e-ISSN: 2656-7997
p-ISSN: 2775-3425

JOURNAL of ASIAN ORIENTATION in THEOLOGY
Vol. 07, No. 01, February 2025 : 99 - 128

PROBLEM OF PROVING THE EXISTENCE OF GOD: A REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE PROOF OF THOMAS AQUINAS

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Submitted: 22-07-2024 | Accepted : 09-04-2025

Abstracts:

This study focuses on the problem of proving the existence of God, offering a review and analysis of Thomas Aquinas' arguments. Aquinas' arguments are presented within the broader framework of theological knowledge, characterized by a highly systematic and detailed approach to proof. Additionally, this paper discusses the perspectives of several scholars who have examined and interpreted Aquinas' arguments on the existence of God. While some of their perspectives share similarities with Aquinas' reasoning, they also introduce differing elements based on their respective viewpoints.

This research employs a library-based methodology using hermeneutic phenomenology, which involves collecting, analyzing, organizing, and interpreting relevant literature as well as reflections on faith in God. The primary sources of this study include Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologiae, while secondary sources provide further context and analysis.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.24071/jaot.v7i1.9255
Web: http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/JAOT | E: jaot@usd.ac.id

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The findings of this study indicate that the concept of analogy in Aquinas' argument serves to illustrate a new mode of action that transcends the hierarchical levels of created beings. Aquinas begins his reasoning from a horizontal perspective and subsequently shifts it to a vertical dimension, unveiling a spiritual aspect that revitalizes both life and faith in God.

Keywords:

Cosmology; Entis Analogy; Evolution; God's existence; Thomas Aquinas

INTRODUCTION

Human knowledge and belief in the existence of God primarily originate from faith. However, it is necessary to question this further: is there any truth that cannot or need not be further contemplated? From the perspective of the Catholic Church, it can certainly be said that what is accepted as belief in the existence of God is the Church's awareness that its life and teachings are nothing more than a continuation of the life and teachings of Jesus.[1] The teachings of the Catholic Church are derived from the statements and teachings of Jesus Christ, which are passed on by the Church to its adherents.

For a child or someone with a simple mindset, the above answer is sufficient to satisfy them. However, for someone whose intellectual life has developed further, such belief also requires intellectual justification. A hypothetical question then arises: how is it possible for humans, in terms of their belief in God, to abandon a way of thinking and faith that has become so familiar to them?

[1] B. Munawar-Rachman, "Tuhan dan Masalah Kejahatan dalam Diskursus Ateisme dan Teisme", *FOCUS*, 3(2) (2022), 89–106.

Humans may still pose additional questions such as: what is the meaning of belief as explained above? Can it be reconciled with general human experience? Is Jesus' teaching on the existence of God a logical way of thinking or not? Does the Catholic Church fundamentally satisfy the intellect of those who believe in God or not? What is the clearest formulation of this matter?

Certainly, the researcher acknowledges that many individuals, not only specific persons but also scholars, have attempted to explore ways to prove the existence of God. Many discussions on this subject can be found in books written by various authors. Numerous scholars have also written about belief and its contents, as well as about the Scriptures. Additionally, some individuals have developed theories to explain issues surrounding belief in God.

René Descartes (1596-1650), for example, linked the understanding of God to the idea of perfection. If humans think about perfection or imperfection, this presupposes the existence of an idea of perfection. According to Descartes, the idea of complete perfection can only originate from the perfect being (God).[2] During the Enlightenment era (17th/18th century), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) began using the bright light of reason to illuminate the image of God, which had become blurred due to the actions of the Church as an institution. The result was a close relationship between the acceptance of God's existence and morality. Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) understood God as a participant in the dynamic processes of the universe.

There have been numerous academic journal publications related to this topic. Kewuel, for instance, stated that the only problem present in all human anxiety and philosophical speculation is the question of God. Does God exist? If He exists, what is His nature? Certainly, this is the

[2] Hartaka, et, al., "Berbagai Sikap Terhadap Eksistensi Tuhan Pada Era Industri 4.0", *Vidya Darsan, 1*(2), (2020), 13-27.

primary target of questions that captivate human curiosity and cannot be avoided.[3] Moreover, Adi Putra highlights issues related to human perspectives and thoughts on belief in God. Belief is an act that satisfies human reason and can be accounted for. However, it should be noted that humans will encounter difficulties similar to those found in other sciences.[4] Humans will attempt to think and approach this mystery, yet they will never reach a definitive conclusion. This makes it clear that such facts are more mysterious compared to other matters.

One of the great figures of the Catholic Church (a philosopher and theologian) who laid the theoretical foundation for the existence of God is Thomas Aquinas. He formulated this foundation in his book *Summa Theologiae*. Academic publications discussing Thomas Aquinas' concept of the existence of God through review and commentary remain relatively scarce. Discussions on the problem of divinity or proving God's existence are not entirely new. The researcher aims to elaborate on this issue by basing their perspective on the reflections of past thinkers, particularly on the book *Theodicy*.

This study will be conducted with the guidance of the following research questions: (1) Who is God according to Thomas Aquinas, and how does he understand God within the framework of rational religion? (2) How is the concept of God structured within Thomas Aquinas' metaphysical system? (3) What is the true concept of God according to Thomas Aquinas?

This research is a library-based study employing the phenomenological hermeneutic method. This method involves collecting, analyzing, managing, and interpreting library materials and faith experiences concerning God as primary sources. The sources include

[3] H. Kewuel, "Lima Cara Thomas Aquinas Membuktikan Adanya Tuhan", *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik, 2*(1), (2009), 44-69.

[4] A. Putra, "Analisis dan Evaluasi Terhadap Pemikiran Thomas Aquinas Tentang Gambar Allah", *Manna Rafflesia, 7*(1), (2020), 45-64.

books written directly by Thomas Aquinas that have been translated into English. Among Thomas Aquinas' works are *Summa Theologiae*, various commentaries on Aquinas' thoughts, and other related works, which serve as secondary sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background of Thomas Aquinas' Life

Thomas Aquinas was born in 1224 in Roccasecca, near the town of Aquino. This region was known for ongoing conflicts between the Pope and King Frederick II. Aquinas received his early education as a child at Monte Cassino. However, after Monte Cassino was seized by Pope Gregory IX and all monks were expelled, Thomas returned to his family, thereby leaving behind the customs and rules of the Benedictine monastery.

Thomas Aquinas was later sent to Naples to receive an education that would prepare him for ecclesiastical duties. During his time in Naples, he studied under Peter of Ireland. It was during this period that he was first introduced to Arab philosophy, particularly the works of Averroes and Avicenna.[5] Averroes argued that God was no longer involved in emanation, as such a notion would diminish His divine status. He viewed God as *Actus Purus*, a being far beyond the world, existing in absolute self-sufficiency. In contrast, Avicenna believed that the world consisted of various types of beings, which were the result of the active intellect and emanations from the "Supreme Being" (God).

While in Naples, Aquinas became acquainted with the Dominican Order and studied its spirituality in depth. After the death of his father, he seized the opportunity to join the order. Consequently, the head of the monastery decided to send Thomas Aquinas to Paris, away from his

[5] Ernest Simmons, *The Father and Doctors of The Church* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959),125.

family's influence. However, this decision was soon discovered, and Aquinas was abducted in Aquapendente and taken back to Roccasecca. Eventually, he was allowed to return to Paris, where he served as a language teacher, despite his lack of interest in the role.[6] In addition to teaching, he studied theology and graduated in 1248, later earning his doctorate in the same institution. His most renowned teacher was Saint Albertus Magnus.

Thomas Aquinas was exceptionally intelligent, and his academic contributions were remarkable. One of his early significant achievements was his commentary on *Sententia*, a standard theological text written by Peter Lombard. His reputation soared when he began teaching in Paris. In 1259, Aquinas was summoned to Rome by Pope Alexander IV, who tasked him with reviewing and correcting translations of Aristotle's works, many of which had been rendered into Latin from Arabic. Additionally, Aquinas revised and translated the works of William of Moerbeke and composed a commentary that could be utilized within the Catholic Church. Among his most influential works were *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*.

In 1269, Aquinas was recalled to Paris to engage in debates against followers of Averroes, who opposed Aristotelian philosophy. He remained in Paris for three years before being sent to Naples to teach at the university. Two years later, he was invited to attend the Council of Lyon as a theologian. However, during his journey, he fell ill and passed away at the Fossanuova monastery on March 7, 1274.

6 *Op. Cit.*, 137.

The Five Ways of Proving God's Existence According to Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas' thoughts on the existence of God can be found in his work *Summa Theologiae* (*Summa Theologiae* I, q.2, art.3).[7] Aquinas presents his arguments systematically and in great detail. This is expressed within a comprehensive theological knowledge framework. He seeks to affirm God's supremacy over all creation. According to him, if one wants to recognize and acknowledge God's power, it is necessary to analyze all events and occurrences related to God's creation itself.

The structure of Thomas Aquinas' understanding is highly detailed, yet not easy to comprehend. His views were later summarized to facilitate study and understanding. This summary is known as *Quinque Viae Sancti Thomae* (The Five Ways of Thomas Aquinas) to prove the existence of God.[8]

First Way

Thomas Aquinas' first argument is based on *motion* (*ex motu*).[9] Aquinas states that by observing the world around us, one can find objects that clearly undergo change. Naturally, nothing can change by itself, as change requires something else that has the ability to bring about change.

Something that can cause change in another object is assumed to possess perfection in itself. However, it cannot change itself by its own power, nor can it create itself. Consequently, something that can cause change in another entity occupies the position of "potentiality" or "the ability to become something else." This process continues infinitely. At a certain point, this sequence must stop at something that causes change

7 Marietti, *St. Thomae Aquinatis, Summa Theologiae: Questiones Disputatae,* Tomus I, Editio Nova Taurenensis, (Rome: Taurini, 1948), 67.

8 Iosepho Hellin, *Philosophiae Scholasticae, Summ III, Theodicea-Ethica*, (Hispania, 1957), 89.

9 *Op. Cit.*, 91.

but is itself unchangeable by anything else. That entity is called God. Thus, denying God's existence is logically impossible.

Scholastic philosophy explains that something undergoing change possesses an inherent potential to reach a higher level of perfection. This capability is known as *potentia* (potentiality). An object cannot change by itself because it requires an external agent to bring about change. The process of change is also referred to as *actus* (actualization). Something undergoes transformation when it moves from *potentia* to *actus*. The presence of this transition from potentiality to actuality can always be observed. However, the regression in search of something that initiates change in another cannot go on indefinitely. One must ultimately arrive at an entity that can actualize something else while itself remaining unchanged. This entity, which possesses ultimate perfection, is capable of causing change in others without itself being changed by anything else, and this entity is called God. Therefore, it is evident that God exists.

Second Way

Aquinas' second argument is based on the "principle of causality" (*ex causis*).[10] He states that in this world, humans can observe various chains of causes. It must be understood that nothing can be the cause of itself, because if something were to bring itself into existence, it would imply that it existed before it came into being, which is logically impossible.

Humans recognize that everything exists due to something else. A cause does not exist by itself but must be caused by another. This chain of causes can seemingly extend indefinitely. However, at some point, one must stop tracing the chain of causes and seek the first cause, which itself is uncaused. After summarizing all the causes that form a series, one

[10] *Op. Cit.*, 92.

must ultimately acknowledge the existence of a first cause that is not itself caused by anything else. This first uncaused cause is referred to as God. Therefore, the existence of God is affirmed.

Third Way

Thomas Aquinas' third argument is based on the concept of "contingent existence (something that may or may not exist) and necessary existence (something that must exist)" (*ex entibus*).[11] Aquinas states that if one observes everything in this world, one will notice that certain entities come into existence, undergo decline, and eventually cease to exist. This indicates that their existence is contingent, meaning they can exist but can also cease to exist. If everything in the world were contingent, then at some point in time, there would be nothing in existence.

However, the fact that something exists at present implies that the existence of these entities is not merely dependent on possibility but is caused by something else that is necessary. The existence of a necessary being cannot rely on an infinite causal chain, as demonstrated in the argument concerning efficient causes. Therefore, there must be an entity whose existence is absolute, which exists by itself and does not depend on anything else. According to Thomas Aquinas, this necessarily existing entity is called God. Thus, the existence of God must be acknowledged as a certainty.

Fourth Way

Thomas Aquinas' fourth argument is based on "the gradation found in various things" (*ex grandibus*).[12] Aquinas argues that one can observe

11 *Op. Cit.*, 98.
12 *Op. Cit.*, 102.

differences in degrees of perfection among things in the world. Some entities possess greater perfection than others, while some are less perfect in comparison. There exist things that are better, while others are worse. Furthermore, Aquinas asserts that something that is the greatest, the best, or the most noble must be regarded as the most superior and most perfect in its existence, goodness, and perfection. Because of its ultimate excellence, it is recognized as the first cause of all that exists. This first cause is referred to as God. Thus, the existence of God cannot be denied.

Fifth Way

Thomas Aquinas' fifth argument is based on "the purpose of all things" (*ex ordine*).[13] Aquinas states that if one carefully examines the world, it becomes evident that all natural things possess an inherent capacity for becoming—that is, they have the potential to actualize their existence further. This raises a fundamental question: How can every entity progress toward its final purpose, fulfilling its potential, when these entities themselves lack consciousness and knowledge?

Aquinas answers this by asserting that precisely because these entities lack knowledge of how to reach their final purpose, there must be a being that possesses intelligence and understanding. Through this intelligent being, all natural things are directed toward their ultimate purpose. This being is what we call God. Thus, the existence of God must be acknowledged.

The Primary Evidence for the Existence of God

The five ways proposed by Thomas Aquinas to prove the existence of God are often summarized into three main types of evidence. These three types of evidence are explained as follows.

[13] *Op. Cit.*, 103.

Cosmological Evidence

Cosmological evidence begins with an aspect of the world (kosmos = world). This type of proof encompasses the first three of Aquinas' five ways. According to C. Van Paassen[14] in Metaphysical Theology, the characteristics of cosmological evidence can be summarized as follows:

1. It always begins with human experience of God's creation.
2. It identifies the presence of dynamics or change in all movements across various domains by examining the sequence of causes and their consequences.
3. It acknowledges the role of human perception in assessing reality based on the nature of existence.
4. It highlights the necessary attributes for something to exist.
5. A series of causes and effects is not considered a sufficient explanation.
6. It emphasizes dependence on a fundamental principle, referred to as the "uncaused being," the "infinite being," or the "necessary being." This dependence is comprehensive, universal, and not particular.
7. The first cause cannot be regarded as equivalent to secondary causes.

Cosmological evidence draws attention to tangible realities found in the world around us. Thus, it provides insight into the dynamics of motion, causal sequences, and the contingency of all things. Continuous contemplation of these aspects ultimately leads to the conclusion that there must be a fundamental basis for all movement, causality, and contingency—an absolute entity. This fundamental basis is not contingent upon anything else because it exists independently and does not rely on

[14] C. Van Paassen, *Teologi Metafisika* [pro manuscript], (Yogyakarta: IFT, 1976).

external causes. It represents a limit that cannot be surpassed by anything else. This absolute being is what people universally refer to as God.

Ontological Evidence

Ontological evidence begins with the nature of existence (on = being). This type of proof corresponds to the fourth of Aquinas' five ways. Through ontological evidence, one can recognize the concept of "participation." What does this mean? Ontological evidence provides an opportunity to understand human participation in an infinite perfection, which is considered the source of all human perfection.[15] This ultimate source of perfection is what is referred to as God.

Aquinas emphasizes that when people observe the world around them, they notice varying degrees of perfection within all things.[16] Some entities exhibit greater perfection than others, suggesting that perfection exists on a scale. This implies that one must not limit their observation to relative perfection but must ultimately conclude that there must be something that is absolutely perfect, in which all other beings participate. This supreme perfection serves as the standard and the cause of all degrees and characteristics of perfection.

Teleological Evidence

Teleological evidence corresponds to the fifth of Aquinas' five ways. This argument begins with the natural order of the universe and the purpose inherent in that order (telos = purpose). Through this evidence, one can observe that objects in the world have their own final purposes. However, these objects cannot achieve their final purpose unless they possess complete understanding and intelligence. In reality, inanimate

15 *Loc. Cit.*, Hellin, 104.
16 *Ibid.*

objects lack knowledge and intelligence.[17] How, then, can they achieve their ultimate purpose?

Thomas Aquinas answers this by asserting that in order for final purposes to be realized, there must be an entity possessing understanding and intelligence that directs all things toward their ultimate goals. Thus, Aquinas introduces the idea of God as a necessary being who ensures that all things in nature achieve their intended purposes.

Manuscripts of Thomas Aquinas

The following text is taken from the book *Philosophiae Scholasticae*, in which Thomas Aquinas' proofs for the existence of God are found.[18] This manuscript serves as a summary of Aquinas' arguments as presented in his work *Summa Theologiae*. The manuscript is as follows:

Utrum Exsistentia Dei Demonstretur Omnibus Quinque Viis Sancti Thomae

Thesis 8. Existentia Dei demontratur omnibus quinque viis a Sancto Thoma insinuatis (n. 82-86)

1. *Ex motu metaphysico demonstratur exsistensia Dei ut est Motor absolute immobilis*

Manifestum est in mundo res moveri, et quod movetur esse contingens: ens enim necessarium non movetur; atqui contingens postulat ens necessarium (n. 101), quod est causa omnis motus et ipsum est absolute immobile; ergex motu metaohysico demonstratur exsistentia Dei ut est Motor absolute immobilis.

2. *Ex causis subordinatis seu dependentibus in operari demonstratur exsistentia Dei ut est causa prima et independens*

Videmus enim multas causas in mundo dependere a plurimis conditionibus et praerequisitis ut possint operaris, ideoque sunt causae contingents in esse; nam ens necessarium non dependet ab ullo; atqui contingens postulat ens necessarium et causam primam a nullo re dependentem; ergo ex causis subordinatis demonstratur ex sinstentia Dei, ut est causa prima et independens.

[17] *Op. Cit.*, 112.
[18] *Op. Cit.*, 122.

3. *Ex entibus corruptibilibus demonstratur exsistentia Dei ut est ens absolute necessarium*

Videmus enim in mundo plurima entia corruptibulis, et ide sunt contingentia: nam ens necessarium non est corruptibile; atqui ens contingens postulat ens absolute necessarium: ergo ex entibus corruptibilibus demonstratur exsistentia Dei, ut est ens absolute necessarium.

4. *Ex gradibus perfectionis demonstratur existentia Dei, ut est ens simpliciter infinitum*

Videmus enim in mundo esse perfectiones vitae, substantiae, entis, secundum gradus maiores et minores, ideoque saltem gradus minores sunt finiti, et proinde contingentes: nam ens necessarium non potest esse finitum: atqui ens contingens postulat ens necessarium, quod est infinitum simpliciter; ergo ex gradibus perfectionis secundum magis et minus demonstratur ezsistentia Dei ut est ens simpliciter infinitum.

5. *Exordine mundano demonstratur exsistentia Dei ut est intelligentia ordinatrix*

Nam est in mondo mirabilis ordo, ut contemplanti apparet; atqui opus ordinatum est opus intelligentia; ergo exsistit intelligentia ordinatrix mundi. Iam vero illa intelligentia aut est creata ut increata; si est increata, illa est Deus; si autem est creata, postulat causam increatam, quae sit intelligens, ne sit minor quam sui affectus intelligens; ergo ex ordine mundano demonstratur exsistentia Dei ut est intelligentia ordinatrix mundi" (n. 195-198).

Comments on the Thought of Thomas Aquinas

Thomas Aquinas' arguments are presented and explained within the comprehensive framework of theological knowledge. His arguments constitute a highly systematic and detailed proof of God's existence. Additionally, this article presents the views of various thinkers who have explored and attempted to understand Aquinas' arguments regarding the proof of God's existence. Their perspectives differ from Aquinas', with some elements aligning while others diverge according to their respective

viewpoints. Erfandi argues that these arguments serve as a strong foundation for proving the existence of God.[19]

Comments by John Baillie

John Baillie disagrees with Thomas Aquinas in his presentation of arguments for proving God's existence. He argues that Aquinas and his followers fail to properly distinguish between purely natural knowledge and supernatural (or divine) knowledge.[20] Natural knowledge, as commonly understood, is based on observable aspects of the universe, whereas supernatural knowledge pertains to matters beyond the universe and is entirely independent of natural phenomena. The fundamental question here is: can one truly compare the two in terms of intensity? Can natural knowledge alone enable one to resolve the question of God's existence? Are the analogies employed by Aquinas and his followers fundamentally flawed?

John Baillie's viewpoint is influenced by the medieval understanding that God reveals Himself through inner reflection—that is, through the soul. This belief heavily shapes his stance, leading him to reject attempts to prove God's existence. Baillie asserts that proof is not necessary to help individuals understand faith in God. He emphasizes that one of the most significant areas of philosophical inquiry is the study of God, alongside the study of nature and humanity.[21] Furthermore, he argues that while humans can have knowledge of God's reality, this knowledge does not require explicit conclusions derived from argumentation, nor is it dependent on rational calculation or intuition.[22]

19 E. Setiawan, E. Wulandari, O. Olivia, K. Riyanti, & R. Juniari, "Komparasi Deskriptif Thomas Aquinas tentang Filsafat dan Teologi", *Asian Journal of Philosophy and Religion*, *1*(2), (2022), 81–96.

20 John Baillie, *Our Knowledge of God,* (London: Oxford Univ., Press, 1939), 19.

21 M. Fauziah, "Argumen Adanya Tuhan: Wacana Historis dan Estetis", *Jurnal Pemikiran Islam*, *1*(1), (2021), 30.

22 *Loc. Cit*., Bailie, 20.

Comments by Langmead Casserley

Langmead Casserley offers a perspective similar to that of John Baillie. He asserts that nothing observable in human life can lead a person to acquire knowledge of God.[23] This view extends even to followers of Aristotle, except for those aligned with Saint Augustine, who strive for a similar understanding despite following different stages in their intellectual journey. The followers of Saint Augustine align with Saint Bonaventure's view that human intellect does not merely recognize God but constantly strives to find Him.

Casserley further develops his argument by focusing on self-awareness. Human self-awareness does not exist in isolation but is always engaged in the understanding of God. Self-awareness can be elevated to a metaphysical state that provides profound meaning for human existence.

Comments by Austin Farrer

Austin Farrer rejects the notion that God desires to be proven in any manner, as this would place Him on par with observable and directly experienced objects or beings.[24] Farrer argues that God can only be known through His unique and perfect activities. Regarding Aquinas and his followers, Farrer contends that they do nothing unique in their reasoning, as their statements merely express their personal views on an active God within the world and a world governed by God's power.

Ultimately, Farrer emphasizes that any attempt to explain a limited being is inherently unexplainable. The reason for this, he states, is unclear, yet it must be accepted as a given.

23 Langmeed Casserly, *The Christian in Philosophy,* (New York: Nisbet & Co, 1948), 139.
24 Austin Farrer, *Finite and Infinite,* (Dacre Press and Naperville: Alleson, 1948), 34.

Comments by E.I. Watkin and O. Hardwicke

E.I. Watkin and O. Hardwicke reject the logical method seen in Thomas Aquinas' arguments. Hardwicke asserts that God cannot be proven through deductions from empirical experience. The analysis of empirical experience cannot guarantee or compel belief in something infinite. If a person perceives something finite, they will not stop at that finite entity but will be led to look beyond it toward the infinite. Why? Because it is generally accepted that finite things depend on something infinite.

Watkin introduces two key terms: "demonstration" and "exhibition." According to him, God's existence cannot be proven, as proof is typically understood as a process of conviction rather than intuitive reasoning. Instead, God's existence can only be exhibited to a contemplative intellect.[25]

Comments by Hawkins

Hawkins critiques the method employed by Aquinas and his followers in proving God's existence. He questions whether the conclusion that created beings necessitate an uncaused first cause is valid. Can conclusions derived from analogy be considered logically sound? Hawkins suggests that Aquinas' followers employ analogical concepts without distorting their reasoning. The analogy used by Aquinas' followers serves as a logical transition from the finite to the infinite, aligning with Penido's statement that "analogy begins where Aquinas' Five Ways end."[26]

[25] Therese Harvey. M. Gemme, "As of The Six Magnitute: Growth in Opennes to God Presence", In Review for *Religious*, Vol. 41 (2), (1982), 89.

[26] *Ibid*., 93.

Comments by E. Gilson

E. Gilson disagrees with Aquinas' approach of proving God's existence by starting from created things. He argues that those who believe their knowledge originates solely from reason are mistaken. Can reason alone be considered a valid means of knowing God's existence? According to Gilson, reason must refer to the experience of God's existence itself.[27] Human knowledge, implicitly, already acknowledges God's existence.

Beyond reason, the soul also plays a role in providing knowledge of God. The soul influences reason, guiding it toward recognizing God. This view is influenced by Saint Bonaventure, who asserts that the idea of God resides within the human soul or intellect. When this idea is expressed, it serves as a form of acknowledgment of God's existence.[28]

Comments by J. Maritain

J. Maritain argues that philosophical proof does not attain its full evidential value at the critical reflection stage unless a person recognizes that different objects exist and should not be indiscriminately applied to one another. This distinction also applies to the concept of existence as used in Aquinas' Five Ways.

Maritain further suggests that Aquinas' Five Ways can be seen as a logical construction of systematic knowledge about God, based on pre-philosophical and natural reasoning. This pre-philosophical knowledge of God can be understood as a fundamental intuition that includes spontaneous reasoning, metaphysical reflection, and self-evident truth, forming a pathway toward God.

27 E. Gilson, *God in Philosophy,* (Newhaven Com., Yale, 1941), 21.
28 E. Gilson, *Philosophy of St. Bonaventura,* (London: Sheed and Ward. 1938), 38.

Comments by Garrigou Lagrange

Garrigou Lagrange briefly examines Aquinas' Five Ways and argues that each follows a similar foundational reasoning.[29] He presents a simple syllogism:

1. Premise 1: The world depends on an extrinsic first cause.
2. Premise 2: This extrinsic first cause is what we call "God."
3. Conclusion: Therefore, God exists.

If one analyzes the term "cause" used in these premises, one must understand it analogically. While this reasoning is difficult to accept universally, it must be acknowledged, as rejecting it would prevent one from reaching any conclusion at all. Lagrange also notes that such conclusions are primarily accepted by those who adhere to theistic beliefs.[30]

Comments by C.D. Broad

C.D. Broad critiques both the ontological and cosmological arguments of Aquinas.[31] He presents two conditions necessary for the cosmological argument:

1. At least one particular existential fact about the universe must be necessary in itself.
2. All facts about the existence of natural entities must be truly existent and connected to ongoing natural events as necessary consequences of existential facts.[32]

Broad finds the cosmological argument unconvincing because:

1. It does not provide compelling evidence, as nature does not fulfill reason's demands in a unique or special way.

29 Garrigou Lagrange, *God, His Existence and Nature,* (Harder, 1934), 19.
30 *Ibid.,* 23.
31 C. D. Broad, *Religion, Philosophy and Psychical Research,* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, ltd., London, in John Smith (ed), Philosophy of Religion, Collier-McMillan limited. New York: Random House, 1965), 67.
32 *Loc. Cit*., Broad, 68.

2. The first condition is difficult to fulfill through reflection.
3. If the first condition is met, the second condition becomes impossible to satisfy.

Thomas Aquinas' Proof of God's Existence and Its Subsequent Philosophical Challenges: Researcher Comments

Thomas Aquinas' attempt to prove the existence of God has generated further philosophical challenges for later thinkers. This is evident in the distinct reactions, both in favor and against, from various scholars. Even today, Aquinas' arguments continue to be a subject of debate. Without diminishing the contributions of other critical thinkers, the researcher wishes to offer a commentary in response to Aquinas' thoughts and the perspectives of subsequent philosophers.

In the researcher's view, the arguments presented by Thomas Aquinas are highly systematic and detailed. His point of departure is remarkably simple: he begins with contingent beings. Aquinas carefully observes every movement, causal sequence, degree of perfection in worldly objects, and the ultimate purpose of all created things. What is particularly intriguing is that he does not become mesmerized or fixated on these observations. Instead, he directs his attention to a "fundamental principle" that cannot be caused by another foundation because it is "unlimited." This fundamental principle, he asserts, is "God" Himself. The fundamental principle is the center of all things and is independent of any other foundation. It is the source of everything. Through this reasoning, Thomas Aquinas expresses the omnipotence of God over all existence. Nothing escapes His providence. For Aquinas, such reasoning presents no issue, as he views it as a natural and necessary conclusion that must be accepted as such.

At first glance, Aquinas' reasoning appears unproblematic, as his arguments are highly systematic and logical, supported by simple examples from the sensory world. This may explain why his ideas did not

provoke much opposition in his time, as there were few critical reactions. However, in contemporary discourse, new critical perspectives have emerged, both supporting and challenging Aquinas' arguments.

It must be acknowledged that different philosophical approaches often highlight distinct aspects of the same subject—the existence of God. These thinkers can generally be divided into two groups. The first group doubts or outright rejects the capability of human reason to prove God's existence. The following seven thinkers share a similar emphasis in their critiques:

1. **John Baillie**: Rejects any argument attempting to prove God's existence, asserting that human reason is incapable of providing complete and direct knowledge of God or divine reality. This rejection extends to Aquinas' arguments.
2. **Langmead Casserley**: Denies that human intellect can directly comprehend God. Consequently, he does not accept Aquinas' argument, which relies on intellectual reasoning.
3. **Austin Farrer**: Argues that neither a priori nor a posteriori evidence can be used to prove God's existence using empirical proof.
4. **Watkin and Hardwicke**: Claim that God cannot be proven, as He can only be revealed to a contemplative intellect. They reject Aquinas' argument.
5. **E. Gilson**: Asserts that human reason alone cannot know God. Rather, reason must work in conjunction with the heart (or soul), which has an intimate connection with God. He rejects Aquinas' argument.
6. **Garrigou Lagrange**: States that Aquinas' arguments are difficult to accept for those who do not already acknowledge divinity.
7. **C.D. Broad**: Dismisses Aquinas' arguments, particularly the cosmological argument, as it fails to meet empirical requirements and is difficult to accept as proof.

These thinkers focus on the logical consequences and implications of Aquinas' arguments. The researcher perceives that their critiques are shaped by the intellectual context of their time. Aquinas' arguments are scrutinized within the framework of strict linguistic principles and logical analysis. The linguistic impact and semantic interpretations of the terms used in Aquinas' reasoning are examined in accordance with the linguistic conventions of their respective eras.

The second group of thinkers concentrates more on the method of proof used in Aquinas' arguments, particularly his use of **analogy**. At a glance, the views of the following thinkers appear to align:

1. **Hawkins**: Considers the analogy used by Aquinas as a logical transition from the "finite" to the "infinite."
2. **J. Maritain**: Views Aquinas' analogy (and that of his followers) as merely a tool to logically reconstruct knowledge of God.

These thinkers recognize that if one assigns literal meaning and function to **analogy**, it would equate God with created things—an inadmissible treatment of God. They fully understand that the analogy in Aquinas' argument, as adopted by his followers, aims to indicate a new action that transcends the parallel realm of created things. Aquinas begins with a **horizontal** perspective and then shifts it to a **vertical** one. Through this vertical transition, he discovers a new dimension—the spiritual dimension—that transforms his understanding and deepens his faith in God. In this realization, God becomes everything.

The Relevance of Thomas Aquinas' Thought

The cosmological argument proposed by Thomas Aquinas is outlined in his philosophy, which starts from one of the fundamental aspects of the world (cosmos). This argument encompasses the first three of the "five ways" he presented, asserting that the entire creation actively participates in revealing the divine work, that is, the essence of God in relation to creation. The world, in its ongoing existence, is always

dependent on God. Through His creation, God continuously establishes a relationship with everything that exists, creating a dependence between all entities in space and time and Himself (Summa Theologiae I a, q.45, art.3). Time and events in the universe are created by God as a means and space for encounter, allowing humans to recognize His presence. Thus, the world becomes a medium that fosters human belief in the existence of God and His eternity.[33]

Cosmology Today

Cosmology can be defined as the scientific study of the universe as a whole. Cosmology, however, is not exactly the same as other natural sciences, which typically employ strict methods based on clear laws or principles derived from rigorous research. Cosmology has only one subject: the universe, which needs to be observed, but not investigated or analyzed in the same way. This is where the uniqueness of cosmology lies.

Understanding of cosmology today has evolved. It is now regarded as the science that studies the universe in its broadest aspects, including its origins, structure, and overall evolution. Consequently, cosmology is considered a natural science governed by mathematical laws. In this sense, cosmology is closely linked to theories such as relativity and the law of gravity.

It is clear that the cosmological proof presented by Thomas Aquinas points directly to the existence of God through the law of cause and effect from a logical perspective. In contrast, cosmology, as seen in its development, is a science based on systems and laws derived from rigorous research. Cosmological evidence points toward the acknowledgment of God as the Creator. However, as a scientific discipline, cosmology does not claim to lead thoughts to God as the

[33] H. Cahyono, "Pemikiran Transendensi Dan Imanensi Thomas Aquinas Dan Implikasinya Bagi Teologi Peribadatan Pentakosta", *Diegesis : Jurnal Teologi*, *8*(1), (2023), 37–54.

Creator; instead, it investigates the universe as it is, limited to the physical world.

Understanding Evolution Today

The concept of evolution seeks to draw attention to changes that are both physical and biological, whether human or seen in phenomena of the physical world. The concept of evolution has a trilogy or three important areas of discussion: cosmology, biogenesis, and anthropogenesis.[34]

The idea of evolution gives rise to several concepts related to cosmogony. The universe began at a very early time. The exact time when the universe began is still under investigation, and astrophysicists and geophysicists are working to develop the tools necessary to calculate when stars and Earth came into existence. Hypotheses suggest that new stars will continue to form in space. Many celestial bodies have been studied and found to differ from one another; Earth has an age similar to or in close proximity to that of the galaxy. Hypotheses suggest that the positions of celestial bodies, as seen, differ from points of transformation or evolutionary time. Modern astronomers and astrophysicists argue that there is a slow rate of change. Another indication is that stars have varying temperatures, even though they are made of the same chemical elements.[35]

The idea of evolution also gives rise to several concepts of biogenesis. The hypothesis on biogenesis is as follows: no life phenomenon occurs except within certain temperature limits; therefore, every living organism must appear at a particular stage in Earth's physical evolution. There are also objects in the world with the same chemical elements, but the elements used to form living organisms contain many

34 *Loc. Cit*., Rachman, 23.
35 *Op. Cit., 24*.

more elements than those found in the physical world in general. The building blocks of life, known as macromolecular nucleoproteins, are considered the basis for assimilation and reproduction phenomena. Other indications used to explain biogenesis relate to living organisms such as protists, plants, and animals, which can be precisely classified by their types.[36] According to current ethnological research, living organisms tend toward high levels of action. Thus, in general, the idea of biological evolution is seen as progressive.

In addition to concepts of cosmogony and biogenesis, evolution has led to ideas about anthropogenesis. The following hypothesis was found: according to paleontology, fossils of early humans have been discovered. It is estimated that the origin of humanity follows an evolutionary line that is more or less the same as animals. However, this remains a challenge for many people due to the discovery of another aspect of humanity: intellect, which is entirely different from what is found in animals.[37]

The universe began when it came into existence, evolving from an early stage and continuing to evolve until it reaches its maximum level of development in the future, as studied by evolution. This development involves problems and numerous transformations, from the simplest and lowest forms to higher and more mature forms. Evolution's ideas about cosmogony, biogenesis, and anthropogenesis tend to employ scientific methods, even supported by scientific discoveries, presenting itself as a structured system of knowledge. Its aim is to explain changes and transformations. Metaphysical matters are far beyond its scope, and evolution, as a system of knowledge, does not influence anyone to acknowledge the existence of God.

Faced with the cosmological proof of Thomas Aquinas, there is no proper dialogue because the starting points and thought processes of

36 *Ibid*.
37 *Op. Cit.*, 25.

evolutionists are misaligned. Aquinas' cosmological proof leans more toward metaphysical aspects to reach knowledge of the existence of God, whereas evolutionists strive to understand the mysteries behind the universe, living and non-living things, and the origin of human life.

CONCLUSION

Thomas Aquinas, through his argument, sought to defend his faith in God. His proof begins with the situation and condition of created things and then traces it back to God, the cause and governor of everything. Aquinas aims to affirm God's power over all things in the universe. He disagrees with the method of proof used by earlier thinkers, such as Saint Anselm, because Aquinas argued that the existence of God would only become clear if one understands the essence of God. If everyone accepts that the word "God" refers to something that cannot be further conceived, this does not mean they understand that what is meant by the name "God" is the God that exists. The name "God" merely exists in their minds.

Despite the profound nature of Thomas Aquinas' thought, there have been objections from commentators who followed him. Some argue that God is precisely and clearly present within the human soul, while others contend that God cannot be proven because God can only be shown to the contemplating intellect. This argument is difficult to accept by those who do not accept the concept of divinity.

Upon closely examining Aquinas' argument, one can detect a kind of "leap" in reasoning from the situation and condition of created things to the existence of God. The structure of Aquinas' proof starts with created things but suddenly transitions into a metaphysical framework concerning God. Such matters may not have been considered or questioned in his time, which reflects the intellectual framework of that era.

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