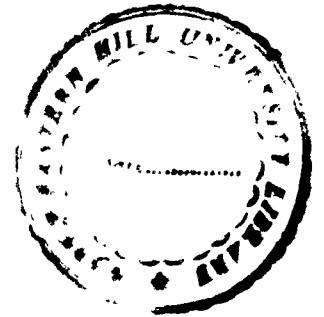


ST. THOMAS AQUINAS : GOD AND CREATION



JUTHSUTHO PHOJI

**SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIRMENT OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY IN PHILOSOPHY OF
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY,
SHILLONG.**

Thesis

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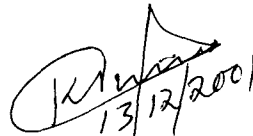
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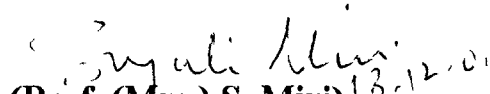
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I, *Juthsutho Phoji*, hereby declare that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by me, that the contents did not form the basis of award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institution.

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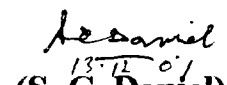
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13/12/01

(JUTHSUTHO PHOJI)

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

St. Thomas Aquinas is one of the most important philosophers of the medieval period besides being a great Theologian. He is known for his ability to synthesize. He is also able to combine Aristotelianism with Neoplatonism and blend them within a Christian framework. He is an original and inventive philosopher. He distinguishes between philosophical investigations and theological investigations. He points out that philosophical investigation is inadequate to discover things that can be made known to human beings only through Revelation. He recommends that theologians must philosophize in order to theologize.

St. Thomas Aquinas was born in 1225 in the Castle of Roccasecca, near Aquino in Italy. He studied the liberal arts in Naples, and in 1244 he decided to become a Dominican. He was the pupil of Albert the Great in Cologne from 1248-1252. From 1259-1268, he spent in Italy teaching at Papal Curia. It was at this time Pope Urban IV wanted writings on Aristotle in the Christian world that would benefit Christians. St. Thomas Aquinas ventured into this great challenge in Orvieto. He was back in Paris by 1269. In 1272, he was given the task of Fossanuova. In March 7, 1274, he was canonized by Pope Pious V and declared him the Angelic Doctor. Both by tradition and by Papal authority St. Thomas Aquinas holds a unique place as a teacher within the Church.

St. Thomas Aquinas' writing career was not long. However, he brought out enormous number of works, both theological and philosophical commentaries on the areas of doctrinal discussions and

several treatises. One is simply amazed at the amount of energy and time devoted for his numerous writings, which historians find it difficult to put down in chronological order.

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. The *Sentences* consists of four books: Book I, *On the Trinity*, Book II, *On the Creation of Things*, Book III, *On the Incarnation*; and Book IV, *On the Doctrine of Signs*. He also wrote his own report of Albertus' lectures on the *Divine Names* of Dionysius. He also wrote an extensive commentary on *Book of Causes*. The most important of all his writings include: those commentaries that he wrote on almost all the works of Aristotle – Aristotelian treatises *in Ethics, Politics, Physics, Metaphysics and Logic* (1266-1272). Some of his writings that emerged out of his teaching experiences include: *On Truth* (*De Veritate*, 1256-1259). *On the Power of God* (*De Potentia Dei*, 1265-1267), *On Evil* (*De Malo*, 1269-1270). All these come under doctrinal issues called *Disputed Questions*. The *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1259-64) is a classical manual of Christian doctrine intended for the use of Christian missionaries in Spain. He did not give this work a title, however, there are indications to justify the tradition that it can be called – *On Truth of Catholic Faith* (*De Veritate Fidei Catholicae*). Another famous work called *Summa Theologica* was left unfinished. St. Thomas Aquinas' work represents the whole gamut of theological, philosophical, biblical and ethical topics. One of the most widely published small works on *Being and Essence*, provides the essence of his philosophy. His most popular theological work is his *Compendium of Theology* and by far the most widely

acclaimed work on scripture is his *Catena aurea* (Golden Chain) of quotations from the fathers of the four Gospels.

I have used both *Summa Theologiae* and *Summa Contra Gentiles* as my main texts besides other sources, and from these two I have attempted to draw out the thoughts and insights of St. Thomas Aquinas and specially Book I and Book II of *Summa Contra Gentiles* were of great source of information for dealing on the concept of God and Creation respectively.

The work of St. Thomas Aquinas may be approached and considered in several different ways. The Thomist theologian of the old school regards them as an authority, if not as a sacred book. In them he sees the origin and the basic principles of the great system of scholastic theology, which he expounds and in them he expects to find the answer to almost any question in philosophy or theology. St. Thomas Aquinas was the pupil of Albert the Great both at Paris and Cologne who had been brought up on Aristotle as a boy at Naples. St. Thomas Aquinas had little of Albert's great range of knowledge and interest, which made him the fountain head of at least three different schools of thought. In the realm of the pure intellect and in clarity of mind he was greatly superior to Albert. Both as a pure philosopher and a pure theologian he was unsurpassed. Though St. Thomas Aquinas makes use of Aristotle's thought to say that he 'baptized' him, is to lose the full significance of his work. Rather we might say that he stood Aristotle's system on its head. Whereas the philosopher was primarily interested neither in the human soul nor in God whom he reduced to a postulate, almost to a mere

hypothesis, as the First Mover, for St. Thomas Aquinas the universe is something radiating from and centred upon God, who is the infinite richness of Being compared with whom all other beings are shadows. Aristotle links his universe together partly as a machine and partly as a fabric of logical argument, St. Thomas Aquinas uses his pregnant and characteristic doctrine of analogy, by which being and all its qualities are seen to be in all that exists but in different modes, and by which even God can be described not only in purely negative terms (the so-called apophatic method) but as being the source of all being, whose perfections are shared analogically in all his creatures. Thus even in God the author of nature St. Thomas Aquinas finds the centre and course and end of his system, but above this there is the whole realm of supernatural being, in which and through which God communicates his own way of being to rational creatures of his choice. It is by this integration of speculative theology and rational philosophy into a single system ruled and explained, at the rational level, by concepts and axioms which permeate the whole that St. Thomas Aquinas created the first original philosophical system of the Christian centuries. Moreover his presentation of God, both transcendent and immanent, the author of Nature and Grace, the Father and Judge of all rational creatures, he could find place for much of the idealism, the otherworldliness, the preoccupation with the soul and its destiny, and the concept of our world as reflecting a higher order and based upon the divine ideas, that were the characteristic heart of Platonism. St. Thomas Aquinas went far towards making the union between Platonic and peripatetic philosophy dominating both systems from above, transformed both into a new whole. If one is looking for a complete system of thought in the middle ages, it is St. Thomas Aquinas

or nothing. Building with material largely supplied by Aristotle he did what no other thinker of his age succeeded in doing – what none of our age has done – he gave a coherent rational account of the universe of being as known to the human mind, and gave it in a philosophical idiom which may be unfamiliar to us, but which cannot be lightly dismissed as fantastic, archaic or incomprehensible.

An issue regarding which the Christian tradition was opposed to Greek philosophy was the thesis of “the eternity of the world”. Aristotle, in the *Physics*, had concluded that the world was beginningless because of the impossibility of explaining an absolute beginning of motion. Masters in the faculty of Arts adopted this conclusion as philosophers. But Christian doctrine holds that the world did begin to exist: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”.

St. Thomas Aquinas also devoted a separate treatise to this controversy, his *De aeternitate mundi*. After having expressed the doctrine “that the world’s duration had a beginning”, he immediately raises the problem “whether the world could have always existed”. He argues that the whole problem comes down to the question of whether the concepts *created by God* and eternal (*beginningless*) are contradictory. At this point it becomes clear against whom this treatise is really directed. St. Thomas Aquinas is opposing not the masters in the Faculty of Arts, but fellow theologians. Bonaventure had argued that the idea of “an eternal created world” contains an inner contradiction. Creation *ex nihilo* necessarily implies a temporal beginning. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, on the other hand, creation “from nothing” means that things

are caused by God in their complete being, but this ontological dependence does not necessarily imply a temporal beginning. A cause does not necessarily precede its effect in duration, but can be simultaneous with the effect. An eternal creation is possible, philosophically speaking. No compelling arguments can be adduced for the “novelty” of the world. Neither, for that matter, can the opinion of the philosophers, that the world is necessarily eternal, be proved. Aristotle’s arguments for the eternalist position are not demonstrative and conclusive, but only probable. That the world had a beginning we know only on the basis of divine revelation. (Is d.r. necessary for k)

The fact that in *De aeternitate mundi* St. Thomas Aquinas defends the possibility of an eternal creation against theologians is worth noting. He intends to provide a metaphysical deepening of the concept of creation by pointing out that it is not the concept of *beginning* but that of *original dependence of being* that necessarily belongs to its essence. St. Thomas Aquinas’ view provoked fierce reactions from theologians. A few years after his death the Franciscan William de la Mare put together the *Correctorium Fratris Thomae*, which contained 118 points of criticism. One of the views most objectionable to William was Brother Thomas’ rejection of the demonstrability of the world’s temporal beginning. In the words of Norman Kretzmann St. Thomas Aquinas’ works ranks among the greatest philosophers, but the number of such people is still smaller than it should be. Philosophers especially those in the Anglo-American tradition, have been bringing St. Thomas Aquinas into secular philosophical discussions. St. Thomas Aquinas’ systematic approach to philosophical theology led him to include in it full treatments

of virtually every area of philosophy, regarding which he always shows how in his view the existence and nature of God is related to the area's subject matter. Consequently, philosophers of religion who first read St. Thomas Aquinas in connection with a narrow twentieth century conception of their specialization of other aspects of his thought, and they are gradually being joined by philosophers who have no professional interest in religion.

The most formidable obstacle to contemporary philosophers granting medieval philosophy the attention it deserves is the still wide spread suspicion that it merely helps itself to carefully selected bits and pieces of philosophy in order to serve the purpose of theology, or that medieval philosophy simply is theology of a sort that might occasionally fool on unwary reader into thing it is philosophy.

We can dispel this misconception by observing that medieval philosophy's connection with other disciplines in other periods, and that philosophy has been noticeably affected by one or another influence during most of its history. For instance, from the middle of the nineteenth century until the present, the dominant influences on philosophy seem to have included first biology and geology, then physics and mathematics, and now perhaps, a combination of physics, neurophysiology, and computer science. Theism's influence is used to be considered to have been unhealthy for medieval philosophy. It might have been so if the philosophy really had been confined to theological topics, but it was not; or if the medievals typically had developed, say, their theories of inference, of significance, or of acceleration with only religious purposes

in view, or had applied religious criteria of some sort in assessing those theories; but they did not.

Anthony Kenny and Jan Pinborg have pointed out, during the Middle Ages:

The most advanced scholarly research in philosophy ... was made by students or teachers in the faculty of theology (especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth century)... but this does not entail that philosophy and theology could not be studied separately. There are large sections of pure philosophy in theological texts. (Kenny, 1982, p. 15).

The modern philosophers are beginning to realize that although St. Thomas Aquinas' motivation may be most readily described as theological, what he produces in acting on that motivation is thoroughly, interestingly philosophical. Some of the most fully developed and traditionally recognized components of St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy are presented by the contemporary western philosophers such as; John Wippel, Norman Kretzmann, Scott Mac Donald, Ralph McInerny, and Paul Sigmund, each of whom inevitably and quite naturally refers to connections between the particular philosophical subject matter and St. Thomas Aquinas' theological concerns. A closer look at St. Thomas Aquinas' life long enterprise of philosophical theology will show that even its motivation can be construed as fundamentally philosophical. St. Thomas Aquinas thinks that human beings have relatively easy access to particular knowledge of the absolutely first cause through divine revelation in scripture. But he is also convinced that a great deal of such knowledge can also be obtained through a standard sort of application of

reason to evidence available to everyone without a revealed text. He is also convinced that even propositions conveyed initially by revelation and available only in that way – such as the doctrine of Trinity – can be instructively clarified, explained, and confirmed by reasoning of a sort only in its subject matter. John Wippel brings out a close connection between philosophy and theology in St. Thomas Aquinas' *metaphysics*. Even Eleonore Stump highlights in the presence of a good deal of philosophy in St. Thomas Aquinas' *commentaries on Scripture*.

Our appreciation of St. Thomas Aquinas' outstanding value as a philosopher depends on our seeing his ostensibly theological works as also fundamentally philosophical. The most prominent of the philosophical issues acknowledged and recognized in St. Thomas Aquinas' writings by the Contemporary Philosophers are found in: Wippel's discussion on Philosophy of mind, Kretzmann's Epistemology, Mac Donald's Ethics, McNerny's Politics and Law. Even a casual reader of any of those detailed discussions will notice that St. Thomas Aquinas very often cites Aristotle as a source or in support of a thesis he is defending, and a reader who knows Aristotle well will recognize even more of St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy as Aristotelian. In those circumstances it is only natural to wonder whether St. Thomas Aquinas is not merely Aristotle's most talented and prominent follower. Again, even scholars entirely friendly to St. Thomas Aquinas and impressed with his achievements as a philosopher have sometimes presented him as simply consummate Aristotelian, adopting the term "Aristotelian – Thomistic" as the best short characterization of St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophical positions.

Brief Chronology of the Life of St. Thomas Aquinas

- 1225 Born at Castle of Roccasecca mar Naples.
- 1230 Enters Monte Cassino as Benedictine Oblate.
- 1239 Leaves Monte Cassino. Goes to University of Naples for undergraduate arts studies.
- 1244 Receives Dominican habit at Naples. On way to Parisian House of Studies seized by brothers at Tuscany, imprisoned at Roccasecca; resisted temptations to give up vocation.
- 1245 Returns to Dominican House at Naples. Travels to Paris for early university studies at St. Jacques with Albert the Great.
- 1248 Goes to Cologne for Theology under Albert the Great. Is ordained sometimes between 1248 and 1252 at Cologne Cathedral.
- 1252 Returns to Paris for graduate studies Biblical Bachelor (1252-54). Sententiary Bachelor (1254-56) and lecturer on Scripture.
- 1256 Promoted to Master of Theology by Papal dispensation four years before required age.
- 1259 Attends General Chapter at Valenciener; revised Dominican Plan of Studies.
- 1260 Named preacher – general of Dominicans.
- 1265 Made regent master in Dominican House of Studies at Rome.
- 1267 Made definitior of Roman province.
- 1269 Attends General Chapter at Paris.
- 1272 Attends General Chapter at Florence.

- 1273 Has heavenly revelation on 6th December while celebrating Mass in Chapel of St. Nicholas.
- 1274 Summoned in January to Church Council at Lyons by Gregory IX.
- 1274 March 7 dies at age of forty nine.
- 1323 At Avignon, July 18, St. Thomas Aquinas canonized by Pope John XXII.

Plan of the Thesis

Chapter – I deals with the question of whether St. Thomas Aquinas is a philosopher more than a Theologian.

Chapter – II deals with a comparative study between St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle.

Chapter – III deals with St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle's Concept of God.

Chapter – IV deals with St. Thomas Aquinas' Concept of Creation.

Chapter – V summarizes the findings of the thesis and discusses their implications.

CHAPTER - II

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS AND ARISTOTLE

When we see some of the major themes that run through in the writings of both St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, we see similarities between them and *prima facie* indications may seem to point in the direction of a unitary trend in their basic philosophical procedures. For instance, both of them reason in terms of actuality and potentiality; of material, formal, efficient and final causes; and of the division of scientific thought into the theoretical and practical and productive. Both ground all naturally attainable human knowledge on external sensible things, instead of on sensations, ideas or language. Both look upon cognition as a way of being in which percipient and thing perceived, knower and thing known, are one and the same in the actuality of the cognition. This may easily give occasion for a claim that, from a strictly philosophical viewpoint, St. Thomas Aquinas' thought coincides with Aristotle's despite differences of historical epoch and of cultural and religious background.

The work of Aristotle dealing with natural philosophy together with his book on *Metaphysics*, *Ethics* and *Psychology* became known in the west almost at once. Aristotle suited western Christendom of around 1200 uncannily well though there were men who were afraid that the coherence of tradition might be shattered. However, the ecclesiastical warnings and restrictions were a hopeless business from the start. The year (1245) St. Thomas Aquinas set out for Paris, he had already completed his studies on Aristotle at Naples, and in Paris despite the persistence of the ban, Aristotle was unquestionably in the curriculum. A

lecture on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* was studied under Albertus Magnus. In St. Thomas Aquinas' first book, *De ente et essentia*, the first chapter opens with a quotation from *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. Aristotle is not just quoted as any author, but is alluded to by his honorary title "the philosopher". The commentaries by Albert and St. Thomas Aquinas practically abrogated the Church's ruling: on one hand, the elementary process of assimilating Aristotle was begun and concluded within the span of barely a generation; on the other hand, the Church took understandable and no doubt necessary measures to preserve the continuity of tradition in spite of the new ideas coming to the fore. It was then at the earliest stage of this incorporation of Aristotle into Christianity's philosophical and theological world view that St. Thomas Aquinas in Naples attended Peter of Hibernia's lecture on *Aristotle*. The reception of Aristotle in the thirteenth century was not merely the result of a choice between rival philosophies but was a theological act, the work of theology in full possession of its faith. St. Thomas Aquinas while still young accomplished so unique a task: that of joining these two apparently incompatible decisions (for the 'Gospel' and for 'Aristotle') and creating intellectually and existentially, a foundation upon which the whole orderly structure of Christian world view could be raised, structures which continue to serve the Christians to this day and seems to have a timeless durability. For St. Thomas Aquinas, both decisions signified a turning point in life. And he adhered to both decisions to the day of his death. He didn't begin his commentaries on the writings of Aristotle until the last decade of his life (around 1266), and when he fully ceased writing, a number of these commentaries were left uncompleted.

It is not the case that since Aristotle said so, that St. Thomas Aquinas regarded them to be true. Nor is the case that St. Thomas Aquinas regarded Aristotle as an authority, but because he said it in a way that throws light on the problem – that is why it is so. On the other hand, he doesn't hesitate to cite an author if it seems to him that this author is right and has contrived to express the truth in exemplary fashion. He takes the liberty of concurring with someone who he believes has told the truth. There are number of quotations from Aristotle with the implication that the statement is valid because Aristotle made it.¹ He never assumed that the doctrine of Aristotle was invariably compatible with Christian doctrine. This attitude was quite prevalent among medieval Aristotelians, St. Thomas Aquinas himself never subscribed to this view. The argument from authority is the weakest argument in so far as human knowledge is in question; but where its basis is divine revelation, it possesses supreme power. All true tradition leads back to this superhuman source, the tradition what has been handed down, is valid because it ultimately derives its authority from the word of God.

Philosophical arguments, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, are valid, not because of those who state them, but because of the reasoning of what is stated. St. Thomas Aquinas in his lifelong labours of interpreting Aristotle was ultimately not concerned with the historical author named Aristotle, nor with an accurate construction of his doctrine. It is true that St. Thomas Aquinas endeavoured in a manner highly unusual for the thirteenth century thinker to discover Aristotle's real meaning. His commentary on Aristotle remains to this day among the few congenial commentaries which truly throws light upon Aristotle's

doctrine. The ultimate intent of St. Thomas Aquinas' interpretation of Aristotle aimed at something beyond Aristotle. He sticks to his text, it is true and he wants to understand it, but not as a scholar who indulges in the historical reproduction of a system belonging to the past, rather a seeker, who wishes to find in it a witness for the truth. What interests St. Thomas Aquinas in Aristotle then, is not Aristotle, but the truth, not in what Aristotle thought, but in "how the truth of things stands" (p. 53). So at one point he said:

We will say that Aristotle teaches exactly what he does teach; but we will determine whether he really teaches it, and above all we will not conclude from the mere fact that he taught it that it is true. Even if it contradicts the truth, what Aristotle meant ought not to be concealed.²

The medieval philosophers were not interested in Greek philosophy in purely historical terms The historical Aristotle for them was only the truth which he himself derived from his principles not also the truth which his principles were capable of sustaining. The historical Aristotle for them was Aristotle in all his grandeur, but also with limitations. The same was true for Plato. Medieval philosophers in studying Aristotle and Plato, wished to know all those things and only those things which were true. Where the truths of these philosophers were not complete, they asked themselves how to complete them. St. Thomas Aquinas then didn't regard Aristotle primarily as a historical author any more than he regarded Augustine or Dionysius Areopagita. He considered them as witnesses for the truth which revealed itself through them.

Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas examines the text of Aristotle which he attempts to illuminate in voluminous commentaries, but he simultaneously examines something beyond the historical Aristotle and he follows precisely the same procedure of Augustine. There is only one text that he treats differently, Holy scripture, which as the divine word holds absolute authority for him and is the highest conceivable expression of objective truth. On one hand, he is unwilling to rest content with the literal sense of the word, he looks behind the text for the author's intention, which is to be grasped at the deeper level. On the other hand, and above all, however, he wants to grasp the truth as his own author has formulated it.

In accepting Aristotle's outlook on the world, St. Thomas Aquinas was not appropriating something alien, but recognizing of his own. This is true in the sense of deep temperamental affinity between the two thinkers. The decision in favour of evangelical perfection on the one hand, and of Aristotle on the other hand, was probably taken by St. Thomas Aquinas with utmost deliberation. He no doubt knew very well what he was doing. His decision was the outcome of a single, unitary view of reality. It still remained for him, however, to formulate this view with clarity to prove the compatibility of the theological and philosophical ways of considering the world. He had to provide good grounds for his fusion of an extremely 'theological' – that is, Bible – theology and an equally extreme 'philosophical' philosophy.

Similarities and Differences Between Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas

Similarities and differences between Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas have to be accounted and looked from their historical and cultural circumstances of their own time. In his ethical works Aristotle repeatedly insists on the fundamental importance of the cultural habituation for shaping one's practical philosophy. The formative influence of one's cultural surroundings appears to exercise a determination over the direction that one's speculative thinking takes. Even in *Metaphysics* he does say that the general habit of philosophical thinking has been handed down by one's predecessors who had exercised in their earlier times, as though it depended upon the training given by them.

One has to keep in mind that Greek culture was polytheistic, its mythologies entertaining plurality of gods. It exhibits little, if any, yearning for loving celestial father who exercises devoted and tender providence over every detail, even the smallest of human life. Human activity as a whole was directed towards worldly goals rather than to a life with a heavenly father after bodily death. So the focus was on happiness in the present life.

Corresponding to this cultural factors, Aristotle's philosophical thought followed a notion of finite form that had been cultivated with admiral success through Greek art and intellectual contemplation. The world was there before his eyes. Its existence posed no problem. The cosmic processes were accordingly without temporal beginning and

would never come to an end. Human happiness was attained in a complete life time on earth through intellectual contemplation of the mind's highest objects, or in a secondary fashion by exercising the practical virtues that make this contemplation possible.

St. Thomas Aquinas lived in the thirteenth century at a time when feudal civilization had already reached its peak and was showing signs of deterioration. St. Thomas Aquinas' family members of the lower nobility, played its part in the feudal quarrels of the time and experienced the discouragement and reverses of changing political circumstances. This pessimistic attitude towards efforts at political change stands in contrast to the buoyant elan of fourth century B.C. Athens in regard to political life. But it bears witness to an attitude of relying on spiritual rather than temporal forces in working out one's happiness. In his early manhood he was caught up in the full flow of the intellectual enthusiasm that was sweeping through the universities of his day. He launched wholeheartedly into the problems and controversies of the age, with an admiration for Aristotle that increased with the years. Like Aristotle he also had first hand contact with the political struggles and turmoil of his century. He also enjoyed the best educational opportunities of his time for philosophy. As his teacher St. Thomas Aquinas had Albert the Great At Cologne, just as Aristotle had Plato and the Academy at Athens. St. Thomas Aquinas from his Christian home and family life and early acquaintance with monasticism, became habituated at an early age to regarding human happiness as above all earthly vicissitudes. From this viewpoint, success or failure in every day life had only secondary importance. The one goal that really mattered was working toward an

eternal happiness after death, in accordance with the teaching of Christian faith. The supernatural and other worldly, destiny it is true, consisted as with Aristotle, intellectual contemplation. But for Christian belief this intellectual contemplation was achieved through divine grace, not through unaided human effort. The result was that St. Thomas Aquinas did all his writings as a theologian, not as a philosopher. Nevertheless, his Aristotelian formation permeates this theological work. To use his own metaphor, the water of philosophy was absorbed into the wine of theology.³ Yet it remained philosophy. And to use the same figure of speech, philosophy was essential to his theological thinking as water is to wine, even though the water might be separated merely by distillation.

One of the fundamental concepts in Aristotelian philosophy is that of act and potency or potentiality. St. Thomas Aquinas like Aristotle saw the interplay, the correlation of act and potency in the accidental and substantial changes of the material world and in the movement of all creatures. He followed Aristotle in arguing from the observed fact of movement, of changes to the existence of the unmoved mover. But St. Thomas Aquinas saw deeper than Aristotle: he saw in every finite thing that there is a duality of principles, of essence and existence, the essence is in potency its existence, that it doesn't exist necessarily, and so he was enabled to argue not merely to the Aristotelian unmoved mover, but to the necessary being, God the Creator.⁴

Again, St. Thomas Aquinas has made use of Aristotelian concept of finality in Christian setting which is more fundamental than that of act and potency since all reduction from potentiality to act takes place in

view of the attainment of an end. This idea of finality has been used to explain his concept of creation. God created the world for an end. Creatures exist for God, who is their ultimate end, though He is not the ultimate end of all creatures in the same way, it is only rational creatures who can possess God by knowledge and love. Creatures have their proximate ends, the perfecting of their natures, but his perfecting of the creatures' nature is subordinate to the final end of all creation, the glory of God, the manifestation of His divine perfection which is manifested precisely by the perfecting of creatures, so that the glory of God and the good of creatures are by no means antithetical ideas.

There are number of ideas which have been borrowed from Aristotle upon which St. Thomas Aquinas has thought out independently. For example, on the idea of soul he mentions the following: the soul is the form of the body individualized by the matter it informs: it is not a complete substance in its own right, but soul and body together make up a complete substance, a man.⁵ This stressing of the close union of soul and the body stands opposed to the Platonic ideas of soul's capacity to exist independent from the body. However, holding this view of the inseparable existence between soul and body and granted the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body is demanded. We would then seem to be faced by the dilemma, that either the soul, after death would apart from God's intervention remain in an unnatural condition, or that the doctrine of the soul's union with the body must be revised.

Again, as opposed to Platonic concept of innate ideas St. Thomas Aquinas adopted Aristotelian psychology hand in hand with

epistemology with an insistence that human knowledge is derived from sense experience and reflection thereon. However, this theory leads even to the rejection of divine illumination. So it stands in conflict with the traditional theory. He however, without any hesitation adopts Aristotelian even when it led him to conflict with traditional theories but did so only when he considered that the Aristotelian position were true in themselves and were thus compatible with Christian revelation. When it was a question of position which were clearly incompatible with the Christian doctrine he rejected them. For example, commenting on Aristotle's description of God as self-thinking thought, St. Thomas Aquinas observes that it doesn't follow that things other than God are unknown to Him, for by knowing Himself He knows all other things.⁶ Probably however, the historic Aristotle didn't think of the unmoved mover as knowing the world or as exercising any providence: He is the cause of movement as final, not as efficient cause. For Aristotle the world is eternal and was not created by God. Moreover, Aristotle envisaged the possibility at least of a multiplicity of unmoved movers corresponding to different spheres, the relation of which to one another and to the highest unmoved mover he left in obscurity. The God of St. Thomas' natural theology on the other hand is first efficient cause and creator, as well as final cause. He is not wrapped in splendid isolation, but acts in creating, preserving, concurring and exercising providence. St. Thomas Aquinas' position in natural theology constituted a supplement to or a completion of Aristotle's position and that it cannot be said to be non-Aristotelian; but it must be remembered that for St. Thomas Aquinas God creates according to intelligence and will and that He is efficient cause, creator, as exemplary cause: that is to say, He creates the world as a finite

imitation of His divine essence which He knows as imitable in a multiplicity of ways. In other words, St. Thomas Aquinas utilises the position of St. Augustine in regard to the divine ideas, a position which philosophically speaking was derived from neo-Platonism, which in turn was the development of the Platonic philosophy and tradition. Aristotle rejected the exemplary ideas of Plato, however, this ideas is present in the thought of St. Augustine (*creatio ex nihilo*) at which the Greeks didn't arrive; and St. Thomas Aquinas' acceptance of this notion links him on this point with Augustine, and so with Plato through Plotinus, rather than with Aristotle.

If one looks on the philosophy of Aristotle as a complete system, certain tension is bound to be present when one attempts to combine it with supernatural religion. For the Aristotelian philosopher, it is the universal and the totality which really matters, not the individuals as such. The individuals exist for the good of the species: it is the species that persist through the succession of the individuals; the individual human being attains his beauty in this life or he does not attain it at all: the universe is not a setting for man, subordinate to man, but man is an item in, ~~a~~ part of, the universe: to contemplate the heavenly body is more ~~is~~ really more worthwhile than to contemplate man. For the Christian, on the other hand, the individual human being has a supernatural vocation, and his vocation is not an earthly vocation, the individual stands in a personal relation to God.

Since historically speaking, Aristotelianism was a closed system, in the sense that Aristotle didn't and could not envisage the supernatural

order, and since it was a production of reason unaided by revelation, it naturally brought home to the medievals the potentialities of the natural reason: it was the greatest intellectual achievement they knew. This meant that any theologian who accepted and utilized the Aristotelian philosophy as St. Thomas Aquinas did was compelled to recognize the theoretical autonomy of philosophy, even though he also recognized theology as an extrinsic norm and criterion. As long as it was a question of theologians, the balance between theology and philosophy was, of course preserved: but when it was a question of thinkers who were not primarily theologians, the charter granted to philosophy tended to become a declaration of independence. The acceptance of a great system of philosophy known to have been thought and without the aid of revelation was almost certain sooner or later to lead to philosophy going her own way independent of theology. In this sense the synthesis achieved by St. Thomas Aquinas was intrinsically precarious.⁷

In his writing, St. Thomas Aquinas also frequently defends Plato against Aristotle; he points out that, Aristotle in his polemics often didn't consider the substance of what Plato said, but only the superficial phrasing. The doctrine of Ideas, the concept of creation as following prototypes living within the Logos. This central Platonic concept was something that St. Thomas Aquinas never abandoned. The encounter with Plato was an encounter of two religious modes of thought; but the encounter with Aristotle was the encounter between religion and philosophy.

We find St. Thomas Aquinas giving us ever new shades of the fundamental position. He says that Aristotle refuses to withdraw from the realities present to the senses, refuses to be distracted from those things that are evident to the eyes. And St. Thomas Aquinas himself emphatically accepted this principle. Those things evident to the senses, which can be seen, heard, tasted, smelled and touched are to be taken as realities in their own right, standing on their own ground, not as mere reflections or shadows.

The five ways for demonstrating God's existence were regarded as vital in Thomistic philosophical thought. Yet even the basic framework for these arguments is lacking in Aristotle, despite superficial structural resemblances. Aristotelian metaphysics reasons from the eternity of the cosmic processes and animated heavens to separate and immobile substance as final cause. Whether that substance was unique or a plurality seemed a matter of indifference to Aristotle. In Aristotle, there is no mention of efficient causality on the part of the separate substances. Each was aware of itself only, and unable to produce any actuality outside itself through efficient causality of its own.⁸

This situation points to a radical difference between the philosophical thinking of St. Thomas Aquinas and that of Aristotle, despite St. Thomas Aquinas' use of the Aristotelian vocabulary. The philosophical phrasing employed by the two thinkers may to a large extent be the same but the meanings attached to the same expressions can be very different for each of them. This gives rise to the general question of how philosophers can use the same terms yet understand them in

radically different ways. In our own day that phenomena can be explained in virtue of the different historical and linguistic circumstances in which various philosophers were brought up. Each thinks in the grooves in which he or she has been placed by these circumstance, and his or her way of thinking is to be probed and interpreted in the light of those circumstances.⁹

The above considerations make it clear that the philosophical thought of St. Thomas Aquinas is dependent upon and indebted to the work of Aristotle, and the radical difference between the two types of metaphysics that are developed respectively in their writings. The difference in their conception of being is all pervasive. Other metaphysical concepts, such as those of truth, goodness and relation, could likewise be explored to assess the differences and the similarities in the two philosophical procedures. The result would be substantially the same. The vocabulary of St. Thomas Aquinas remains to a large extent the vocabulary of Aristotle. Nevertheless, his own original thinking at times have forced him to use his own expressions. Wordings could remain the same with the possibility of change in their meanings. Also wordings could be different, however, there could be deep originality.

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CHAPTER - III

AQUINAS AND ARISTOTLE ON THE CONCEPT OF GOD

Aristotle in one of his writings says that the science which would be the most proper for gods to possess is a divine science, and so too is any science, which deals with divine items. The *gods* are supposed to be among the *causes of all things* and to be the first *principles*. What exactly does the study of the *first causes* study? Aristotle claims to give us the answer in the first two chapters of Book *Alpha* (AL, 983 a 23-24), but he tells us little, and even when we supplement his remarks from such passages as Lambda 1-4 we get only a sketchy account. Nonetheless, we may reasonably suppose that the study will include both the philosophical analysis of the different *types of causation* or explanation which we find in the *Physics* and also in the *Philosophical Investigation* of the concepts which types of causation or explanation involve. In addition, the study will need to explain *what makes a cause a first or primary cause*.

Both in *On the Heavens* and in *On Philosophy* it is to be understood that *living creatures* move themselves and also are moved (on occasions) by forces from without. But what makes a living creature move itself? This question is tackled in *Physics VIII*, where he argues that even a self-moved mover requires a cause outside itself to initiate its movement. If we are to avoid an infinite regress, we must suppose that this leads us to one or more prime movers that are themselves unmoved and that have the power to move by acting as objects of desire. Aristotle actually supposes that the *Prime mover is one, eternal, and non-material*, and that there is one first-moved object, namely, the outermost heaven. The *unmoved mover is necessarily at rest*, and this doctrine clearly is in

some danger of introducing a conflict with the doctrine that nature is that which has a source of movement within itself. In *Metaphysics A*, Chapter VIII, Aristotle puts forward the theory that there are *forty seven* or *fifty five celestial spheres*, each eternal and for each of them there is a *separate unmoved mover*. But above *all there is a single unmoved mover* clearly referred to within *chapter eight*, and it is probable that there is no rejection at a single unmoved mover – it should, rather, be regarded as standing on a higher plane than the departmental movers assigned to individual planets.

These movers are substances. They must be incorporeal, partless and indivisible. They cannot therefore impart movement by pushing and shoving. Rather they cause movement in the way in which objects of desire cause movement. The issue of change – how it comes about? Or, how it is initiated? Who is the agent that is involved. These are the basic appropriate questions to be addressed while talking about motion. Stone that is unhewn remains unhewn so far as the stone itself is concerned: it does not hew itself. No more does hewn stone build itself into a house. In both cases an external agent, source of the change or movement is required. In other words, besides the formal and material causes an *efficient cause is required. But this is not necessarily external to the thing that undergoes the change*: for instance, according to Aristotle, each of the four elements has a natural movement towards its own proper place in the universe (e.g., fire goes up so also the air, whereas earth and water move downward. It belongs to the form of the element to tend towards its natural region, and *thus the formal and the efficient cause coincide*. But this does not mean that the efficient cause is always identical with the

formal cause: it is *identical in the case of a soul*, formal principle of the organism, regarded as initiator of movement, but it is not identical in the case of the builder of the house, while in that of the *generatio* of the human being, for example, the efficient cause, the father, is only specifically, and not numerically, the same as the formal cause of the child.

Every motion, every transit from potentiality to act requires an actual moving cause, then the world in general, the *universe*, requires a *First Mover*. It is important however, to note that the word '*First*' must not be understood temporally, since motion according to Aristotle is necessarily eternal (to initiate it or cause it to disappear would itself require motion). Rather, it is to be *understood as meaning Supreme*: the first mover is the source of eternal motion. Moreover, the first mover is *not a creator-God*: the world existed from all eternity without having been created from all eternity. *God forms the world, but did not create it*. He is the source of motion by drawing it, i.e., by acting as final cause. In Aristotle's view, if God caused motion by efficient physical causation – 'showing the world, as it were – then He himself would be changed: there would be a reaction of the moved on the mover. He must act, therefore as Final cause, by being the object of desire.

In *Metaphysics*, A 6ff, Aristotle shows that this moving principle must be of such a kind that it is *pure act*, without potentiality. Presupposing the eternity of the world (if time could come into being there would, he thinks be a time before time was – which is contradictory, and since time is essentially connected with change,

change too must be eternal) he declares that there must be a *first mover which causes change without itself being changed*, without *having any potentiality*, if for *instance*, it could cease from causing motion, then motion or change wouldn't be necessarily eternal which it is. There must accordingly be a first mover, which is pure act, and if it is pure act, then it must be *immaterial*, for materiality involves the possibility of being acted upon and changed. Moreover, experience which shows that there exists the ceaseless, circular motion of the heavens, confirms this argument, since there must be a first mover to move the heavens.

God moves the universe as *final cause*, as being the object of desire. Apparently, God is conceived as moving directly the first heaven, causing the daily rotation of the stars round the earth. He moves by aspiring love and desire (the desirable and intelligible one the same in the immaterial sphere), and so there must be an intelligence of the first sphere, and other intelligences in the other spheres. The intelligence of each sphere is spiritual, and the sphere desires to imitate the life of its intelligence as closely as may be. Not being able to imitate it in its spirituality, it does the next best thing by performing a circular movement. In an earlier period Aristotle maintained the Platonic conception of star souls; the star souls themselves possess souls and move themselves but he abandoned the conception in favour of that of the intelligences of the spheres.

It was ultimately due to this notion of a plurality of movers that medieval philosophers supposed there were intelligences or Angels that move the spheres. By making them subordinate to and dependent on the

First Mover or God, they were taking up the only possible position, since if any harmony is to be achieved, then the other movers must move in subordination to the First Mover and should be related by intelligence and desire to Him, whether directly, i.e., hierarchically. This is the Neo-Platonist view.

The First Mover, being immaterial, *cannot perform* any bodily action: His *activity* must be purely *spiritual*, and so intellectual. In other words, God's activity is one of *thought*. But what is the object of His thoughts? Knowledge is intellectual participation of the object: now God's object must be the best of all possible objects, and in any case the knowledge enjoyed by God cannot be knowledge that involves change or sensation or novelty. *God therefore, knows Himself in an eternal act of intuition of self-consciousness.* Aristotle, then, defines God as "*Thought of Thought*". God is subsistent thought, which *eternally thinks itself*. Moreover, God cannot have any object of thought outside Himself, for that would mean that He had an end outside Himself. *God therefore, knows only Himself.* St. Thomas Aquinas and others, e.g. Brentano, tries to interpret Aristotle in such a way as not to exclude knowledge of the world and the exercise of Divine providence; but, though St. Thomas Aquinas is right as to the true view of God, it does not follow that this was the view of Aristotle. Aristotle has no theory either of Divine creation or Divine providence. He does indeed speak in rather a different strain on occasion, as when he speaks of God as the captain of an army who brings about order in the army, or says that God provides for the continuance of generation in the case of those beings which, unlike the

stars, are incapable of permanent existence, but such remarks should hardly be pressed in view of his treatment of the First Mover.

The question whether the God of Aristotle is a *personal God* is an *important question* to be addressed. Aristotle sometimes speaks of God as the First Unmoved Mover, sometimes as only *one God* and sometimes *many gods* (*Nicomachean Ethics*). Like most Greeks, Aristotle *does not seem to have worried much* about the *number of the gods*, but if we are to say that he was definitely and exclusively monotheist, then we will have to say that his God is personal. Aristotle may not have spoken of the First Mover as being personal, and certainly of anthropomorphic personality would be very far indeed from his thoughts, but since the First Mover is intelligence or Thought, it follows that He is personal in the philosophic sense. However, there is no indication that Aristotle never talked of the First Mover as an object of worship, still less as a Being to whom prayers might profitably be addressed. And indeed, if Aristotle's God is entirely self-centred, then it would be out of the question for men to attempt personal intercourse with Him. *In the Magna Moralia, Aristotle says expressly that those are wrong who think that there can be a friendship toward God*. For (a) God could not return our love, and (b) we could not in any case be said to love God.¹

Other arguments for the existence of God are found in rudimentary form in Aristotle's works. *In the fragments* of his writings he pictures men who behold for the first time the beauty of the earth and sea and the majesty of the heavens, and conclude that they are the works of gods. *This is an adumbration of the teleological argument*. In the same work,

Aristotle hints at least at a line of argument which was later to develop into the 'fourth way' of St. Thomas Aquinas (through various intermediaries). *Aristotle argues that where there is a better, there is a best*, now, among existing things one is better than another, therefore there is a best, which must be the divine.² This line of argument leads directly only to a relatively best: in order to arrive at the absolutely best, or the perfect, it is necessary to introduce the *idea of causality*, arguing that all finite perfection ultimately spring from or are participations, in absolute perfection, which the *Cause* of all finite perfections. This St. Thomas Aquinas does, referring to a passage in the *Metaphysics*,³ and even making use of Aristotle's *illustration of fire*, which is said to be the hottest of all things, in as much as it is the *cause of the heat of all other things*. As far as Aristotle himself is concerned, the use of the degrees of perfection in order to prove God's existence would seem to be confined to his earlier period, when he is still strongly under Platonic influence: in the *Metaphysics* he does not use this line of argument in reference to the existence of the divine. In general, we must say that Aristotle, when he came to compose the *Metaphysics*, had moved a good way from the popular religious conceptions that appear, for example, in the *Fragments*. He continues on occasion to use language that hardly fits the conceptions of *Metaphysics A*, but in any case we wouldn't expect Aristotle to avoid all popular language, expressions and notions with an absolute that he *never really attempted* any final systematization of his *doctrine concerning God* or to harmonize the expressions he sometimes employs implying Divine providence and activity in the world with the speculations of the *Metaphysics*.

For Aristotle theology is the highest science which deals with substantial, self dependent Being, which moves everything without itself being moved, i.e., the unmoved Prime Mover.

Aristotle believes that the universe is eternal with its hierarchical order, and each rung of the ladder, is characterized by its own form actualizing itself in its individuals. Hence, all the rungs of this ladder-like order are in movement. Hence the teleological movement of each rung and again the whole hierarchical order is caught up by an all pervasive movement by this unmoved Mover. At all rungs of the ladder, forms are actualizing themselves. Some rungs are higher than others. Higher rungs have lower rungs as their matter of potentiality. At the top of this hierarchical order, there is actuality, but no potentiality. At the base of the graded scale; there is potentiality, there is no actuality, but potentiality waits for being actualized into individual objects belonging to higher and lower levels. But even their potentiality is not non-Being, but is a substratum and support and stuff of all things in the process of being from the lowest to the highest. At the top there is actualized matterless form and at the bottom of this graded system is pure matter without form.

The second thing is that the unmoved Prime Mover, called matterless form is pure activity (*actus purus*). The whole universe exists because it is characterized by a never ending activity and is sustained by activity. As the universe is eternal, so Unmoved Mover called God is also eternal.⁴

Here, Aristotle is concerned to hold that what is eternal is prior logically to what is perishable. Further, no potentiality can ever be maintained to be eternal and actual, for, whatever is potential may not become actual. For example, a potential artist may not paint a picture of Urvasi. Again, eternal is that which by its own nature cannot fail to be. Hence, God is by His own nature an actual Being, for there is nothing of potentiality in Him. He is all perfect and nothing is lacking in Him.

As God is eternal, and exists of His own necessity, so He alone sustains Himself and the whole universe without anything outside of Him to sustain Him. All other things are moved by Him, but He alone remains unmoved. A is moved by B, and A in its turn moves C, and C moves D and so on. But if this series continues *ad infinitum*, then no moving thing will contain because of itself. Everything moved by another comes to an end. But the universe is eternal. It must have a mover which keeps on moving by itself without being moved by anything else.

Ordinarily, form by itself does not exist. It exists in something individual. God is form of forms; its own thought of thought. Because God thinks His own thought, so God is said to be self-conscious. Therefore, God is mind, God also must have life; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality. His essential actuality is life most good and eternal. God therefore, is a living being, eternal, and most good; to Him belongs – rather He is – life and duration, continuous and eternal.⁵

Aristotle also maintains that God thinking His own thought and goodness enjoys perfect blessedness. It is difficult to imagine God's

mind, life, blessedness literally as we human beings are said to experience and know them. These terms appear to us figuratively used. So Aristotle appears to be as metaphorical, even mythical as Plato was. Indeed the pure form or the Prime Mover in Aristotle is the same as the idea of the good in Plato. Aristotle uses all the works of Platonic ideas of the good for the Unmoved Mover. It is eternal, unchangeable, immovable, incorporeal and at the same time the final cause of generation.

As God is without matter, potentiality and body, so He is wholly immaterial. Nay, God's thought is without body, without senses, He is said to be pure spirit. He is again stated to be spiritual because he is pure rationality and the rational end for the whole universe.⁶ A question crops up at this stage. True, God is transcendent to the whole universe, for He is at the top of the hierarchical order in which this universe is found. As a transcendent God, He does not respond to the prayers of His worshippers, for He is absorbed in His own thought. But God is also said to be the final cause of the world. Does the world love God without being loved? Is there also an inner teleology in the universe which sustains the graded order or hierarchical system of the universe? David Ross, a great authority on Aristotle thinks that Aristotle does imply some sort of God's immanence, saying that God is at work in the world, and in this sense He is immanent.⁷ However, it will be too much to state that God works in the world immanently, or, even in the world providentially, so far we human beings are concerned, we become self-conscious by knowing an object external to us. For example, we perceive a tree, we become aware of ourselves as "I am perceiving the tree". But it has been suggested by

Christian scholars that this self consciousness on the other part of God is reversed. He knows Himself directly and the world indirectly. The reason for this is that God alone has direct knowledge of Himself, but all things depend on Him. So by knowing Himself, He knows all things indirectly, by knowing Himself as a being in which all other things depend.

According to D. Ross, God's influence on the world is of the same sort which a statue has on its admirers. Certainly, Aristotle will not hold any theory of Divine creativity and its providential care for the whole world. God's creativity and providential care are not allowed by Aristotle on the ground that God is not moved by desire but by thought. He grants the primacy of thought over desire, even when he thinks that both desire and thought can be moved without themselves being moved. An important question which needs to be asked is: How is the world moved by God then? *The final cause (God), then, moves by being loved, while all other things that move by being moved.*⁸

Hence, man is attracted by God who is good and pure spirit but He cannot expect any responsive love of God. Like Platonism, one can meditate on God and by meditating on Him can be slowly and gradually transformed, or, as Aristotle himself has observed that one can be influenced by a statue, so God can influence the world by being loved. It is a case of unrequited love while Spinoza and Goethe understood it to be the highest kind of love.

The doctrine that the world is drawn towards the unmoved mover on God means that the grand End called God is moving the world, as its

culminating end. The whole world is realizing God, but it can do so only unconsciously. Hence, there is the doctrine of unconscious teleology. But the question is whether it is a defensible doctrine. The term teleology implies, purpose, and purpose means some conscious purpose in the mind of person. However, we have seen that for Aristotle, God is not a person who responds to the prayer of His devotee. He remains absorbed in His own thought and enjoys His own blessedness. In other words, purpose means conscious end. Therefore, unconscious purpose or teleology will be deemed self-contradictory phrase. Another very important question which needs to be addressed here is: God is said to be the Unmoved Mover, how does He move all the things? Aristotle maintains that God moves first the heaven directly and all other things through it indirectly. Here the 'first heaven' is said to be a god, living and eternally moving in a circle. Of course the heavens are regarded as near-perfect gods who exercise their influence on things lower than what they are as their objects of desire and love.

What does it mean for God to move the first heaven directly? It is obscure and we have already seen that unconscious teleology is only an analogical expression. The very concept of God as thought thinking its own thought cannot explain the universe. God as life, mind, and even self-conscious spirit remains obscure and the whole description is figurative. Hence, St. Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus have tried to give a more theistic interpretation of unmoved Mover.

Proofs for God's Existence

Aristotle presents some sort of cosmological argument for the existence of God. All existing things are perishable substances. But there are two imperishable existing things, namely time and change. Time is actually experienced thing. If it is not eternal, then it will have either beginning or end. But if we say that time began. It means it began at some point of time, which means that to think of time as having a beginning means that time is already there in which it had a beginning. In the same way if we say that time ceased to be, then it means once again at some point of time it ceased to be. Hence, there must be time when it ceased to be. Hence, time cannot have any beginning or ending without presupposing time at both ends. Hence, time is eternal. Again, either time and change are identical, or, change is one continuous change as heavenly bodies have. Both Plato and Aristotle supposed that planets have been moving in their circular movement since eternity.

Therefore, to account for eternal time and change there must be an eternal self-Moved Mover. This self moved mover not only must have the potential power to move, but must be necessarily everlastingly actual. Mere potentiality for eternal actuality will not do so, for potentiality may possibly not be.⁹

Again, Aristotle suggest that men beholding the beauty of God and see the majesty of starry heavens cannot but conclude that these wonderful things are works of gods. This may be called teleological argument for the existence of God. Of course, the contention that matterless form is of its very nature must exist if necessity speaks of

ontological argument. But apart from this Aristotle proves the existence of God, from graded things in nature. His argument is:

Where there is better, there is the best. Now among existing things one is better than other: therefore, there is the best, which must be divine.¹⁰

This proof is called argument from gradation of things in nature by St. Thomas Aquinas. But it has been used by Descartes in relation to his ontological argument. According to Descartes, God in mere thought is inferior to God who is both in thought and in existence. Similarly, Anselm proves that existence of God by the idea of God than which greater and higher cannot be thought. Hence Aristotle has advanced certain proofs for God which have proved important later in Christian and Western philosophy. Especially St. Thomas Aquinas who advanced his five proofs for the existence of God has made use from these Aristotelian arguments though in the Aristotelian writings the first three proofs namely: motion, efficient cause and from contingent are discussed together and not treated separately as St. Thomas Aquinas does. However, all the first three proofs can be discussed at the same time as Aristotle did because under these proofs lie the metaphysical assumption that God creates motion, sets things in motion and in that he becomes the efficient cause and at the same time all the contingent things in this world have come about through the act of God's creation (Aquinas) who is the efficient cause.

Logical positivism has not disappeared entirely from the philosophical scene but clearly it no longer occupies the centre of the

stage. Most contemporary philosophers have come to see that it is uninteresting and individious. Even the critics of religion are no longer content to dismiss belief and its utterances as simply meaningless and non-sensical.

Hume and his followers appear to have believed that the inductive science rests upon certain factual claims concerning the nature of the external world and that science would not be justified unless and until these were demonstrated. They seem to have thought that our confidence in the generalization of science would not be justified until we had established the truth of certain propositions such as 'every event has a cause' and 'the future will resemble the past'. In short, they held that science would not be philosophically respectable until its external or preliminary foundations had been secured. The critics of religion assumed that the situation is precisely the same with religious belief: they hold that it is unjustified and indefensible until its underlying and allegedly dubitable assumptions have been demonstrated.

Today, even science has been subject to charges very similar to those now standing against religion. The point that certain of the scientists' crucial utterances are not open to any final falsification has already been made by a number of philosophers including, for example, Warnock¹ and Waismann. Philosophers are now much more aware that language has a variety of functions, and connected with this, many are now much less inclined to identify unfalsifiability and meaninglessness.

Even Bertrand Russell in *Problems of Philosophy*,² suggests that science is based upon the universality of causal connection interpreted as

simply contingent fact. He claimed that science rested upon certain assumptions, concerning the nature of the world. In particular, he claimed that it rested upon the *belief* that the future will resemble the past, that every event has a cause. He held that science presupposed the truth of these claims and that it necessarily awaited their demonstration. And he further held that these assumptions had not been and, at least so far as he could see, could not be demonstrated. In short, foundations of science were undemonstrated and indemonstrable.

We do not know that the future will actually resemble the past. Nor do we know that there always has been and always will be a cause for every event. Such claims are unknown and unknowable in principle and in fact. It is perhaps worth adding that though he was unable to demonstrate the foundations of science Hume seems to have accepted its conclusions and to have held that men were fundamentally right in doing so. Hence, even in the sphere of science we are left with the paradox that we must regard the various determinate orders as convenient fictions and ascribe reality only to an order which we cannot ourselves specify. Though scientists might succeed in discovering the determinate order of the world, he could never know that he had actually done so. Because alternative explanations are always possible he could never be sure that his claim was in fact true. The order upon which science depends is one which the world could never lack. Nor can the scientist conceive of the world as possibly lacking order in this sense. He knows and has every right to claim that he knows the fact upon which, in the final analysis, his discipline rests. This is equally true of the relation of the believer to the foundations of his belief. A scientist does not say that there actually is

something in the universe corresponding to them; at most he regards them as convenient fictions and their existence as a working postulate. And yet he does in some sense assume their existence; in any event, his investigations presume that they are at least a partial reflection of the real order of the world. Their reality is for him a matter of belief or faith, at least this is perhaps, and in much the same way, it is just such determinate conceptions which are the proper object of faith or belief within religion.³ When a scientist says 'the world has an order' he is not alleging that the world is some particular way; he is not making a claim which might be either supported or refuted by evidence. His is a claim which could not possibly be false. The world might lack any particular order; it might even lack the order it presently has, but it does not and cannot lack order as such. His claim is then unfalsifiable. But so far from being a defect, this is instead its real strength. It is this unfalsifiability which justifies the scientist's essential resolve to treat every event as pointing to the real nature of the world's order. It is this feature which makes it possible for this use to do the job for which it is intended. Same is the case with the religious beliefs whose claims of a religious believer such as God is love, I believe in God, or God exists, are all regarded to be unfalsifiable and thereby meaningless according to the charges forwarded by the logical positivists. However, the sponsors of unfalsifiability charge habitually fail to discriminate the various senses in which religious utterances are actually employed.

Though it can never be conclusive, there could always be evidence in support of believe in the existence of the various determinate orders described by science. Similarly, though it can never be conclusive, there

could always be evidence supporting belief in the existence of the various determinate Gods found in different religions. But with respect to the heuristic uses upon which science and religion are based, there can be no question of evidence or empirical pointing. In neither case are there any simple empirical facts which might be urged as supporting evidence. Nor is this a really serious problem. 'Order' and 'God' in the sense in which these serve as the respective foundations of their disciplines, are necessarily referring expressions and we have only to know their use to know that there must be something corresponding thereto. It is impossible that the world should lack order in the sense with which science is fundamentally concerned. In precisely the same way, it is impossible that there should be nothing corresponding to the use of 'God' upon which religion is based. The believer who expresses his belief in God in this sense is, among other things, asserting a claim which could not possibly be false. This is also the position advanced by St. Thomas Aquinas with regard to his doctrine of God. What does St. Thomas Aquinas mean when he speaks of God as the cause of the *esse* of creatures and of God as *ipsum esse* subsistence? A fundamental teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas is that any knowledge we have of God is derived from what we know of creatures. There is no direct human knowledge of God akin to our knowledge of objects falling within our experience ("knowledge by acquaintance"). On his account too, human knowledge of God cannot be something inferred on the basis of some prior understanding of what God is "knowledge based on the concept of God",⁴ According to St. Thomas Aquinas, who in this respect is remarkably an empiricist:

The knowledge that is natural to us has its source in the senses and extends just so far as it can be led by sensible things; from these, however, our understanding cannot reach to the divine essence.... In the present life our intellect has a natural relation to the natures of material things; thus it understands nothing except by turning to sense images.... In this sense, it is obvious that we cannot, primarily and essentially, in the mode of knowing that we experience, understand immaterial substances since they are not subject to the senses and imagination... what is understood first by us in the present life is the whatness of material things... (hence)... we arrive at a knowledge of God by ways of creatures.⁵

As Herbert McCabe, O.P. nicely puts it, St. Thomas Aquinas' view is that:

When we speak of God, although we know how to use our words, there is an important sense in which we do not know what they mean.... We know how to talk about God, not because of any understanding of God, but because of what we know about His creatures.⁶

On St. Thomas Aquinas' account there are philosophical puzzles which arise with respect to the world of our experience. And these puzzles are our basis for talking of God. So to understand St. Thomas Aquinas on what he means in speaking of God as *ipsum esse* subsistence we need to look more at what St. Thomas Aquinas thinks of creatures. The point we need most specially to note is that creatures, for St. Thomas Aquinas, are more than the meaning of words. St. Thomas Aquinas even appeals to it as a reason for rejecting a famous argument for God's existence based on the meaning of the word 'God'.⁷ For him however, we might know what something is in a way that goes beyond learning what a dictionary

tells us that a word means. Herbert McCabe puts it that according to St. Thomas Aquinas, “it is not simply in our capacity to use signs, our ability for example, to understand words, but in our actual use of them to say what is the case that we have need of and lay hold on the *esse* of things”. St. Thomas Aquinas’ teaching on *esse* is decidedly a matter of fact and even pedestrian. For him, we lay hold on the *esse* of things by living in the world and by truly saying what things are. We lay hold on the *esse* by being natural scientists exploring our environment and talking about it as we try to understand it. In St. Thomas Aquinas’ view, however, our environment itself is a puzzling thing. At the end of his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein says: “Not how the world is, is the mystical, but that it is”.⁸ For Wittgenstein, how the world is a scientific matter with scientific answers. But so, he insists, even when the scientific answers are in, we are still left with the *thatness* of the world, the fact that it is. He says: “We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all”.⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas is of the same mind. We can, he thinks, explore the world and develop an account of what things in it are. But we are still left with a decidedly non-scientific question – How come that the world is? The fact that we can think of things having *esse* is one which St. Thomas Aquinas finds important and suggestive. For he finds it natural to ask “How come things have *esse*?” and he thinks of the question as causal. Or as we may also put it, St. Thomas Aquinas’ view is that, as well as asking “what in the world accounts for this, that, or the other?” we can also ask “why any world at all?” How come the whole familiar business of asking and answering “how come?” And it is here that St. Thomas Aquinas thinks in terms of God. For him

the question “how come any universe?” is a serious one to which there must be an answer. And he gives the name ‘God’ to whatever the answer is. God, for St. Thomas Aquinas, is the reason why there is any universe at all. God, he says is the source of the *esse* of things – the fact that they are *more than the meaning of the words*. Considered as such, St. Thomas Aquinas adds, God is *ipsum esse* subsistence, which means God is not created. Since the expression seems to be telling us what God is, one might expect St. Thomas Aquinas to speak of it as part of an account of God’s properties or attributes. But this is not what he does. We cannot, he argues, know what God is. We must content ourselves with considering “the ways in which God does not exist rather than the ways in which He does.”¹⁰ It is part of an account of ways in which God does not exist. To be more precise, it is part of an attempt to note ways in which God is, as St. Thomas Aquinas puts it, non-composite. This negative way of attempting to define who God is also found in the concept of God advanced by Shankara while speaking about the Nirguna Brahman (God without attribute). And this Brahman from the higher or transcendental point of view (*paramarthika-drst*). Brahman in this aspect is devoid of all distinctions, external as well as internal (*sajatiya, vijatiya and svagata bhedas*). To predicate a quality is to limit God. A great western philosopher, Spinoza recognizes this and lays down the dictum, ‘Every determination is negation’. He also thinks therefore, that God, the ultimate substance, is indeterminate and cannot be described by any positive qualification. Moreover, the God of Spinoza and the attributeless God of Upanishad are impersonal gods and since it denies of God all predicates it also denies even worshipability.¹¹ However, the God of Aquinas though He can be understood only from what He is not,

He is a God who is personal and who can be worshipped by His devotees and also who is interested in human affairs for their welfare and finally for which He revealed to the world through the person of Jesus Christ.

Being composite, for St. Thomas Aquinas, is something that creatures can be said to be. And there are, so he thinks, various ways in which creatures can be thought to be composite.¹² So, for St. Thomas Aquinas to be created means to be composite. Creatures for St. Thomas Aquinas, are what they are not just because other creatures have brought it about that they have begun to be and not just because other creatures play a role in keeping them going. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, creatures are dependent in a deeper sense, which he puts by saying that their *esse* is derived. They are dependent in the sense that we can ask “How come any world at all?” Wittgenstein found it striking that the world is. And this led him to silence. Having asked scientific questions, he says, “there is then no question left, and just this is the answer.”¹³ We cannot speak about what is not a part of the world. And St. Thomas Aquinas at one level, agrees – hence his assertion that we cannot know what God is. He does not intend to suggest that we can claim no knowledge of God at all. He does, however, think that God is not an object in our universe with respect to which we can have what we would now-a-days call a “scientific understanding”. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, we know what something is (*quid est*) when we single it out as part of the material world and define it. More precisely we know what something is when we can locate in terms of genus and species. So, St. Thomas Aquinas denies that God belongs to a natural class and that God

can be defined on this basis. Yet St. Thomas Aquinas does not at this point lapse into silence. One thing he holds is that we can truly speak by noting what could not possibly be true of whatever it is that accounts for things having *esse*. And since things having *esse* are derived, it makes sense, he thinks, to deny that whatever accounts for things having *esse* is, in the same way, derived. Or as St. Thomas Aquinas puts it, in God there can be no composition of *esse* and essence (i.e., God is *Ipsum esse subsistens*). For St. Thomas Aquinas, creatures exist by being what they essentially are. But how come that anything has an essence? Whatever accounts for that, so St. Thomas Aquinas thinks cannot be something in the world with some particular way of being. As he puts it, if there is a God then God must be outside the realm of existents, as a cause from which pours forth everything that exists in all its variant forms. "This teaching is not an attempt to tell us what God is. It is an attempt to tell us that, whatever else we might want to say of God, we must bear in mind that God is not created. Its content is exceedingly negative. "Our minds", St. Thomas Aquinas observes, "cannot grasp what God is in himself; whatever way we have of thinking of him is a way of failing to understand him as he really is."¹⁴ It must be borne in mind that when predicates are denied of God, they are not denied of Him because He lacks any perfection expressed in that predicate, but because He infinitely exceeds that limited perfection in richness. Our natural knowledge has its beginning in sense and extends as far as it can be led by the help of sensible objects. As sensible objects are creatures of God, we can come to know that God exists, but we cannot attain by means of them any adequate knowledge of God, since they are effects which are not fully proportionate to the divine power. The consideration of the

existence of God and nature of God was approached by St. Thomas Aquinas both from the starting point of *supernatural revelation* (the scriptures), which is the way of the theologian, and from the starting point of man's ordinary *experience* of finite beings and their operations, which is the way of the *Philosopher*. The Philosophers who follow the order of natural cognition, place the knowledge of creatures before the divine Science; that is, the Philosophy of nature comes before metaphysics. On the other hand, the contrary procedure is followed among the theologians, so that the consideration of the creator precedes the consideration of creatures. In *Boethii de Trinitate*, prologue (11, 3c) we are told the first way of Philosophy in sacred doctrine is to demonstrate items that are, preambles to faith, such as those things that are proved God by natural processes of reasoning: that God exists, that God is one, and so on.

St. Thomas Aquinas recognizes two types of demonstration, one moving from cause to effects and other from effects back to their cause. The argument that he selected to establish that God exists uses the second procedure and are technically called *quia* arguments. In other words, these proofs start with some observed facts of experience (all St. Thomas Aquinas' arguments to God's existence are *a posteriori*) and concluded to the ultimate cause of these facts: they proceed from creatures to God, and it is the creature's nature, the lack of self-sufficiency on that reveals the existence of God. Moreover, we can by the natural light of reason, attain by reflection on creatures and their relation to him. On this account it would seem only 'natural' to begin the exposition of the Thomist Philosophy with a consideration of the

concrete *objects* of experience by reflection on which we arrive at those fundamental principles which leads us on to develop the proofs of God's existence. He points out that from a consideration of effects which are disproportionate to the cause obtain a perfect knowledge of the cause, we can come to know that the cause exists. The effects do not contain in themselves their own sufficient ontological explanation. What St. Thomas Aquinas did was identify a central perfection-*esse*- in which all things participate. He then showed that the having of existence requires an efficient and formal exemplary cause and since man is among these existents, his exemplar would be personal, unparticipated being, and all things are like God in so far as they have existence. This existence is, of course, the most intrinsic of all perfections. Without existence, there is nothing real. Because of this existential situation, which is echoed in the intellect's orientation toward Absolute Being in its life of knowledge, we may gain some positive knowledge of God by knowing creatures in as much as the possession of existence is the foundation for any analogy between finite beings and Infinite Being.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, we can discern the ascending orders or ranks of forms, the irrational sensitive forms of animals, the rational soul of man is created, finite and embodied, while God is uncreated, infinite and pure spirit: it is only reasonable, then to suppose that between the human soul and God there are finite and created spiritual forms which are without body. At the summit of the scale is the absolute simplicity of God.¹⁵

Aristotle when asserting in the *Metaphysics* a plurality of movers, of separated intelligence, raised the question how this could be possible if matter is the principle of individuation though he didn't answer the question. St. Thomas Aquinas, holding on the one hand, that matter is the principle of individuation and denying its presence in the angels on the other hand, was forced to deny their multiplicity within the species. For St. Thomas Aquinas then, the intelligences really became separate universals, though not, of course, in the sense of hypostatized concept.

In God alone are essence and existence identical: God exists necessarily because His essence is existence: all other things receive or 'participate in' existence, and that which receives must be distinct from that which is received. The fact that St. Thomas Aquinas argues that whose existence is other than its essence must have received its existence from another, and that it is true of God alone that His existence is not different from or other than his essence, and this seems to be making it perfectly clear that *St. Thomas Aquinas regarded the distinction between essence and existence as objective and independent of the mind*. The third way of proving the existence of God appears to presuppose the real distinction between essence and existence in finite things.

Existence determines essence in the sense that it is act and through it the essence has being; but on the other hand, existence, as act, is determined by essence, as potentiality, to be the existence of this or that kind of essence. Yet we must not imagine that essence existed before receiving existence, for that there is a kind of neutral existence

which is not the existence of anything in particular until it is united with essence: the two principles are *not two physical things united together*, but they are *two constitutive principles* which are concreated as principles of a particular being. There is no existence without essence and there is no essence without existence, the two are created together, and if its existence ceases, the concrete essence ceases to be. Created existence and essence arise together and although the two constitutive principles are objectively distinct, *existence is the more fundamental and God is the source of finite existence*, the another of the composition between essence and existence but must have existence as its very essence, existing necessarily.

Proofs of God's Existence

The most famous of the arguments are the "five ways" of reasoning to the conclusion that God exists (*Summa Theologiae* 1,2,3,c). All these ways employ the principle of causality and that from empirical knowledge of the physical world. They are not entirely original with St. Thomas Aquinas, depending not only on Plato, Aristotle, and Avicenna but also on Augustine and especially on Moses Maiminides. The first way begins with the point that things in the world are always changing or moving, and concludes to the existence of one, first moving cause. Motion is here understood in the wide Aristotelian sense of reduction of potency to act, and St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle, argues that a thing cannot be reduced from potency to act. In this sense everything which is moved it must be moved by yet another agent. An infinite series is impossible, we come in the end to an unmoved mover, a first

mover and all understand that this is God.¹⁶ In SCG he develops it at considerable length.

1. Argument from Motion:

St. Thomas Aquinas favours the argument from physical motion. *The Summa Contra Gentiles* (1, 13) offers an extended version of this first argument and frankly indicates its relation to the ideas in the last books of Aristotle's *Physics*. The other four ways are but briefly suggested in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. In another, much neglected work (*Compendium Theologiae* 1,3) the first way is stated clearly and concisely. The law of motion that we daily observe in our life is that: all things that are moved are moved by other things; furthermore, things of an inferior nature are moved by the superior beings. St. Thomas Aquinas' examples are chosen from thirteenth century *Physics* and *Astronomy*, in which the four basic elements were thought to be under dynamic influence of the stars, and lower celestial bodies were considered to be moved about by those at a greater distance from the earth.

St. Thomas Aquinas next argues that the process in which A moves B, B moves C, and so on cannot be self-explanatory. His way of saying is this "This process cannot go in infinity". He concludes that the only possible explanation of the series of physical motions observed in the universe requires the acceptance of the existence of a different sort of 'mover' – a being that is not moved by another, in other words, a first mover. This would have to be real being, of course and of a quite

different nature from bodily things. He eventually suggests that this mover existing above all else is what Christians call God.

In the same passage from the *Compendium*, two other facets of the argument from motion are introduced. First, St. Thomas Aquinas claims that all causes observed as acting in the universe are instrumental in character and must be used, as it were, by a primary agent. This primary agent is again another name for God. To suppose that the universe is self explanatory is to St. Thomas Aquinas, like thinking that a bed could be constructed by putting the tools and materials together without any carpenter to use them. This is an important case of the conception of God as a divine craftsman. In the second place this text suggests briefly that an infinite series of moved movers is an impossibility; the length of the series has nothing to do with its explanatory function, if all its members be finite. Finally, any such series require a first mover (primary in the sense of causality, not necessarily of chronological priority). This first mover would be a Supreme Being. It is obvious that many of the attributes of God are already implied in the argument for divine existence.

This argument from motion is similar to Aristotle's proof of the First Mover, and for both Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas we must remember that motion includes change, and that change in its turn includes not only change of location but also transition from potentiality to actuality. As here stated by St. Thomas Aquinas it is also less satisfactory. The conclusion can contain no more than an initial first cause some convulsive heaven by which the whole thing is started off,

but which dies away when impetus has been imparted. No element of continuance is included here, and the form in which St. Thomas Aquinas presents the argument lacks the permanent character of the operation of motion which Aristotle presupposed.¹⁷

2. Argument from Efficient Cause

The second way is from the nature of the efficient cause. In the world of sense we find that there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known, neither is it, indeed, possible in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now, in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity. Because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several or one only. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore, it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause to which everyone gives the name of God.

A similar concept between Aristotle and Aquinas on one hand, and Flint on the other hand, is found in the following quotation from Flint's book, *Theism*:

A true cause is one to which the reason not only moves but in which it rests, and except in a first cause the mind cannot

rest A true cause is a single all originating, all pervading, all sustaining principle; ... all things must consequently 'live, move and have their being' therein. It is at their end as well as at their origin, it encompasses them, all round, it penetrates them, all through. The least things are not merely linked to it by intermediate agencies which go back an enormous distance, but are immediately present to it, and filled to the limit of their faculties with its power.¹⁸

Spinoza directly equated the ultimate ratio with God, who is not *causa remota*, but *causa immanence* of the universe, as all things directly depend upon his timeless essence.¹⁹

3. Cosmological Argument

God is not taken by the causal argument as the end of time-series such that if time-series is taken as infinite then God is not required as the last link of this series. God is really timeless and eternal and therefore, even if time series is taken as infinite. God is still there as the first cause lying beyond the infinite time-series itself.

The third way or the cosmological proof like the causal one is an *a posteriori* proof and in a way is a specific form of the causal proof itself. It is also known as the argument from contingency. It tries to prove God as a necessary being, who is inevitably required for an adequate explanation of the objects of the world. The argument runs thus: We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if

everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, at one time if nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore, we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing others their necessity. This men speak of as God.

Cosmological proof does not really want to thrive on the claim that the time series must start with a necessary being such that at no point of time a situation could be conceived when nothing existed. Its real claim seems to be that, apart from any consideration of time sequence, there is a logical connection between the necessary being and the contingent objects, such that the existence of the latter would be unintelligible without the former. A necessary being is necessary to explain the existence of contingent objects. The important question to be considered with regard to the cosmological proof are: (1) whether the world requires an explanation of the type which cosmological claims to advance through the hypothesis of a necessary being, or, in other words, whether the world really remains unintelligible without the hypothesis of

a necessary being, and (2) whether necessary being really becomes able to explain the universe.²⁰

Modern critics like Hume and J.J.C. Smart centres around the very plausibility of the notion of a necessary being. Modern logicians point out that the notion of a necessary being is an absurd one. J.J.C. Smart, for instance, points out in one of his important essays that “asking for a logically necessary first cause” is “worse than asking for the moon”, for, whereas to get the moon is only physically impossible, to get a logically necessary being is logically impossible. However, to get a logically necessary being is logically impossible. However, it should be pointed out that the Cosmological argument does not use the notion of necessary being in the sense of logically necessary being at all. It uses the notion only in the sense of factually necessary or ontologically necessary, meaning thereby that God is an eternal being having no beginning or end of his existence. Unlike all other beings of the world which are only temporary, God is an eternal, everlasting being. Such an eternally existing being is really an inevitably required to explain the existence of the contingent objects of the world. And it is in this sense that St. Thomas Aquinas enunciated his famous third way to prove the existence of a necessary being as God. The concept of necessary being has been advanced even by John Hick, R. L. Franklin and Richard Swinburne whose writings have denied of the logical necessity as misunderstood by the critics on God’s necessity. These authors find God’s necessity in his ultimacy, his independence of other things.²¹ J. N. Findlay also makes similar remark when he says:

... Not only must the existence of other things be unthinkable without him, but his own non-existence must be wholly unthinkable in any circumstances.²²

4. Argument from Graded Excellence

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, noble and the like. But 'more' and 'less' are predicated of different things according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph.* ii. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum of heat is the cause of all hot things. Therefore, there must be something which is to all beings the cause of their beings, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.

In this argument too Aquinas leans heavily on Aristotle and the concept of all natural things compounded of form and matter. But the use he makes of it to infer the existence of that in which the degrees reach their perfection is more Platonic than Aristotelian: pure form is affirmed by Plato but denied by Aristotle. We should beware of interpreting this argument on lines of the much later theory of evolution. Nature for Aquinas is clearly graduated, and this is the ground for our finding the degrees of more and less. But this is different, despite what modern Thomists have wished to make out, from thinking of nature as on the move from lower to higher. Only evolutionism could impart such a fluent

character to the understanding of nature. The staircase of St. Thomas Aquinas should not be identified with the escalator of evolutionism.

5. Teleological Argument

According to Immanuel Kant, who had nothing but contempt for the Ontological and Cosmological arguments believed that:

The teleological proof always deserved to be mentioned with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and the most accordant with the common reason of mankind. It enlivens the study of nature, just as it itself derives its existence and gains ever new vigor from that source.... Reason, constantly upheld by this ever increasing evidence which, though empirical, is yet so powerful, cannot be so depressed through doubts suggested by subtle and abstruse speculation, that it is not at once aroused from the indecision of all melancholy reflection, as from a dream, by one glance at the wonders of nature and the majesty of the universe—ascending from height to height up to the all highest.²³

In many ways the teleological argument is difficult to discuss and assess mainly perhaps from the circumstances that it is an inductive or analogical argument; and the logic of such argument is not nearly as well understood as the logic of deductive argument. Further more, questions involving degrees of difference between widely disparate classes of things (does the universe resemble a machine more than it does an animal? Or is it more like a vegetable?) become essentially relevant; and it is indeed hard to see how to answer them.

Hume's treatment of the argument in the *Dialogues* is widely hailed as a masterpiece of philosophical criticism. He presents essentially two objections to the argument from design. The design argument as

stated in an argument by analogy and may be put schematically as follows:

- (1) The 'production of human contrivance' are the products of intelligent design.
- (2) The universe resembles the production of human contrivance.
- (3) Therefore, probably the universe is a product of intelligent design.
- (4) Therefore probably the author of the universe is an intelligent being.

The objection to this argument is that the universe is not, after all very much like the production of human design and intelligence not enough like them to support the argument. One may compare to the universe the houses, ships, furniture, machines; and from their similarity in some circumstances infer a similarity in their causes, but the question is, whether a conclusion can with any propriety, be transferred from parts to the whole. There is a great disproportion that bar all comparison and inference. From observing the growth of a hair we cannot learn anything concerning the generation of a man.

Although this objection is not very easy to evaluate, taken by itself it doesn't seem very strong. Philo in that dialogue, apparently, suggests that no whole can resemble its parts (on some set of its parts) sufficiently to support an analogical inference. The following is his objection:

When two species of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can refer by custom, the existence of one whenever I see the existence of the other. And this I

call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place, where the objects as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human; because we have had experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance.²⁴

There are several suggestions contained here. One is that we could arrive at inductive conclusions about the origin of the universe only if we had had experience of the origin of various universes, which, of course, could be difficult to manage. But this suggestion is too strong. The passage also suggests that the universe is unique and singular, hence not sufficiently like the products of human contrivance (or anything else presumably) to support an analogical argument whose conclusion ascribes some property to it. But how does the fact that the universe is single or unique affect the argument? It would seem to be relevant only if it implies that there are no classes as which both the universe is a member (or perhaps no classes which contain it and other things), and hence no reference class for the argument. But, of course, there are any number of classes to which both the universe and many other things belong: the class of very large things, for example, or of things more than fifty years old. The mere fact that a thing is unique doesn't of course entail that it has no property in common with anything else. The fact that the universe is single or unique, therefore, doesn't invalidate the argument. Hume has suggested that in a good inductive argument the reference class is always a species or some other natural kind. And this would rule out argument from design; but it

call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place, where the objects as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art, like the human; because we have had experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance.²⁴

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is much too wrong. There certainly are proper inductive arguments with reference classes such as the houses built between 1980 and 1990, the class of overweight adult human males, and telephone poles.

A very great deal of Hume's criticism of the argument is devoted to the claim that the universe does not really resemble the "objects of human contrivance" to which Cleanthes likens it. Philo suggests that the world resembles an animal more than a machine, and a vegetable more than either. The members of the reference class must themselves resemble each other to some degree and in particular the members of the sample class must resemble, to some degree, the members of the reference class minus the sample class.

No doubt all this is so. Still it is not of much help. For naturally enough the members of any class resemble each other in some respect; the problem is to specify how much and in what respects the members of the sample class must resemble those of the reference class minus the sample class. It is difficult if not altogether impossible to give rules for detecting the sorts of differences that disqualify an argument; and in criticizing the argument from design Hume doesn't do so.

What exactly, is the trouble with the reference class of the teleological argument? True enough, the universe does not greatly resemble a spring loom or a golf club, it may even be, as Hume suggests, that it resembles an animal or a plant more than the products of human contrivance – or at any rate that there are some products of human contrivance to which it bears less similarity than it does to some plants or animals. This, however, is not to the point, since plants and animals

themselves (as well as some of their parts) have the reference property: they too exhibit the curious adaptation of means to ends. Eyes for example, are often cited as having this property.

The upshot of this objection about the reference class of the argument from design is best construed, as the question whether its sample class resembles the reference class minus the sample class sufficiently to support an inference of any strength at all: Hume has given us no answer to this question. And how are we to decide whether the admitted differences do or do not disqualify the argument? Philo concedes that the universe certainly seems initially to resemble things we know to be designed; the impression that the universe has been designed is hard to avoid: A purpose, an intention, or design strikes everywhere the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it.²⁵ Kant thinks the analogy of the universe (or the parts we are acquainted with) to the products of design is sufficient to support some such argument and at any rate better than anything else at hand:

But any rate we must admit that, if we are to specify a cause at all, we cannot here proceed more securely than by analogy with those purposive productions of which alone the cause and the mode of action are fully known to us.²⁶

And the fact is that the universe does seem to resemble in certain important aspects, and with certain qualifications, things we know to be designed. Perhaps it also resembles such things as animals and trees; and surely there are the differences Hume points out between the universe

and the things we know to be designed. But there seems to be no reason to think that these differences ruin the argument.

Aquinas: God's Nature

Qualities that are attributed to God such as: immutable, infinite suggests to have a negative connotations, immutable being equivalent to not mutable and infinite to not finite; however, there are predicates applied to God which suggests no such associations, such as good, wise etc. They are positive predicates of names which are predicated of divine substance affirmatively. For example, the predicate 'non-corporeal' denies corporeality of God, removes it from Him, whereas the predicate good or wise is predicated affirmatively and directly of the divine substance. There is then, an affirmative or positive way, in addition to the negative way. But what is its justification if these perfection, goodness, wisdom, etc., are experienced by us as they are in creatures, and if the words we use to express these perfections express the ideas we derive from creatures? Are we not applying to God ideas and words which have no application save within the realm of experience? Are we not faced with the following dilemma? Either we are predicating of God predicates which apply only to creatures, in which case our statements about God are false, or we have emptied the predicates of their reference to creatures, in which case they are without content, since they are derived from our experience of creatures and express that experience?

First of all, St. Thomas Aquinas insists that when affirmative predicates are predicated of God, they are predicated positively of the divine nature or substance. He will not allow the opinion of those who,

like Maimonides, make all predicates of God equivalent to negative predicates, nor the opinion of those who say that, 'God is good' or 'God is living' means simply 'God is the cause of all goodness' or 'God is the cause of life'. When we say that God is living or God is life, we do not mean merely that God is not non-living: the statement that God is living has a degree of affirmation about it that is wanting to the statement of God is not a body. Nor does the man who states that God is living mean only that God is the cause of life, of all living things: he means to say something positive about God Himself. Again, if the statement that God is living meant no more than that God is the cause of all living things, we might just as well say that God is body, whereas we do say that God is living, and this shows that the statement that God is living means more than that God is the cause of life, and that a positive affirmation is being made concerning the divine substance.

On the other hand, none of the positive ideas by means of which we conceive the nature of God represent God perfectly. Our ideas of God represent God only in so far as our intellects can know Him; but we know Him by means of sensible objects in so far as these objects represent or mirror God so that in as much as creatures represent God or mirror Him only imperfectly, our ideas, derived from our experience of the natural world, can themselves represent God only imperfectly. When we say that God is good or living, we mean that He contains, or rather is the perfection of, goodness or life, but in a manner which exceeds or excludes all the imperfections and limitations of creatures. As regards what is predicated (goodness, for example), the affirmative predicate which we predicate of God signifies a perfection without any defect; but

as regards the manner of predicating it every such predicate involves a defect, for by the word (nomen) we express something in the way it is conceived by the intellect. It follows then, that predicates of these kind may, as the Pseudo-Dionysius observed, be both affirmed and denied of God. For example, if we make the statement that God is wisdom, this affirmative statement is true in regard to the perfection as such; but if we meant that God is wisdom in precisely that sense in which we experience wisdom it would be false. God is wise, but He is wisdom in a sense transcending our experience; He does not possess wisdom as an inhering quality or form. In other words, we affirm of God the essence of wisdom or goodness, or life in a 'super-eminent' way and we deny of God the imperfections attendant on human wisdom, as we experience it.²⁷ When, therefore, we say that God is good the meaning is not that God is the cause of goodness or that God is not evil, but that what we call goodness is creature's pre-exist in God *secundum modum alteriorem*. From this it does not follow that goodness belongs to God in as much as He causes goodness, but rather that because He is good, He diffuses goodness into things, according to the saying of Augustine, 'because He is good, we exist'.²⁸

Analogy:

The names we apply to God and to creatures are not to be understood in an univocal sense, that is, in precisely the same sense. Our concept of wisdom is drawn from creatures, and if we applied precisely this concept to God, we should be saying something false about God, since God is not, and cannot be, wise precisely in the same sense in which a man is wise. On the other hand, the names we apply to God are

not purely equivocal, that is to say, they are not entirely and completely different in meaning from the meaning they bear when applied to creatures.²⁹ If wisdom as predicated of man and wisdom as predicated of God signified something completely different, the term wise as applied to God would have no content, no significance, since our knowledge of wisdom is drawn from creatures and is not based on direct experience of the divine wisdom. It might be objected that, though it is true that if the terms predicated of God were used in an equivocal sense, we should know nothing of God from creatures, it does not follow that we can know anything about God from creatures; but St. Thomas Aquinas' insistence that we can know something of God from creatures is based on the fact that creatures, as effects of God, must manifest God, though they can do this only imperfectly.

The question one can put here at this situation is: if the concepts derived from our experience of creatures and then applied to God are used neither in an univocal nor in an equivocal sense, in what sense are they used? St. Thomas Aquinas replies that they are used in an analogical sense. When an attribute is predicated analogically of two different beings, this means that it is predicated according to the relation they have to some third thing or according to the relation the one has to the other. Here, we have St. Thomas Aquinas' first analogical example of health. An animal is said to be healthy because it is the subject of health, possesses health, while medicine is said to be health as being the cause of health, and a complexion is said to be healthy as being the sign of health. The word 'healthy' is predicated in different senses of the animal in general. The medicine and the complexion, according to the different

relations they bear to health; but it is not predicated in a purely equivocal sense, for all three bear some real relation to health. Medicine is not healthy in the same sense that animal is healthy, for the term 'healthy' is not employed univocally, but the senses in which it is used are not equivocal or purely metaphorical, as when we speak of a smiling meadow. But this says St. Thomas Aquinas, is not the way in which we predicate attributes of God and creatures, for God and creatures have no relation to any third object: we predicate attributes of God and creatures, in so far as the creature has the real relation to God. When, for example, we predicate being of God and creatures, we attribute being first and foremost to God, as self existing being, secondarily to creatures, as dependent on God. We cannot predicate being univocally of God and creatures, since they do not possess being in the same way, nor do we predicate being in a purely equivocal sense, since creatures have being, though their being is not like the divine being but is dependent, participated being.

Analogical predication is founded on resemblance. In the *De Veritate* St. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes resemblance of proportion and resemblance of proportionality. The predication of being in regard to created substance and accident, each of which has relation to the other, is an example of analogical predication according to proportion. While the predication of vision in regard to both ocular and intellectual vision is an example of analogical predication according to proportionality. What corporeal vision is to the eye, that intellectual apprehension or vision is to the mind. There is a certain similarity between the relation to the eye to its vision and the relation of mind to its intellectual apprehension, a

similarity which enables us to speak of 'vision' in both cases. We apply the word 'vision' in the two cases neither univocally nor purely equivocally, but analogically. Though God is not related to creatures by a real relation, creatures have a real relation to God. Nor is God included in the definition of any creature in the way that substance is included in the definition of accident, however, we are able to apply the same term to God and to creatures in virtue of that relation. We gain knowledge of being or goodness or wisdom from creatures but it does not follow that these perfections exist primarily in creatures and only secondarily in God, or that they are primarily predicated of creatures and only secondarily of God. On the contrary, goodness for instance, exists primarily in God, who is the infinite goodness and the cause of all creaturely goodness, and it is predicated primarily of God and only secondarily of creatures, even though creaturely goodness is what we first come to know.

It has been argued that St. Thomas Aquinas came to abandon analogy of proportionality in favour of analogy of proportion. However, in the Commentary on the sentences he gives both types of analogy and even in later works, like the *De Potentia*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologica*, he seems to emphasize analogy of proportion, however, this does not seem to indicate that he had abandoned analogy of proportionality. This type of analogical predication may be used in two ways, symbolically and properly. We can speak of God as 'the Sun' meaning that what the sun is to the bodily eye, that God is to the soul, but we are speaking symbolically, since the word 'sun' refers to a material thing and can be predicated of a spiritual being only in a symbolic sense.

We can say however, that there is a certain similarity between God's relation to His intellectual activity and man's relation to his intellectual activity, and in this case we are not speaking merely symbolically, since intellectual activity as such is a pure perfection.

The foundation of all analogy, then, that which makes analogical predication possible, is the likeness of creatures to God. However, it is only one way likeness, that is, the creature is like God, but we cannot properly say that God is like the creature. Secondly, creatures are only imperfectly like God; they cannot bear a perfect resemblance to Him. This means that the creature is at the same time both like and unlike God. It is like God in so far as it is an imitation of Him; it is unlike God in so far as its resemblance to Him is imperfect and deficient. Analogical predication, therefore lies between univocal and equivocal predication. In analogical predication the predicate is applied to God and creatures neither in precisely the same sense nor in totally different senses; it is applied at the same time in similar and dissimilar senses.³⁰

In considering the way St. Thomas Aquinas speaks, he seems to examine the way in which we speak about God, the verbal and conceptual implications of our statements, and that he is not actually establishing anything about our real knowledge of God. For example, if God has created intellectual beings, God must be possessed of intellect; we cannot suppose that He is less than intellectual. Again God's intelligence cannot be a faculty distinct from His essence or nature, since God is pure Act and not a composite being, nor can God know things successively, since He is changeless and incapable of accidental

determination. God must possess the perfection of intellectuality, but we cannot form any adequate concept of what the divine intelligence, since we have no experience of it: our knowledge of the divine intelligence is imperfect and inadequate, but it is not false; it is analogical knowledge. We cannot help thinking and speaking of the divine intelligence in terms of human concepts and language, since there are no others available to us, but at the same time we are aware that our concepts and language are imperfect. We cannot for instance, help speaking as though God 'foresaw' future events, but we are aware that for God there is no past or future. Similarly, we must ascribe to God the perfection of free will in respect of other objects than Himself. But God's free will cannot involve changeableness: He willed it freely from all eternity, in virtue of the one act of will which is identical with His essence. Though we cannot form adequate conception about God's free will, but the relation of creatures to God shows us that God must possess free will and we can realize some of the things which the divine free will cannot mean; yet the positive reality of the divine free will exceeds our comprehension, precisely because we are creatures.

There is a difficulty that arises out of the doctrine of analogy. If our idea of intelligence is derived from human intelligence, it obviously cannot, as such, be applied to God, and St. Thomas Aquinas insists that no predicate which is applied to God and creatures is applied univocally. On the other hand, unless we are willing to acquiesce in agnosticism, we could not allow that such predicates are used in a purely equivocal sense. Therefore, our idea of divine intelligence has a positive content according

to St. Thomas Aquinas since he advocates both via *negative* and via *affirmative* ways.

The concept of divine intelligence leads one to talk about the divine ideas. St. Thomas Aquinas establishes that there must be ideas in the divine mind since God has created things not by chance, but intelligently, according to the exemplary idea He conceived in His mind. He remarks that Plato erred in asserting the existence of ideas which were not in any intellect. Aristotle blamed Plato for maintaining their subsistence apart from the human mind, if one is considering their subjective reality, and apart from things, if one is considering their objective reality as forms.

St. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of the divine ideas is that: from one point of view we must say that there is a plurality of ideas in God, as Augustine said, since God knows each individual thing to be created, but from another point of view there cannot be a plurality of ideas in God, since this would contradict the divine simplicity. But how do we reconcile this seemingly two contradictory views? What he means is this: If by idea one refers to the content of, then one must admit the plurality of ideas in God, since God knows many objects; but if by idea one means the subjective mental determination, the species, then one cannot admit plurality of ideas in God, since God's intellect is identical with His undivided essence and cannot have determinations or any sort of composition. God knows His divine essence not only as it is in itself, but also as immutable outside itself in a plurality of creatures. This act of knowledge as it exists in God is one and undivided and is identical with

His essence; but since God not only knows His essence as immutable in a multiplicity of creatures, but also knows that in knowing His essence he knows a multiplicity of creatures, we can and must speak of a plurality of ideas in God, for 'idea' signifies, not the divine essence as it is in itself, but the divine essence as the exemplar of this or that object. And it is the exemplar of many objects. In other words, the truth or falsity of our statements in regard to God must be estimated in terms of human language. To deny a plurality of ideas in God without qualification would be to deny that God knows a plurality of objects; but the truth that God knows his essence as immutable by a plurality of creatures must not be stated in such a way as to imply that there is a multiplicity of real species or really distinct modifications in the divine intellect.³¹

When we today use the term 'idea' we naturally refer to the subjective idea or mental modification, and in this sense St. Thomas Aquinas does not admit in God a plurality of ideas really distinct from one another; but St. Thomas Aquinas was primarily thinking of 'idea' in the sense of exemplary form, and since the divine essence as known by the divine intellect is known as immutable in a plurality of creatures, as the exemplar of many objects, he felt himself entitled to speak of a plurality of rationes in God, though he had to insist that this plurality consists simply in God's knowledge of His essence in respect of the multiplicity of creatures and not in a real distinction in God. We attain our natural knowledge of God only by considerations of creatures, God's effects, and since the perfection of creatures, the manifestations or reflection of God in creatures are different, we use different names to signify those different perfections. But if we could comprehend the

divine essence as it is in itself and if we could give its proper name, we should use one alone.³² We cannot, however, comprehend the divine essence, and it only by means of diverse concepts: we have, therefore, to employ diverse words to express the divine essence, though we know at the same time that the actual reality corresponding to all those names is one simple reality. This means simply that our intelligences are finite and discursive and that they cannot apprehend God save by means of His different reflection in creatures. Our knowledge of God is thus inadequate and imperfect, but it is not false.³³

Aquinas' argument for divine simplicity

Aquinas' conception of divine simplicity belongs to that class of positions where a grasp of the arguments for a position is necessary not only to determine whether or not it is true, but also to understand what it means.

The argument for divine simplicity begins by considering whether God is a body. St. Thomas Aquinas points out that all bodies are subject to change and can be causally affected; since neither of these things can happen to God, God is not a body. Therefore, since God is immaterial. And this means if God is immaterial he is identical with His form.

God, like other immaterial beings, is not individualized form, but a form *per se*. Forms *per se* are individualized when they are instantiated in things that are not identical with them. But in the case of the forms of the immaterial things, there is no difference between having the form and being the form, so it is not possible for such forms to be instantiated in things that are not identical with them. This is only possible for material

forms, since material things have forms without being those forms; that is why St. Thomas Aquinas asserts that forms are individualized by matter. It follows that immaterial forms cannot be individualized forms.³⁴ Part of the case for believing that there can be such a being as having the form and being the form or a substantial form – a form existing on its own – lies in the strength of the reasons we have for postulating such a being. St. Thomas Aquinas thinks that sound deductive arguments can be given for there being a God, and for God's being a substantial form.

The difficulty that St. Thomas Aquinas himself raises in connection with Plato's theory is the impossibility of the forms of material things existing immaterially. He follows Aristotle in maintaining that "It is contrary to the nature of sensible things that their forms should subsist without matter", and that the forms of material things have real existence only in matter. But this objection obviously does not apply to immaterial substantial forms. Nor do the difficulties involved in the notion of participation arise for St. Thomas Aquinas. He does not hold that material things participate in immaterial form, or that different immaterial things participate in the same form; in his view every immaterial being is essentially different from every other immaterial being. It is misleading to think of St. Thomas Aquinas' substantial forms as being like Platonic forms. Platonic forms are universals, which particulars participate in. St. Thomas Aquinas' substantial forms are not universals, because it is not possible for things to participate in them. Nor are they particulars, in the sense that 'particulars' is usually given, since this sense implies that there are universals that particulars fall under. That

is why St. Thomas Aquinas often says that God is neither universal nor particular.

St. Thomas Aquinas also believes that it is wrong to believe that all forms can only exist as such in thought. It is true that the forms of material things can only exist as forms *per se* in thought, and that they do not have causal powers in this mode of existence. For example, a material form *per se*, like whiteness, cannot exist on its own, because for a material form to really exist is to exist in matter, and whiteness itself cannot be a material thing. Since it is their being material form that makes it impossible for such forms to exist on their own and be actual *per se*, we cannot infer that immaterial forms are unable to exist and be actual *per se*. St. Thomas Aquinas holds that we can truly predicate terms of God in their literal sense (cf. 1a q.13 a 3), while being ignorant of his nature. There is no difficulty in this view if the predicates we apply to God are formal ones or highly vague ones, like being identical with himself or having some property or other, but St. Thomas Aquinas wants to say that we can literally ascribe to God properties like knowledge or power. This is possible because the real properties that we can ascribe to God are general ones. These properties are literally true of God, but knowing this does not tell us the determinate form that they take in the divine nature, and is thus compatible with ignorance of that nature.

St. Thomas Aquinas does not think that God is the only being who is identical with his essence – this identity results from God's being immaterial, all immaterial beings – not just God – are substantial forms. The difference between God and other substantial forms is that God is the

only being who is identical with his existence as well as with his essence. The argument for this conclusion is straight forward. If God's existence is not his essence, it either follows from his essence or is caused by something other than himself. It cannot follow from his essence, because that would mean that he would cause his own existence, which is impossible. It cannot be caused by something else, because he is the uncaused cause. Therefore, it is false that his existence is not his essence. If a thing's existence does not belong to its essence, it is contingent. We can ask the question "Why does it exist?" assume that a thing is an effect, and set about looking for its cause. Since being contingent means being an effect, God cannot be contingent. Since it belongs to his nature not to be contingent, his existence is a feature of his nature. Since he is his nature, he must also be his existence.

Analogy of Being

The Analogy of Being Occupies a Centre stage in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Metaphysics*. There is a difference between Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas with regard to the concept of being. Aristotle's explanation of being is that all beings exist in one way or another, either in reality or in thought. But Aristotle shows no special concern with existence as a philosophical notion. There is no real distinction between thing and being, they are known by the same mental activity. A thing's being and what it is coincide. The problem of the world's needing a creator to make it exist doesn't arise, and an efficient cause is explained in terms of originating motion rather than of bestowing existence. Because, it is utterly unchangeable, separate form has in itself and through itself the nature of being. All other things depend upon it through

final causality for their permanence and in consequence for their being. In this way separate form is the primary instance of being, and everything else has being through focal reference to it.³⁵

All beings have a focal reference to substance, to the extent that it is the substance that has accidents, actualities and potentialities. Substance is being in the primary sense, but all the rest are beings, only in so far as they are related to the independent substances. Aristotle viewed 'thing' and 'being' as one and the same, because they coincide with 'what something is'; the 'what' of a thing or being is its essence. Thus Aristotle treated being as identical with essence. St. Thomas Aquinas, however, in spite of the structural resemblance with Aristotelian metaphysics, was the effect far reaching changes in it by introducing existence. So the doctrine of being in St. Thomas Aquinas acquires a new significance. Aristotelian finite substance, which is primarily being, without being rejected at the empirical level, gets transformed at the transcendental level, by St. Thomas Aquinas into God, the focal Being which communicates 'being' to all created beings by way of his creative efficient causality.³⁶

For Aristotle God is the primary instance of being. In the philosophical language God was the first efficient cause of all other things. He was the nature to which all other beings had focal reference as beings. Further on, in Exodus (3:14) God reveals his own name in terms of being (I am who am) was the way the text read in the Vulgate translation. That was for St. Thomas Aquinas the "sublime truth" that the Christian knew about being. It was the very name and nature of God. In

Aristotelian language this meant that the primary instance of being was God, the God who was now revealed as a loving parent deeply interested in and concerned with the children he had begotten in his own image and likeness. His efficient causality extended to everything that took place, in so far as he concurred as primary cause in everything done by his creatures, and conserved them all in existence. God alone has being as its nature and no creature could have being as its nature. Its being necessarily is other than its nature and requires bestowed by an efficient cause. Ultimately being is bestowed by God as the primary efficient cause, through creation, conservation and concurrence in the activity of every creature. Being cannot come from the creature's own nature, for without existence there would be no creature to produce it. It has come from something else: from the primary efficient cause. In the creation proclaimed by Genesis, moreover, there was nothing antecedent to receive the existence. There was only the giving of being. This is a radical development of the Aristotelian notion of efficient causality. It continues to recognize the Aristotelian form as cause of being, but only under the activity of the efficient cause.³⁷ Efficient cause now bears upon the whole of the finite thing and extends to the production of both matter and form through a creative act – the bringing of something into existence rather than the initiating of motion. In Aristotle matter was related to form as potentiality to actuality, but now the whole finite thing is seen as itself a potentiality to its own existence.

So conceived, this is very different from the notion of being that had been developed by Aristotle. Yet it is readily brought under the general Aristotelian concept of actuality, which was adaptable enough to

undergo the further extension. The new notion was that of an actuality that had not been isolated in Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle didn't focus upon the existence of things, as an actuality distinct from the nature. Existence was taken for granted as a being of the things and as identical with them in reality.

With St. Thomas Aquinas on the contrary, the being of the thing becomes identified with the aspect that is expressed by the term "existence". It is an aspect that stands in sharp contrast with a finite thing's nature. Being is present as a nature only in God. Everything else has to receive it as an actuality that comes from outside, from an efficient cause. In that framework, St. Thomas Aquinas can follow the structure of Aristotelian reasoning from sensible things in their mixture of actuality with potentiality to an actuality that has no potentiality whatever. But whereas for Aristotle the actuality reached was finite form, for St. Thomas Aquinas it was infinite existence. This radical difference arose from the way actuality in sensible thing was conceived. For Aristotle the things were actual through their form. For St. Thomas Aquinas the composite of form and matter was made actual by existence. Existence was in this way the ultimate actuality of every finite thing, and always distinct from the thing's nature.

Human knowledge of quiddity or nature and human knowledge of existence have two radically different origins. Contrary to Aristotle's tenet, what a thing is and that it is are not grasped by the same intellectual activity. The result is that knowing what a thing is will never give knowledge of its existence. That is why, for St. Thomas Aquinas the

definition of what God is cannot serve as the basis for reasoning to his existence in an ontological argument. In St. Thomas Aquinas' own procedure, the reception of existence by the things in the actual world is shown to proceed ultimately from existence that subsists. The subsisting existence is in this way presupposed by and included in the notion of God as it is reached philosophically by St. Thomas Aquinas. But no amount of reasoning on the basis of what things are can lead to any conclusion regarding existence.

The lack of any existence whatever in the thing's nature likewise allows St. Thomas Aquinas to see that the existence it has must come from something else, and ultimately from existence that subsists. It also gives a convincing explanation of how the same thing can exist both in reality and in one's cognition, and thereby of how the thing existing outside cognition is the same thing that is known. Similarly, it explains how the knower and the thing known can exist as identical in the actuality of cognition. These important epistemological consequences follow the understanding of essence or nature as something known through a different act, namely judgement. For Aristotle the two were grasped by the same intellectual activity. Although he explained the fact of cognition by the union of the knower and the thing known in the actuality of cognition, and regarded the subject as united with the predicate by the copula in a proposition, he didn't have the notion that these unions were brought about by an actuality over and above the thing's nature and grasped only by an act of judgement.

Essence and Existence

The 'whatness', or 'what is', constitute St. Thomas Aquinas' concept of being where the 'what' represents an essence and 'is' represents existence. God's nature is identical with his existence. St. Thomas Aquinas' statements about the identity of existence and essence in God, and their composition in creatures occur in many contexts.

In *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I, 22, 6), St. Thomas Aquinas states that if the existence of God is not identical with his essence, it cannot be part of his essence either since the divine essence is simple. So if it were not identical with his essence, it would have to be in addition to his essence. He argues that if God's existence were caused by his essence, then, since it is substantial existence which is in question, this would mean that God would be the cause of his own existence, while if his existence were caused by some other cause, God would not be the first cause. It is granted that both God's existence and his essence are uncaused. God's existence belongs to his essence. The reasoning in brief is that, what belongs to an essence but is in addition to that essence is caused. God's existence is not caused and God's existence is not in addition to his essence.

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CHAPTER - IV

AQUINAS – CREATION

An examination of the passages written by St. Thomas Aquinas shows that the essential St. Thomas Aquinas is existential. This statement is not a paradox but a fact. Each creature has its own being; at the same time it is not only related to other beings but to God. These relationships are so vital that we might rightfully call them the necessary conditions of their existence. By looking at finite things without their ontological relationships, Aristotelian could see nature apart from God. It was this ancient view of nature that Augustine repudiated. St. Thomas Aquinas never returned to it even when he accepted insights from Aristotle. Although it was Augustine who emphasized that without God nature cannot be itself, it was St. Thomas Aquinas whose metaphysical analysis made clear that the “act of existing” cannot come from anyone less than God and that when a finite man is recognized receiving existence from God, his possibilities for change becomes infinite. The creature’s kind of being – finite being – provides it with an open, dynamic relationship to Absolute Creative Being. This relationship is not only the source of all existence but the source of all development. Instead of using the word “becoming” St. Thomas Aquinas uses the word “participation” to indicate that nature was becoming.

For St. Thomas Aquinas, existence as infinite becomes the exemplar of all finite participants. But the latter do not merely image their exemplar in some intrinsic fashion. The image theory that Plato had related to the forms and that Augustine related to the divine ideas was transposed by St. Thomas Aquinas into a doctrine of participation

whereby creatures have an intrinsic, limited sharing of 'existence' with all the perfection that existence brings with it.

There was a considerable disagreement among St. Thomas Aquinas' predecessors about how to interpret the recently received philosophical literature regarding the philosophical theory of the universe's origin. Some led by such figures as Robert Grosseteste and William of Auvergne, thought that the philosophers believed in an eternal universe that arose from several distinct co-eternal principles, one of which was God. Others such as Philip the Chancellor and Alexander of Hales, doubted that Aristotle ever meant to claim that the world was eternal; rather he simply adduced proofs that the world could not have arisen out of a process of natural generation. The philosophers cannot be construed as positing a doctrine of creation because the notion of creation involves the coming to be of something out of nothing, which is universally understood to mean that the created thing must acquire being after non-being; whereas the philosophers' universe is a beginningless universe, a universe wherein things besides the First Principle have always existed.

If we turn to the fifth article, question 1 of distinction 1, book II of St. Thomas Aquinas' *Commentary on Sentences*, we find St. Thomas Aquinas raising the same issue St. Bonaventure did in his second question namely, Aristotle's opinion among those advanced by philosophers, but rejects all the philosophical opinions on the subject of the eternity of the world as false and heretical. Like Albert, St. Thomas Aquinas defends the position that belief that the world began is not

demonstrable by reason and must be held by faith. Indeed the originality of St. Thomas Aquinas' presentation here seems to consist in the clear and straight forward manner in which he contrasts the philosophical views positing the eternity of the world and the theologians claiming that *Creatio de novo* is demonstrable by reasons as two extremes to his own view, cast in the role of the mean. St. Thomas Aquinas asks the question whether something can come forth from the first principle in the manner of creation. After listing five arguments denying for a variety of reasons, that creation is possible, St. Thomas Aquinas gives his startling response. Creation, he claims is not only held on faith but demonstrable by reason. We should pay close attention as to why he says that creation is demonstrable. His reasoning is that the things in the world are akin to items in a genus that imperfectly possess a generic quality like the way that items that are hot, according to medieval physics, imperfectly and incompletely possess the quality of heat found *per se* and completely in the element of fire. Similarly, each and every being in our experience participates, according to the measure of its being, in the act of being, something imperfect. Therefore, there must exist a primal and perfect Being from which each and everything arises. But for something to be produced according to the entirety of its being is for something to be created. Thus all things must arise from the First Principle by way of Creation.¹ To St. Thomas Aquinas, creation, unlike any other change, presupposes nothing in the thing created, neither matter nor subject. Second, in the thing created non-being is prior to being, not in the sense that there is any priority of duration, but in the sense that there is a priority of nature; if the created thing were left to its own devices, so to speak it would cease to be. In the light of these two features of creation,

one may say that the created order comes to be out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) in two ways. The negation, nihil, denies that the ordinary notion of subject applies; in other words, created things come to be out of nothing in that they come to be out of no pre-existing subject. In another way, *ex nihilo* signifies that the ordination of created things to nothing remains even after they are created, for each created thing more naturally possesses non-being than being, since its being is *ab alio* whereas non-being belongs to it *per se*.

Taking into account of the above two points St. Thomas Aquinas concludes by saying: And if these two points would suffice (sufficient) for the notion of creation, then creation can be demonstrated and in this way the philosophers have posited creation. If however, we should accept a third point as required for the doctrine of creation, namely that the created thing have being after non-being with respect to duration, in such away that it can be said to be out of nothing, because it is in time after nothing, that creation cannot be demonstrated, nor is it granted by the philosophers, but it is rather supposed by faith.² St. Thomas Aquinas has now shifted to the subjunctive mood. Creation is knowable by reason, if the two points that St. Thomas Aquinas just explained are considered sufficient. If however, one adds the notion, much emphasized by his contemporaries and reaffirmed by the Church at Fourth Lateran Council, that the created thing is of finite temporal duration, then creation is not knowable by reason and philosophy.

Viewed against the historical background stretched earlier, St. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of creation, as it embraces the two essential

notes, is quite unique and novel. The emphasis among earlier theologians, especially Parisian theologians was that *ex nihilo* entailed being after non-being; as Bonaventure so aptly stated it, the world came out of nothing as out of a point of origin. St. Thomas Aquinas recasts the doctrine of creation in such a way as to interpret the *ex nihilo* not to imply the need for finite duration in the past on the part of the creature, but to express the nature of creaturely being: left to themselves created things would resolve into nothing since the source of their actuality and existence is outside themselves. If we are to really understand his position we should ask a question somewhat like this: why is he so willing to reformulate the doctrine of creation and why he thinks that the philosophical proofs of the First Principle are tantamount to admissions of the doctrine of creation. The answer to both these questions is given by St. Thomas Aquinas in the texts reviewed above. The heart of creation is total ontological dependence, not temporal finitude. St. Thomas Aquinas consciously and deliberately brings to bear his doctrine of being in an effort to explain what that dependence means. Likewise the philosophers posit a First Principle to account for the universe of beings. Whether they realize it or not they are positing a God, a Being Itself, upon which every other thing depends at each and every moment. What St. Thomas Aquinas seems to be engaged in when he grants philosophers knowledge of creation is not simply a restatement of the doctrine of creation, but he is in effect, granting to their metaphysical theories of being precisely that notion of being that he himself thought so obvious. His discovery of creation in the text of the philosophers is more a function of his revamping and nuancing the notion of creation than in any unique textual interpretation or historical insight.

Aristotle seems to advocate the existence of the world from eternity. However, there are other writers such as Philip the Chancellor and Alexander of Hales who advanced a much more benign interpretation of Aristotle. On this interpretation the notion that the world is eternal is not truly Aristotle's opinion but one that has been foisted upon him. According to their view, all Aristotle really meant to claim was that the mobile motion and time are co-eval; that if there was something mobile there would be motion and time and they are perpetual in the sense that, on natural principles at least, there would be no reason to think they would cease or end and his philosophy remains content with the conclusion that motion originates from something immobile.

There are others who sternly believe that Aristotle maintained the existence of the world from eternity. The most prominent of whom is the Bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne, who maintains that Aristotle means what he appears to say in the *Physics* and claimed that not only Aristotle but all his followers conceived of the universe as eternal in that it had neither a beginning of its motion nor of its being. The world of philosophers is a world that is caused by God, but not created, since creation means not simply ontological dependence but also finite duration in the past, which is taken to be a necessary feature of anything that is made out of nothing. However, we have St. Albert who seems inclined to say that Aristotle himself held that the prime matter together with its substantial form was produced by God *ex nihilo* and refers us to a book by Aristotle entitled *De natura deorum*. But then Albert gives us reason to doubt that he considers this philosophical account of prime matter's origin to be tantamount to creation. For he hints that both

creation and its mode may exceed the realm of what reason can discern. In the *Sentences* the title of the articles asks the question whether something can come forth from the first principle in the manner of creation; he claims that creation is not only held on faith but demonstrable by reason. We should pay close attention here as to why he believes creation to be demonstrable. His reasoning is that the things in the world are akin to items in a genus that imperfectly possess a generic quality, like the way that items that are hot, according to medieval physics, imperfectly and incompletely possess the quality of heat found *per se* and completely in the element of fire. Similarly, each and every being in our experience participates, according to the measure of its being, in the act of being (*esse*) and is thus, in respect of the act of being, something imperfect. Therefore, there must exist a Primal and Perfect Being from which each and everything arises. But for something to be produced according to the entirety of its being is for something to be created. Thus all things must arise from the First Principle by way of creation.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the two points belong to the notion of creation. First, unlike any other change, presupposes nothing in the thing created, neither matter no subject. Second, in the thing created non-being is prior to being, not in the sense that there is any priority of duration, but in the sense that there is a priority of nature; if the created thing were left to its own devices, so to speak, it would cease to be. In the light of these two features of creation, one may say that the created order comes to be out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) in two ways. The negative, *nihil*, denies the ordinary notion of subject applies; in other words, created

things come out of nothing in that they come to be out of no pre-existing subject. In another way, *ex nihilo* signifies that the ordination of created things to nothing remains even after they are created, for each created thing more naturally possesses non-being than being.

If the above two points are considered for the notion of creation, then creation can be demonstrated and in this way the philosophers have posited creation. If however, we should accept a third point, namely that the created things have being after non-being with respect to duration, then creation cannot be demonstrated, and is supposed by faith. Here we can see that his hesitation concerns what one includes in the notion of creation. Of the three points of creation, the first two are the ones that are essential; they are the ones that St. Thomas Aquinas unwaveringly affirms which belongs to the very notion of creation.

St. Thomas Aquinas on Creatures as Causes of Esse

Among students of St. Thomas Aquinas, it is well known that he reserved the act of creating to God alone. Apart from some slight hesitation concerning this in his commentary on the *Sentences*, owing perhaps to his youthful difference to Peter the Lombard, he also denies that any creature could serve as a minister or as an instrumental cause of God in his creative activity.³ For instance, in *Summa Theologiae* 1.45.5 he writes:

To produce the act of being (*esse*) in the unqualified sense, and not in so far as it is this or such, belongs to the nature of creation. Therefore it is evident that creation is an action that is proper to God.⁴

In the same context he acknowledges that it can happen that something participates in the action proper to something else, not by its own power but by acting as an instrument with the power of that other thing. For instance, according to the physics of his time, air was regarded as having the power to heat and to ignite by reason of the power of fire. Accordingly, some held in analogous fashion that, while creation is the proper action of the universal cause, i.e., God, certain lower causes can also create, not in so far as they act on their own but in so far as they act by the power of the First Cause. Thus, continues St. Thomas Aquinas and Aviscenna held that the first separate substance which is created by God i.e., the First Intelligence, creates another substance (intelligence) after itself, as well as the substance (or matter) of the outermost heavenly sphere and its soul as well.⁵ So too, St. Thomas Aquinas notes that Peter the Lombard (*Sentences* IV.5) writes that God can communicate to a creature the power to create so that it would create not on its own authority but as a minister of God.⁶

Here as always after the time of his commentary on the *Sentences*, St. Thomas Aquinas flatly rejects any such proposal. A secondary and instrumental cause does not participate in the action of a higher cause unless, by means of something that is proper to it, it can act in a dispositive way with respect to the effect of the principal agent. If it cannot do this, its intervention in the act in question would be pointless. But the act of being taken as such (*esse*) is the proper effect of God and is presupposed for everything else. Since creation does not proceed from any pre-existing or presupposed subject, there is nothing on which a created agent could act in dispositive fashion and thereby serve as an

instrumental cause in God's creative activity. Therefore, it is impossible for the act of creating to pertain to any creature, whether by its own power or merely as an instrument or minister of God.⁷

Texts such as these have led various scholars to conclude that, for St. Thomas Aquinas, God alone can produce the very existence of other being, as E. Gilson expressed this in his *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*.⁸ Or as H. Renard put in his *Philosophy of God*:

There really are two types of efficient causality in the order of existence, two types of existential causes: the cause of the becoming which is generally a creature, and the cause of the 'to be' which can only be God.⁹

Or as James Anderson insists in the first chapter of his *The Cause of Being*, to ask whether a finite being can cause existence is really to ask whether existence can be the effect of a change or transformation. Since in his judgement St. Thomas Aquinas' answer to the latter question was negative. Anderson concluded that for him creation is the only possible explanation of the act of existing of any existing substance.¹⁰

One can easily understand the concern on the part of such scholars to reserve the creative act to God alone, and on this point their reading of St. Thomas Aquinas is surely correct. Even so, within St. Thomas Aquinas' metaphysical perspective the conclusion that only God can cause the act of being raises some difficulties on philosophical and on textual grounds. On the philosophical level, if one grants with St. Thomas Aquinas that every finite substance consists of an essence principle and a distinct intrinsic act of being (*esse*), what really happens when a new

finite substance is generated by natural agency, for instance, a puppy by its parents? Not only must one account for the presence of a new substantial form in prime matter resulting in an individually distinct new essence; the newly generated puppy must also possess its own and distinctive act of being (*esse*). The question of concern to us here has to do with the efficient causality of that new act of being. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, what is generated is not merely the individual new essence, or the new act of being, but the complete entity. But if only God can produce the very existence or the 'to be' (*esse*) of things, are we to conclude that, in every such act of generation, two lines of efficient causality must be distinguished? The natural agents, i.e., the parents, would be the principal efficient causes accounting for the education of the new substantial form from matter and the impression of this on pre-existing matter. And God alone would simultaneously be the sole efficient cause of the puppy's new act of being.

While some such explanation might possibly be proposed with respect to the generation of a new human being because of the spiritual nature of the human soul and the need for it to be created immediately by God, such an account would be surprising in the case of the natural generation of purely material substances. Indeed, it would seem to compromise rather seriously the causal efficacy of such natural agents. Not surprisingly, therefore, John Duns Scotus directed a similar criticism against St. Thomas Aquinas' argumentation in *Summa Theologica* I. 45.5.¹¹

Moreover, this position does not seem to do justice to some of St Thomas Aquinas' more mature texts on the interrelationship between God, the First Cause, and created causes. With these concerns in mind, therefore, I now propose to turn to some of his texts concerning this issue. First, some passages will be considered where he seems to assign some role to form in causing the act of being.

For instance, in *De ente 4* he writes: "Such is the relationship of form and matter that form gives *esse* to matter".¹² Since he often repeats this notion and seems to regard it as axiomatic, one might be tempted to conclude from it that he defends a position diametrically opposed to that held by interpreters such as Gilson, Renard, and Anderson. Far from denying that any creature can cause the act of being, St. Thomas Aquinas would assign this function to every substantial form with respect to its own act of being.

Such a suggestion is not likely to be correct. While one would expect him to hold that a substantial form exercises formal causality with respect to the act of being of the substance which it informs, it is most unlikely that he would ever assign the efficient causation of a thing's act of being to its intrinsic substantial form. Indeed, in *De ente 4* he makes it clear that it is impossible for a thing's *esse* itself to be efficiently caused by that thing's own form or quiddity; for then something would be the efficient cause of itself and would produce itself in the order of existence. This he rejects as impossible.¹³

As he makes clear in his commentary on *I Sentences* in a number of passages, a thing's act of being may be said to come from its form in

the order of formal causality but not in the order of efficient causality. Thus, at *In I Sent.* 8.1.2 and 2, he writes that created *esse* is not (caused) by something else if by this term ‘by’ (*per*) we have in mind its intrinsic formal cause. But if we have in mind a formal cause outside the thing, or an efficient cause, in that sense it is (caused) by the divine *esse* and not by itself.¹⁴ And in *In I Sent.* 17.1.1, he comments that all *esse* comes (literally, ‘is’) from some inhering form, as being white (*esse album*) comes from whiteness, and substantial *esse* is from substantial form.¹⁵ And there, in replying to obj. 5, he comments that something is said to make or produce something in two ways, either in the manner of an efficient principle, as when a painter makes a wall white, or in the manner of a form, as whiteness makes something white. As Cornelio Fabro comments, this text covers causality both in the area of *esse* and in the area of becoming (*fieri*).¹⁶

The same point is brought out in other texts. For instance, in *De veritate* 27.1 and 3, he writes that in creating God produces a natural act of being (*esse*) in us by means of no (other) efficient cause but, nonetheless, by means of some created formal cause, for a natural form is a (formal) principle of natural being (*esse*).¹⁷ Fabro suggests that St. Thomas Aquinas’ formulation of this point has matured by the time of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Thus, in 1.27, he refers to the form of a body not an *esse* itself but as a principle of being. And in SCG II. 68, he writes that a form is a principle of being substantially for that of which it is a form, not an efficient principle, however, but a formal principle.¹⁸ In summary, therefore, when we find St. Thomas Aquinas in later writings referring to form as causing *esse*, we should always keep the distinction

in mind. He does not mean thereby that a thing's form is the efficient cause of its *esse* but that it is its intrinsic formal cause.

At the same time, his frequent appeal to form as the intrinsic formal cause of a thing's act of being also suggests that substantial form plays some role in his full account of the causation of that thing's *esse*. As we have just seen, this is not to say that he will ever make the form itself the thing's intrinsic and efficient cause of the act of being. But in the order of formal causality, it does seem to communicate *esse* to the matter of a corporeal entity. Reference has already been made to the unique situation of the human soul within his perspective, and Fabro has suggested that this case, along with that of created separate substances, is of decisive importance for St. Thomas Aquinas' clarification of the relationship between form and the act of being. To repeat a point already made, in the case of the human soul, St. Thomas Aquinas holds that it is immediately this to the body during life on earth; but it also retains the act of being in itself after it is separated from the body.

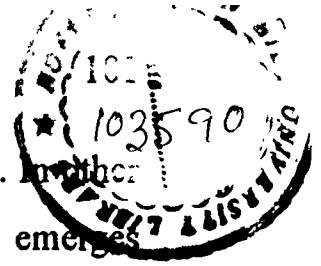
But one should not conclude from this that, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, there are two acts of being in humans such that the body would receive the act of being from its parents and the soul would acquire a separate act of being from God, its creator. Such an explanation would destroy the substantial unity of the human being and would be diametrically opposed to his defence of unicity of substantial form in such entities. As St. Thomas Aquinas puts it in *De pot. 3.9 ad 20*, it is rather that God, the creator, gives *esse* to the soul as realized in the body and that a human generator disposes the body so that it can participate in

this same act of being by means of the soul which is united to it. In other words, the mediating function of the soul or substantial form emerges clearly in this explanation. As he expresses this in ST.1 76.1 ad 5, the soul communicates to corporeal matter that very act of being in which it subsists so that the act of being of the composite whole is the very same act of being as that of the soul itself.²⁰

At the same time, we must remember that, for him, the creation of the human soul and, of course, of created separate substances (angels) is to be attributed to God alone. Hence, he alone is the efficient cause of their respective acts of being. This still leaves unanswered our query concerning the efficient causation of the acts of being of purely material substances when they are naturally generated.

Production of 'Esse' in the Generation of Material Substances

Throughout his career St. Thomas Aquinas assigns the production (efficient causation) of material terrestrial substances, though not of heavenly bodies, to created agents as regards their coming into being. But frequently enough he distinguishes this from the production of their respective acts of being and assigns the latter to God. At times he expresses this point by distinguishing between causes of becoming (*causae fiendi*) and causes of being (*causae essendi*). For instance, in *De veritate* 5.8, in replying to obj. 8, he comments that, as Avicenna says in his *Metaphysica*, no effort can remain if that which was its cause, in so far as it is of this given kind, is removed. But among lower causes some are causes of becoming and some are causes of being. He describes a cause of becoming as one which induces a form from the potentiality of



matter through motion, for instance, when an artisan makes a knife. A cause of being, on the other hand, is that upon which the act of being (*esse*) of an effect depends *per se*, for instance, as the knife does not depend upon the continued exercise of causality by the artisan, the existence of light in the air would cease in the absence of the sun. So too, the being of a creature would cease if God's creative action were to cease since God is both a cause of becoming and a cause of being with respect to creatures.²⁰ As St. Thomas Aquinas passing reference to Avicenna in this text would suggest, and as Fabro also indicates, St. Thomas Aquinas seems to have taken this distinction from the Muslim thinker. Thus he comments at *In I Sen. 7.1.1. ad 3*: "Avicenna says that the divine agent differs from a natural agent: for a natural agent is a cause of motion but the divine agent gives a complete being (*esse totum*) as the creator of the world." In the immediately preceding context St. Thomas Aquinas has just pointed out that the divine action does not function by way of motion but by way of operating, and that this differs from motion as the perfect differs from the imperfect. Therefore, it does not require any pre-existing matter on which to operate.

One finds this same distinction, even if expressed in slightly different terms, in later writings. In *De pot* 5.1 (1265-66) he defends the point that things are conserved in being by God and would immediately be reduced to nothingness if his conserving action were to cease. He recalls that an effect depends upon its cause and notes that this is evident with respect to material and formal causes. If a material or formal principle is removed, the thing ceases to exist. The same thing should be said of efficient causes. An efficient cause causes something in so far as

it induces a form or in so far as it disposes matter (to receive a form). Hence, as a thing depends upon its form and matter, so does it depend its efficient cause. Accordingly, the being of an effect depends upon its efficient cause to the extent that the form of the effect depends on it. He notes that there is a kind of efficient cause on which the form of the effect does not depend *per se* and in terms of its nature as a form but only *per accidens*. It is in this way that the form of fire which is generated depends upon another generating instance of that fire. The two instances of fire are only numerically distinct or, as he puts it, distinguished by a material division, i.e., by the division of matter. Ultimately, however, one must conclude to the existence of a higher and incorporeal principle which he eventually identifies as God upon which the form of the effect depends *per se* and for its specific nature as a form. He adds that, if some corporeal principle can in some way cause such a form, it can do so only in so far as it acts by the power of this higher and incorporeal principle and, as it were, as its instrument.²¹

Of particular interest to us here is the point that he makes next. Lower corporeal agents are not principles of the forms found in their effects except so far as causality based on change can extend; for they act only by changing, that is to say, by disposing matter and by educating form from matter. Therefore, the forms of things that are naturally generated depend upon such cause in order to be educated from the potentiality of matter but not for their being (*esse*) in the unqualified sense.²² Here again we have a distinction between causes which produce the becoming of something and the cause which produces its being (*esse*) in replying to obj. 5 within this same discussion. He comments that, if one holds (with

Aristotle) that substantial forms are educed from the potency of matter, natural agents will be causes not only of the dispositions of matter but also of substantial forms. To that extent they are principles of being with respect to the coming into being of such forms but not with respect to their act of being as such (*esse absolute*). And as will be seen below, in STI. 104.1, he again has recourse to this distinction between causes of becoming and causes of being.

On other occasion St. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between a cause of being in the unqualified sense (*causa essendi simplicitor*) and a cause of being this or such (*causa essendi hoc vel tale*). For instance, in SCG II. 21, he again maintains that God alone can create. In one of his arguments, he reasons that *esse* is the first effect, which is evident from its universality. Therefore, the proper cause of *esse* must be the first and universal agent, God. Other agents are not the cause of the act of being as such (*causa essendi simplicitor*) but are a cause of being this (*essendi hoc*), such as being a human or being white. The act of being as such is caused through creation which, he continues, presupposes nothing, i.e., no subject. Through other productions this (*hoc*) being or such (*tale*) being is produced. As seems clear from the examples which he has introduced (being a human and being white), what he has in mind by producing 'this' being is the introduction of a substantial form into the matter; and by producing 'such' being, he has in mind the introduction of some accidental form.²³

On still other occasions he distinguishes between the cause of a species and the cause of an individual. As he phrases this in SCG III. 65,

no particular univocal agent can be the cause of a species as such. Thus this individual human being cannot be the cause of the human species, for it would then be the cause of that human being, including itself. This individual human being is the cause of that individual human being within the species since it is the principle or cause by reason of which human nature is realized in the matter, i.e., in individuating matter. He reasons that there must be some other efficient cause of the human species as such and of every other natural species. This cause is God, either mediately or immediately. Farther on in this same discussion, he notes that nobody can be the cause of the being of something in so far as it is being; it can only cause its being moved toward being, i.e., its becoming.

But then, in *Sunma Contra Gentiles* III. 66, he introduces a new dimension. He maintains that lower agents do not give the act of being (*esse*) except in so far as they act by divine power. The implication seems to be that, by reason of divine power, in some way they do give the act of being. For instance, in one argument he reasons that, if *esse* is an effect that is common to all agents (for every agent makes something be a actuality), it follows that (created) agents produce this effect in so far as they are ordered under the First Agent and act with its power. In another argument he reasons that the ultimate in goodness and perfection among those things which a secondary cause can produce is that which it can effect by reason of the power of the First Agent. But among all effects *esse* is most perfect since a nature or form is perfected by reason of the fact that it is realized in act, and it is related to its act of being as potency

to act. Therefore, secondary agents can produce the act of being by the power of the First Agent.

Or as he reasons in still another argument, the order of effects must correspond to the order of causes. But first among all effects is *esse* since all other things are certain determinations of it. Therefore, it is the proper effect of the First Agent. He also adds that secondary agents which, as it were, particularize and determine the action of the First Agent produce as their proper effects other perfection which determine *esse*. This text is helpful because here, after again distinguishing *esse* as the proper effect of God and as something which other agents can produce in so far as they act with the power of God, he also distinguishes between the proper effect of secondary causes – the production of perfection which determine *esse* – and the production of *esse* itself, in which they may share (only) by acting with the power of the First Cause. As he expresses this in the course of his final argument, the *esse* does so in so far as it acts with the power of God.

This text, dating as it does from the period between 1259 and 1264, is very important for our discussion. St. Thomas Aquinas has now acknowledged that lower agents do not cause the act of being except in so far as they act with the power of God. But he has repeatedly indicated that they do this – that is, by acting with the power of God, they themselves in some way cause the acts of being of their effects. Moreover, in at least one passage within this context, he has distinguished between this effect which they produce only by means of God's power and other proper effects which they produce by their own

power, namely, perfection which determine and particularize *esse* in some way. By these he seems to have in mind substantial and accidental forms.

A question may be raised concerning how widespread, in his eyes, is this sharing in causing *esse* by secondary causes when they act with divine power. Does he want to apply this to all instances of secondary causal activity, or at least to all instances of their production of new substances? Or does he want to restrict it to certain kinds of secondary causes? He does really answer this question in this context. On the one hand, he has here referred to *esse* as an effect that is common to all agents because every agent makes something enjoy being in actuality. This might suggest that he has in mind all secondary causes which generate new substances. On the other hand, in L. 65 he has written that nobody causes the being of a thing in so far as it is being but causes it to become. This would suggest that he has in mind a much more restricted application of his theory, one that would limit it to created incorporeal agents. For more detailed discussion we now turn to later treatments in the *De Potentia* and the *Prima Pars*.

In *De pot.* 3.7, he is directly concerned with explaining whether and how God works in the operation of nature. He begins by noting that it must be granted that God does work both in the operation of nature and in those performed by created wills. He first considers and rejects a form of occasionalism reported by Moses Maimonides as having been defended by certain Muslim theologians (*loquentes in lege Maurarum*). Accordingly to this view, God has so arranged things in nature that, when

one thing seems to operate on another (for instance, when fire seems to cause heat), God himself really produces the apparent effect which only seems to be caused by the alleged cause. In fact, one natural thing does not really act upon another so as to introduce any form into it.

He rejects such occasionalism out of hand as opposed to sense experience, to reason, and to the divine goodness which tends to be communicative of itself and as a result of which God produces things similar to himself not only in being but also in the order of action. He also adds that this theory falsely assumes that all forms are accidents with the consequence that there would be no substantial being among natural things.²³ He then considers and rejects another theory proposed by Avicbron, according to which no purely corporeal substance truly operates. Rather, a certain spiritual power which penetrates all bodies acts in them and is responsible for their apparent activity. As one of the arguments which St. Thomas Aquinas offers for this position indicates, the First Agent (according to this view) is purely active and in no way passive. While intermediate substances are both active and passive, purely corporeal entity, being the lowest, must be passive only and not active in any way. St. Thomas Aquinas is equally critical of this theory and argues that it arises from the mistaken notion that the totality of corporeal reality is, as it were, numerically one and the same substance.²⁴

St. Thomas Aquinas himself defends the view that there is mutual interaction between different corporeal substances since, in the matter of one thing, the form of another is potentially present. Consequently, one must not think that God operates in natural agents in such a way that they

would in fact do nothing. He then goes on to explain in some detail how God operates in the works of nature and in those of agents acting with will. Something can be said to cause the action of some other thing in different ways. First, this may happen because it grants to that other thing created nature since he gives to natural things the powers by means of which they act. Second, God not only gives such powers to natural things but also continuously keeps those powers in being. In other words, he causes such powers not only in terms of their becoming but also with respect to their continuing being (*esse*) by conserving them.

In a third way something may be said to cause the action of another thing in so far as it moves that thing to act. Here he explains that he does not have in mind either the original conferring of being upon that thing's active power or its continuing conservation in being. He is thinking of what he calls the 'application' of that power to action in the way, for instance, that someone is said to cause the act of cutting on the part of a knife in so far as he applies the sharp point of the knife to something by moving it. Because, within the world of nature, lower bodies do not act except in so far as they are moved and because one must ultimately arrive at God, the unmoved mover. St. Thomas Aquinas concludes that it necessarily follows that God causes the action of every natural thing by moving and applying its power to action.

Fourth, continues St. Thomas Aquinas, because of the similarity of effect to cause, there is a certain order among effects which corresponds to the order among causes. Thus a secondary cause cannot by its own power operate upon an effect that is proper to a first cause, but it may

serve as an instrument of a first cause with respect to such an effect. An instrumental cause does in some way cause the effect of a principal cause, not through its inherent form of powers but only in so far as it participates in some of the power of the principal cause owing to the motion exercised by the latter. For instance, a tool is the cause of an artifact not by reason of its own form as power but by means of the power of the artisan by which it is moved and in which it participates. Thus, in this fourth way, one thing may cause the action of another in the way that a principal cause is a cause of the action performed by an instrumental cause.

In this way too, continues St. Thomas Aquinas, God must be said to be the cause of the action of every natural thing. The higher a cause is, the more universal and efficacious it is, and therefore the more profoundly does it enter into its effect and reduce it from a more remote potentiality to actuality. But every natural agent is (1) a being (*ens*), (2) a natural thing, and (3) of such or such a nature. Of these the first (being) is common to all things; the second applies to all natural things; the third applies to things within one and the same species; and a fourth, if we wish to add accidents, applies to this individual. Because of this, an individual natural agent cannot through its action produce another thing which belongs to a similar species except in so far as it functions as an instrument of something which is the cause of that entire species and, indeed, of the total being (*esse*) of lower nature. Consequently, reasons St. Thomas Aquinas in accord with the physical outlook of his day, no purely natural cause can exercise causality with respect to a species of lower things except in so far as it acts through the power of (i.e., as an

instrument of) a heavenly body. Nor can it exercise causality with respect to *esse* except in so far as it acts with the power of (i.e., an instrument of) God himself.

Regarding this final point, St. Thomas Aquinas notes that *esse* itself is the first and most universal effect and is more intimately present to things than any other effect. It is stated even on the *Liber de Causis* (Prop. 9), even on intelligence does not communicate *esse* except in so far as the divine is present in that intelligence. In other words, here St. Thomas Aquinas maintains that, if a Secondary Cause such as an intelligence can communicate *esse*, it can do so only by its own inherent power. The implication is that it can communicate *esse* in this instrumental probe. From this St. Thomas Aquinas concludes that God is the cause of every action in so far as every other agent is an instrument of the divine operative power. In his presentation of the fourth way in which God works in the operation of natural agents, St. Thomas Aquinas has indicated that no lower natural cause can exercise causality with respect to an entire species unless it acts by the power of, or as an instrument of God. In *Summa Theologica* 1.95.5, he maintains once more that to create is proper to God alone. Individual human beings cannot cause human nature as such, for then it would cause itself. But it can cause human nature to be realized in this generated human being. In order to do this it presupposes determined matter on which to operate and by reason of which human nature is rendered this individual human being. So he concludes that no created entity can cause being as such (*ens absolute*) except in so far as it causes it to be present or realized in this individual.

In *Summa Theologica* I.104.1, St. Thomas Aquinas argues that creatures are conserved in being by God. He begins by clarifying that he has in mind not indirect conservation whereby someone preserves a thing in being by removing that which would corrupt it, but direct conservation whereby what is conserved so depends upon its conserving principle that without this it could not exist. He insists that in this way all creatures must be conserved in being by God, so much so that without God's conserving action they would not subsist even for a moment but would fall into nothingness.

In support of the above point, he introduces the distinction between a cause of a thing's becoming and a cause of its being. This distinction may be applied to the causation of artifacts and of natural entities. As regards artifacts, he illustrates this with the example of a builder who causes a house to come into being but does not directly cause its continuing being. He comments that the being (*esse*) of the house follows upon its form. Since the house is an artifact, he identifies its form as a certain composition and order which follows upon the natural powers of certain things (such as the cement, stones, and wood) which the builder uses in constructing it and which receive and preserve its composition and order, i.e., its form as a house. Therefore, the being of the house depends upon the natures of these things just as its coming into being depends upon the action of the builder. And if a given agent (efficient cause) does not cause the form of an effect in so far as it is that kind of form, that agent will not be the *per se* cause of the being (*esse*) which follows from that form, it will only cause the effect to become.

If two things belong to the same species, one cannot be the *per se* cause of the form of the other in so far as it is that kind of form, for then it would (efficiently) cause its own form. But it can cause a form of this same kind to be present in matter; that is, it can cause this individual matter to receive this individual form. This is to cause something in terms of its becoming, as when one human being generates another or when one instance of fire generates another.

Accordingly, St. Thomas Aquinas proposes a criterion for distinguishing between a cause of becoming only and a cause of being. If a given nature effect receives an impression from its efficient cause of the same kind that is present in that agent, the effect will depend upon that cause for its becoming only, not for its being. If, however, the effect does not receive an impression from the agent of the same kind that is present in the agent or, to put it in other words, if the agent and the effect differ in species, such an agent can be a cause of that form precisely in so far as it is that kind of form and not merely in so far as it is received in this individual matter. In this cause the agent is not only a cause of becoming (*causa fiendi*) but also a cause of being (*causa essendi*) with respect to that form. It is in this way St. Thomas Aquinas adds that heavenly bodies are causes of the generation of lower bodies which differ from them in species. In other words, they are causes of being as well as of becoming with respect to terrestrial bodies.

Again, St. Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between direct and indirect conservation of things in being and comments that some created things may be found to conserve others in each of these ways. Since here

we are interested in direct causation and conservation of being, we may turn immediately to his discussion of this. He repeats the point that some effects are found to depend on another creature for their being (*esse*). When many causes are ordered to one another in exercising their causality, an effect will depend first and foremost on its first cause but in secondary fashion on all the intermediary causes. Therefore, in primary fashion, the first cause conserves the effect but, in secondary fashion, so too do the intermediary causes. Within such an ordered series of causes, one will conserve the effect to a greater extent than another to the degree that it is higher in the series of causes and more proximate to the first cause. Consequently, even among corporeal things the conservation and permanence of things is to be attributed to superior (created) causes. Once again St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the conservation that takes place indirectly on other things through the medium of heavenly bodies, but this is done through the conserving power of God on those heavenly bodies. Thus we see St. Thomas Aquinas holding the view that some created causes are indeed conserving causes of being and not merely causes of becoming. God immediately creates all things but that within creation he has established an order so that certain creatures depend on others in such a way that they are conserved in being by them in a secondary way, and this without prejudice to their primary conservation, which is exercised by God himself.

Further, on keeping in line with the same issue of discussion St. Thomas Aquinas grants that no creature can cause another to acquire a new form or disposition except by means of some kind of change. But he adds that, after a creaturely agent has introduced a form or disposition

into an effect, it may conserve that form or disposition in being without introducing any additional change in the effect. As we have noted it is clear after distinguishing between causes of becoming only and causes of being he allows for some secondary or created causes of being (*causa essendi*). But he restricts this to situations where the cause belongs to a higher species than the effect. In accord with what we have seen from above, we assume that he would continue to insist that only God is the first and proper cause of being (*esse*) and that, if some created agents can also participate in causing *esse* with respect to certain effect, they can do this only with God's power.

The final point of difference between St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle with regard to creation is that, the historic Aristotle didn't think of the unmoved mover as knowing the world or as exercising any providence; He is the cause of movement as final, not as efficient cause. But whereas for St. Thomas Aquinas the first cause is also the efficient cause besides being the final cause. Aristotle envisages the possibility at least of a multiplicity of unmoved movers corresponding to different spheres, the relation of which to one another and to the highest unmoved mover he left in obscurity. However, the God of St. Thomas Aquinas is not wrapped in splendid isolation, but acts in creating, preserving, concurring and exercising providence. St. Thomas Aquinas' position in natural theology constitutes a supplement to or a completion of Aristotle's position, and that it cannot be said to be non Aristotelian; but it must be remembered that for St. Thomas Aquinas, God creates according to intelligence and will and that He is efficient cause, creator, as exemplary cause; that is to say, He creates the world as a finite

imitation of his divine essence which he knows as imitable in the multiplicity of ways. However, in the act of creation the unmoved mover of Aristotle doesn't create anything out of nothing, but rather he moves something that is already there from eternity. Therefore, in Aristotle change comes in picture in talking about creation. But for St. Thomas Aquinas, the question of change doesn't arise since for him creation is out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) for God in the material cause as well besides being the efficient and final cause.

For St. Thomas Aquinas creature is dependent on God in the sense that the creature is receptive of existence from God. The creature, or the substance or essence of the creature is a recipient, a potency, the existence of the creature is an act. This composition of essence and existence is in the creature itself. For St. Thomas Aquinas, there is a real distinction between existence and essence in a creature which is commonly held to be the kernel of St. Thomas Aquinas' metaphysics.

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CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

In conclusion by way of summarization I shall critically examine on St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, the concept of God and creation by St. Thomas Aquinas and present my findings where and how he differs from Aristotle while making use of his philosophical concepts especially in speaking about God and creation. A close examination will cover all the five proofs for the existence of God leading towards his philosophical and theological concept of creation which is held by many philosophers to be an extension of his doctrine of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas has made use of Aristotle's philosophical thought more than making use of Plato's. It is true that there are even Platonic thoughts in St. Thomas Aquinas such as the doctrine of Ideas and Creation, but much of his synthesizing work between philosophy and theology is mostly based on the same line of Aristotle's thought using his vocabularies and expressions such as; act and potency, material, formal, efficient and final causes. Both ground all naturally attainable knowledge on external sensible things instead of on sensation, ideas or language. Cognition is regarded as a way of being by both in which percipient and thing perceived, knower and thing known are one and the same in the actuality of cognition. St. Thomas Aquinas has utilized Aristotelianism as an instrument of theological analysis. He did this not because Aristotle said so, but because he takes the liberty of concurring with someone who **he believes teaches the truth. What interests in Aristotle is not Aristotle but the truth and in how the truth of things stands.** It is true that St. Thomas agrees with Aristotle in saying that soul is the form of the body

individualized by the matter it informs. However, he goes beyond Aristotle by introducing his subsistent theory of soul which is also against the pre-Socratic materialists who identifies souls as bodies. St. Thomas Aquinas says that soul is both a subsistent entity and a substantial form. He employed this subsistent theory to support the Christian theory of the immortality of soul rather than identifying the body with the soul.

As I examine on St. Thomas Aquinas' concept of God, of all the proofs of God's existence St. Thomas Aquinas attached the greatest weight to the first proof, that from motion. The second proof for the existence of God demonstrated from the law of cause and effect, as well as the third proof of God's necessary existence adduced from the world of contingent beings are seen as a mere extension of the first proof from motion. The basic assumption in all these three proofs arises out of the notion that if there is no first Unmoved Mover or the First Cause or a necessary being then our idea of motion, cause and effect will end up in infinite regression. The most influential reason arose directly and implicitly out of Aristotelian scientific considerations; they are metaphysical proofs, that is, proofs which are supposed to follow on theorizations in physical science. The gist of the argument in these three proofs for God's existence is that, if there were an infinite regress of causes, then no adequate scientific explanation would be possible and observed phenomena would thus be unintelligible which consequence is absurd . However, this claim is limited to causal series. St. Thomas Aquinas excludes the possibility of an infinite regress of causes and so concludes that there must be a first cause which we call God. Therefore,

an attempt to bring in the argument with the issue of the mathematical infinity holds no good. Because, even the causal regress discussed by St. Thomas Aquinas extends only to some among causal members. Because in the course of proving that the world might in principle be everlasting, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote:

In efficient causes it is impossible to proceed to infinity *per se*. Thus, there cannot be an infinite number of causes that are *per se* required for a certain effect; for instance, that a stone be moved by stick, the stick by the hand, and so on to infinity. But it is not impossible to proceed to infinity accidentally as regard efficient causes ... [It is for example,] accidental to this particular man as generator to be generated by another man, for he generates as a man, and not as the son of another man. For all men generating hold one grade in the order of efficient causes – viz., the grade of a particular generator. Hence, it is not impossible for a man to be generated by man to infinity.¹

Here then the claim is that causal regresses like a's being begotten by b, b's being begotten by c, and so forth, can go on to infinity, whereas causal regresses in general like z's being moved by y, y's being moved by x, and so forth cannot. Why was an infinite regress thought to be impossible in essentially ordered series, but not in accidentally ordered ones? The contention that an ordered series must have the first cause is that all *per se* ordered series must have a beginning just because they are always *per se* ordered. Both for Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas it makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more, nor whether they are infinite or not, because so long as they have the nature of intermediate they cannot be the first cause of motion. This is the whole

gist and the forte of the first three arguments for proving the existence of God.

The third way of proving God's existence or argument is:

- 1) If anything exists, then there must exist a logically necessary being.
- 2) Something exists.
- 3) Therefore, there must exist a necessary being.

The first two premises look superfluous. Because if God's existence is supposed to be logically necessary, then surely the conclusion will stand on its own. However, when we see St. Thomas Aquinas' passage, the last part of the sentence, there we do not see him using the word logical necessity in proving God's existence, but rather he uses the sentence, *a being having its own necessity*.² For it would be naïve to think that there could be an efficient cause for what is logically necessary. Moreover, St. Thomas Aquinas' admission that there might in principle be many necessary beings should lead one to doubt whether he thought that '*x exists necessarily*' entails '*x is an infinitely perfect being; that is, God*'. So the sentence: "there are many necessary things in existence" are directly referred to the created things including the celestial bodies, human soul, prime matter and angels. So St. Thomas Aquinas quite openly asserts that necessary things cannot exist, and moreover can have a cause of their (necessary) being just as in the theory of causation there are intermediary efficient causes. St. Thomas Aquinas follows Aristotle in holding that a necessary being could not begin or cease existing by any "natural process" allowed by the

Aristotelian physics; but St. Thomas Aquinas adds that such beings can come into existence via creation *ex nihilo*. The distinction between the necessity of God and the necessity of other created things is that the latter are created by God.

There is a little difficulty in accepting as empirical facts the starting points of the first three ways. For nobody really doubts that some things are acted upon and changed or moved, that some things act on others, and that some things are perishable. The proposition that there are different grades of perfection in things stands in need of a much more thorough analysis than St. Thomas Aquinas accords it in his brief outline of the fourth way. For the schematic outlining of the five proofs was designed, not to satisfy the critical minds of mature philosophers, but as introductory material for “novices” in the study of theology. And in any case St. Thomas Aquinas could naturally take for granted in the thirteenth century ideas which were familiar to his contemporaries and which had not yet been subjected to the radical criticism to which they were later subjected. As for the fifth way the modern reader may find great difficulty in seeing what is meant if one confines his attention to the relevant passage in the *Summa Theologica*. But if he looks at the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (1, 13) he will find St. Thomas Aquinas saying that we see things of different natures cooperating in the production and maintenance of a relatively stable order or system. When he says that we see purely material things acting for an end, he does not mean to say that they act in a manner analogous to that in which human beings consciously act for definite purposes. Indeed the point of argument is that they do not do so.

Another significant point to be noted in St. Thomas Aquinas' arguments is that; he speaks with considerable restraint: he avoids sweeping generalizations. Thus in the first argument he does not say that all material things are "moved" but that we see that some things in this world are moved or changed. Even in the third argument he does not state that all finite things come into being and pass away. And in the fifth argument he does not say that there is an invariable world order or system but that we see natural bodies acting always or in most cases in the same ways. The difficulty, therefore, which may be experienced in regard to St. Thomas Aquinas' proofs of God's existence concerns not so the empirical facts or alleged empirical facts with which he starts as in seeing that these facts imply God's existence. However, what St. Thomas Aquinas seems to be attempting to tell the readers is that, in every proof the idea of ontological dependence on a transcendent cause appears in some form or other. His conviction is that a full understanding of the empirical facts which are selected for consideration in the five ways involves seeing the dependence of these facts on a transcendent cause. We should not be misled by the illustrations which he sometimes offers from contemporary scientific theory. For these are mere illustrations to elucidate a point in terms easily understandable by his readers: they are not meant to indicate that the proofs of God's existence were for him empirical hypotheses in the modern sense of the term.

The modern disciple of St. Thomas Aquinas whosoever it may has not only to develop the proofs in far greater detail and to consider the difficulties and objections which could hardly have occurred to St. Thomas Aquinas, but also to justify the very principle on which the

general line of proof rests. Thus in regard to the fifth proof given by St. Thomas Aquinas, account of recent theories which profess to render intelligible the genesis of the order and finality in the universe without recourse to the hypothesis of any spiritual agent distinct from the universe, while in regard to all the proofs one has not only, in the face of the Kantian Critique, to justify the line of argument on which they rest, but he has to show as against the logical positivists that the word 'God' has some significance. It is not however, the task of the historian to develop the proofs as they would have to be developed today, nor is it the task to justify those proofs. The way in which St. Thomas Aquinas states the proofs may perhaps cause some dissatisfaction in the reader, but it must be remembered that the saint was primarily a theologian and that he was considered not so much to give an exhaustive treatment of the proofs as to prove in a summary fashion the preamble of faith. He therefore makes use of traditional proofs which either had or seemed to have some support in Aristotle and which had been employed by some of his predecessors.

The concept of creation inevitably flows out of the discussion on the concept of God both for Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. It is because the concept of cause and effect occupies a centre stage in talking about God. And this uncaused cause or the unmoved mover becomes very important again in explicating the concept of creation for both of them.

Prime matter which is the basic philosophical concept of Aristotle is regarded to be the ultimate substratum of all other things with a

common supposition during Aristotle's time that "nothing comes from nothing" (*ex nihilo nihil fit*). However, "creation" is a fundamental notion in Christian doctrine and it seems difficult to connect the two notions because prime matter cannot come to be since it is the substratum of every becoming. Aristotelian doctrine of matter and form is inadequate to account for the radical origin of things. Aristotle's thesis that prime matter is ungenerated concerns the particular mode of becoming in nature – the sort analyzed in the Aristotelian category. At this level it holds that "nothing comes from nothing". But for St. Thomas Aquinas this is not ultimate. He elaborates his thesis that all created things are marked by the composition of essence and *esse*. Things have received their *esse* from that which is Being itself, and their relation to this creating cause is the relation of participation in being.

A second striking feature of St. Thomas Aquinas' view is that the idea of creation appears as a result of the internal development of thought, independent of the external aid of revelation. That the world is created is not only a dictum of faith but also a philosophical insight. St. Thomas Aquinas defends this philosophical notion of creation, the production of being absolutely, against theologians in his treatise *De aeternitate mundi*. Reason can prove that the world's being had an origin, but not that the world had a temporal beginning.

For St. Thomas Aquinas creation can be taken to mean the "present" dependence of all other things upon God, without reference to a possible temporal beginning of the world. That is to say, it can be taken to mean the simple causal dependence of the creatures upon the Creator.

The creature is dependent on God in the sense that the creature is receptive of existence from God. Since the creature is a recipient of existence in this sense St. Thomas Aquinas sees a composition in creatures. The creature or the substance or essence of the creature is a recipient, a potency; the existence of the creature is an act. This composition, the composition of essence and existence, is in the creature itself, and not only in someone's thoughts about the creature. Therefore, for St. Thomas Aquinas there is a real distinction between essence and existence in a creature, but in God essence and existence are the same. Therefore, the relationship between the creator God and the creature in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas is a unilateral relation. For him, every creature in virtue of its status of being created, has a 'real' relation to God, as its efficient first cause; but God may not be said to have such a 'real' relation to his creature, lest he should make God even inadvertently dependent on his creatures. Thus he categorically asserts that every creature, being created by God, depends on him for its existence (being) and perfection (becoming). The creature, in particular, man, may not be said to have been endowed with any creative power that we associate with God's own creative power. However, St. Thomas Aquinas here seems to be not free from internal contradiction with himself, because on one hand he denies any creative power assigned to the creatures, while on the other hand he acknowledges the existence of some intermediary intelligent creatures who participate in the act of creation. St. Thomas Aquinas may be confronted that a creature, lacking in creative power, even of the higher order, cannot make use of the potentiality of the species of the lower order, and thereby cannot as a matter of fact contribute anything for the perfection of the universe.

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2. *Summa Theologica*, I. Q. 2, Art. 3.

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