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Premise and Validity of Proofs for the Existence of God in the Middle Ages^{*}

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Many modern scientists regard religion as a "projection of human desire" and treat it like a superstition. For example, Richard Dawkins, in his bestseller, *God the Delusion*, denies the existence of God and

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treats the proof for the existence of God in the Middle Ages as unacceptable nonsense from the standpoint of modern science. In this atmosphere, the debate about the success and utility of the existence of God is reemerging. Namely, if we cannot even be sure of a god's existence, then all the doctrinal systems and organizations that have been built on the basis of this belief will become a figurative and empty pavilion. Is there a way to talk rationally about the existence of God without escaping into faith? Medieval scholars presented many proofs for the existence of God, as well as criticism of those proofs. But is debate about these proofs meaningful in the modern age of natural science?

Criticism of the proof for the existence of God is not only present in modern times. *Although proof for the existence of God has been criticized since the beginning*, the most powerful criticism was made in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Kant classified the existing proofs for the existence of God as ontological proof — cosmological proof — teleological proof, and criticizes them in reverse order.¹ In the end, Kant, who asserted that human reason could not succeed, went down the path of “requesting” the existence of God. However, after this attempt, many scholars again criticized Kant's criticism as valid only for proof from modern philosophy as it prevailed at that time, but did not properly understand the intention of the original medieval scholars who tried to develop proofs for the existence of God. Thus, the attempts of modern scholars to respond to criticism of the proof for the existence of God have also been very diverse. How, then, among other things, can we improve the comprehensiveness of the proofs, correct their vulnerabilities or introduce ancillary evidence, explain in detail

¹ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Critique of Pure Reason)*, A590/B618.

the intentions of the original authors, attempt to reduce the credibility of criticisms and reconstruct new evidence using the achievements of modern physics?² Thus, the debate over the validity of individual proofs for the existence of God is often done and explored, but the assessment of its overall performance can only be legitimately made from a broader perspective.

The key questions to be explored in this study are as follows. What did the proofs for the existence of God in the Middle Ages actually mean? Is there a clear difference between the proofs for the existence of God, and why? To answer this, we cannot take a detailed look at the individual arguments. Rather, my focus is to compare and analyze the cases where the premises are most in conflict, while proceeding with discussion based on the basic knowledge of the proof for the existence of God. Thus, Thomas Aquinas, who represents empirical proof with ‘the “Five Ways”’ in the *Summa Theologiae*, presents ontological proof derived from Anselm’s *Proslogion*. I will introduce the critical passage (part 1) and confirm that Thomas’ criticism of Anselm is justified (part 2). Based on this, I will compare the different premises and intentions of the two thinkers (part 3 and Chapter 4).

It is my hope that a review of the diversity of the proofs for the existence of God in the Middle Ages will, likewise, provide a basis for reflection on the presuppositions of contemporary critiques.

² Cf. N. Kertzman, *The Metaphysics of Creation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 84-138; A. Flew, *God and Philosophy* (New York: Delta, 1966); Lee, Jae-Ryong, “A note on Proof of God’s existence,” *Catholic Theology and Thought* 47 (2004): 7-43.

1. Thomas Aquinas' Criticism of the Ontological Proof

Thomas Aquinas' critique of Anselm's ontological proof appears in the *Summa Theologiae* under the title, "Is it self-evident that God exists (I, q.2, a.1)?"³ In the second objection, Aquinas introduces the following formulation of the ontological proof:

Further, those things are said to be self-evident which are known as soon as the terms are known, which the Philosopher (1 Poster. iii) says is true of the first principles of demonstration. Thus, when the nature of a whole and of a part is known, it is at once recognized that every whole is greater than its part. But as soon as the signification of the word "God" is understood, it is at once seen that God exists. For by this word is signified that thing than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally. Therefore, since as soon as the word "God" is understood it exists mentally, it also follows that it exists actually. Therefore the proposition "God exists" is self-evident (STh I,2,1,obj.2).⁴

Those who oppose the need to prove the existence of God begin with the premise that immediate recognition is self-evident when the terms are known. That is, once a person knows what the name "God"

³ Cf. SCG I,10&11; QDV X,2.

⁴ Praeterea, illa dicuntur esse per se nota, quae statim, cognitis terminis, cognoscuntur, quod philosophus attribuit primis demonstrationis principiis, in I Poster., scito enim quid est totum et quid pars, statim scitur quod omne totum maius est sua parte. Sed intellectu quid significet hoc nomen Deus, statim habetur quod Deus est. Significatur enim hoc nomine id quo maius significari non potest, maius autem est quod est in re et intellectu, quam quod est in intellectu tantum, unde cum, intellectu hoc nomine Deus, statim sit in intellectu, sequitur etiam quod sit in re. Ergo Deum esse est per se notum.

means, it immediately becomes known that God exists. Here, Anselm's *Proslogion* argument is introduced. What the name of God means is a thing above which nothing greater can be conceived.⁵ As long as we know that the name of God means something than which nothing greater can be conceived, because that which exists actually and mentally is greater than that which exists only mentally, it is possible to realize that God exists actually and mentally. Thus, as soon as the word "God" is understood, the conclusion follows that it is self-evident, that it is immediately known that God exists.

Aquinas then moves to define the meaning of the term 'self-evident': "A thing can be self-evident in either of two ways: on the one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us; on the other, self-evident in itself, and to us" (STh I,2,1,c.).⁶ According to Aquinas, a proposition is self-evident because the predicate is included in the essence of the subject, and if one knows the meaning of the predicate and subject of the proposition and the meaning of the proposition itself directly becomes clear, it is clear and evident in itself. However, the relation between this predicate and subject has two meanings. It can be directly and explicitly accepted as soon as we know the order of the objective truth expressed through that sentence. In this case, the sentence itself is self-evident in itself and to us as well. However, the relation between subject and predicate is not directly obvious to us, and it is possible that the predicate is implied in the concept of the subject even though it should be revealed through the new perception itself. In this case, the sentence is self-evident in itself, but not self-evident to us.

⁵ In this article and in SCG I,10&11, Thomas uses to be thought (*cogitari*) and to be signified (*significari*) without distinction.

⁶ *Respondeo dicendum quod contingit aliquid esse per se notum dupliciter, uno modo, secundum se et non quoad nos; alio modo, secundum se et quoad nos.*

Based on this distinction, Thomas asserts the following:

Therefore I say that this proposition, “God exists,” of itself is self-evident, for the predicate is the same as the subject, because God is His own existence as will be hereafter shown (Question [3], Article [4]). Now because we do not know the essence of God, the proposition is not self-evident to us; but needs to be demonstrated by things that are more known to us, though less known in their nature — namely, by effects (STh I,2,1,c.).⁷

As was later described in the *Summa* (STh I,3,4), the essence of God as the subject, given to Aquinas, is the same as the predicate “existing.” But because “what God is” is not known to us, ‘to us’ is the proposition not self-evident. Based on this explanation, Thomas explicitly refutes the claim that the existence of God is self-evident, which was presented in the second objection.

Perhaps not everyone who hears this word “God” understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word “God” is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought; and this pre-

⁷ Dico ergo quod haec propositio, Deus est, quantum in se est, per se nota est, quia praedicatum est idem cum subiecto; Deus enim est suum esse, ut infra patebit. Sed quia nos non scimus de Deo quid est, non est nobis per se nota, sed indiget demonstrari per ea quae sunt magis nota quoad nos, et minus nota quoad naturam, scilicet per effectus.

cisely is not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist (STh I,2,1,ad2);⁸

Against the objection cited above, Aquinas points out (i) that everyone does not conclude that the meaning of “something than which nothing greater can be thought” (henceforth, <X>⁹) is the name of God. This is precisely the critique of the starting point of Anselm: Those who understand God as a body have no reason to think that the definition of <X> belongs to God. The same fact is pointed out in a parallel passage of *Summa contra Gentiles*, Book One. Many ancients believed that the world itself was God, not <X>, but no such inference can be drawn from the interpretations of the name God to be found in the writings of St John Damascene [De fide orthodoxa I, 9].¹⁰

Next, Aquinas points out that (ii) even if everyone understands God as <X>, the conclusion that <X> is in the natural order of things is not necessarily drawn. Even if intelligence grasps the concept of the most complete essence, it does not conclude that an object with this essence actually exists. The existence of something that corresponds to a concept outside the mind cannot be determined simply by the concept itself. Thus, even for those who understand that God is an <X>, the claim that God does not exist is possible without any difficulties.

⁸ Ad secundum dicendum quod forte ille qui audit hoc nomen Deus, non intelligit significari aliquid quo maius cogitari non possit, cum quidam crediderint Deum esse corpus. Dato etiam quod quilibet intelligat hoc nomine Deus significari hoc quod dicitur, scilicet illud quo maius cogitari non potest; non tamen propter hoc sequitur quod intelligat id quod significatur per nomen, esse in rerum natura; sed in apprehensione intellectus tantum. Nec potest argui quod sit in re, nisi daretur quod sit in re aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, quod non est datum a ponentibus Deum non esse.

⁹ Since the expression <something than which nothing greater can be thought> is repeated over and over again in this paper, I'll replace it with <X> to make it brief.

¹⁰ SCG I,10,n. 67.

In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, reasons for the error that God's existence is directly self-evident are clearly revealed:

In part, the above opinion arises from the custom by which from their earliest days people are brought up to hear and to call upon the name of God. Custom, and especially custom in a child comes to have the force of nature. As a result, what the mind is steeped in from childhood it clings to very firmly, as something known naturally and self-evidently (SCG I,11).¹¹

The second reason for the error that he reveals is that "people do not distinguish between what is self-evident in itself and what is self-evident to us." This argument has already been addressed in the text of *Summa Theologiae*. In addition to this, he quotes the following famous passage.

Hence it comes about, as it is said in *Metaphysics* II [Ia, 1], that 'our intellect is related to the most knowable things in reality as the eye of an owl is related to the sun' (SCG I,11).¹²

As is clear in this passage, one can sympathize with the fact that Aquinas, who is aware of the limitations of human reason, could not accept the claim that the existence of God is self-evident. However, whether Anselm, the founder of ontological proofs originating from <X>, was similarly cautious remains up for debate. To confirm this,

¹¹ Praedicta autem opinio provenit. Partim quidem ex consuetudine qua ex principio assueti sunt nomen Dei audire et invocare. Consuetudo autem, et praecipue quae est a puero, vim naturae obtinet: ex quo contingit ut ea quibus a pueritia animus imbuatur, ita firmiter teneat ac si essent naturaliter et per se nota.

¹² Et sic fit ut ad ea quae sunt notissima rerum, noster intellectus se habeat ut oculus noctuae ad solem, ut II *Metaphys.* dicitur.

let us take a closer look at the questions raised in relation to the ontological proof of Anselm.

2. Reevaluation of Thomas Aquinas’ Criticism of Anselm

2.1. Should We Accept the Anselm’s Definition of God?

Aquinas rejected the fact that everyone understood <X> with the word “God,” noting that ancient materialists equated the universe with God. But it is doubtful whether Aquinas is accurately describing Anselm’s thoughts with this criticism.

Anselm inserts a short prayer before starting a full-scale argument in line with his plan to provide a rational basis for faith (*ratio fidei*), within which the definition of God is found.

Therefore, O Lord, You who give understanding to faith, grant me to understand — to the degree You know to be advantageous — that You exist, as we believe, and that You are what we believe [You to be]. Indeed, we believe You to be something than which nothing greater can be thought (*Proslogion*, ch.2).

Because of the beginning of prayer, some, like Karl Barth, try to limit this definition to the meaning of faith.¹³ However, this phrase does not necessarily take effect only in the meaning of Christianity.

¹³ Cf. K. Barth, *Fides quaerens intellectum*, Anselms Beweis der Existenz Gottes im Zusammenhang seines theologischen Programms (II/1931), hg. von Eberhard Jüngel / Ingolf U. Dalferth, 1981.

The original form of the expression is already found in Cicero,¹⁴ Augustine,¹⁵ and Boethius.¹⁶

It is possible to interpret that Anselm does not claim that each individual understands God as <X>, but merely the fact that if a person understands this concept, he must acknowledge it as being in the natural order of things. Perhaps against Aquinas' refutation, Anselm might answer: "I am just targeting people who understand the word 'God' in an absolute sense, not in a relative sense, such as the polytheists."

Kurt Flasch, despite acknowledging the clarity of Anselm's argumentative structure, deems the definition of God a vulnerability in Anselm's ontological proof.

The first vulnerability lies in replacing the word 'God' with the expression <X>. Anselm did not see that the expression could be recognized as the same as 'God' only in certain historical contexts, and, above all, did not reveal how he reached it, and that it had meaning and had no contradictions. What exactly does the word 'perfect' mean if it rises to the greatest outside of the world? As long as this remains unclear, Anselm's argument has room for attack. Duns Scotus, Descartes and Leibnitz revised the argument in this sense.¹⁷

In this regard, Aquinas' criticism seems reasonable to some extent in that Anselm recognizes the concept of God based on the Christian

¹⁴ *De natura deorum* II,7,18-21.

¹⁵ *De libero arbitrio* II,6,14; *De moribus Manichaeorum* II,11,24; *De doctrina Christiana* I,7.

¹⁶ *De consolatione philosophiae* III, pr.10.

¹⁷ K. Flasch, *Das philosophische Denken im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1986), 195.

position as a prerequisite for the validity of his arguments and does not explain any of these premises. It is also true that not everyone will take this definition for granted, and the whole argument cannot be established without accepting this definition.

2.2. Does Anselm Leap from “Logical” to “Ontological”?

Aquinas’ second criticism (ii), quoted above, is expressed in a condensed form by later critics: “Anselm leaps from a ‘logical’ to an ‘ontological’ level.” Although this criticism may be suitable for modern ontological proofs, it is not appropriate for, at least, Anselm’s *Proslogion* argument. Anselm starts from the fact that even though every understanding is meaningful, the object of the understanding does not actually exist for that very meaning.¹⁸ Had Anselm assumed that everything in his understanding is real in itself, his argument would have lost all meaning. On the contrary, Anselm clearly distinguishes between “the presence of one thing in the understanding” and “the recognition of the existence of things”:

For that a thing is in the understanding is distinct from understanding that [this] thing exists. For example, when a painter envisions what he is about to paint: he indeed has in his understanding that which he has not yet made, but he does not yet understand that it exists. But after he has painted [it]: he has in his understanding that which he has made, and he understands that it exists (*Proslogion*, ch.2).

¹⁸ On the contrary, Anselm distinguished the issue so clearly that people praised him for speaking about the distinction of “Sinn und Bedeutung” ahead of Frege. Cf. J. Pinborg, *Logik und Semantik im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1972), 41.

Therefore, one cannot say that Anselm does not know the distinction between the name and the thing, and between the thought and the real thing, which should act as a fundamental distinction. His argument is explicitly valid on the premise of this distinction, and the idea that comes to mind arbitrarily should not be confused with the conceptual content of $\langle X \rangle$. Therefore, the criticism that Anselm leaps from the logical level to the ontological level is weak and shows an insufficient understanding of the nature of Anselm's argument.

Aquinas argues at the end of his criticism, "Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists $\langle X \rangle$." The original form of this assertion can be found in Gaunilo's "A Reply on Behalf of the Fool." Gaunilo first introduces the legend of the "lost island," a fictional island that surpasses all countries in abundance. He then imitates Anselm's ontological proof and proves that the island actually exists. Here Gaunilo seems to be saying that thinking akin to Anselm's proof would successfully prove the existence of the 'lost island' we cannot seriously believe in, and that something must therefore be wrong with Anselm's proof.¹⁹ In the following paragraph, Gaunilo argues that the existence of the real thing should first be revealed through the most definitive proof.

When have I said that there truly existed some being that is 'greater than everything,' such that from this it could be proved to me that this same being really existed to such a degree that it could not be thought not to exist? That is why it must first be conclusively proved by argument that there is some higher nature, namely that which is greater and better than all the things that are, so that from this we can also infer everything else which necessarily cannot be

¹⁹ Cf. "A Reply on Behalf of the Fool," 6.

wanting to what is greater and better than everything (“A Reply on Behalf of the Fool,” 7).

Aquinas, in earnest, proposes his proof for God’s existence; “The existence of God can be proved in five ways (*quinque viis*). The first and more manifest way (*manifestior via*) is the argument from motion.” This raises the impression that he is presenting the assignment given by Gaunilo.

However, Anselm answers the critique of Gaunilo as follows.

Moreover, you maintain that, from the fact that <X> is understood, it does not follow that it is in the mind, nor that, if it is in the mind, it therefore exists in reality. I insist, however, that simply **if it can be thought it is necessary that it exists.**

For <X> cannot be thought save as being without a beginning. But whatever can be thought as existing and does not actually exist can be thought as having a beginning of its existence. Consequently, <X> cannot be thought as existing and yet not actually exist. If, therefore, it can be thought as existing, it exists of necessity (“The Author’s Reply to Gaunilo,” 1, emphasis added).

Anselm justifies his argument in terms of “necessary existence.” <X> should necessarily exist, because it can only be thought of as a “being without a beginning.” A contingent being can be deemed as an “object defined through initiation” in the sense that it may exist even if it does not yet exist. Here, the metaphysical value stage presupposed by Anselm is clarified. All contingent beings have a starting point that they know of. By contrast, <X> is necessary in that it exists without a beginning. However, a being without a beginning has a metaphysical advantage over beings with possible beginnings. In this answer,

Anselm shows his disagreement with the view of Gaunilo and are, of consequence, consistent with those of Aquinas.

2.3. Does Anselm Consider Existence to be Perfection?

Aquinas introduces Anselm's claim that "what exists in reality as well as in the mind is greater than something that exists in the mind alone" (SCG I,10; STh I,2,1, obj.2). He applies this claim to his own criticism. Namely, he sees this proposition as a key reason for Anselm to claim that God cannot exist only in the mind. Meanwhile, Kurt Flasch argues that this comparison itself is the greatest weakness of Anselm's argument.

The second vulnerability of the argument is the most sensitive. It is simply a comparison between the thought 'something than which nothing greater can be thought' and what exists in reality. This comparison is crucial in Anselm's argument, and yet it can be questioned in a way that Anselm did not realize beforehand. How can the completeness of what exists solely in the mind be measured on the same scale as the completeness of what exists in reality? Anselm set out from the fact that his system of value-based questions is available beyond the limits of experience, and that it simply allows for a comparison between what is thought and what is real.²⁰

The continuation of this interpretation has been met with a general criticism that "Anselm regards existence as perfection."

²⁰ Flasch, *Das philosophische Denken im Mittelalter*, 195.

In Anselm's argument, however, the exact corresponding phrase does not appear. The determination above is based on the following phrase in Chapter 2 of the *Proslogion*.

For if it is only in the mind, it can be thought to exist also in reality—something which is greater (Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est).

Brian Davis²¹ asserts that this passage can be interpreted in two ways.

(I) The first interpretation is the following: **“For if it is only in the mind even, it can be thought to be in reality as well, which is greater.”** This interpretation is consistent with that of Aquinas. When the conceptual content of <X> is the same, the <X> that exists solely in the mind and the <X'> that exists both in the mind and in reality differ in completeness; the latter is considered larger and complete. In this interpretation, the problem raised by Flasch is justified.

(II) Second, this phrase can be interpreted as **“For if it is only in the mind, what is greater can be thought to be in reality.”** This interpretation does not rely on comparisons and assessments of superiority between what exists in the mind and what exists in reality; it merely states that “if something exists only in the mind, **we can think of something greater than that.**”

Which translation of Anselm should we prefer? Davis himself admits that determining the more appropriate interpretation is not easy. The first interpretation is attractive because it can give a clear answer

²¹ Cf. Brian Davis, “Anselm and the Ontological Argument,” ed. Brian Davis / Brian Leftow, *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 160-161.

to the key question “Why can no $\langle X \rangle$ be only in the mind?” The problem, however, is that Anselm himself never opens up this kind of discussion, so this way of thinking may be unfamiliar to Anselm himself.

What about the second interpretation? The premise of the second interpretation, “If something exists only in the mind, we can think of something greater than that,” may be an appropriate answer to the key question, why cannot it be only in the mind? However, the premise itself is at stake: Why can you think of something larger than that when it is only in the mind?²²

The justification for this interpretation can be found in “The Author’s Reply to Gaunilo.” In the answers quoted above, Anselm shows a series of processes starting from “the one with the beginning and the end” to “the necessary being with neither beginning nor end.” He then stresses that $\langle X \rangle$ cannot even be considered to do not exist.

Now, **whatever can be thought and does not be, if it should exist, $\langle X \rangle$.** If, therefore, it were $\langle X \rangle$ it would not be $\langle X \rangle$, which is completely absurd. It is, then, false that $\langle X \rangle$ does not exist if it can merely be thought; and it is all the more false if it can be understood and be in the mind (“The Author’s Reply to Gaunilo,” 1).

As this passage also shows, what matters is not a comparison between what exists only in the mind and what exists in reality.²³ The point is that what exists only in the mind is “something from which

²² A more detailed explanation of these two interpretations see Lee, Kyung-Jae, “Two Main Streams in Scholastics Mirrored in Proofs of the Existence of God of St. Anselm and St. Thomas,” *Journal of Mediterranean Area Studies* 8/1 (2006): 36-137.

²³ Cf. Lee, Kyung-Jae, “Two Main Streams in Scholastics Mirrored in Proofs of the Existence of God of St. Anselm and St. Thomas,” 139.

can think of something bigger than that,” “something from that can estimate something bigger than that.”

The above quoted sentence does not necessarily seem to be interpreted in the way that <X> should exist in reality because existence is perfection and because what exists in reality is larger and more complete than what exists in the mind through the comparison of this and that. This is because there are other possible interpretations (II) that do not have any comparison or premise of this superiority.

2.4. Does Anselm See the Existence of God as Self-evident?

If so, does Anselm see God’s existence as self-evident, as Aquinas assumes? At the least, Anselm does not say that it is obvious that <X> exists anywhere. This is not only a matter of expression but also a matter of Anselm’s argument. Aquinas states that God’s existence is not self-evident to us because the nature of God is not known to us. Then, does Anselm suggest to us that God’s existence is self-evident because he thinks we can see the nature of God?

In Chapter 15 of the *Proslogion*, Anselm admits that God is not only “<X>” but “something greater than can be thought.” He then confesses to the limitations of his perception that humans cannot grasp the nature of God and that what God is about is beyond what man can think of.

Thus, many scholars have criticized what Aquinas believes comes from his misunderstanding, just as Anselm denies the need to prove a God because of a presumed self-evident nature of His existence. In both the *Monologion* and the *Proslogion*, Anselm attempts, to prove God’s existence in a purely rational manner. Had Anselm seen the

existence of God as self-evident, neither would he have exerted effort to prove God's existence at great length in the *Monologion* nor would he have compressed it as "one argument" in the *Proslogion*.

3. Premises of Anselm Overlooked by Thomas Aquinas

Anselm and Thomas Aquinas assume completely different positions with regard to proving God's existence, which Kyung-Jae Lee attributes to "the difference between the two enormous currents of medieval thought: the Platonic-Augustinianism of Anselm and the Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas."²⁴ Overall, such claims are plausible, but detailed discussions are needed to understand the difference.

3.1. Is It Because of the Ignorance of Aquinas?

If Aquinas's criticism of Anselm's proof is unjust, why does Aquinas interpret it so? Is Aquinas simply misunderstood? Or is there some other intention?

Is it possible that Aquinas did not read Anselm himself, and instead, only relied on what was organized by a later scholar to disseminate his argument? Such doubts are highly probable in the context of the 13th century, when a vast number of subjects of exploration emerged. The notion that God's existence is self-evident represents the general view of a group of 13th-century theologians well known to

²⁴ Lee, Kyung-Jae, "Two Main Streams in Scholastics Mirrored in Proofs of the Existence of God of St. Anselm and St. Thomas," 149.

Aquinas. Moreover, the arguments adopted by Aquinas are those used by theologians of the time to justify this view.

The 13th-century work that best represents the proof for God' existence is the extensive publication by Alexander de Hales, known in the Middle Ages, as the *Summa Theologiae*. This text contains the three objections that Aquinas discusses in STh I,2,1: arguments taken from Damascene, arguments taken from Anselm, and arguments from the truth.²⁵

However, this overlap does not confirm that Aquinas had not read Anselm. His teacher, Albertus Magnus, had expressed interest in the argument of the *Proslogion*.²⁶

In addition, only the second chapter of the argument of *Proslogion* is summarized by Aquinas in his critique found in the *Summa Theologiae* cited above. Nevertheless, it is not possible to draw the conclusion that Aquinas did not have sufficient knowledge of the *Proslogion*, given that the *Summa contra Gentiles* covers the same subject and explicitly mentions the proof found in Chapter 3 of the *Proslogion*.

Again, it is possible to think that something exists whose non-existence cannot be thought. Clearly, such a being is greater than the being whose non-existence can be thought. Consequently, if God Himself could be thought not to be, then something greater than God could be thought. This, however, is contrary to the definition

²⁵ Alexander de Hales, *Summa Theologica*, I (Quaracchi, 1924), 25-26, 41-43. They are also included in Bonaventura's *Commentary to Sententiarum*; Cf. Bonaventura, *Opera theologica selecta, I, Liber I Sententiarum*, Quaracchi, 1934, d.8, q.1, a.1, 2, 118-121.

²⁶ A. Hufnagel, "Anselm-Albert. Anselms Proslogion-Argument bei Albert dem Großen," *Analecta Anselmiana* IV, 1 (1975), 105-110.

of the name God. Hence, the proposition that God exists is self-evident (SCG I,10).²⁷

Furthermore, given Thomas Aquinas' sincere and meticulous character, it is not likely that he simply relied on the material compiled by a later scholar to develop his argument without first reading the text of Anselm himself. Kyung-Jae Lee suggests that Aquinas' interpretation may be an intentional distortion rather than a misunderstanding of Anselm's position.²⁸

In several respects both Anselm and Aquinas have different premises and intentions. Thus, even Aquinas, one of the most eminent scholars, does not fully accept Anselm's position and instead adapts it to his own view. What, then, are the premises that they do not explicitly state in their arguments, even though they themselves are sometimes not conscious of the fact that these premises are not accepted by everyone?

3.2. Premises of Anselm

Anselm's argument appears to be strict in form, but its premise is much less stringent than its formality. Anselm sought "one argument" (*unum argumentum*) which required no other support than the proof itself. Many scholars believe that Anselm did not reach this goal. He did not realize that his argument already presupposed the basic rules

²⁷ Item. Cogitari quidem potest quod aliquid sit quod non possit cogitari non esse. Quod maius est evidenter eo quod potest cogitari non esse. Sic ergo Deo aliquid maius cogitari posset, si ipse posset cogitari non esse. Quod est contra rationem nominis. Relinquitur quod Deum esse per se notum est.

²⁸ Cf. Lee, Kyung-Jae, "Two Main Streams in Scholastics Mirrored in Proofs of the Existence of God of St. Anselm and St. Thomas," 143.

of Platonic thought in the expressions he used as the starting point of his discussion. For example, Anselm's proposition, in arguing from the presumption that existence is completeness, is valid only within the particularity of neo-Platonic philosophical thought.

The fact that Anselm was thinking within the neo-Platonic philosophical system is evident in the empirical proof presented in the *Monologion*. He aims to prove God with the following empirical facts: 1) that various individual goods originate from "the only good in itself," 2) that everything that exists is based on "what exists in itself," and 3) that the various stages of completeness can be recognized only when the most complete object exists. All these arguments are based on observations of created reality, and they are noticeably Platonic in nature.

The elements of these proofs are well grounded in two major metaphysical premises of neo-Platonic inspiration. Namely, things cannot be exactly the same, and all things with the same completeness are supposed to have some common integrity, where the source is outside of things and each thing participates to an equal or unequal degree. This intention remains the same in the *Proslogion* which has sub-stages sorted according to both their completeness and participation which culminate in God, an absolute and supreme source of existence and the best of all things that can exist.

However, according to Maurer, Anselm overtakes Platonism by using Platonic participation. We find a typical example of what can be called "Christian Platonism" in these arguments.²⁹ The comparative process of "greater than" (*maius*) that appears in the *Proslogion*, is a product of efforts to faithfully reach God, the supreme being, along

²⁹ A. M. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy: A History of Philosophy* (『중세철학』, 조흥만 옮김, 서광사, 2007), 78.

the path to God that exists within the world as present as one has been participated.³⁰ For Anselm, the existence of God is undeniable, and his proof for God's existence is a classic example of the use of Platonic dialectics; it proceeds toward transcendent supremacy in a hierarchical and inevitable manner to assert God's existence.

As Anselm reveals after his argument, necessary existence is possessed only by God, and nothing better than this necessary being can be thought of.

Indeed, except for You alone, whatever else exists can be thought not to exist. Therefore, You alone exist most truly of all and thus most greatly of all; for whatever else exists does not exist as truly [as do You] and thus exists less greatly [than do You] (*Proslogion*, ch.3).

Thus, Anselm tells us that the process of going from better to best at each stage of argument is fundamental. The fact that <X> exists in the mind is better than <X> never understood. The fact that it exists not only mentally but also actually is better than that it exists only mentally. The fact that <X> necessarily exists is better than the fact that it can be thought of as non-existent: contingent. Therefore, necessary existence is the best way of being that can belong to the divine nature. However, it cannot be found in the argument presented here about why necessary existence is better than the lack of existence. Anselm assumes that the "a lesser being — a better being—the best being" — value system is natural. This assumption is the cross that his argument must bear.

³⁰ A. C. Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the 'Proslogion'," *Medieval Studies* 28 (1966): 259-260.

4. The Premise and Intention behind the Criticism of Aquinas

4.1. Other Premises Supporting Aquinas' Criticism

The distinction between Aquinas and Anselm is indirectly revealed by Aquinas' use of the term "in rerum natura" (in the nature of things), a term in his critique which is drawn from the Stoic materialists.³¹ Pegis argues that Aquinas himself knew that Anselm did not claim that the existence of God was self-evident. In addition, Pegis believes that Aquinas' criticism of Anselm has virtually nothing to do with Anselm's own argument, and therefore cannot be considered an interpretation of Anselm's ontological proof itself.³² Both Anselm and Aquinas attempt to claim that the existence of God was undeniable (but not self-evident). Anselm approaches this task in a Platonic manner, while Aquinas, in the 13th century, reexamines Anselm's proof in the light of his extensive study of the rediscovered works of Aristotle. Aquinas, furthermore, having grasped that Christian truth was more appropriately expressed through Aristotle than Plato and Plotinus, who were preferred by Augustine, considered that translating Augustine into an Aristotelian framework was a major task of the 13th century.³³ Obviously, it is not very satisfactory to explain the difference between the two with such broad statements. However, to properly understand

³¹ For Aquinas' criticism of Anselm's argument, refer to the following references: W. Baßler, "Die Kritik des Thomas von Aquin am ontologischen Gottesbeweis, Diss. Köln 1969/70," *Franziskanischen Studien* 55 (1973): 97-100; 56 (1974): 1-26; E. L. Rousseau, "St. Anselm and St. Thomas: A Reconsideration," *The New Scholasticism* 54 (1980): 1-24.

³² Cf. Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the 'Proslogion'," 262-267.

³³ Cf. Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the 'Proslogion'."

the differences between Anselm and Aquinas, one must first take note of the differences in concept regarding existence and essence that exist between the two.

Like Anselm, Aquinas also acknowledged the truth that existence belongs to being through participation, and that the completeness of existence is found to be realized in beings according to some hierarchical order. Aquinas, however, insisted that “Existence does not constitute the essence of being, and that is not identified with this, but is actually distinguished.” In contrast, Anselm tried to overcome the distinction between conceptual composition and actual existence claims, even though he thought this was possible only in the special case of <X>. But even though Aquinas recognized Anselm’s idea as an excellent concept, he could not admit the existence of God as inferred from it. For him, the concept of “existence” is not of a nature that can be added to the concept of any one thing. Existence is the basis for establishing all predicates and is not one of those predicates.

In the case of Anselm, however, he replies to Gaunilo and discusses the nature of it without knowing its existence. Of course, Aquinas, as he argues in STh I,2,2, obj.2, does not deny the seeming impossibility of asking if there is any “can exist” unless it can answer the question “what is it.”³⁴

It should be noticed, however, that we cannot know *that* a thing is without knowing in some way *what* it is, either perfectly or at least confusedly, [...].

³⁴ In this context, Thomas says, in the answer to the second objection, the meaning of “word” (nomen) — not the essence of “God” itself — can be used as a medium for proof and can begin proof. About discussing this in detail Lee, Sang-Sup, “One Consideration of Validity of Proof of God’s Existence,” *Philosophia Medii Aevi* 14 (2008): 118-119.

For if a person knows that man exists and wants to find out what man is by definition, he must know the meaning of the term “man.” And this is possible only if he somehow forms a concept of what he knows to exist, even though he does not know its definition. [...] Similarly, therefore, we cannot know *that* God and other immaterial substances exist unless we know somehow in some confused way, *what* they are (deT 6,3).

Aquinas also says that being is what is first conceived by the intellect.

Now the first thing conceived by the intellect is being; because everything is knowable only inasmuch as it is in actuality. Hence, being is the proper object of the intellect, and is primarily intelligible; as sound is that which is primarily audible (STh I,5,2).³⁵

Aquinas notes in his early work, *On Being and Essence* that “being and essence are what is first conceived by the intellect” (DEE, Introduction). However, essence does not have the same position as being. According to his commentary on this assertion, if the first thing conceived by the intellect is being, then the essence is also known because being has essence.³⁶ Here, the relationship between the concept of existence and sensory perception is clearly revealed. According to

³⁵ Primo autem in conceptione intellectus cadit ens, quia secundum hoc unumquodque cognoscibile est, in quantum est actu, ut dicitur in IX Metaphys. Unde ens est proprium obiectum intellectus, et sic est primum intelligibile, sicut sonus est primum audibile. Cf. STh I,85,3; I,87,3,ad1; I-II,94,2; SCG II,83,n. 31; In Met I,2,n. 46; IV,6,n. 605.

³⁶ Cf. J. Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence: A Translation and Interpretation* (Notre Dame: University Press, 2004), 9-10: “Thus, the analytical beginning point of our intellectual knowledge about sensible things is a grasp of being, but of being which has essence. And this is why St. Thomas adds here: “and essence”.”

Aquinas, who follows the tradition of Aristotle, our knowledge is first formed through sensations.

Thus, our temporally first knowledge is sense knowledge about sensible things. Knowledge by intellect is dependent on knowledge by sense as on an origin; since this is so, our temporally first knowledge by intellect is about things which are sensed.³⁷

The knowledge formed through this sense is transmitted to our intellect. At this time, the first thing that is communicated to the intellect is the knowledge that “**there is** something there.” The first thing that happens when the intellect recognizes a flower is the knowledge that there is a creature that is different from the observer. Thus, our temporally first concept expresses an explicitly sensory experience and implicitly includes the concept of being.

Aquinas states that what is known to us “per se” is directly known to us through our senses. Therefore, when we know the whole and the part, we immediately find that the whole is greater than the part without further investigation.³⁸ For Aquinas, the concept of existence is by no means the same as its existence and its value, and existence is fixed or proved rather than deduced.³⁹

The differences between Anselm and Aquinas on existence and essence are stereotyped in the “debates over the problem of universals,” which was among the most prevalent controversies of the Middle Ages. According to Anselm’s “exaggerated realism” position, what one con-

³⁷ J. Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence: A Translation and Interpretation*, 3.

³⁸ According to Gilson, it would be difficult to point more strongly to the empirical origin of all self-evident, no matter how abstract. E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1966), 54-55.

³⁹ DEE 4, n.27. ; I Sent 19,2,2; II Sent 1,1,1; QDV 27,1,ad8.

cept implies is revealed by logical reasoning. Meanwhile, Aquinas, who takes the position of “moderate realism,” takes a path that is not “a priori,” that is, moving from concept to reality, regardless of how special the concept, including <X>. Instead, he takes a path that is “a posteriori,” that is, moving from effects to causes and from “ens” to “esse.” He acknowledges only the argument of “ex effectibus” and intends to lead proof of sensuous objects in this argument.⁴⁰ For Aquinas, only this way is “based on imposing truth that existence is to be and is not non being.”⁴¹

4.2. Different Contexts in Which Proof for God’s Existence Is Discussed

Although it has been overlooked so far, it should be noted that the “God” whose existence Anselm and Aquinas are trying to prove, is different. Anselm exhibits extreme restraint in the use of the word “God” in the *Monologion*. By contrast, he inserts a long prayer in the *Prosligion* before the ontological proof for the existence of God; this prayer ends with the following phrase.

O Lord, I do not attempt to gain access to Your loftiness, because I do not at all consider my intellect to be equal to this [task]. But I yearn to understand some measure of Your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand in order to believe, but I believe in order to understand. For I believe even this: that unless I believe, I shall not understand (*Prosligion*, ch.1).

⁴⁰ STh I,2,2&3.

⁴¹ Cf. Jae-Ryong Lee, “A note on Proof of God’s existence,” 41.

Moreover, he appeals to “faith and conscience” in his *Reply to Gaunilo*.

I reply as follows: If <X> is neither understood nor thought of, and is neither in the mind nor in thought, then it is evident that either God is not <X> or is not understood nor thought of, and is not in the mind nor in thought. Now my strongest argument that this is false is to appeal to your faith and to your conscience. Therefore <X> is truly understood and thought and is in the mind and in thought (“The Author’s Reply to Gaunilo,” 1).

By contrast, Aquinas refrains from appealing to and commenting on devotional elements in most of his works, including the *Summa Theologiae*. His famous empirical proof for the existence of God is written immediately after the first question “Is theology a science?” in the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas thoroughly discusses the following topics according to the theory of science in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*. According to Aristotle, when we inquire about an object, we first ask “Is there the object being explored” (an est), and only after it is confirmed is the question of “essence,” “what is it” (quid est), asked. In this order, Aquinas places the proof for God’s existence at the forefront of the essential question of God.

Concerning the Divine Essence, we must consider: (1) Whether God exists? (2) The manner of His existence, or, rather, what is NOT the manner of His existence; (3) Whatever concerns His operations — namely, His knowledge, will, power (STh I,2,prol.).⁴²

⁴² Circa essentiam vero divinam, primo considerandum est an Deus sit; secundo, quomodo sit, vel potius quomodo non sit; tertio considerandum erit de his quae ad operationem ipsius pertinent, scilicet de scientia et de voluntate et potentia.

According to Aristotle's theory of science, Aquinas places his proof for the existence of God in the position of the basis for discussion of the religious God. In his proof for the existence of God, God as the original object of theology is not a problem. Rather, the conflict is the question of the founder of the natural order, God, as long as he has a causal relationship with nature and the world. Aquinas' "Five Ways" all have naturalistic foundations. The ways all begin with a certain phenomenon of contingency found in the empirical world (motion, dependent causality, possibility, degree of completeness, teleology). Subsequently, the dependent and contingent characteristics of individual phenomena are identified (Whatever is in motion is put in motion by another; the second causes depend on the first cause; the contingent being has its existence from the necessary being; the stage of completeness depends on the highest perfector. Teleology always demands intelligence, and some natural things lack it). However, listing an infinite series of contingent phenomena is not sufficient for ultimately explaining some kind of contingent phenomenon. Thus, the only plausible explanation for a contingent one is that it comes down to "unmoved mover," "first cause," "eternal and necessary being," "most-good being" and "the highest intelligence in granting order." Aquinas concludes that people call these beings or understand them to be God.⁴³ In this manner, his "Five Ways" start with natural observations, but beyond physics, he is reaching the highest cause of metaphysics.⁴⁴ Many scholars have presented exaggerated interpretations,

⁴³ STh I,2,3.

⁴⁴ Cf. W. Kluxen, "Der Übergang von der Physik zur Metaphysik im thomistischen Gottesbeweis," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 40 (1993): 49.

but none say whether the cause of this natural world is still the same as the object of faith, the Trinitarian God.⁴⁵

Whether the God mentioned at the end of the proof is the same God who is the object of faith is not yet clear, and whether the five causes all refer to the same one reality cannot be conclusively determined. Only through consideration of “how God does not exist,” from the third to the eleventh questions in the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*, can one talk about the simplicity, goodness, infinity, immutability, eternity, and unity of God.

Nonetheless, this analysis does not deny that God, whom Aquinas discusses in his proof for the existence of God, is the subject of theology, the God of faith. Rather, regarding the “Five Ways” only as a complete “proof” that is philosophically independent, that is, separate from a theological context, is contrary to Aquinas’ intention from the outset.⁴⁶ Aquinas tries to prove the existence of God, according to his own expression, as an entrance or a preamble (*praeambula*) and as the starting point of his vast knowledge of God, which is revealed in the *Summa Theologiae*. He does not attempt, in a single gulp so to speak, to perfectly present the fact that the “God of faith exists.” He merely suggests the validity of the new concept as a vessel that can have content about the Christian God to be completed in Part III of the

⁴⁵ Cf. Criticism of the exaggerated interpretation of ‘Five ways’ of Elders [Elders L. J., *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1990)] etc. Aertsen, Jan A., “Der wissenschaftstheoretische Ort der Gottesbeweise in der *Summa theologiae* des Thomas von Aquin,” ed. E. P. Bos, *Mediaeval Semantics and Metaphysics*, *Artis-tarium Supplementa II* (Nijmegen: Ingenium, 1985), 161-193.

⁴⁶ The ‘Five Ways’ are located in the front part of the *Summa Theologiae*, which is clearly written with theological intent. L. Velecky, *Aquinas’ Five Arguments in the Summa Theologiae Ia 2,3*, Kok Pharos, 1994, 35.

Summa Theologiae.⁴⁷ In this respect, the “Five Ways” provide an incomplete understanding of God that needs further analysis.

4.3. Points to Note in Comparing the Proofs for God’s Existence

Anselm and Aquinas interpret the term “proof” differently. Aquinas, a scholar who lived after the rediscovery of Aristotle, strives to adhere to the principle of academic argumentation, the so-called “logica nova” found in *Posterior Analytics*. Meanwhile, Anselm, who had known only the former “logica vetus,” cannot be expected to perfectly fulfill what would be called an argument in the Aristotelian sense.⁴⁸

This difference in opinion can be of great help in rethinking the debate about the proof for God’s existence in modernity. Charles Hartshorne argues in his later works that the term “arguments” is more accurate than “proofs” in today’s discussions about the existence of God.⁴⁹ As understood today, “proof” has become so rigorous in its requirements that it is impossible to prove the existence of any real being (outside the knowing “I”), let alone the existence of a transcendent reality like God.⁵⁰ If the demand for such rigorous proof were applied to Anselm and Aquinas, both will be judged to have failed.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Cf. Aertsen, “Der wissenschaftstheoretische Ort der Gottesbeweise in der *Summa theologiae* des Thomas von Aquin,” 191-193.

⁴⁸ Cf. Kyung-Jae Lee, “Two Main Streams in Scholastics Mirrored in Proofs of the Existence of God of St. Anselm and St. Thomas,” 143-144. As for Anselm’s reason and the concept of ‘argument’ Barth (1981).

⁴⁹ Cf. W. N. Clarke, “Is a Natural Theology Still Possible Today?,” in *Physics, Philosophy, and Theology*, ed. R. J. Russel et. al. (Vatican Observatory, 2005), 112.

⁵⁰ Cf. W. N. Clarke, “Is a Natural Theology Still Possible Today?”

⁵¹ 참조: A. 케니, 『중세철학』, 김성호 옮김 (서광사, 2010), 456쪽.

Anselm's proof would have no convincing power to empiricists who do not accept his Platonic system and its underlying notion of reality. Likewise, Aquinas' "Five Ways" lose their convincing power when "Aristotelian premises," such as "The potentiality can only be realized by another actuality" and an "Infinite retrospective is impossible" are questioned.⁵² Furthermore, Aquinas is widely criticized for allegedly failing to prove "God as a Person" or a "creator" or the "God of the Trinity" in his proof for the existence of God. Such an assessment is valid only if the existence of the God Aquinas intends to prove with his proof is actually such a God. However, if Aquinas presented proof for God with an intention and a role, that are completely different from what is discussed in this paper, then this criticism would lose its validity.⁵³

Conclusion

Scholars have attempted to explain the distinct differences between Anselm and Aquinas in relation to proof for God's existence, usually through the difference between the respective Platonic-Augustine and Aristotelian traditions. However, given the many different nuances of these two traditions, I have, in this paper, tried to focus on the reasons behind this diversity. The difference between

⁵² Critique of Thomas' proof for the existence of God has already been raised in the Middle Ages through Duns Scotus and Ockham. Cf. A. Kenny, *A Brief History of Western Philosophy* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1997) [『서양철학사』, 이영주 옮김, (동문선, 2003)], 265-267; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* [『중세철학사』, 김기찬 옮김 (철학과지성사, 1997)], 626-630, 677-679.

⁵³ Cf. Yang, Tai-Bum, "Fünf Wege und ihre metaphysische Struktur im Gottesbeweis bei Thomas von Aquin," *Research in Philosophy and Phenomenology* 35 (2007): 117-149.

their positions plays a very large role in, among other things, their views on being or existence. This divergence might also be read as the difference between Anselm, who follows the theory of “exaggerated realism,” and Aquinas, who takes the stance of “moderate realism.” Moreover, according to their respective academic systems, the two have distinct theological intentionality.

Many scholars criticize Anselm’s ideal proving the God of Christianity without presupposing anything else in a very strong sense as violating modern linguistic and logical rules. Moreover, critics state that such a pure beginning pursued by Anselm could not be found in the human mind. Nonetheless, Kurt Flasch sees great potential in the metaphysical attitude of Anselm. According to him, Anselm’s attitude seems to be more likely than that of Aquinas, who was essentially influenced by the acceptance of Aristotle in the 13th century, after Hume showed that necessary cognitive and metaphysical views cannot be gained from simply accidental experiences. “In metaphysics there is either an Anselm-style road, or there is no path at all.”⁵⁴ This is because Anselm’s proof for God’s existence prescribes much less than Aquinas’ proof. Anselm seeks to free himself of the recognition of the highest good (*summum bonum*) from the dependencies and the uncertainties that follow regarding the different kinds of assumptions that other philosophers recognize or that he himself accepts in the *Monologion*.

In judging arguments of the existence of God, all similar evaluations are judged differently according to the evaluator’s own metaphysical position. During the Middle Ages, Anselm and Aquinas, in other words, judged differently according to their metaphysical atti-

⁵⁴ Flasch, *Das philosophische Denken im Mittelalter*, 192.

tudes. We may acknowledge any kind of argument for God's existence according to our own metaphysical or religious premises, or deny some or all arguments for God's existence. However, various manifestations of God's existence can reveal the problems of other positions and increase the understanding of the divine reality that cannot be totally encompassed by men and women. Does the accumulation of these reflections not open the possibility that the finite human mind can approach God, the infinite Absolute?

Even in the Middle Ages, when many viewpoints were shared, such as belief in God, the theory of participation, and teleological viewpoints, Anselm and Aquinas showed great differences in their attempts to prove the existence of God. In addition, medieval scholars and modern critical observers start from totally different concepts of proof and metaphysical premises. However, the existence of these differences does not mean that the entire metaphysical framework presented by medieval scholars should be ignored. Rather, reflection on this issue reminds us that our thinking frame may be rigid, just as medieval scholars did not relativize their frameworks.

In modern society, when the demand for proper proof in the scientific exploration of the material world fails to apply to God, a relativistic and agnostic position spreads across the board. Even though the existence of God cannot be proved in an active sense, the arguments from the Middle Ages can have meaning in the form of a mirror that clearly reveals the premises inherent in the claims of modern over-skepticism.

Those who are attracted to modern scientific achievements also need to look at their presupposition of many points of view about the world and God. Furthermore, given that the natural sciences, history, and law have various methods of so-called "proof" or "argument," an

open approach to reality that deviates from the original scientific method of experimentation seems to be worth considering. We should look at whether we will miss out on key lessons by criticizing the explanatory attempts made in other contexts by putting them into our own framework and premises. This process will require a considerable amount of dialogue conducted with an open mind. Nevertheless, in the dialogue between faith and science, we must realize not only their fusion on the same level, but also the fact that they perceive the world and God from different levels.

An attempt to modify Anselm's and Aquinas' proof for God's existence so that it endures the rigor of the modern demands for "proof" seems unsuccessful when considered on the basis of our reflection. Moreover, under these circumstances, there seems to be no proof that will to compel nonbelievers to accept the existence of God as a completely value-neutral proof, as Anselm attempted. However, the function of rational reflection that helps each of those facing the arguments to make existential decisions and choices based on their premises can still remain in the traditional proof for the existence of God. Meanwhile, for those who were blocked on the way to God because of their strong presuppositions, it would still be worth trying to overcome the obstacles and provide an "invitation to faith based on rational ground."

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■ Abstract ■

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Medieval scholars have presented many proofs for the existence of God, as well as criticism of these proofs, but is the debate over these proofs meaningful in the modern age of natural science? In this study, the two most famous proofs are compared: those of Thomas Aquinas and Anselm of Canterbury. Thomas Aquinas, who presented an empirical proof in the *Summa Theologica*, known as the “Five Ways,” criticized the ontological proof derived in Anselm of Canterbury’s *Proslogion*. After introducing this, the legitimacy of Aquinas’ criticism of Anselm is examined, and the different premises and intentions of the two thinkers are described. Anselm’s proof would be unconvincing to empiricists who did not accept the Platonic system and notion of reality upon which Anselm’s proof is based. Aquinas’ “Five Ways” also becomes less convincing where the Aristotelian premises therein are questionable.

Thus, the evaluation of the existence of God differs according to the evaluator’s own metaphysical position. We may acknowledge or deny any proofs of God’s existence based on their metaphysical or religious premises. However, various manifestations of God’s existence can reveal problems in other positions and increase an understanding of the divine reality that human beings cannot directly comprehend. Investigating the differences between these two proofs allows us to reflect on whether or not our modern frame of thinking is rigid. Based on each individual’s personal assumptions, individual proof for God’s existence can serve as a rational reflection to aid in making existential

decisions.

- ▶ Key Words: Anselm of Canterbury, Thomas Aquinas, Proof for the Existence of God, Ontological Proof, Empirical Proof.

 ■ 국문 초록 ■

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중세 시대 신 존재 증명의 전제와 유효성

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중세 스콜라 학자들은 ‘신의 존재’에 대해 많은 증명과 그 증명에 대한 비판을 남겨 놓았다. 그렇지만 이런 증명들에 대한 논의가 자연과학이 발달한 현대에도 과연 의미를 지닐 수 있을까? 본 연구에서는 가장 유명한 두 증명을 비교해 보았다. 『신학대전』에 나오는 “다섯 가지 길”을 통해 ‘경험론적 증명’을 대표하는 토마스 아퀴나스는 가장 유명한 신 존재 증명 중에 하나인 안셀무스의 『프로슬로기온』에 기원을 둔 존재론적 증명을 비판했다. 이를 소개한 후, 토마스의 안셀무스 비판이 과연 정당한가를 살펴 보았다. 이를 토대로 두 사상가들이 지녔던 상이한 전제들과 의도들이 무엇인가를 기술했다. 그런데 안셀무스의 증명은 그가 전제했던 플라톤적인 체계와 실재 관념을 받아들이지 않는 경험론자들에게는 아무런 설득력도 지니지 못할 것이다. 토마스 아퀴나스의 “다섯 가지 길”도 그곳에 포함되어 있는 아리스토텔레스적인 전제가 의문시되는 곳에서는 그 설득력을 잃어버린다. 이처럼 신 존재 증명에 대한 평가는 모두 평가자 자신의 형이상학적 입장에 따라 다르게 판단된다. 우리는 각자 자신이 가지고 있는 형이상학적이거나 신앙적인 전제에 따라 어떠한 종류의 신 존재 증

명을 인정하거나 일부 또는 일체의 신 존재 증명을 부정할 수도 있다. 그러나 다양한 신 존재 증명은 다른 입장의 문제점을 드러나게 해주고, 인간이 직접 전체적으로 포괄할 수 없는 신적인 실재에 대한 이해 가능성을 한 측면에서라도 높여 줄 수 있다. 신 존재 증명들 간의 차이에 대한 성찰은 우리 현대인의 사고틀도 경직되어 있지 않은가를 돌아보게 해준다. 개별적인 신 존재 증명은 이를 접하는 각자가 지니고 있는 전제에 기반해서 실존적인 결단을 도와줄 이성적인 성찰로서 기능할 수 있을 것이다.

- ▶ 주제어: 안셀무스, 토마스 아퀴나스, 존재론적 신 존재 증명, 경험론적 신 존재 증명, 증명의 전제.