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Philosophy 475
April 17, 2018
Senior Essay

The Existence of God

Introduction:

In this paper I will be discussing the Existence of God. I will compare the philosophers Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in order to illustrate that God exists as the sole creator of the universe. I will begin by explaining each philosopher's idea on God, and how good and evil exists within each theory. In the final section of my paper I will compare the two philosopher's concepts in order to establish that Aquinas' notion of God has superior proof than that of Spinoza's. In doing so, I will demonstrate that God exists as a Creating, Loving, and Personal God that has and will continue to exist infinitely outside of space and time.

Section I: The Existence of God: Spinoza's God

Benedict de Spinoza's ideas consisted of but are not limited to the following: denying the immortality of a soul, strongly rejecting the notion of a transcendental God, and claiming that the Law (as given in the Torah) was neither literally given down by God nor by any Jew (Nadler). His most famous and controversial book "*The Ethics*" was published in 1677 (after his death earlier that year), in which Spinoza tries to illustrate that our happiness and well-being do not depend on our emotions (how we feel), the stuff we possess, or even the religion we associate with, rather, our happiness can be found in the life of reason (Nadler). Clearly, Benedict de Spinoza was a man with creative and revolutionary ideas, as we can see throughout his writing,

specifically in his most famous book. Therefore, it is necessary to take a closer look at this work in order to understand how he came to such broad ethical conclusions.

In "*The Ethics*," Spinoza defines God as, "an absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence" (D6, 85, Spinoza). He argues this assertion by offering several propositions in order to systematically prove that God and nature are of one substance. Spinoza begins by discussing the manner in which this substance exists by stating, "By cause of itself I understand that whose essence involves existence, or that whose nature cannot be conceived except as existing" (D1, 85, Spinoza). In defining the nature of this Being/Substance, Spinoza suggests that God has always been, and will always be. God is everything that can be understood in existence, God is existence itself. Further, God is the only substance that can exist, all other individual substances are merely modes of God's substance, such as humans. Consequently, God will always exist despite the finite attributes of these modes, because God is existence itself. Therefore, a further analysis of this drastic view is necessary in order to understand Spinoza's reasoning behind suggesting this new vision of God.

To begin, we look at Spinoza's propositions (from Books 1 and 2 of "*The Ethics*") so as to understand what he is claiming and how he is doing it. He commences by stating that "in Nature there cannot be two or more substances of the same nature or attribute" (P5, 87, Spinoza). For instance, God/nature are not two separate substances, they possess the same attributes. Further, there exists smaller substances that are a part of the single substance which is God. These smaller substances, however, do not share the same attributes. They can neither be understood as a part of single substance itself, nor comprehended as a variety of individual

substances. Therefore, the difference between all these substances is their uniqueness there exists no two same substances.

An objection to think about is whether the existence of these smaller substances is necessary for the existence of the single substance. For instance, a basketball team exists solely because it is comprised of players, without these players there is no team. Likewise, without teams the sport cannot exist as it does. Therefore, the dependence of smaller substances is necessary in order for the whole substance to exist. This objection however is never discussed by Spinoza, he assumes that we agree with him on this premise, and proceeds. Nevertheless, we will continue to analyze his argument in order to further understand it and possibly question it.

Next, Spinoza argues that “God, or a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists” (P11, 88, Spinoza). He presents this proposition in order to suggest that there must exist a substance with an infinite amount of attributes, because if there does not exist such a Being, then God does not exist. For instance, Spinoza argues that if a thing is to be understood as not existing then, its essence does not involve existence. It is clear, however, from Spinoza’s seventh proposition (88, Spinoza) that this is irrational, therefore, God must exist. In trying to understand this notion presented by Spinoza one can become lost in his argument because it is somewhat unclear, in that it is circular. For instance, Spinoza argues that the existence of God depends on the possession of all attributes, while at the same time claiming that God consists of all attributes. One cannot make a valid argument by saying A is A because of A, it simply does not work. Therefore, Spinoza argument for God possessing all attributes is flawed in that it relies on itself to prove itself. Additionally, Spinoza assumes the existence of God, rather than proving it and then explaining his theory. This

is problematic because what if an individual does not believe in God, then we are forcing him or her to believe instead of trying to prove the existence systematically.

Further, Spinoza continues by arguing that “one substance cannot be produced by another” (P6, 87, Spinoza), therefore, since nature and God are of one substance, they cannot produce one another, they merely exist as one. Which implies that this substance cannot be created, it must exist infinitely, and because it always exists, all other individual substances exist in it. “Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God” (P15, 88, Spinoza).

Additionally, Spinoza continues, by claiming that “all things have been predetermined by God, not from freedom of the will or absolute good pleasure, but from God’s absolute nature, or infinite power” (Appendix, 109, Spinoza). God does not have free will, he does not do things out of pleasure, instead, things happen out of the predetermined necessity of nature as a whole. For God, “the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things” (P7, 119, Spinoza). Each idea is in God or part of God, since God is the totality of all ideas and all things. (Lebuffe).

Furthermore, in the third and fourth books of “The Ethics” Spinoza discusses the difference between good and evil. He defines good as “what we certainly know to be useful to us” and evil as “what we certainly know prevents us from being masters of some good” (D1&2, 200, Spinoza). Spinoza defines these terms in this way in order to suggest that good and evil should be considered as “modes of thinking,” that human beings apply to things, but which really reveal little about the things to which they are applied (Lebuffe). For instance, consider the following example given by Spinoza, “music is good for one who is melancholy, evil to one who

is mourning, and neither good nor evil to one who is deaf” (Preface IV, 199, Spinoza). He uses this example in order to illustrate that for an individual, something may be considered good, while for another it may be considered evil. Good and evil should not be considered the same however, because Spinoza explicitly makes a distinction between the two. Further, he demonstrates that good and evil really only exist as labels, rather than separate entities. Moreover, they reveal more about the individual, who is labeling the music good or bad, than they do about the music itself.

Further Spinoza argues that “as far as good and evil are concerned, they also indicate nothing positive in things, considered in themselves” (Preface IV, 199, Spinoza). If a thing is deemed useful by an individual then it is good, but if it prevents an individual from “mastering some good,” then it is evil. Therefore, Spinoza clearly illustrates how good and evil should be perceived.

Finally, Spinoza argues that the many religious environments around him are the causes for the negative outlook on his ideas. He states that “many prejudices remain that could, and can, be a great obstacle to mens’ understanding the connection of things in the way I have explained it” (Appendix, 109, Spinoza). Many individuals in the time of Spinoza, could not and would not be able to fathom a God that is so impersonal, such as the one presented. Further, Spinoza would argue that humans are childish for wanting to anthropomorphize God and give him the shape of a father (Preface IV, 200, Spinoza). For Spinoza, God is not the first cause, nor the father of human beings, rather God is merely the essence of existence (Nadler).

Section II: The Existence of God: Thomas Aquinas' 'First Mover'

Thomas was primarily and officially a theologian, which meant he was more concerned with issues having to do with God and religion more so than typical philosophic ideas.

Nevertheless, his work in the area of philosophy cannot go unnoticed, because of the value he provided in his commentaries in addition to his interest in Aristotelian scholars (McInerny).

Moreover, a closer look at his most famous work, "*The Summa Theologica*" is necessary in order to fully comprehend his understanding of God.

To begin, "The Summa Theologica" commences with a series of questions on the nature and existence of God. In part one, question two, Aquinas discusses the very existence of God. He begins by offering the question of "Whether the Existence of God is Self-Evident?" (P1, Q2, A1). Aquinas disagrees that someone can know God self-evidently. He argues that one can come to recognize that something exists, whether that be God or something else, however, one does not naturally know that God exists (P1, Q2, A1, R1). For instance, a human being does not automatically have knowledge of the world when he or she is born, he or she must come to learn, understand, and experience the world in order to gain knowledge of it. Moreover, Aquinas suggests that the existence of God can be self-evident, however, it may not be self-evident to human beings because they lack the knowledge. One can come to know that God or something exists if one were to study the products of God. Likewise, Aquinas claims that the existence of truth in general is self-evident, but the existence of primal Truth is not self-evident to human beings (P1, Q2, A1, R3) For example, an individual's view of a story, say of what happened in class today, may be different from another's. Nevertheless, there exists a Truth that is not from an individual's perspective, rather from an objective one. Therefore, for Aquinas, one can know his

or her truth about the world around him or her self-evidently, however, one cannot know the Truth of his or her life self-evidently.

Furthermore, Aquinas argues that God is “pre-eminently” good; meaning that “God is the first effective cause of all things, it is manifest that the aspect of good and of desirableness belong to God” (P1, Q6, A1). For Aquinas, God must be good, because if God does not exist as the ultimate good, then Aquinas’ argument for evil as the lack of good would not make sense. Additionally, God must be good because if God is not, then that would make creation evil because it would not originate from the good. Moreover, evil would then exist as an entity of its own, instead of a lack of something, which would mean that it could possibly consume goodness. Nonetheless, God is the ultimate good and evil can never defeat goodness because God is the sole and ultimate power (P1, Q23, A1).

Furthermore, Aquinas discusses the origins of good and evil, and how they exist in order to further prove his claim of the existence of God. He defines good as “every action, in so far as it has being” (P1, Q49, A3), and evil as “lacking in goodness, in so far as it is lacking in something that is due to its fullness of being” (P1, Q49, A3). For instance, God is the supreme good because God does not lack anything, God is being itself. For Aquinas, God is the cause of all existence, and since God is the cause for all existence, then all existence must originate from good, because God is supremely good. Evil on the other hand cannot originate from God, because God is perfectly good. If God were to create evil then he/she would not be perfectly good, meaning that there could exist things that do not have good within them. However, this is not the case, therefore, everything that exists has some good within it, because God created it and

God is perfectly good. However, creation cannot be perfectly good, since it does not exist as God (the Supreme Good), rather it is a product of God.

In contrast, Aquinas further distinguishes evil from good by suggesting evil as a lack of good. There cannot exist something that is purely evil, because if it exists, then it must be part good, since it has been created by God. Moreover, “there is no one first principle for evil (or supreme evil), however, there is one first principle for good” (P1, Q49, A3), because if something exists then it must be good. For instance, evil only exists as a lack of good, therefore, it can never fully consume good, since all things originate from God, who is good. Thus, for Aquinas evil has a real existence in that it lacks good, but good will always and absolutely prevail because it originates from the Supremely Good, God (Finnis).

Furthermore, Aquinas discusses “Whether the Existence of God can be Demonstrated” (P1, Q2, A2). He first offers several objections such as: it cannot be demonstrated since God’s existence relies on faith, God’s essence cannot be demonstrated, and God’s existence can be seen through God’s effects, however, God’s effects do not fully encapsulate God’s existence (P1, Q2, A2, O123). Moreover, it is interesting to see that many of these objections remain relevant today, especially the one that discusses faith. Despite the push by many philosophers and theologians for faith in God to be based on reason in combination with faith, many objectors have decided to continue to suggest that belief in God must solely involve faith. Aquinas, however, directly answers this assertion in his response to the second article by stating “The existence of God, and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preludes to the articles” (P1, Q2, A2, R1). For Aquinas, faith can presuppose natural reason, however, it does not mean that natural reason cannot be used to

understand and know God. Further, there is nothing prohibiting an individual from understanding God through science or rational thought, instead of merely accepting God's existence by faith. Moreover, one can demonstrate the existence of God by studying the effects of God, creation. One can come to know many aspects of God through this examination, however, one should not limit God's essence to merely the creation of the universe. Further, Aquinas has shown that God can be both seen and demonstrated if one were to merely use one's reason in combination with one's ability to study the natural world. The proof for the existence of God, according to Aquinas, is through one's ability to think and know the world. He argues that throughout life one comes to know that there exists something outside of creation, a creator, one who must be supremely good. However, Aquinas does not offer a proof outside of this until he presents the five ways in which one can come to know that God exists. Therefore, Thomas presents the five ways in order to assist one in rationally grasping the existence of an all-powerful, ever-present, and loving God.

Aquinas' begins with the First Way, the "Argument from Motion" (P1, Q2, A3), which systematically claims that an object cannot be pushed into motion without having another 'actual' moving object pushing it. Further, an object is always stationary until it is pushed into motion. For example, consider the creation of the universe, which Aquinas' argues must have been pushed into existence by an outside "unmoved mover," since an object cannot push itself into being. His reasoning behind this is that things move when 'potential' motion becomes 'actual' motion, and only 'actual' motion can convert a 'potential' motion into an 'actual' motion. Further, 'actual' motion cannot be both 'actual' and 'potential' motion, since that would be a contradiction, such as the example of an individual who is both running and sitting at the same

moment. Consequently, there are two kinds of motion ‘actual’ and ‘potential.’ Additionally, Aquinas’ extends his argument by claiming that “nothing can move itself” (P1, Q2, A3), it must be pushed by something else, i.e. ‘actual’ motion. For example, there cannot exist an infinite amount of ‘potential’ motion, because if this were the case then nothing could be moved since there was no ‘actual’ motion to push it; however, ‘potential’ motion does move, therefore, there must exist ‘actual’ motion. Thus, for Aquinas, this “first mover,” is that which exists separately from that which is moved, “and everyone understands this to be God” (P1, Q2, A3).

Through the second way, that of “Efficient Causes” (similar to the ideas presented by Aristotle, who Aquinas studied in school), suggests that one can see that each thing in the world has a cause or an origin (P1, Q2, A3). For instance, every human being has a set of parents from whom they originate, and his or her parents have their own set of parents, and so on and so forth. There does not exist a human being without a source for its existence. Further, the same logic can be applied to all things existing in the world, that they must have some cause for their existence. These causes, however, cannot go on infinitely because that means there would be no first cause. Therefore, there must exist a cause that is the first cause to all causes, this can be understood according to Aquinas, as God.

The third way, that of “Possibility and Necessity” argues that if everything was contingent, meaning that things exist by chance, then things must come into and out of existence by chance (P1, Q2, A3). For instance, it is reasonable to think, based on the logic of contingency, that there was a conceivable time when all things did not exist as they currently do. However, consider a time period when nothing existed, as it currently exists, what could have pushed the nonexistence into existence? Therefore, everything cannot be contingent, because we can clearly

see that things currently exist, and they have a purpose that cannot be explained by chance. Additionally, since everything is not contingent, then there must “exist a being of its own necessity, who does not receive its existence from another being, but rather causes them. This all men speak of as God” (P1, Q2, A3).

Aquinas’ fourth way is that of “Gradation,” which claims that some things are better or worse than others (P1, Q2, A3). Every being has something that has caused their being to come into existence. For example, there must exist the most perfect being, since there exists different degrees of being. This perfect being is the cause of all other beings, and for Aquinas this is understood as God.

The fifth and final way for the existence of God, is that of “Design,” which Aquinas argues can be understood in the investigation of the natural body. One can see that his or her body works to an end, it does not do so by chance, however, because it does not have the knowledge of itself. Rather, the body works to achieve goals directed to it by some higher intelligence. For instance, Aquinas offers up the example of an arrow reaching its target. The arrow cannot reach its target without a direction from the archer. There exists a being whose intelligence directs things to an end, and this being is called God. Therefore, for Aquinas, humanity and creation have an end goal in which they are directed by God.

Clearly, Aquinas offers a distinctive vision of God, in that God exists as infinite creator of the universe. Nothing exists without God first pushing it into existence, and everything has been planned and designed by God.

Section III: The Existence of God: Aquinas vs Spinoza

Spinoza and Aquinas both begin their argument for the existence of God by offering up visions of an infinite and all-encompassing God, in addition to the way God exists. Then they move on to discuss the meaning of good and evil in order to relate it back to each of their claims on the existence of God.

An Infinite God

Spinoza begins by defining God as, “an absolute infinite, that is, a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence” (D6, 85, Spinoza). God is the totality of everything that exists, God’s essence is existence itself. For Spinoza, God is immanent, meaning that there exists nothing outside of God; rather, everything is God.

In contrast, Aquinas argues that God is transcendental, meaning that God exists outside of space, time, and creation. This does not mean that God is limited by creation, since it exists outside of God. Instead, God has dominion over everything since it is God’s creation (Finnis). Additionally, he presents God as the creator of the universe, which implies that creation must have a design or end goal. For instance, consider when one is building a new house, he or she must have a design in his or her head of what the house should look like and how it can function. It is impossible to assume that a builder or a creator could create something without having a design or end goal in mind. This teleology of creation is a distinct difference between Spinoza and Aquinas, in that, according to Aquinas, God has created everything for a purpose. He states that “there must be will in God, since there is intellect in God” (P1, Q19, A1) This will of God is also seen as a purpose to creation. God, one who has intellect, would not will something into

existence for no reason; therefore, everything that exists has a purpose because it has come from the mind of God. The purpose of it all, according to Aquinas, is at the end of our life to be one with God. This purpose, however, should not be seen as a predetermined future for all things, in which humans have no free will. Instead this plan of God is merely a blueprint in how things function, and how we could best live our lives. As humans, we possess part of God, in that God is an “agent present upon to which it works” (P1, Q8, A1), meaning that individuals possess the ability to use the nature of God, goodness, in order to make his or her life better. This presence of God in humans is not the same as Spinoza suggests because for Aquinas God is not a part of the essence of a human being, he is an agent for good in the human being. Additionally, Aquinas states that “we have free will with respect to what we will not of necessity, nor natural instinct” (P1, Q19, A10). He claims this in order to further illustrate that an individual has the ability to control one’s life, and in controlling his or her life, one can choose to do good or evil. In choosing to use one’s inner agent (God/goodness), an individual is more capable of doing good because the agent itself is wholly good. This is not to say that if one does not use this agent that he or she cannot do any good, rather in using the agent one is able to do the most good, more easily.

In comparing the two, it seems more logical and true to accept the view of God that Aquinas presents, a creator, than that of Spinoza. Moreover, in considering Spinoza’s God, one is able to see the faulty reasoning in stating that only one thing can be infinite, while at same time arguing that “every substance is necessarily infinite” (P8, 87, Spinoza). It is difficult to argue that there is one substance that exists infinitely in other substances that are finite, but they are the same substance. I do not believe Spinoza is able to pull off a convincing argument. Therefore, in

comparing the two philosophies on God, I would choose that of Aquinas because his seems to work more for human beings, and how we currently exist in this world. For instance, look at the design of a human being. It is incredible how many things are working together, each thing having a specific role. One might say that humans have evolved, therefore, nature is the one who deserves the credit. I disagree, because imagine a God who is beyond space and time, who is able to see and know what is going to happen. Then place this God as creator of the universe; would not this God design creation to adapt to upcoming changes seen throughout the entirety of the universe? God would not create something without knowing where the object is headed in terms of adaptation, then God could not be all knowing. As Aquinas states, “the natural agent must have the end and the necessary means predetermined for it by some higher intellect; as the end and definite movement is predetermined for the arrow by the archer” (P1, Q19, A4). Therefore, everything has a purpose, a design, and reason for its existence, because it has been created by God, the creator of the universe. This purpose, as stated earlier, is to be one together in God’s love.

God: Good and Evil

Since God is immanent for Spinoza, there exists no good or evil for God, rather God is beyond good and evil. For instance, God’s essence is existence itself, therefore, making God the totality of everything that exists and every action that occurs is just part of God’s existence. However, these actions cannot be deemed good or bad, instead they are merely a part of God’s totality. Nevertheless, Spinoza does insist that good and evil exist as labels given to actions by individuals. The way in which an action can be understood by an individual is how one should

label it good or bad; consequently, the affect is good or bad for the individual, not the thing itself. Therefore, good and evil are only relative to the individuals who use them, and not to God.

In contrast, for Aquinas, God is “pre-eminently” good; meaning that “God is the first effective cause of all things, it is manifest that the aspect of good and of desirableness belong to God” (P1, Q6, A1). For instance, since God is the cause of all things that are good, then he must be good. God, however, is not the cause of evil, rather evil exists as a lack of goodness. Therefore, only goodness can originate from God, consequently meaning that God must be good. Aquinas discusses God as supremely good, when stating “goodness is attributed to God... however, it does not flow from God” (P1, Q6, A2). For example, heat is in the sun more so than it is in fire. Aquinas uses this example in order to properly illustrate the goodness of God. Goodness does not flow from God to creation, rather, goodness is merely a part of creation (as seen in humans, with God being an agent in them), because it is a part of God. Consequently, God can experience pain and suffering because of God’s connection to the good and creation.

In objecting to Spinoza’s claim of an infinite God who possesses all attributes, one might view his vision of an all-encompassing God as having the characteristic of evil. But can God be both evil and good at the same time? Spinoza would answer by stating that God is beyond good and evil. Moreover, good and evil should be viewed as labels placed on things by human beings. For instance, Spinoza defines good as “what we certainly know to be useful to us” (D1&2, 200, Spinoza). It is difficult, however, to decide whether something is “good” (in Spinoza’s world) because good for one individual could mean something evil for another. For example, consider the death penalty, it may be beneficial to society to kill those who deserve to die for the crimes they committed. However, is the act of killing someone good or evil in itself? This is why one

cannot accept the relativist claim that Spinoza offers, because if individuals do not have an agreed upon base for good and evil, then it can become a slippery slope of what is considered good or evil. For instance, at what point does murder become acceptable? Is it when we are killing someone who 'deserves' to be killed? How do we decide if a life is worth taking? These are the questions we must ask ourselves if we are to agree with Spinoza's notion of good and evil.

Additionally, the objection of the impersonality of God remains, which cannot be underestimated. In my own experience, an indifferent God cannot exist, because if God is indifferent, then that means our suffering as human beings is meaningless. The pain we experience daily has no meaning, it merely exists. If this were so, then what stops us from agreeing with Spinoza that good and evil should only exist relative to us. This mindset is hard to accept because what is good and evil can become unclear depending on each individual, thus, what can be considered as good or evil can slowly become a slippery slope. Further, if there does not exist a God who cares about the actions of human beings, then as a whole, humans will not care to do the right thing.

However, God does not exist as impersonal, rather God is personal because we are made similarly to God in that we are naturally good. We however are not the ultimate good, such as God, rather we are created from the ultimate good, thus making us inherently good. We seek to achieve this good on a daily basis, based on our unique talents and abilities. For instance, I try to do good based on my individual ability to connect with people on a one on one basis. In building friendships with these individuals I am push them to do further good in their lives with their unique talents. In seeking out and doing good, we are each coming closer to the ultimate good

which is God. Therefore, since God is the ultimate good, then God must also exist as personal, in that God created us similarly to him/her goodness.

Aquinas further argues that the human motivation to do good should be to love one's neighbor as he or she might love oneself. Additionally, since the existence of God is not self-evident, one should come to know the existence and nature of God in order to love God. In doing so, one is able to live a good life, and know that he or she will live an even better life with God after death. To love, for Aquinas, is "to will the good of the other," as God did in creating human beings. For instance, God created human beings out of love, nevertheless, God does force humans to love him back. Rather, God willingly lets humans choose to love or not love God, because if there were no choice then it would not be considered love, since there would not involve a choice to not love. Consequently, in choosing to love God, one is able to be with God in love which is the purpose of human creation (e.g. Heaven).

In considering objections to Aquinas' theory on God, one might consider the teleology of God, along with God's supreme goodness. A common objection is that if God is all-good and all-powerful, why does there still exist evil? Aquinas would argue that evil exists as a lack of goodness in the world. For Aquinas, evil exists because free will exists (P1, Q83, A1). If free will did not exist, then human beings would be predetermined to be good or bad, however, God does not operate like this for Aquinas. Instead, God offers individuals a choice, either to freely love God or not love God. This is why evil exists, because individuals choose not to love God and decide to turn away from God. In choosing this, an individual, is deciding to choose evil (a lack of goodness) over the good, which is God. Some may see this choice as not having absolute freedom, because one is able to know the consequences of his or her choice. However, consider

if one knew all the consequences to all the choices one had in his or her life, it would still be a free choice for that individual to decide despite that knowledge. Freedom does not mean one has to be ignorant to the consequences of his or her choice, rather, freedom involves having a choice in the first place. Therefore, I agree with Aquinas, in that God exists as Supreme Good because it would be difficult to think that God would be indifferent in the discussion of good and evil.

Conclusion

The existence of God seems to be the first philosophic question ever asked; nevertheless, philosophers around the world struggle to solidify a concrete answer on to what and who God exists as. I have studied many different philosophies on God, and have found several logical arguments that have made me change my own philosophy on the essence of God. In reading Spinoza, I became captivated with a God that exists in everything, and I think a younger me believed that his theory was true. However, as I began to experience the world, I could not agree with Spinoza's assertion that good and evil only exist as labels. In revisiting Thomas Aquinas' transcendental theory on God, however, I was reminded that evil exist as a lack of good, and that God exists as the Supreme Good. Further, for Aquinas, God exists as creator, meaning that God willed and designed the universe for a purpose, and that I have meaning in the world. I have something to offer the world, that no one else can offer. Additionally, the fact that God does and will always love me is something that cannot be taken for granted. God wants to see everyone, including me do good; God wills the good for all of humanity. Therefore, Thomas Aquinas' vision of God makes not only logically sense, but also emotional sense in that God is so personal and invested in each and every one of our lives.

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