rather, it is our responsibility to engage in critical thinking and recognise that the malevolent actions observed in this world are not in opposition to the principles of goodness and holiness espoused by the divine. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge that this order in the world is God's benevolence, for which we should be grateful and utilise it to our advantage." (Pazman 1918, 188)

²⁶ For Šanc, there is no doubt that true philosophy is possible and that this is exemplified by scholastic philosophy, which is in accordance with the Christian faith. "The Church thus asserts that scholastic philosophy represents the genuine philosophical tradition. Consequently, those who adhere to the tenets of the Church are obliged to accept scholastic philosophy as the sole authentic philosophical system." (Šanc 1944, 188)

a step-by-step process towards his own, specifically scholastic and ecclesiastical position. In consideration of the aforementioned argument, it is reasonable to conclude that it is rooted in the Christian philosophical tradition of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Moreover, by underscoring the notion that the glory of God emanates from evil and suffering, Šanc will undoubtedly fail to resonate with those who do not accept Christianity as a source of answers to fundamental human questions. In other words, it will be challenging to persuade an individual who is not a Christian of the veracity of their position through rational argumentation alone. In this argument, we identify a certain limitation in the author's line of reasoning and justification of the existence of evil in the world. This response will undoubtedly resonate with those of the Christian faith, who will readily accept it as it aligns with the entirety of God's revelation. For those who do not adhere to Christianity, it is not implausible to conclude that the Christian concept of God may not align with the notion of absolute benevolence and love, as espoused by Christians.

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