


Reflection and Evaluation of Thomas Aquinas' Theological and Philosophical Influence

George Emmanuel Acquah¹ 

¹ Adventist University of Africa, Kenya.



ABSTRACT

This study evaluates Thomas Aquinas' influence on theology and philosophy by examining his background, relationship with Aristotelian thought, and reflections on the Bible. It employs theological and evaluative methodology to analyse and reflect upon Thomas Aquinas's theological and philosophical influence. The research uses literature and documentary sources, including works by Thomas Aquinas, biblical passages, and writings by theologians and philosophers. Thomas Aquinas' understanding of God's nature, immortality, body, and soul was shaped by his theology and philosophy of God and humanity. His theory of sense perception and cerebral knowing is based on Aristotle's ideas, significantly influencing his moral philosophy. God's essence is Ipsum essence sustenance. The existence of God is self-evident, though not universally acknowledged. Aquinas argues that a living object's soul exists before death; it is not corruptible like the body. He states that the resurrection of the body is a revealed truth, distinct from the preambles of faith. The study revealed that the soul is not distinct from the body. The soul dies and can only receive the resurrection when Christ comes. The existence is self-evident and is seen through the incarnation of Christ. Thomas Aquinas accepted that the soul was immortal, but the Bible shows that it is mortal. Thomas Aquinas' ideas resemble Aristotle's concept of souls entering disembodied joy, which differs from the biblical notion of new heavens and earth. The soul dies, and the resurrection on the final day, based on Jesus' resurrection, is the key to immortality. The incarnation of Christ is evidence of the existence of God.

Correspondence

George Emmanuel Acquah

Email:

emmanuela@aua.ac.ke

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INTRODUCTION

Christian philosophy deals with issues that are consistent with Christian beliefs.¹ The distinction between philosophical and theological issues is frequently identified as the characteristic of a believer and a philosopher.² Many philosophical problems can be asked since the believer already has a viewpoint based on his religious faith.³ The permeation of theology and Philosophy began when

¹ Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn, *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2010), 60.

² Adam C. English, *The Possibility of Christian Philosophy: Maurice Blondel at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy* (Oxfordshire: Routledge Publishing, 2013), 16.

³ Edward W. H. Vick, *Philosophy for Believers* (Cantonment, FL: Energon Publications, 2013), 253.

Christianity spread in the Greco-Roman civilisation.⁴ In that period, many theologians⁵ were educated in Greek philosophies, such as Stoicism, Platonism, Aristotelianism, Epicureanism, and others.⁶

Greek philosophies infiltrated Christian ethics and Christian theology. The infiltration is partially due to critical concerns⁷ in interpreting certain Christian doctrines.⁸ These concerns necessitated the use of Greek philosophy in their interpretation of Christian doctrines. Christian thinkers have been using the best philosophy of their times to help them make sense of the world. Christian philosophy preserves themes and ideas that Greek philosophy would have finally articulated.⁹ However, this move has been challenged by the fact that there is no “Christian philosophy.” They argue that Christian philosophy has no uniqueness and that its conceptions and ideas are taken from Greek philosophers.¹⁰

Besides, the church scorned those Christian philosophical writings as heresy or pagan, which impeded many theologians from referring to the ancient wisdom in their theological works.¹¹ Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic scholar Thomas Aquinas was a Western theologian who analytically used Greek philosophy to develop theological arguments.¹² Also, Thomas Aquinas criticised thinkers for constantly falling short of Christian revelation.¹³ However, he developed a comprehensive integration of Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy.¹⁴

Thomas Aquinas developed his deductions from Aristotle’s assumptions, which included metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. He asserts that philosophical theology is not a separate study from metaphysics.¹⁵ The separation of theology and metaphysics may give the impression that the nature of a deity is only a bonus, a peripheral factor. Nonetheless, metaphysics is the primary goal of the study of theology.¹⁶ He asserts that metaphysics may be understood as a long-term endeavour to analyse substances to discover the first cause.¹⁷ Aquinas’s influences were evident in his use of philosophy in interpreting theology. He was much attracted to Aristotle's writings.¹⁸

⁴ Lawrence Pearsall Jacks and George Dawes Hicks, *The Hibbert Journal: A Quarterly Review of Religion* (New South Wales, Australia: G. Allen and Unwin Limited, 1918), 390.

⁵ Christian infiltration of Hellenistic philosophy was anticipated by Philo and other Greek-speaking Alexandrian Jews. Philo's synthesis of Judaism, Platonism, and Stoicism impacted Christian Alexandrian writers such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria, as well as, in the Latin world, Ambrose of Milan. Augustine was a Platonist in metaphysics and theology; Thomas was a Christianizing of Aristotle's metaphysics. Louis Bouyer, *The Christian Mystery* (London: A&C Black Publishing, 2004), 191.

⁶ Kevin W. Kaatz, *The Rise of Christianity: History, Documents, and Key Questions* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-Clio Publishing Location, 2015), 172.

⁷ The concerns are based on the nature of consciousness, as well as the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute, and potentiality and reality. Alfredo Pereira Jr et al., “Consciousness and Cosmos: Building an Ontological Framework,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 25, no. 3–4 (2018): 181–205.

⁸ Christians worship a single God, who is a trinity of three distinct yet separate personas. This notion raises various concerns that must be addressed. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press and Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 255; Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God* (Scotland Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 303.

⁹ Gerald A. Press, *Development of the Idea of History in Antiquity* (Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2003), 5.

¹⁰ Everett Ferguson, Michael P. McHugh, and Frederick W. Norris, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis, 1998), 926.

¹¹ Charles George Herbermann, *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, MA: Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 80; Jack Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1999), 17,18.

¹² Dot Reid, “Thomas Aquinas and Viscount Stair: The Influence of Scholastic Moral Theology on Stair’s Account of Restitution and Recompense,” *The Journal of Legal History* 29, no. 2 (2008): 189–214; Perry Shaw, *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning* (Carlisle, Cumbria: Langham Publishing, 2014).

¹³ Brian Davies, *Aquinas: An Introduction Continuum* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 93.

¹⁴ David B. Burrell, “Thomas Aquinas and Islam,” *Modern Theology* 20, no. 1 (2004): 71–89; David B. Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986); David B. Burrell, *Freedom and Creation in Three Traditions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993); Eleonore Stump Kretzmann, “Aquinas and Islamic and Jewish Thinkers,” in *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 60–84.

¹⁵ Leo J. Elders, *The Metaphysics of Being of St. Thomas Aquinas in a Historical Perspective* (Leiden: BRILL, 2021), 26.

¹⁶ Jenny E. Pelletier, *Four Metaphysics and Theology, in William Ockham on Metaphysics: The Science of Being and God* (Leiden: BRILL, 2012), 206.

¹⁷ Mieke Bal and Bryan Gonzales, *The Practice of Cultural Analysis: Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 258.

¹⁸ Catherine Cory and Michael Hollerich, *Christian Theological Tradition* (Oxfordshire: Routledge Publishing, 2015), 275.

Thomas Aquinas claimed that theological discourse in philosophy is unnecessary since the disciplines of philosophy and theology embrace every form of being.¹⁹ Theological debate begins with God's revelation in His words and actions. According to Aquinas, philosophical and susceptible discussions revolve around God's revelation. God's revelation has been revealed, and inquiry requires faith.²⁰

Theological and philosophical questions about God's nature, immortality, and the body and soul of humans impacted Thomas Aquinas' thought. Aquinas's new insight about God and humanity needs to be assessed. The question is: What is Thomas Aquinas's relationship with Aristotelian philosophy? And what are his theological and philosophical reflections and influence on God's nature, the body, and the soul of human? This study explores Thomas Aquinas' theological and philosophical influence and reflections.

The purpose of this paper is to review Thomas Aquinas' background and his relationship with Aristotelian philosophy. In addition, it seeks to discover the reflection and influence of Thomas Aquinas philosophy and theology and evaluates them with respect to the Bible. Also, in view of the fact that the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas is a vital issue, it is important to clearly understand it. The study may contribute to reshaping of current perceptions about the issue of Aquinas' philosophical theology. In addition, it will clarify the perception of philosophical theology. More importantly, it will add to existing knowledge about human nature. The concept of human nature needs evaluation. The study is restricted to Thomas Aquinas's metaphysical theology. This study seeks to evaluate Thomas Aquinas's philosophical theology in relation to the nature of God, immortality, the body, and the soul of humanity.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study employs theological and evaluative methodology to analyse and reflect upon Thomas Aquinas's theological and philosophical influence. Qualitative research permits a comprehensive investigation of Aquinas' themes and thoughts. It assesses Aquinas' theological perspectives on God and the human person and systematically analyses Aquinas' theological and philosophical influence following biblical revelation. The theological method facilitates a meticulous examination of Aquinas' doctrines and their relationship to biblical theology. The evaluative method appraises Aquinas' relevance and impact within Christian theology.

This research is based exclusively on literature-based inquiry. It derives entirely from documentary sources, including primary texts by Thomas Aquinas, relevant biblical passages, and scholarly writings from theologians and philosophers. The study is structured into four sections: an introduction; a methodology; the discussion, which comprises subsections that address Aquinas's background, his engagement with Aristotle, his philosophical impact on theology, and a reflection on his legacy; and, finally, a conclusion that synthesizes the study's findings. This analysis thoroughly examines Aquinas's enduring influence on theology and philosophy.

DISCUSSION

Background of Thomas Aquinas

Theological and philosophical reflections of theologians are influenced mainly by their backgrounds. Thomas Aquinas was born around 1225 in Rocaseca, Italy.²¹ He came from one of Italy's most prominent aristocracies.²² Aquinas' father was Landulf of Aquino, and his mother was Theodora of Teano.²³ Aquinas intended to follow his uncle into the abbey, while the rest of the boys

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Anima* (London: A&C Black, 1994), viii.

²⁰ Denis J. M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1997), 45.

²¹ Romanus Cessario, "Thomas Aquinas: A Doctor for the Ages," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, 1999, 27–28.

²² Norman Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 26.

²³ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 3.

in his family joined the military.²⁴ Before Aquinas' birth, a man of God foretold that he would join the Order of Friar's Ministers and become a distinguished student.²⁵

Aquinas was sent to a Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino to study. He was a bright child and often asked his benefactors, "What is God?" when there was unrest in 1239. Aquinas was relocated to a Benedictine abbey in Naples to conclude his studies.²⁶ It was here that he became interested in the philosophy of Aristotle. During this time, he studied the writings of Aristotle, which served Aquinas as an important springboard for his own philosophical investigations.²⁷

Aquinas got interested in current monastic orders at his new institution, which was intimately affiliated with the University of Naples. This was in contrast to the more traditional beliefs and reclusive lifestyle he had met at his former school.²⁸ He was particularly attracted to the orders that emphasised a life of spiritual service. Aquinas abandoned his family's expectations of him. He secretly entered a Dominican order in 1243 and took the habit in 1244.²⁹ During his studies, he was also influenced by a Dominican minister in Naples.³⁰

The family was upset when they learned this. They felt so betrayed that they planned to kidnap him because he had abandoned the values they held dear.³¹ He was imprisoned by his family for a whole year while attempting to persuade him of his new beliefs.³² He received from Christ the grace of perfect chastity.³³ In 1244, his mother attempted to save the family's dignity by assisting him in fleeing through his window at night to Naples and then to Rome.³⁴

In 1245, Aquinas entered the University of Paris, where he was reserved and did not talk much.³⁵ He completed his studies under Albert the Great.³⁶ Around 1250, he was ordained as a minister while going on to teach religion at the University of Paris.³⁷ Aquinas fulfilled the man of God's prophecy of becoming an outstanding intellectual. In 1252, Aquinas earned his master's degree.³⁸ In 1256, in Paris, Aquinas was named rector of theology.³⁹ He earned a doctorate in theology under the tutelage of Albert the Great.⁴⁰ He defended the mendicant orders that had been attacked by William of Saint-Amour.⁴¹

In 1259, Aquinas returned to Naples and was elected preacher general in 1260.⁴² In 1265, he was selected as papal theologian.⁴³ He was commissioned to teach at the *Studium conventuale* of Santa Sabina.⁴⁴ Aquinas wrote a lot of books, commentaries and critiques of Aristotle's books, such as

²⁴ Philip Schaff, "Thomas Aquinas", *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, vol. 126 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1953), 422 - 23; Michael Goodich, "Childhood and Adolescence among the Thirteenth-Century Saints," *The Journal of Psychohistory* 1, no. 2 (1973): 285.

²⁵ Timothy A. Stratton, *Human Freedom, Divine Knowledge, and Mere Molinism: A Biblical, Historical, Theological, and Philosophical Analysis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), 69.

²⁶ Davies, *Aquinas: An Introduction Continuum*, 1-2.

²⁷ Thomas L. Spalding et al., *The Human Person: What Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas Offer Modern Psychology* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2020), 69.

²⁸ Renn Dickson Hampden, *The Life of Thomas Aquinas: A Dissertation of the Scholastic Philosophy of the Middle Ages* (London: John J. Griffin & Co., 1848), 21-22.

²⁹ Diane Collison and Kathryn Plant, *Fifty Major Philosophers* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13.

³⁰ Hampden, *The Life of Thomas Aquinas: A Dissertation of the Scholastic Philosophy of the Middle Ages*, 21-22.

³¹ Hampden, *The Life of Thomas Aquinas: A Dissertation of the Scholastic Philosophy of the Middle Ages*.

³² Davies 2004, 23.

³³ C. Lorraine LeBlanc, *Spiritual Paths & Crossroads* (Morrisville, North Carolina: Lulu Publishing, 2018), 14.

³⁴ Hampden, *The Life of Thomas Aquinas: A Dissertation of the Scholastic Philosophy of the Middle Ages*, 27-28; Pasquale Porro, *Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2016), 4.

³⁵ Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Farnham: Ashgate publishing, 2003), 2; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (Oxfordshire, England: Routledge Publishing, 2003), 3.

³⁶ Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas: Contemporary Philosophical Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6.

³⁷ Fergus Kerr, *Thomas Aquinas: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 13.

³⁸ Joseph A. Selling, *Reframing Catholic Theological Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 54.

³⁹ Edward Craig, *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Oxfordshire, England: Routledge Publishing, 2005), 32.

⁴⁰ William Douglas Woody and Wayne Viney, *A History of Psychology: The Emergence of Science and Applications* (Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis Publishing, 2017), 93.

⁴¹ Rosemary Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Saints* (New York City, NY: Infobase Publishing, 2001), 8.

⁴² Arthur Hyman, James J. Walsh, and Thomas Williams, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2010), 449.

⁴³ Norman L. Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 32.

⁴⁴ Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life*, 4.

Impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem, he *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas, and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.⁴⁵ Although he continued to write diligently, the quality of his work began to decline.⁴⁶ He became unwell and died.⁴⁷

Thomas Aquinas' Relation to Aristotle's Philosophy

Aquinas had a relation to Greek Philosophy, specifically, the writings of Aristotle. He read about Aristotle as part of his basic education in a Benedictine abbey in Naples.⁴⁸ Basically, Aquinas lived during a period of the Latin translation of the books of Aristotle and the debate over the relationship between religion and reason. He learnt the translated books of Aristotle.⁴⁹

Aquinas was a staunch Aristotelian philosopher. He wrote his close textual commentary on Aristotle during his infancy, not towards the end of his life.⁵⁰ When he appealed to Aristotle as the Philosopher, he was not just using a common term at the time.⁵¹ He accepted Aristotle's explanation of physical things, his viewpoint on location, time, and motion, his proof of the prime mover, and his theory of the prime mover.⁵²

Based on Aristotle's theories, Aquinas created his own theory of sense perception and cerebral knowledge.⁵³ His moral philosophy is largely inspired by Aristotle, and in his commentary on *Metaphysics*, he provides a logical and comprehensible explanation of what is happening in those difficult portions.⁵⁴ Paying close attention to how Aquinas comments on or even interpretively clarifies difficult portions of Aristotle that are otherwise highly incomprehensible may often give significant insight into Aquinas's philosophical perspective.⁵⁵ Nothing is more Aristotelian than His notion that there is something to be learnt from each author, not only faults to avoid.⁵⁶

Basically, Aquinas was influenced by Aristotelian ideas. He defended the mendicant orders and fought against Averroistic interpretations of Aristotle as well as the Franciscan rejection of Greek philosophy.⁵⁷ Also, Aquinas and Origen Kierkeby debated whether reason could function inside faith while following its own principles. Aquinas contended that reason may function inside faith while yet adhering to its own set of laws.⁵⁸ Aquinas acknowledged that authority and religion were his beginning points and that he proceeded with reason. He is entirely reliant on the natural light of reason.⁵⁹

Another Aristotelian principle that inspired Aquinas was that knowledge is acquired by the senses and logical reasoning from self-evident facts, rather than being innate.⁶⁰ Aristotle's definition of metaphysics as the science of being was accepted by Aquinas.⁶¹ His idea of analogy, which states that claims concerning God are true analogically rather than univocally, was influenced by Aristotle.⁶²

⁴⁵ Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Written Work: Languand, Labor, and Authorship* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 178.

⁴⁶ Phyllis G. Jestice, *Holy People of the World: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Publishing, 2004); William C. Michael, *The Life and Labours of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Morrisville: North Carolina: lulu.com publisher, n.d.), 229.

⁴⁷ Paul J. Wadell, *The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 105.

⁴⁸ Wadell, *The Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas*, 8.

⁴⁹ Edward Craig, *Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London: Psychology Press, 2000), 49.

⁵⁰ Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas after His Readers* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2006), 154.

⁵¹ John Franklin Johnson, "Hermeneutics in Thomas Aquinas: An Appraisal and Appreciation," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1981): 223–32.

⁵² Saint Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 2003), xvii.

⁵³ Simon Kemp and Garth J. Fletcher, "The Medieval Theory of the Inner Senses," *The American Journal of Psychology*, 1993, 559–76.

⁵⁴ Leo Elders, "The Aristotelian Commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics*, (2009): 29–53.

⁵⁵ Dwight Crowell, "Thomas Aquinas 'Attribution of Participation to Aristotle,'" *Dionysius* 37 (2019): 134–63.

⁵⁶ Gerald Hartung, *Colin Guthrie King and Christof Rapp, Aristotelian Studies in 19th Century Philosophy* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), 65.

⁵⁷ G.K. Chesterton and Mark Armitage, "Chesterton on St. Thomas Aquinas: Some Newly Discovered Pages," *The Chesterton Review* 30, no. 1/2 (2004): 27–49.

⁵⁸ Joseph Grcic, *Facing Reality: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Bloomington, Indiana : Authorhouse Publishing, 2009), 118.

⁵⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York, NY: Cosimo Inc Publisher, 2013), 5.

⁶⁰ John Edward Abbruzzese, "Do Descartes and St. Thomas Agree on the Ontological Proof?," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (2008): 413–35.

⁶¹ Christopher M. Cullen, S. J. Franklin, and T. Harkins, *The Discovery of Being and Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2019), 2.

⁶² Charles Side Steinberg, "The Aesthetic Theory of St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Philosophical Review* 50, no. 5 (1941): 483–97.

His divisions between act and potency, essence and existence, substance and accidents, active and passive intellect, and his notion of the soul as the "shape" of the body were all inspired by Aristotle.

However, Aquinas' theories are perceived as Aristotle's Christianized. When the Christian tradition necessitated it, he did not hesitate to depart with "the Philosopher," as he referred to him. Aristotle was interested in figuring out how the universe functioned. Aquinas was more concerned with explaining why it existed in the first place. Aristotle is most known for his logic, but he also wrote about physics, metaphysics, and ethics. His works were translated into Latin by scholars in the 12th and 13th centuries. Aristotle's theories influenced generations of medieval academics, particularly the best medieval Christian thinkers, including Aquinas.

Influence of Thomas Aquinas on Christian Philosophy

The impact of Aristotle's philosophy on Christian thought has never stopped being significant. Aquinas was a remarkable theologian, but he was also a great metaphysician, and his metaphysical work is making a resurgence in academic circles. His study of God's nature, Body and Soul, and Immortality is worth revisiting. When Aquinas was a little lad, he inquired of his instructor, "What is God?" He came to think that only one individual, the God-man, or Jesus Christ, could potentially answer that issue correctly. This section discusses the Influence of Thomas Aquinas on Christian Philosophy under, the nature of God, the body and soul, and immortality of the soul.

Thomas Aquinas' Influence on the Nature of God

Aquinas opines that humans cannot know the nature of a deity because the assumption that a god exists is unknown to humans.⁶³ Insofar as is known, God is the first efficient cause of creatures, the exemplar formal cause of creatures, and the final cause of creatures, Aquinas believes that humanity can know not only that God exists and what God is not through philosophy, but also that it is reasonable and meaningful to predicate of God certain positive perfections such as being, goodness, power, knowledge, life, will, and love.⁶⁴

Furthermore, Aquinas contends that God's essence is ipsum essence sustenance, or what philosophers seek but cannot find in its essence.⁶⁵ Nonetheless, while understanding that God is good is a valid and significant statement, Aquinas says that "we still do not know the essence of God, and so do not know what God is good means with the precision with which we know triangles have three sides, mammals are animals, and so on."⁶⁶ According to Aquinas, ideas are likenesses of objects, and words are representations of them.⁶⁷ He adds that "it is only via this last manner of knowing God that we are able to accurately predicate God's positive perfections."⁶⁸

In *Becoming One*, Aquinas argues that the Greek dictum *ex nihilo nihil* which is from nothing has two interpretations. First, whatever perfection exists in its cause or causes. Second, unlike God, beings do not have an initial material cause.⁶⁹ Beings have qualities like justice, intelligence, kindness, compassion, authority, and love, but they are not absolute perfections. God is the very first giver of life, a simple, unchanging, and eternal cause. As a result, whatever pure perfections exist in creatures must also exist more prominently in God.⁷⁰

Aquinas argues that humanity can significantly apply optimistic predicates to God, and certain of these predicates can be applied significantly to God.⁷¹ According to Aquinas, God's perfection, kindness and wisdom do not just refer to a relationship between God and creatures, rather than God becoming the initial efficient cause of all things. He thinks that conditions like as perfect, good, and

⁶³ Thomas Aquinas, *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 109.

⁶⁴ Aquinas, *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 109.

⁶⁵ Brian Davies, *A Guide and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60; *Summa theologiae* Ia.31.

⁶⁶ Brian Davies, *A Guide and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 60; *Summa theologiae* Ia.31.

⁶⁷ Henrik Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between* (Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, 2010), 500.

⁶⁸ Lagerlund, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy Between*, 500.

⁶⁹ Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden: BRILL, 1988), 326.

⁷⁰ Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought*, 326.

⁷¹ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*, xx.

wise have a profound bearing on God.⁷² Positive conditionals such as God being good, according to Aquinas, "are predicated basically of God, yet they fall short of a full description of Him." Given that mankind does not understand that the essence is God in this life, humans do not understand the precise definition of "good" as applied to God.⁷³

Likewise, God's existence is "demonstrable," according to Aquinas. And he opens his presentation of the Five Ways by implying that it may be "proved."⁷⁴ The five proofs were as follows: The First is motion. Some objects certainly move, yet they are incapable of producing their own movement. Since there can not be an infinite chain of causes of motion, as Thomas said, there is a First Mover who is not affected by anything else, which is what everyone meant by God.⁷⁵ The second is Causation, like motion, cannot cause itself, and an infinite chain of causation is impossible, hence a first Cause, known as God, must exist.⁷⁶ The third is the existence of the required and the superfluous, as we experience, which includes items that are unquestionably there yet appear to be superfluous.⁷⁷

The fourth is Gradation. If one can see a gradation in things, such as some being hotter, better, and so on, there must be a superlative that is the genuine and finest thing, and thus the most completely existent. This is what one refers to as God.⁷⁸ The fifth is Nature's Ordered Tendencies. All bodies that obey natural rules observe a direction of acts to an end. Anything that is not conscious tends to be a goal when guided by someone who is aware. This is what believers call God.⁷⁹

Influence of Thomas Aquinas on Body and Soul, and Immortality

According to Aquinas, the soul can persist independently of the living body when the body dies.⁸⁰ Aquinas explains that what relates to the idea of "this specific item" is just that it be subsistent.⁸¹ As just an intrinsic component of a living body, a hand has an operation that distinguishes it. The existence itself does not distinguish substances. As a result, it lacks its fundamental essence and cannot be considered a substance in and of itself. It is because it is unfinished as a separate entity from the body.⁸²

In addition, Aquinas analyses the existence of the soul and the body in *Summa Theologiae*. There are two methods to express immateriality. To begin with, because the soul is not a material essence, any shape is immaterial.⁸³ This demonstrates the immateriality of the human soul. It is meaningless in the same way that every form is meaningless. However, 'immaterial' refers to subsistent forms, or forms that exist without substance, in the second meaning. According to Aquinas, the soul is not a body; it is incorporeal.⁸⁴

Furthermore, the souls of other animals are not sustained since they lack an operation that does not need the use of a corporeal organ. Aquinas demonstrates that the human intellectual soul, like the souls of other animals, is immaterial, but suddenly humans have a soul that is immaterial and subsistent.⁸⁵ Moreover, in the second sense of Aquinas's definition of material, the intellectual soul is an immaterial subsistent. The souls of other creatures, on the other hand, do not exist. This is due to the fact that they exist as either an accident in a corporeal person or as a substantial entity.⁸⁶ According to Aquinas, the human soul is incorporeal, immaterial, incorruptible subsistent, an immaterial form in the second sense that resembles an angel. The souls of other animals are not immediately produced and are not directly corrupt. The living animal is the one who corrupts.⁸⁷ Aquinas contends that it is

⁷² Saint Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*.

⁷³ Saint Thomas Aquinas, *A Summary of Philosophy*.

⁷⁴ *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 2.

⁷⁵ *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 2. Ibid.

⁷⁶ *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 2.

⁷⁷ *Summa of Theology* I, q.2, The Five Ways Philosophers Have Proven God's Existence

⁷⁸ *Summa of Theology* I, q.2, The Five Ways Philosophers Have Proven God's Existence

⁷⁹ *Summa of Theology* I, q.2, The Five Ways Philosophers Have Proven God's Existence

⁸⁰ Adam Wood, *Thomas Aquinas on the Immateriality of the Human Intellect* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2019), 265.

⁸¹ *Summa Theologiae* Ia.75.2 ad1; also *Quaestiones Disputate de Anima* 2.

⁸² *Summa Theologiae* Ia.75.2 ad1; also *Quaestiones Disputate de Anima* 2.

⁸³ Robert Pasnau, *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 89.

⁸⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004), 194.

⁸⁵ Davies, *A Guide and Commentary*, 353.

⁸⁶ Davies, *A Guide and Commentary*, 353.

⁸⁷ Ann W. Astell, *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 127.

not of the same species as an angel. Aquinas defends the perfect oneness of spirit and body against numerous opposing views held by his contemporary theological interlocutors.⁸⁸ Likewise, in his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas exemplifies the use of philosophy to advance certain theological viewpoints and help theologians in avoiding error.⁸⁹

However, Aquinas clearly rejects this pluralism, stressing the apparent oneness of the human being in his deeds. Because there are different substances and multiple individuals, he maintains that there would be no unity in being human if there were various substantive forms of the human being.⁹⁰ He asserts that the human being is a single substantive unity shown via his or her behaviors. He claims that the soul is formed out of living things' activities.⁹¹ There is no plurality of substantive forms due to the oneness of Socrates' deeds, which encompass both animal and reason.⁹²

Aquinas opines that immortality means to be immune to death. Living corporeal substances die as a result of the deterioration of their substantial oneness.⁹³ Because of their constructed bodily natures, animals are necessarily prone to death. It is possible that some other cause, with greater power than living beings, may prevent them from dying and keep them alive indefinitely. God's supernatural involvement is the apparent contender for this cause.⁹⁴

Furthermore, Aquinas argues that it is incorruptible in a way that other animals' souls are not; it is even not naturally vulnerable to death through corruption.⁹⁵ Moreover, Aquinas wrote that Socrates was composed of a soul and a body. After death, the individual who was Socrates lives on as Socrates' soul.⁹⁶ Aquinas contended that the soul of a living object exists before death. The point was not that the intellectual spirit becomes self-sustaining after the death of a human individual.⁹⁷ However, this reading argues that, while there is only one person after death, Socrates, there are two people before death, Socrates and his soul.⁹⁸ Thomas believes that the essence of the soul is flawed. Third, this interpretation would make use of his contention that Socrates is not the same as his soul.⁹⁹

Furthermore, the act of being has that of same power as the souls. It is a fallacy to believe that Socrates is identical to his soul; his soul creates some other creature with which he shares some authority. This, once again, has to do with the soul being his solid shape.¹⁰⁰ He contends that Socrates' animal powers are just as much a part of the human soul as intellectual capacity. Socrates is not immortal if the live animal is not. There is no bodily resurrection; only Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's spirits live on after death. For Abraham to survive, the entire composite of his spirit and body must live.¹⁰¹

Therefore, when Aquinas says, *anima mea non-est ego*, he emphasises the importance of corporeal resurrection for human salvation.¹⁰² He states, "The significance of Christ's Resurrection is that it shows that my resurrection finally redeems me from the dead." According to Aquinas, the resurrection of the body is revealed truth, not one of the preambles of faith. So, while Socrates was not immortal in this life, he may live again in the resurrection and be created immortal by God.¹⁰³

⁸⁸ Astell, *Chaucer and the Universe of Learning*, 127.

⁸⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Thomas Aquinas in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2011), 110.

⁹⁰ Emily Michael, "Averroes and the Plurality of Forms," *Franciscan Studies* 52, no. 1 (1992): 155–82.

⁹¹ Michael, "Averroes and the Plurality of Forms," 115–82.

⁹² Michael, "Averroes and the Plurality of Forms," 115–82.

⁹³ Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press , 2002), 364.

⁹⁴ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae*, 364.

⁹⁵ *Summa Theologica*, 36.

⁹⁶ *Summa Theologica*, 36.

⁹⁷ Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings* (Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2016), 68.

⁹⁸ *Summa Theologiae* 75.

⁹⁹ *Summa Theologiae* 75.

¹⁰⁰ *Summa Theologiae* 75.1 ad 2.

¹⁰¹ *Summa Theologiae* 75.1 ad 2.

¹⁰² John Donnelly, "Heavenly Thoughts," *Philosophy Now* 43 (2003): 32–33.

¹⁰³ Ralph McInerny, *Thomas Aquinas, Thomas De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1993), 161.

Theological Evaluation of Thomas Aquinas' Philosophical Reflection

Aquinas's philosophical and theological views need to be evaluated in light of the Bible. Aquinas chastised thinkers, whom he considered pagans, for consistently falling short of the genuine and suitable knowledge given in the Christian revelation.¹⁰⁴ This appears to indicate that Aquinas's theological and philosophical conclusions were to be based on the Christian revelation, which is the Bible. However, several of Aquinas's assertions do not confirm the Christian Revelation.

First, the evaluation of Aquinas' concept of the body and the soul is critical in determining if the soul is separate from the body. According to Aquinas, the soul can persist independently of the living body when the body dies.¹⁰⁵ This might suggest that he seems to be a kind of substance dualist in the sense that the soul is one substance and the body is another. However, this depiction does not acknowledge the Aristotelian terms of the Aquinas' description of soul and body. Also, Aquinas' argument appears to disregard sola scriptura and is restricted to science and reason. No one, Paul adds, captures you, prisoner and prisoner, through hollow and false philosophy based on human culture and worldly values rather than Christ (Col 2:8,).

Basically, philosophical interpretation opposes the grammatical-historical method, it aims to discover what the original author wanted to communicate to his own audience in his own setting. Philosophy if not handled with Scriptures can destroy the authority of the text of Scripture. The Bible reveals that all Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16–17), and if a philosophical interpretation disregards the text, reason and science supplant Scripture as that of the source of authority. The Genesis narrative of human origins is critical to a correct understanding of the body and soul in this setting. And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living soul, according to Genesis 2:7. God infused life into Adam's lifeless form, transforming him into a "living soul." That lifeless lump becomes a live soul by absorbing the breath of life. What was made or generated from the earth became a living soul or a creation. It was not a living soul that was breathing before being breathed. When the breath was absorbed into the body, it started the consequences.

In addition, Aquinas claims that the human soul is incorporeal, immaterial, incorruptible, and has an immaterial form. The word "living soul" in Genesis 2:7 implies that the soul is not an impersonal force or spirit. A soul, or a live soul, is a human entity. When God breathed into man's nostrils, he created a live soul, not a spirit. Separation of the spirit from the body is called death. The dust will then return to the ground as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it to him (Eccl 12:7). That is why the death of a person is often described as the death of the soul. When death occurs, it is the soul that is deprived of life. Death cannot strike the body or any other parts of the soul without striking the entirety of the soul (Num 31:19; 35:15, 30).

Furthermore, Aquinas asserts that the soul is not corruptible like a human being who is vulnerable to death, and it may endure death. However, death happens as the reverse of this process when a person stops breathing and the breath departs the body. When this occurs, the person dies. He or she no longer exists. The "soul" is no longer present since the live individual is no longer present. Death restores a man to his pre-existence, that is, he ceases to be. After death, man is devoid of his true being; he is nothing. From the earth's dust, God fashioned the entire man from the dust of the earth, saying that God made this man, who was lifeless at first, to breathe and live. The material formed from the dust of the earth became a living soul, that is, it became alive by being made to breathe.

In addition, Aquinas contended that the soul of a living object exists before death. He claims that souls are not and that they are not even inherently prone to death via corruption. This argument appears to contradict biblical teaching on the nature of the soul. The Bible states in Genesis 2:7 that God made man from dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living soul. Though the Hebrew word *nepeš* is typically translated as soul, it may also refer to both people and animals. (Gen1:20, 24-30; 2: 19; 7:21). This implies that the soul contains nothing eternal or even related to higher duties. The wording in Genesis 2:7 appears to imply that humans were

¹⁰⁴ Davies, *Aquinas: An Introduction Continuum*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ *Summa Theologiae* Ia.75.2 ad1; also *Quaestiones Disputate de Anima* 2.

made from dust and breathed life, with the result being a living soul or human being. As a result, the soul cannot be said to be immortal.

Likewise, the Bible states that the soul may be murdered. Dread, not those who murder the body but are powerless to murder the soul, but rather fear Him who in hell may destroy both soul and body. (Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4). Surprisingly, the text reveals that the soul may be murdered, dispelling the notion of soul immortality. The Greek term *apollumi*, which means “to demolish, wreck, or kill” (Matt 2:13; Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 1:19), indicates that the body can be destroyed or harmed. God is the Supreme Lord of life and death, having the power to destroy both parts of human existence by sending them into the death and darkness of hell. This refers to the soul’s ability to be slain by God rather than its eternal and immortal nature.

Besides, Aquinas asserts that the resurrection of the body is revealed truth, not one of the preambles of faith. So, while Socrates was not immortal in this life, he may be resurrected and made immortal by God. According to Aquinas, the dead body will have a resurrection when Christ comes. If the perceived soul of the body is immortal and the body is corrupted, what will possess the body when Christ comes? Is it a new soul or the immaterial soul according to Aquinas?

According to Aquinas, “The soul is not a whole man, and my soul is not I; so, while the soul may not find redemption in another life, I nor any other man does. The premise here is that when this life ends, we cease to exist, but according to the soul, we continue to live.” Indeed, according to Aquinas, the soul is principally responsible for maintaining our separate identity even during our lifetimes. If the soul of a human can enjoy after death, then what is the need of the gospel of hope? The soul dies and can only receive resurrection when Christ Comes.

Secondly, Aquinas’s views on God need to be corrected by the biblical worldview. Aquinas argues on God’s existence. There are more objections to his use of God as a demonstrative object. However, this statement that God’s existence is self-evident in and of itself if it appropriately predicates the subject-basic term’s features. A triangle, for example, is a three-sided planar shape. For Aquinas, the phrase God exists is self-evident in and of itself since existence is a component of God’s essence or nature. However, this statement is difficult for people familiar with the concept of God to completely grasp.

Also, Aquinas’s assertion that philosophical investigation can only reveal a portion of God is inaccurate. The absolute uniqueness and singularity of a deity enfeeble the criticism that whatever the reasons lead to, it is not the God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. There can be no demonstration propter quod of God’s essence or nature, yet this does not leave philosophical theology with a basic awareness of God’s existence.

In addition, Aquinas opines that humans cannot know the nature of a deity because the assumption that a god exists is unknown to us. However, one can tell that such a thing exists and that it is *Ipsum* existing, but not what it is made of. Moreover, humans use the term “mind” in a number of contexts. The fundamental substance of cognition, on the other hand, is perhaps incomprehensible to finite minds like that of mankind. Even if the fundamental distinction is not unreasonable, statements that the nature of a deity is unknown to humans are absurd. Also, for Aquinas to claim that anything is immaterial is to reject any understanding of its attributes, let alone its essence. Still, Thomas has the option of stating that, while philosophical knowledge of God’s essence is incomprehensible, it is given to us through Revelation.

Similarly, Aquinas contends that God’s essence is *ipsum* essence sustenance, or what philosophers seek but cannot find in its essence.¹⁰⁶ Christians believe that God further reveals Himself through Christ’s incarnation as a Trinity of Persons in Unity of Substance. According to the Christian revelation, When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus said I have been with you for so long, and yet you have not known Me? Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father; therefore, how can you demand (John 4:8, 9)? Surprisingly, Aquinas believes that the presence of a deity may be demonstrated. The nature of God, on the other hand, remains theoretically inexplicable to mankind. And any dependence on knowledge of the essence that can only be obtained by faith is no longer

¹⁰⁶*Summa theologiae* Ia.31.

philosophical. Additionally, it can be said that Aquinas is not interested in proving God's existence in his Five Ways. The Ways are unclear and do not necessarily lead to a single creature, much less a god or the Christian God.

CONCLUSION

Aquinas' theological and philosophical apprehension of God's nature, immortality, body and soul of humanity, was shaped by his theological and philosophical reflections on God and humanity. The study assessed Aquinas' theological and philosophical influence and reflections. The study focused on the evaluation of Aquinas's philosophical theology in relation to the nature of God, immortality, the body and the soul of humanity.

Aquinas developed his own theory of sense perception and cerebral knowing based on Aristotle's ideas. His moral philosophy is heavily influenced by Aristotle. He presents a logical and coherent description of what is going on in those difficult sections. Aquinas' apprehension of God's nature, immortality, and the body and soul of humanity, was shaped by his theological and philosophical reflections on God and humanity. The study evaluated Aquinas's theology in relation to the human body, immortality, and the body and soul of humanity.

According to Aquinas, God's essence is Ipsum essence sustenance, or what philosophers seek but can't discover in its essence. Aquinas felt that God's existence is self-evident in and of itself, but this was not universally accepted. The five proofs were as follows: motion, causation, the existence of required and superfluous is our experience; gradation, and nature's ordered tendencies. Aquinas argues that the soul of a living object exists before death. The soul is not corruptible like a human being who is vulnerable to death, and it may endure death. According to Aquinas, the resurrection of the body is revealed truth, not one of the preambles of faith.

Aquinas accepted that the soul is immortal, but the Bible reveals that the soul is mortal. The term "living soul" in Genesis 2:7 shows that nothing is immortal, but refers to a person. The soul is not distinct from the body. After the body's death, the soul cannot exist away from the living body. The soul dies and can only be resurrected when Christ returns. God's existence is self-evident, as demonstrated by Christ's incarnation.

Aquinas's introduction of Greek philosophy into Christian thinking significantly impacted Christian theology. Aquinas's ideas resemble Aristotle's concept of souls entering disembodied joy considerably more than the biblical notion of heaven and earth. The soul dies, and the resurrection on the final day, based on Jesus' resurrection, is the key to immortality and eternal life for all souls. The incarnation of Christ to reveal the Father to all people is evidence of God's existence.

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ABOUT AUTHOR

Pastor George Emmanuel Acquaah, is currently a Ph.D. Candidate in Systematic Theology from Adventist University Africa. He also serves as the Executive Secretary of the Pioneer Ghana Conference of the Seventhday Adventist Church. He holds an MPhil in Biblical Theological Studies from the Adventist University of Africa, Kenya, MA in Human Resource Developments from the University of Cape Coast, Ghana and BA in Theological Studies from the Valley View University, Accra, Ghana. His research focuses on Ethics in Religious Studies.