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The Objections of Cajetan and Suarez to the Five Ways of Saint Thomas

Denis M. Hickey
Loyola University Chicago

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THE OBJECTIONS OF CAJETAN AND SUAREZ

TO THE FIVE WAYS OF

SAINT THOMAS

by

Denis M. Hickey, O.S.M.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the first part of his *Summa Theologiae* St. Thomas Aquinas devotes the third article of the second question to proving the existence of God. That, at any rate, is the apparent intent of the article; and that is how most of the followers of St. Thomas interpret it. But there is one outstanding Thomistic philosopher who refuses to admit that Aquinas is here trying to prove the existence of God. Rather, he insists, in the third article the purpose of the Angelic Doctor is to prove the existence of certain predicates or attributes and, incidentally, of a being possessing them. It is only later, this distinguished commentator insists, that St. Thomas shows us that the possessor of these attributes must be infinite, Pure Act, Subsistent Being—God. The philosopher who proposes this interpretation of St. Thomas is the renowned Thomas De Vio, usually known as Cajetan.

An opinion so unusual, coming from the pen of a Thomist, might be considered daring. But Cajetan had every right to express the truth as he saw it; his unquestioned ability in the field of metaphysics and especially in the interpretation of St. Thomas is sufficient reason for us to take notice, even when his
speculations have the appearance of being extraordinary. (Obvi-
ously, there is no question of faith involved). Historic facts
bear witness to Cajetan's reputation in his own day: he was a
Cardinal of the Church and General of the Dominican Order; he
occupied the chair of metaphysics at the University of Padua and
later at the Sapienza in Rome; he expounded the *Summa Theologiae*
at the universities of Brescia and Pavia. On many occasions of
importance, especially when there was a question of doctrine, he
represented the Holy See; he was present, at the Pope's request,
at the famous pseudo-council of Pisa. An estimation of the repre-
tation of the Cardinal-philosopher may be gathered from the fact
that more than 300 years after his death Pope Leo XIII ordered
Cajetan's commentary to be incorporated with the text of the
*Summa Theologiae* in the official Leonine edition of the complete
works of St. Thomas.

It was in the early sixteenth century that Cajetan's studies
gave a new prominence to Thomism. Toward the end of that century
and at the beginning of the seventeenth the Jesuit Francis Suarez
designed a system of philosophy closely related to, but largely
independent of, the philosophy of Aquinas. Like St. Thomas, he
recognized the proof of the existence of God to be the zenith of
a true system of metaphysics; but his doctrine as to what constitu-
tutes a proof appears to differ much from the doctrine of the
"Doctor Angelicus".
As in the case of Cajetan, the opinions of Suarez on questions metaphysical certainly merit our attention. So profuse are his philosophical treatises that, according to Bossuet, his writings contain the whole of Scholastic philosophy. In the eighteenth century many Scholastic authors wrote their works "ad mentem Suarezii", and "Suarez classes" were established in the universities of Valladolid, Salamanca, and Alcala.

Many books and countless articles have been written on the Five Ways. The Five Ways have been extolled, rejected, amplified, corrected, improved, criticized, and accepted unquestioningly. Today, at any rate, the best Thomists will admit that the two considerations which should govern an interpretation are: (i) the source from which St. Thomas received the arguments, and (ii) parallel passages in other works of St. Thomas where the proofs of the Five Ways or of any one of them are to be found. This study will, consequently, include both of these elements just named. Moreover, it will state the position of both Cajetan and Suarez on each of the *Viae* in turn, try to determine the meaning of and the reason for the pertinent statements of these two philosophers and, finally, attempt an evaluation of their positions. A specific interpretation of any one of the ways will be offered only insofar as it is necessary for this evaluation. For the most part the consideration of the source and of the use of the same argument (in slightly changed form) by St. Thomas himself will be expected to carry the burden of interpretation.
CHAPTER II

THE ARGUMENT FROM MOTION

A. The Argument in St. Thomas

1. Its sources

The argument from motion as contained in the Summa Theologicae\(^1\) is obviously related to the argument from motion in the Summa Contra Gentiles.\(^2\) In the latter St. Thomas explicitly acknowledges his sources: the Physics and the Metaphysics of Aristotle. The argument was also used by Plato.\(^3\) There is no question, however, as to the connection (at least on the surface)

\(^1\)Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologicae, Leonine edition (Rome, 1888), IV, 31. The translation of the Summa Theologicae passages in this paper will be taken from Anton C. Pegis' work, The Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas; translations of Aristotle are from Richard McKeon's edition of The Basic Works of Aristotle. (The Physics translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye; De Caelo by J. L. Stocks; and The Metaphysics by W. D. Ross); translation of St. Augustine from the "Fathers of the Church" series, (De Civitate Dei translated by G. G. Walsh and Grace Monahan). All other translations are by this writer.


\(^3\)Plato, Laws, 887a-889b.
between St. Thomas' argument in the Contra Gentiles and Aristotle's in the Physics and Metaphysics. 4

The seventh book of the Physics uses the two principles: (1) "whatever is in motion is moved by another" 5 and (ii) "an infinite series of movers is impossible." 6 Aristotle's conclusion is that there must be a first mover. 7 The first of these principles is proved from the fact that the movement of a whole thing is dependent on the movement of a part (as a material cause), and so it follows that the whole is not the cause of its own motion--i.e., something else is the cause. 8 The second principle is proved from the fact that the motions in a per se series are simultaneous. Therefore, the motion of the series as a whole would take the same time as any one motion of the series; which means

4Aristotle, Physics, Books VII and VIII. (For the mutual relationship between these two chapters see W. D. Ross, Aristotle's Physics (Oxford, 1936), pp. 11-19. Metaphysics, Book Lambda.

5Ibid. VII, 241b, 24.

6Ibid. 242a, 49-54. That Aristotle speaks of what St. Thomas calls a "per se subordinated series" is obvious from his explicit reference to simultaneous motions in 242a, 26.

7Ibid. 242a, 20.

8Ibid. 242a, 38-49. This is a much disputed argument. See Joseph Owens, "The Problem of the Prima Via," in the Modern Schoolman, XXX, 38, note 19. He defends the validity of the proof with St. Thomas--against Simplicius, Averroes, and W. D. Ross.
even if the series were infinite, the time involved would be finite. Now, physical motion takes place in the manner of a continuum; i.e., each moves that which follows; thus there would be infinite motion in finite time. Therefore, an infinite series of movers is contradictory and impossible.

The double principle of the Book VII argument is repeated in Book VIII, but the principles are proved differently. Here Aristotle proves the first principle of motion—whatever is in motion is moved by another—by the method of induction. He divides motion into animate and inanimate and subdivides each into natural and unnatural. In each case he shows that the thing in motion is subject to the moving influence of another. For Aristotle the greatest difficulty is presented by the case of natural inanimate motion, e.g., heat going up; but even here Aristotle can point both to the natural tendency of the thing (as the intrinsic mover) and to that which removes the obstacle (as the extrinsic mover).

In the eighth book Aristotle resorts to his principle of act and potency to prove that motion must ultimately arrive at, or rather come from, an unmoved mover. The mover must have in act

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9Ibid. 242a, 15-243a, 4.

10Ibid. 254b, 7-23.

11Ibid. 254b, 33-256a, 4.
that which it gives to the thing moved (and which the thing moved has had only in potency). An infinite series of movers, each receiving motion, could never have motion and so could never give it without the existence of some being outside the series from which it receives the motion.\textsuperscript{12}

Aristotle has now proved the existence of unmoved movers, but it still remains for him to prove that there is one eternal unmoved mover. Arguing from the theory that there could be no first movement\textsuperscript{13} just as there could be no beginning in time (the theoretical "first" movement would be preceded by the movement which brought it about, and the "beginning" in time would have as its first point an individual "now", which in turn would be preceded by time), Aristotle proves that motion is one continuous whole and therefore requires one eternal mover because a number of non-eternal movers would not result in one continuous motion, but in a number of successive motions. This one eternal mover would also explain the being, at one time, and the non-being, at another, of the other unmoved movers. The conclusion is that there must be "some such thing which, while it has the capacity of moving something else, is itself unmoved and exempt from all change, which can affect it neither in an unqualified nor in an

\textsuperscript{12}Tbid. 256a, 18.

\textsuperscript{13}Tbid. 250b, 11-252b, 6.
accidental sense." Finally, Aristotle concludes that the eternal first mover is indivisible (i.e., has no parts), infinite, and without magnitude. Moreover, it exists at the circumference of the world.15

The proof for the existence of God in Book Lambda of the Metaphysics also depends on the eternity of time and motion. These, being accidents, require a substance to sustain them, and the substance must also, obviously, be eternal.16 This substance cannot be, of its nature, mere potency; otherwise it would not have to be, and consequently the necessity of eternal motion would cease. Therefore, its very essence is actuality.17 This being causes motion as a final cause, i.e., as an object loved loving itself.18 It is life and thought, knowing only itself. It is unchangeable and indivisible.19 But here Aristotle argues that, besides the simple spatial movement of the universe caused by the first immovable mover, there are other eternal movements in the

14 Ibid. 258b, 14-15. Quotation from Richard McKeon, The Basic Works of Aristotle (New York, 1941), Hardie and Gaye translation, p. 373. (All other English quotations from Aristotle will be taken from McKeon's volume.)

15 Ibid. 267b, 25.
16 Ibid. 1071b, 7.
17 Ibid. 1071b, 22.
18 Ibid. 1072b, 4.
19 Ibid. 1073a, 2-12.
heavens—those of the planets, since the planets move in a circle—
and, therefore, each will have its own eternal mover. As a
consequence, we get may (forty-seven or fifty-five) eternal,
immovable movers, depending on the number of specific motion to
be found in the universe.

2. Its form in the early writings

Seven times in his works St. Thomas makes use of the argument
from motion to prove the existence of God. Thus, with the ex-
ception of the argument from final causality (if we take this to
be the same as the argument from universal order), it is the most
frequently used argument. St. Thomas also considered it to be the
"more manifest" argument. Chronologically it first appeared in

20 Ibid. 1072a, 25-39.

21 See W. D. Ross, Aristotle's Metaphysics (Oxford, 1924),
II, 393-395.

221072a, 14. We shall see that in the Contra Gentiles St.
Thomas does not use this latter part of the argument from the
Metaphysics.

23Contra Gentiles, I, 13; Compendium Theologiae, c. 3; Summa
Theologiae, I, qu. 2, art. 3; In VIII Libros Physicorum: Book
VIII, lect. 2; Book VIII, lect. 1-3, 7-13, 21-23; In XII Meta-
physicorum, Book XII, lect. 5-10; In Evangelium S. Joannis. Pro-
logue.

24Summa Theologiae, I, qu. 2, art. 3. The frequently found
superlative rendering, "most manifest", is not accurate. Mani-
festior should be translated "more manifest". In his commentary
on the Physics St. Thomas describes the argument from motion as
being "most efficacious and irresistible". (In VIII Physics,
the first book of the *Contra Gentiles*. Here, having announced that there are two arguments from motion, St. Thomas proceeds immediately with the first.

He begins by giving the three ways by which the Philosopher proved the principle, whatever is in motion is moved by another. The first way is taken from Book VII of the *Physics*, and St. Thomas' summary may be further summarized as follows: Everything that is in motion must be moved by another, at least by its part which is other than the whole. For, if the motion of the whole did not depend on the motion of the part, then neither would the state of rest of the whole depend on the resting of the part. But, obviously, if a part is at rest the whole cannot be in motion. Therefore, the whole in rest depends on a part in rest; therefore, the motion of the whole depends on the motion of a part. The second proof of the principle is taken by St. Thomas from the fourth chapter of the eighth book of the *Physics*, where Aristotle argues inductively from various types of motion to the conclusion that motion always demands a mover. For the third proof St.

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25 *Contra Gentiles*, XIII.


27 *Physics*, 254b, 7-255a, 10. See above, p. 6, notes 10 & 11.
Thomas uses another passage of the eighth book of the *Physics*: a thing cannot be in act and potency at the same time and in the same respect. But something moving itself would necessarily involve this contradiction and so is clearly impossible.

The second principle, viz., that we cannot postulate an infinite series of movers as an explanation of movement, is also proved in three arguments— one from *Physics VII* (chapter one) and the other two from *Physics VIII* (chapter five). The first is the proof from the impossibility of infinite motion in finite time. The second points out that in a series of per se subordinated motions the first will be the cause of moving all the others, but in an infinite series there is no first. Therefore, motion cannot

28 *Physics*, 257b, 6-13. This proof is very important since, as we shall see later, it seems to be the basis of the whole argument from motion in the *Summa Theologiae*. It is important to note that Aristotle here uses it in a completely different context. After he has proved the existence of a first mover and before he proves the unicity of the eternal mover he uses this argument to show that the first mover does not move itself in the sense of the whole moving the whole—but as a part moving the other parts.


30 *Physics*, 242a, 17-243a, 4. See above p. 6, note 9.
be explained by an infinite series. The third proof is, as St. Thomas admits, merely a restatement of the second but from the opposite viewpoint: all causes in an infinite series would be instrumental; but an instrumental cause operates only in so far as it is moved by a principal cause.

In the second argument from motion in the thirteenth chapter of the first book of the *Contra Gentiles* all the proofs used by the Angelic Doctor are from the eighth book of the *Physics*. First, he proves that not every mover is being moved. This he demonstrates by arguing that the proposition "every mover is being moved" is neither *per se* nor *per accidens* true. To prove that this proposition is not *per accidens* true St. Thomas points out that when we say that a thing is *per accidens* true we mean that it is not necessarily so; in other words, we imply that the opposite is possible. But to say that the opposite of this proposition is possible is (ultimately) to suggest the possibility that no mover is moved. But the "adversary"—the word is St. Thomas—has taken the position that every mover is being moved; therefore, he will admit that if no mover is being moved there will be no motion whatsoever. But this for Aristotle is impossible. And since it is aristotelian doctrine that only impossible premises

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31 *Physics*, 256a, 2-5, 3.

32 St. Thomas stays close to the thought of Aristotle in *Physics*, 256b, 5-257a, 27.
logically lead to impossible conclusions, it follows that it is absurd to say that the proposition "every mover is moved" is per accidens true.

Secondly, St. Thomas excludes the per se truth of the proposition, "Every mover is moved", on the grounds that this would involve one of two inadmissible alternatives: 1) the motion by which the mover is moved is the motion which it gives; or 2) the existence of an infinite multitude of diverse species of motion, whereby each mover receives a motion specifically higher than that which it gives.

Continuing along the lines laid down by Aristotle, St. Thomas examines the sense and the manner in which the first mover moves itself. The conclusion is that a part, (which he explicitly calls the soul of an animal), moves the whole, so that the part itself is per se unmoved, though moved per accidens insofar as it moves with the body. Now, these accidentally moved movers can at one time be, at another not be. Yet (for Aristotle) motion is an eternal continuum. Therefore, there must be some eternal

33 *Physics*, 257a, 35.

34 Ibid. 256b, 3-27. It is disputed whether Aristotle by "immobile mover" in this passage means God or a soul. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics*, p. 699, believes he is referring to God: *Owens*, p. 47, note 53, insists that the reference is to part of a self-mover, i.e., the soul.
mover who is moved neither per se nor per accidens.

Thus far St. Thomas has arrived at an eternal unmoved mover; however, he admits that he has concluded to merely part of a self mover. Therefore, he chooses from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* an argument which proves that there must be an altogether unmoved separate mover: whatever moves itself moves by appetite for something desirable which is higher than itself.35 In other words, the one desiring is a self-moving mover; the one desired is completely unmoved. This is God.

Finally, St. Thomas makes two remarks of great importance about the foregoing argumentation:36 first, he points out that the arguments used are based on the false supposition of an eternal world, which supposition renders the existence of God less obvious; secondly, he refers to the first-moved as "a heavenly body", saying that the first mover must be either the

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35*Metaphysics, 1072a, 29-1072b, 12.*

36*Quotation from *Contra Gentiles, I, XIII: "Praedictos autem processus duo vidantur infirmare. Quorum primum est, quod procedunt ex suppositione aeterinitatis motus; quod apud Catholicos supponitur esse falsum. Et ad hoc dicendum, quod via efficaceissima ad probandum Deum esse, est ex suppositione novitatis mundi, non autem sic, ex esse manifestum, quod Deus sit . . . . Secundum est, . . . . si primum movens non ponitur motum ex se, oportet quod moveatur immediate a penitus immobili. Unde etiam Aristoteles sub disjunctione hanc conclusionem inducit, quod scilicet oporteat vel statim devenire ad primum movens immobile separatum, vel ad movens se ipsum, ex quo iterum devenitur ad movens primum immobile separatum."
unmoved (per se) soul of this heavenly body or an entirely immovable and separate mover. 37

3. Its form in the Summa Theologiae 38

The argument as it appears in the Summa Theologiae may be summarized as follows: it is certain from sense evidence that there is motion in the world, and since (i) whatever is in motion is moved by another, and (ii) an infinite series of (per se) movers is impossible, it follows that the only satisfactory explanation of movement will be had by postulating a first mover, "and this everyone understands to be God." The two principles constituting the "minor" remain to be proved. The first, "whatever is in motion is moved by another," is proved from the fact that motion is the reduction of something from potency to act, and only something already in act is capable of giving act. Therefore, if the thing moved itself it would have to be in act and potency at the same time and in the same respect, which is

37 Actually he does not refer explicitly to the soul of the heavenly body as is evident from the text in note 35, but that he is referring to the soul is clear from the whole argument. He expressly mentions the moving part of an animal as the soul in p. 33, 2a (Leonine edition). His point seems to be that even those who deny the first heavenly body to have a soul must still admit a mover at least equally immobile.

38 Summa Theologiae, I, qu. 2, art. 3. Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Anton C. Pegis (New York, 1945) I, 22. (All quotations from the Summa will be taken from this work).
clearly impossible. The second principle, "an infinite series of
movers is impossible," is evident from the fact that the movement
of each mover in a series depends on that of the first mover; but
in an infinite series there is no first, and hence there would be
no motion. This is contrary to an evident fact.

B. The Criticism of Cajetan

1. Its background

Toward the end of the fifteenth century Padua was the center
of the humanist Neo-Aristotelian strife between the Averroists,
led by Nicoleto Vernias, and the followers of Alexander of Aphro-
disius, led by Peter Pompenazzi. It is not surprising that Caje-
tan, who studied at Padua, and at the beginning of the last decade
of the century occupied the chair of metaphysics at the university
of Padua, should be imbued with some Averroistic tendencies.\(^39\)

Cajetan held, for instance, that Averroes had correctly inter-
preted Aristotle as a monopsychist\(^40\) and that reason alone could
demonstrate neither the personal immortality of the human soul\(^41\)
nor the fact of divine providence.\(^42\)

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\(^{39}\) Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique, P. Mandonnet,
"Cajetan." (Paris, 1912), II, ii, 1325.

\(^{40}\) Commentari super libros De Anima, (Rome, 1512) L.III, c.2.

\(^{41}\) Opera Omnia in S. Scripturam, V. 58. Commentary on Rom. ix.

\(^{42}\) Ibid. IV, 228. Commentary on Luke, xii.
Averroes had followed Aristotle in teaching that God is the subject of metaphysics; and since no science must prove its own subject, he concluded that proof of the existence of God belongs to physics. 43 Cajetan refers to Averroes' premise, "no science can prove its own subject matter," as an objection to any attempt to prove the existence of God in Sacred Theology. 44 He responds to the objection by explaining, on the basis of distinctions made earlier, 45 that a science can per accidens prove the existence of its own subject, i.e., it can use another science ministerially so long as that science is more known than the existence of the subject. Therefore, theology can use human reason and the principles which it discovers.

Now the question is, does Cajetan agree with Averroes to the extent that the science which Theology uses to prove the existence of God must be physics and not metaphysics? In a recent issue of Modern Schoolman 46 Father Joseph Owens treats of Cajetan's refer-

43 In I Physics (Venice, 1562) comment. 83, fol. 47va; In II Physics, comment. 26.

44 St. Thomas' meaning of "Theology" or "Sacred Doctrine" is given in the beginning of the Summa Th., especially in articles 1 to 8. We get something resembling a definition in the corpus of art. 8: "This doctrine does not argue in proof of its principles, which are the articles of faith, but from them it goes on to prove something else . . . ."

45 In Summa Theologiae, I, i, 8, n. vi, vii, viii, ix.

46 Owens, XXVIII, 126, 127.
ence to Averroes in the opening passage of the commentary on the Five Ways,\textsuperscript{47} and he appears to find there an indication that Cajetan agreed with the Averroistic theory that the existence of God must be proved by the science of physics. But, in fact, Cajetan makes no reference whatever to this doctrine of Averroes; he does mention Averroes' premise (no science should prove its own subject), but it is only to dispute it, or rather to distinguish, as explained above. On the other hand, in an earlier passage Cajetan mentions metaphysics as one of the sciences that can be used by theology: "Metaphysical and natural demonstrations used in sacred doctrine are simply extraneous... but, considered as ministers to theology... in establishing those truths concerning which theology has a secondary position, as, for instance, that God exists, is one and immortal, they are not extraneous.\textsuperscript{48}

The above quotation at first sight leads to the impression that Cajetan explicitly called for a metaphysical proof of the existence of God. But there is no necessity of putting this interpretation on his words. The "natural" demonstrations of

\textsuperscript{47} Cajetan in I, 11, 3, comment. i.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid. In I, 1, 8. "Ad hoc breviter dicitur quod demonstrationes metaphysicae et naturales quae afferentur in sacra doctrina, simpliciter quidem sunt extraneae: sed ut ministri theologiae... ad stabilienda ea de quibus theologialia secundario est, ut Deum esse, et unum esse, et immortalem, etc., non sunt estraneae..."
which he speaks can be taken in opposition to the "metaphysical", and there is no reason why the proof for the existence of God cannot be "natural" or "physical". But to say that Cajetan's words demand this interpretation, to say that Cajetan's reference to Averroes denotes that he agrees with a different statement made by Averroes, viz., that God must be proved by physics, is to do less than justice to the evidence. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the conclusion (thus illogically attained) is quite true. It is possible that Cajetan gave assent to Averroes' theory that only physics can be used to show that God exists. This is borne out to some extent by the fact that, as we shall see, Cajetan imposes a physical interpretation on the Prime Via. But this premise in its turn is weakened by the interpretations which we shall find Cajetan giving to the other arguments of the Quinque Via. We will now consider the general lines of his criticism.

Form of Cajetan's criticism

Cajetan opens his commentary on the Five Ways by telling us that they do not prove the existence of God as God really is, that is, a being incorporeal, immutable, first, most perfect, etc.49 He goes on to distinguish the three steps involved in

49 Ibid. "Circa has rationes in communi, advertendum est diligenter quod possunt afferrri ad duo. Primo, ad concludendum
the Summa Theologicae proof of the existence of God: first, certain predicates or attributes actually existing (e.g., the predicate of "immovable mover"); second, a being possessing these predicates (e.g., the immovable mover); finally, God as He really is. The first step Cajetan calls the "direct per se" conclusion of the Five Ways; the second he refers to as the "direct per accidens" conclusion, for, as already mentioned, Cajetan does not hold that the Five Ways arrive at God as he really is. The reason the first step does not arrive at God is that none of the predicates proved evidently denotes infinity. In other words, we do not yet know that the first immovable mover is Pure Act. The arguments in the following questions of the Summa Theologicae make that final step. Now let us take his comments on the Prima Via in particular:

"The First Way, as is said in the I Contra Gentiles, chapter XIII, leads to a mover no more immovable than the intellective soul."50

50Ibid., "Prima via, ut in I Contra Gentiles, cap. xiii, dicitur, non duet ad motorem magis immobilem quam sit anima intellectiva."
"It is sufficient for the First Way to prove that there is a first immovable mover, not deciding whether it is the soul of heaven or of the world; for this is investigated in the following question."

Nevertheless, Cajetan admits that "immovable mover" is in reality proper to God, and therefore concludes that, though the argument from motion leads directly only to a first mover as such, it leads indirectly to God as God.\textsuperscript{52}

C. The Criticism of Suarez

Suarez opens his discussion of the proof for the existence of God by trying to solve the problem of the Arabs, viz., whether physical or metaphysical proofs should be used. He finds the physical argument has some value but decides (with Avicenna, against Averroes) that the proof pertains to the realm of metaphysics. The physical argument fails because of its inherent limitations: there is no reason why an argument from motion should arrive at an immaterial mover. Evidently, Suarez holds the principle of motion, "everything in motion is moved by

\textsuperscript{51}Ibid. "Prima viae, ex parte motus, sat est quod inferatur, ergo datur primum movens immobile, non curando utrum illud sit anima caeli aut mundi? nec enim quaeatur in sequenti quaedam"

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid. "Omnia hae praedictae scilicet movens immobile, etc., sunt secundum veritatem propria Deo: et ideo, concludendo haece invenire in rerum natura, concluditur directe, quasi per accidens, quod Deus est, idest, Deus, non ut Deus, sed ut habens talem conditionem, est: et consequenter ipsum substratum, scilicet Deus ut Deus, est."
another", as used in the Aristotelian argument to prove the existence of God, to be an exclusively physical principle.53 Moreover, the physical argument from motion has, in the eyes of Suarez, another defect: the basic principle, i.e., the principle of motion is not at all certain. He sees the "state" of potency to be compatible with that of "virtual activity", and he agrees with Sextus that a thing in the state of virtual activity can reduce itself to formal act.

Because he limits the principle of motion to the physical order, we can say that Suarez would deny that the Prima Via proves the existence of God. Secondly, and more important, because he questions the certainty of the principle of "whatever is in motion is moved by another" as such, inasmuch as he is not convinced that only a being already in act (formally) can reduce a being not in formal act to that state, he refuses to accept the basic principle of the Prima Via, whether that principle be taken physically or metaphysically. As a consequence, it would seem

Suarez explains the value of the argument from motion: first, it prepares the way for the metaphysical proof; secondly, "quia ex motu et sensibilibus effectibus ascendimus ad consederandum rationem effectus et causae secundum se et ex dependentia in motu, ad dependentiam in esse et origine, per quam ad primum ens in- creatum pervenimus; tum etiam quia, si non omnino evidente, physicum viam ad motorem coeli ab eo separatum, ex quo facillus metaphysicus discurrit ad inquirendum non iam primum motor coeli, sed primum factorem rerum, sumendo proportionalia principia, tanta evidentiora, quanta abstractiora, ut satis declaravimus,"
correct to conclude that Suarez rejects the Prima Via as a valid proof for the existence of God.

**Form of criticism**

Treating of the principle, "Everything in motion is moved by another", and referring it to Aristotle (the eighth book of the Physics and the twelfth of the Metaphysics), Suarez says:

This medium, taken by itself, is found in many ways to be incapable of demonstrating that there is in the nature of things some immaterial substance; still less can it demonstrate a first and uncreated substance; and I especially insist that the principle on which the whole argument is founded: "everything which is in motion is moved by another", is still not sufficiently demonstrated in every kind of motion and action, for there are many things which through virtual action are seen to move themselves and to reduce themselves to formal act, as can be seen in the appetite or will, and in water reducing itself to its pristine frigidity; the same therefore is able to take place in local motion; and therefore it can be said that the heaven is moved by nothing other than its own form or some innate power from which the whole movement results, as the downward motion in a stone is the result of intrinsic gravity. Consequently, it is still disputed whether or not the heaven is moved by an intelligence. How, then, from such uncertain principles, can a true demonstration be established to show that God exists?54

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54Ibid. p. 23: "Hae autem medium per se as praeclise summar multis modis inventur ineffectiox ad demonstrandum esse in rerum natura aliquam substantiam immaterialiam, nemed ad demonstrandum primam et incoetam substantiam; et impris omittio principium illid in quo tota illa ostensio fundatur: *Omne quod movetur, ab alio movetur*, adhuc non esse satis demonstratum in omni genere motus vel actionis; nam multa sunt quae per actum virtualis vide- untur esse movere et reducere ad actum formalis, ut in appetitu seu voluntate videre licet, et in aqua reducente se ad pristinam frigiditatem; idem ergo accidere potest in motu locali; atque ita dici potest coelum non ab alio quam a seipso moveri per formam.
Suárez then proceeds to point out that, even if we concede that the principle of motion is valid, we must still insist that the argument based on a physical principle cannot lead to God:

Then let us concede as true that principle, **everything in motion is moved by another** (it is in fact more probable, correctly understood), and as a consequence let us grant the heaven to be moved by another: by what necessary or evident consequence, I ask, is it able to be inferred from that principle and from the motion of the heaven that there is some immaterial substance?\(^{55}\)

In another passage Suárez sums up his rejection of a physical proof in somewhat similar terms:

Arguing from the motion of the heaven alone it cannot be concluded that there is a first being, immaterial and uncreated; for, the motion of the heaven of itself leads only to some proximate mover of the heaven, in which, of itself, it does not require, and consequently does not prove, such perfections as we have mentioned; \(^{56}\) therefore, neither from that motion nor from any other physical effect can we investigate whether that mover should be one in all the heavens, or many, and if many, whether all are reduced to one first, on whom they depend . . . much less can it be gathered from the motion of the heaven that there is one first being, in which all those

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\(^{55}\)Ibid. p. 23: "Deinde ponamus ut verum illid principium, omne quod movetur ab alio movetur, (est enim revera probabilius, recte intellectum), et ex consequente ponamus coelum ab alio moveri, qua, quaeque, necessaria aut evidenti consecutione inferri potest ex illo principio et motu coeli, dari substantiam aliquam immaterialum?"

\(^{56}\)He is referring to such attributes as immateriality and unicity.
perfections exist together; but it will always be necessary to add some metaphysical medium by which that is concluded.57

An Evaluation

1. Cajetan's position

The more basic objections that have been raised against Cajetan's stand on the Five Ways can be reduced to the following three: i) he is not justified in limiting the conclusion of the argument from motion to an intellective soul on the grounds that St. Thomas himself so limits it in the thirteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles; ii) although Cajetan would have correctly designated the conclusion of the argument if the "motion" of which the argument treats referred only to motion in the strict sense, i.e., physical motion, nevertheless, since St. Thomas means motion to be taken in the wide sense, i.e., to include metaphysical motion, Cajetan is wrong in denying that the argument arrives at God as such; iii) by asserting that the conclusion of

57Ibid. p. 26: "Ex vi solius motus coeli concludi non potest dari aliquod primum ens immateriale, et increatum; nam motus coeli de se solum ducit ad proximum aliquem motorem coeli, in quo ex se non requirit, et consequenter neque ostendit illas perfectiones ut declaravimus; ergo neque ex illo motu neque ex aliquo effectu physicō potest investigari an ille motor sit unus in omnibus coelis, vel plures, et si sint plures, an omnes reducantur ad unum primum, a quo pendent . . . multo minus poterit ex motu coeli colligi esse aliquod primum ens, in quod perfectiones illae conveniant; sed oportet semper aliquod medium metaphysicum adiungere, quo id concludatur."
the argument proves the existence of a finite mover no more immovable than the intellective soul (of the heaven or of the world), while maintaining that the direct, per se conclusion, namely the attribute of first infinite immovable mover, is proper to God, Cajetan is guilty of contradiction. The point of the objection is that one and the same attribute cannot be proper to God and, at the same time, common to Him and to a creature. We shall now examine separately these closely related objections to the interpretation of Cajetan.

The objection which insists that Cajetan should not have limited the conclusion of the Prima Via to a mover no more immovable than the intellective soul was recently made by Owens in his article, "The Conclusion of the Prima Via."58 This is the position Owens takes: there are two arguments from motion in the thirteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles. The first (taken from arguments in the Physics VII and VIII) is more closely related to the Summa Theologica argument, whereas it is the second (taken from Physics VIII and Metaphysics XII) that introduces the notion of intellective soul. But even in this second argument it is merely the part from Physics VIII that contains the reference to an intellective soul; the addition from the Metaphysics is put in precisely because of this limitation in the passage from the

58 P. 203-207.
physics. On the basis of this division Owens claims that Cajetan was in error when he says in his commentary on the Summa Theologiæ that "the First Way, as is mentioned in the thirteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles, does no lead to a mover more immovable than the intellective soul." Owens criticizes Cajetan for ignoring the fact that there are two arguments from motion in the thirteenth chapter and for paralleling the Summa Theologiæ with a passage which is not its counterpart. He should, according to Owens, have compared the Summa Theologiæ argument with the first argument from motion in the Contra Gentiles, I. 13. 59

However, this apparently devastating refutation of Cajetan loses its force if Gilson's interpretation of the chapter in question is correct. Gilson sees two arguments in the text of St. Thomas. He believes that the first argument is composed of all of the proofs taken from the Physics; the second consists in the passage taken from the Metaphysics, and it is this, and only this proof, which leads to God. 60 According to this theory the combination of arguments from the Physics leads merely to the soul of a first mover; and if this theory is correct there is no reason why Cajetan's reference to the Contra Gentiles argument should be invalid since it is the Physics passages in the Contra

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59 P. 204.

Gentiles which parallel the *Summa Theologiae* argument from motion.

We have now arrived at a position where we can see that Gajetan's interpretation may stand or fall, depending on how we divide the compound argument from motion in the *Contra Gentiles*. At first glance it does seem that Father Owens' interpretation is correct; it would appear that the passage from the *Metaphysics* is added as a complement to the second series of proofs from the *Physics*, so that the combination of arguments from the two books arrives at God, in the same manner that the combination of proof's from *Physics* VII and VIII, constituting the "first argument", arrives at God. But, on the other hand, there is evidence indicating that the first argument (from *Physics* VII and VIII) does not arrive at God; but merely proves the existence of the soul of a self mover. The evidence consists in this: to establish the basic principle of the "first argument", "whatever is in motion is moved by something other than itself", three proofs are used. Now, all three of these proofs seem to use "other" in the sense of a part, so that the principle when proved would merely say: "whatever is in motion is moved by something other than itself, whether that thing be extrinsic or a part of itself". A glance at the three proofs will substantiate the suggestion that "other" may mean merely "a part". In the case of the first proof, St. Thomas and Aristotle admit that "other" means "a part"; in the second--the inductive proof--one of the elements used in ar-
riving at the principle is the fact of the soul moving the body; in the third proof it is not clearly evident in the argument as used by St. Thomas, but in its Aristotelian source, the argument is used to show that a part of the unmoved thing must be the mover.

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It will be insisted against this interpretation that St. Thomas explicitly refers to the term of the first argument from motion as God, whereas at the end of the Physics passage in the second argument he concedes that so far he has arrived only at a soul of a self-mover. This objection is not as forceful as it appears to be. We must remember that St. Thomas is ex professo giving the arguments of "the philosophers and doctors", and he says exactly that in the thirteenth chapter of I Contra Gentiles. In this case, however, he is giving the arguments of Aristotle. Now, it is quite understandable that St. Thomas would select from one work of Aristotle a number of passages that were intended to prove the existence of God, that he should submit them as Aristotle submitted them, i.e., as proving the existence of God, and that he should, at the end, point out that the conclusion is not really God, but the soul of a self-mover. Then, logically, St. Thomas might take another work of Aristotle and select from

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61 Cajetan, according to Father Owens' explanation, could scarcely be said to have read the argument in the Contra Gentiles. It would seem impossible to read the text of St. Thomas and be unaware of the division of proofs.
it an argument which would complement the conclusion attained by
the arguments of the former work. This, in fact, seems to be the
intent of the Angelic Doctor in the *Contra Gentiles*. Having used
the arguments of the *Physics* to the full, he admits their defici-
ency and proceeds to draw on the *Metaphysics* to make the term
"immovable mover" designate no mere soul of a self-mover, but the
separate immovable mover, God.

Let us look again at Cajetan's position. He taught that the
conclusion of the argument from motion in the *Summa Theologica*
proved the existence of a mover no more immovable than the intel-
lectual soul "as is said in the *Contra Gentiles*". We have studied
the objection which stated that the argument as it appeared in
the latter work did not have so limited a conclusion. On inves-
tigation we have found the evidence favoring Cajetan's evaluation:
we have seen that Cajetan's mention of the argument in the *Contra
Gentiles* most probably refers only to the passages taken from the
*Physics*. The comparison made by Cajetan is fair, since there is
nothing in the *Summa Theologica* argument which evidently goes
beyond the *Physics* passages in the other *Summa*. If the conclusion
of the latter does not go beyond the intellectual soul, the
former, too, must have this limitation.

The second objection raised against Cajetan's interpretation
is based on the meaning of the word "motion". Half a century
after Cajetan's commentary made its appearance Dominicus Benez
raised violent objections to an interpretation of it as signifying physical motion. In fact Banez has come to be regarded as leader of a school of those who insist on a metaphysical acceptance of motion in the Prima Via. Strange to say, Banez gives no positive proof for his stand; he seems to rely on the negative implicit argument that if the Prima Via is based on physical motion alone it does not prove the existence of a completely unmoved being. Stranger still, Banez assumes that Cajetan holds the terminus of the First Way to be a first mover moved per acci-

64Banez, In Summa Theologiae, I, ii, 3: "... si nomine motus solum intelligatur motus physicus, bene dicit Cajetan quod per illam rationem solum devenitur ad primum motorem, immobilem quidem per se, per accidentem tamen potest esse mobilis. Sed ne debet sic sumi, sed ut comprehendat etiam motus spirituales et metaphysicos, qualis est quaevis applicatio potentiae spiritualis ad sumum actum, et etiam motus metaphoricos, qualis est motio finis."
Although a staunch defender of Cajetan's position, Father Bersani, C.M., also holds that the conclusion of which Cajetan speaks is any intellective soul (at least as far as immobility is concerned); but it should be evident from his reference to the thirteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles that Cajetan must have in mind the intellective soul of the first heaven. This soul is unmoved both per se and per accident; this soul, and only this soul, with any reasonableness could be classified as a being "whom everybody calls God". Cajetan certainly must have seen the superiority of such a soul so carefully established by St. Thomas.

Strong evidence pointing to a metaphysical interpretation.

65 See note 64. The conclusion of St. Thomas in the Contra Gentiles I, xiii (as Cajetan must have realized) goes as follows: "Relinquitur ergo quod oportet esse aliquod movens seipsum perpetuum, quod causat perpetuitatem generationis in his inferioribus moventibus se; et sic motor eius non movetur neque per se, neque per accidens." This conclusion St. Thomas derives from the Physics exclusively.


67 The parallel between the Summa Theologiae argument from motion and that of the Contra Gentiles is, apparently, Cajetan's main reason for imposing a physical interpretation on the former. Vincent Remer, S.J., in his Summa Philosophiae Scholasticae (Rome, 1926), VI, 19, attempts to show indications of a transition to the physical order in St. Thomas' use of the conjunction "and": "it is certain, and evident to our senses . . ." The reasoning appears to be defective: nothing in the context shows that the double predicate demands a double subject; on the contrary it should be obvious that the reason why St. Thomas can say that motion is a "certain" fact is precisely because it is evident to our senses.
of motion can be found in St. Thomas' reply to the second objection in this article,\textsuperscript{68} which states that nature, or human reason and will, is a sufficient explanation for all things. St. Thomas answers that nature must be directed to its end by a higher agent and that human reason and will must be traced back to a superior agent "since these can change and fail; for all things that are changeable and capable of defect must be traced back to an immovable and self-necessary first principle, as has been shown."\textsuperscript{69} It has been argued that, since motion in this text clearly extends beyond mere physical motion, the same should be true of the word when used in the corpus.\textsuperscript{70} On the other hand we must remember that in the \textit{Contra Gentiles} St. Thomas had also spoken of the soul being moved \textit{per accidens}, and he is referring to physical motion.\textsuperscript{71} Most probably he has the same type of change in mind

\textsuperscript{68}\textit{Summa Theologiae}, I, ii, 3 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{69}"Similiter etiam quae ex proposito fiunt, oportet reducere in aliquam altiorem causam, quae non sit ratio et voluntas humana; quia haec mutabilia sunt et defectabilia; oportet autem omnia mobilia et deficiere possibilia reduci in aliquod primum principium immobile et per se necessarium, sicut ostensum est."

\textsuperscript{70}Robert Leet Patterson, "The Argument from Motion in Aristotle and Aquinas", \textit{The New Scholasticism}, X (1936), 247.

\textsuperscript{71}"Sed quia in moventibus se, quae sunt apud nos, scilicet in animalibus, pars movens, scilicet anima, et si sit immobilis per se, movetur tamen per accidens . . . ."
here. This becomes more convincing when we consider that here he makes it quite clear that the reference is to a human soul, whereas, as already indicated in this paper, the arguments from motion (whether in the Contra Gentiles or in the Summa Theologica) must arrive at, at least, a soul of the first mover—which everybody calls God.

The question we are dealing with is: what does St. Thomas mean by "motion" in the Prima Via? and, correspondingly, what precisely is the conclusion of the Prima Via? Now it will be obvious that the best indication of the meaning of the conclusion of the argument as St. Thomas saw it will be the use made of this conclusion by the Angelic Doctor himself. On examination of the following questions in the Summa Theologica we find that St. Thomas uses this conclusion to prove that God does not have a body, 72 but he does not use it to prove any of the other attributes. 73 Now, if the Prima Via concluded to a being devoid of motion in the wide sense, then that would naturally be the basis for proving that God is Pure Act. But St. Thomas proves that God

72 Summa Theologica, I, iii, 1.

73 See the graph at the end of this paper outlining the manner in which the various divine attributes are deduced from the Five Ways. It will be noted that the conclusion of the Quarta Via and, to a lesser extent, the conclusion of the Secunda are the bases from which most of the attributes are drawn.
is Pure Act from the fact that he is the first being. He speaks of this "first being" as already proved; he appears to be referring to the "greatest being" of the Quarta Via, or probably to the "first cause" of the Secunda Via, but not to the "unmoved mover" of the Prima Via.

How do we know that by "first being" St. Thomas did not mean "unmoved mover" as proved in the Prima Via? Why not say that motion should be taken in its widest sense, that the "unmoved mover" signifies a being devoid of even metaphysical motion, and that "first being", consequently, refers to the being proved in the Prima Via (either alone or in conjunction with the other Vias)? An objection of this kind would deny the probative force of the contention in the last paragraph; in other words, it would insist that the Prima Via was used by St. Thomas as a premise in proof of the divine attributes. The position taken by one making this objection would be this: St. Thomas first proves a mover devoid of all motion, i.e., a first being (Prima Via); from this he proves that God is Pure Act, eternal, simple, infinite, etc.

But the ninth question of the Summa Theologiae gives evidence—extremely important evidence—against the hypothesis just mentioned. In this question St. Thomas proves that God is absolutely

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74 Summa Theologiae, I, iii, 1. "...necesse est id quod est primum ens, esse in actu, et nullo modo in potentia... Ostensum est supra quod Deus est primum ens. Impossibile est igitur quod in Deo sit aliquid in potentia."
without motion or change of any kind, and here we have ample grounds for refuting the hypothesis given above. For, first, if St. Thomas had proved the existence of a being immovable, in every sense of the word, in question two, why should he attempt to prove the same thing in question nine? Secondly, even if we concede that for some reason St. Thomas would attempt to prove divine immobility a second time, we must admit that this procedure involves a vicious circle. (We are accepting the hypothesis, even to the extent of supposing that the Prima Via is the basis, or one of the bases, for the deduction of the divine attributes.)

Here is the vicious circle: Aquinas first proves the absolutely immovable mover or first being (Prima Via, question two); from that he deduces the attributes of simplicity (question three) and infinity (question seven); from these two attributes75 and from

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75Summa Theologiae, I, ix, 1: " Omne quod movetur, quantum ad aliquid manet; et quantum ad aliquid transit . . . . Et sic in omni quod movetur, attenditur aliqua compositio. Ostensum est supra quod in Deo nulla est compositio, sed est omnino simplex. Unde manifestum est quod Deus moveri non potest.

Omne quod movetur, motu suo aliquid acquirit, et pertingit ad illud ad quod prius non pertingebat. Deus autem, cum sit infinitus, comprehendens in se eam plenitudinem perfectionis totius esse, non potest aliquid acquirere; nec extendere se in aliquid ad quod prius non pertingebat. Unde nullo modo sibi competit motus."
from the fact that God is first being he deduces the absolute immobility of God (question nine). In other words, the fact that God is immovable is both the premise in proof of and the conclusion deduced from the simplicity and infinity of God.

It would seem, therefore, false to say that St. Thomas held that the Prima Via proved the existence of a being devoid of motion in every sense of the word, and that this unmoved mover is the "first being" of whom St. Thomas speaks. We have seen that this theory would lead logically to a vicious circle, since St. Thomas later proves the existence of an absolutely immovable mover (when in the ninth question of the Summa Theologicae he proves that God is without motion of any kind), and in doing so he uses as premises attributes deduced from the conclusion of the Prima Via, viz., simplicity and infinity. To avoid the vicious circle we must insist that the conclusion of the Prima Via is not a being devoid of all motion. If we say that it concludes merely to a being devoid of physical motion, then the circle is broken. There is nothing illogical about (i) demonstrating that there exists a being physically immovable, (ii) arguing that such a

76 *Ibid.* "Supra ostensum est esse aliquod primum ens, quod Deum dicitur; et quod hujusmodi primum ens oportet esse purum actum absque permixtione aliusquae potentiae; eo quod potentia simpliciter est posterior actui. Omne autem quod quocumque modo mutatur, est aliquo modo in potentia. Ex quo patet quod impossibile est Deum aliquo modo mutari."
being must be simple and infinite (of course, in the case we are considering, the conclusions of the other Vias are used to arrive at these attributes), and (iii) proving that a being that is simple and infinite must be devoid of all motion.

The position we have just given is the position of Cajetan. He says that the First Way proves the existence of a being physically unmoved. He says that the other attributes of this being are deduced in the following questions of the Summa Theologiae. This theory of his, as we have just seen, avoids the vicious circle involved in any theory that would hold that the Prima Via proves the existence of a being in whom there is no motion of any kind, and who is, so ipso, the "first being". When Cajetan comes to study the ninth question of the Summa, he can regard it simply as an advanced stage in the progressive deduction of the attributes of the "immovable mover" of the Prima Via. Because the latter is unmoved physically—we know no more than that at the conclusion of the Prima Via—whereas the latter is immovable, even metaphysically. We can only conclude that Cajetan was justified in maintaining that the conclusion of the Prima Via is a being physically immovable.

Now we come to a third objection, also raised by Banez against Cajetan's interpretation of the Prima Via. Banez insists

77See note 50 above.
that Cajetan is guilty of intrinsic contradiction when he says
that the attributes proved to exist in the nature of things are in
truth proper to God, while claiming that the being proved as
possessor of those attributes is merely a soul of heaven or earth.
The attribute of immovable mover, says Banez, as taken in this
argument, is either proper to God or common to Him and to the
soul of a self-mover.78

This objection is certainly a serious and difficult one.
The problem is: since Cajetan holds that the motion of the
Prima Vía is exclusively physical, why does he say that the first
cause of that motion can be none other than God? In other words,
why does he deny the predicate "first immovable mover" to the
soul of the first heaven? The answer seems to be this: it is
true that the soul of the first heaven (presuming of course that
there is such a thing) is the ultimate terminus to which an argu-
ment from physical motion arrives—in this sense this soul is a
first immovable mover—but by means of the other Vías and the
subsequent deduction of the attributes we find that there is an

78Banez, In Summa Theologicae, I, 11, 3: "Vel praedicata,
qua hic de Deo concluuntur, sunt propria Deo, vel communia sibi,
et corpore coelesti sive motore ejus. Si, primum, ergo male docet
Cajetan per has rationes non concluunt motorem magis immobilem
quam anima intellectiva vel forma coali. Si secundum ergo non
concludunt aliqua praedicata, quae secundum veritatem sunt pro-
pria Deo; siquidem communia non sunt propria."
immovable mover separate and transcendent, Pure Act, Subsistent Being, etc.; and of course this Being is the first immovable mover. In other words, though God and the (at least hypothetical) soul of the first heaven are both immovable movers (physically) and though the latter can be called "first" in relation to its inferior movers, yet, when they are compared to each other, God is obviously the first immovable mover. Consequently, the attribute is in reality proper to God; therefore, Cajetan is not guilty of self-contradiction.79

To conclude this evaluation of Cajetan's position on the Prima Visc, it seems true to say that his theory is reasonable. True, the opposite position is plausible, viz., the theory that this is an argument embracing all kinds of motion and that God is the direct conclusion. (Banex, it should be noted, admits that God is not the explicit and formal conclusion but only the implicit and virtual, and even then it is not God as most perfect being whose existence is proved.)80 But the interpretation given

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79 A lucid explanation of the whole problem will be found in Bersani's article. His solution, however, is not complete. He does show that God and the soul are equally immovable (physically) --although he speaks of a human soul--but he does not show clearly why God is first mover (in the physical order).

80 Banex, In Summa Theologiae, I, ii, 3: "Liset omnes illae rationes simul sumptas non probent immediate et explicite Deum esse, et multo minus Deum esse illud ens perfectissimum, quo perfectius quid exscogitare nequit, (hoc enim reservatur ad probandum insequentibus quaestionibus) nihilominus rationes illae efficacissime probant quod in rerum natura reperiantur perfectiones
by Cajetan has more force for two reasons: first, because it corresponds more closely to the parallel argument or collection of arguments in the thirteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles (i.e., those arguments taken from Aristotle's Physics only); secondly, because this interpretation preserves the logic of the method involved in the deduction of divine attributes.

2. Suarez' position

We have seen that Francis Suarez is quite insistent that there is no physical proof for the existence of God. The physical way has its use, however; first, because it traces out the path in its own order which we must continue to follow in a higher plane, and, secondly, because it leads (most probably) to a separate first mover of the heavens.

To the principle of motion he prefers the principle of efficient causality, which he regards as metaphysical. But it would not be true to say that Suarez considers the principle of motion as being exclusively physical. True, as used in Aristotle's argument from motion he considers it in that sense only; but he bases

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quaedam, et proprietates, quae alteri quam Deo nequeunt competere; et ex consequenti virtualiter et implicite probant Deum esse. Nam prima ratio convincit reperiri in rerum natura primum movens immobile, et sic alia probant efficaciter alias proprietates, quae soli Deo convenire possunt."

Banes is here using the traditional distinction between God as he really is (Pure Act, Subsistent Being), and God in terms of creatures (Creator, greatest Being, etc.).
his objection to the principle as governing local motion because
it allegedly does not hold true in regard to spiritual motion. In any event, if the principle as such is open to doubt it should not be used in the metaphysical order. Consequently, Suarez is logical when he uses a different principle in the metaphysical order.

The next question is: is Suarez justified in questioning the principle of motion? In this he is following Scotus. Scotus and Suarez agree that a thing can move itself (Suarez more reluctantly and with some hesitation). According to Suarez the perfection of formal activity need not come from an extrinsic agent but is already contained in the state of virtual activity. Scotus, in fact, goes so far as to say that virtual act is the more perfect of the two. The ultimate basis offered by Scotus for this view is the evidence of nature. He gives as evidence six examples of virtual motion: i) heavy bodies moving downwards; ii) local motion of animate things; iii) nutrition and augment-

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61 Suarez, p. 23, "Ut in appetitu seu voluntate videre liceat ... idem ergo accidere potest in motu locali."

62 Ibid. p. 27, "Omne quod fit ab alio fit."

63 Scotus, Omnia Opera (Paris, 1895), VII, 595a.

64 Ibid. 589b, "... et sensui concordat quod grave a se movetur, et secundum Aristotellem in 8. Physicorum: Fatuum est quaeere rationem, ubi habetur sensus; et concordat rationi ... et movet actions aequivoca, et ipsum est capax termini illius actionis; ergo sic movebit se."
tation; iv) alteration, as when water of itself becomes cold by returning to its "natural temperature"; v) cognition; and vi) intellective appetite. Arguments to the contrary, says Scotus, cannot stand against the force of the inductive proof of these examples. If this conclusion is absurd, then everywhere there is absurdity. 85

Suarez never enlarges on this theory: it would appear that he regards the argument of Scotus as conclusive. It will be noted that the examples quoted by him in proof of his assertion are taken from Scotus. 86

Much has been written against the objections raised by Scotus and Suarez to the principle of motion. Their objection was this: nature proves that not everything in motion is moved by another. 87 The defense can be reduced to this: while it is true that many things move themselves, none of them is the adequate cause of its own motion. In other words, besides being moved by themselves, they are moved by another. The position taken by Scotus himself makes this clear: he admits that there is in

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85 Ibid., 599, 600 "... ex ratione actus virtualis et formalis, numquam est repugnantia quod insint eidem, quia tunc ubique esset repugnantia."

86 The examples given by Suarez are (i) the appetite and (ii) warm water becoming cold.

87 E.g.: Owens, p. 207-211; Chossat, p. 932; Billot, p. 56; Billuart, p. 29; Capreolus, Quaestiones Metaphysicae, iii, 8, ad l.
formal act an addition to virtual act. But he makes no attempt
to explain this addition. Indeed, it would be impossible for him
to do so without contradiction: the action properly so called,
i.e., the formal act, is not actually present in a subject which
has it only in potency, even in "active potency" or virtual act;
and, simply from the principle that nothing can give that which
it does not have, it is obvious that the formal act could never
be fully explained by the potency which precedes it.
CHAPTER III
THE ARGUMENT FROM EFFICIENT CAUSALITY

A. The Argument in St. Thomas

1. Its sources

In chapter thirteen of the Contra Gentiles St. Thomas refers to the second book of Aristotle's Metaphysics as the source of the argument from efficient causality. While it is quite possible that this is the only source of St. Thomas' argument not only in the Contra Gentiles but also in the Summa Theologiae, it is also possible that Aquinas borrowed from the same argument as found in Avicenna\(^1\) or Albert the Great.\(^2\) Plato also had used an argument from efficient causality to prove the existence of God, and St. Thomas may also have had this in mind.\(^3\) Most historians,

\(^1\)Avicenna, Metaph. lib. II, tract. VIII, c. 1.

\(^2\)De Causis et Processu Universitatis, I, 1, 7. ed. Janmy V, 554.

\(^3\)Plato, Timaeus, 27c-28c. Plato argues from the objects of sense, which are ipso facto generable and corruptible, to the object of intellection, which is eternal and without origin. His key principle is: "Whatever becomes necessarily comes from a cause."
however, would agree that the source given by St. Thomas himself, namely Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, is the chief, if not the only, source.⁴

Let us now look at the Aristotelian passage to which St. Thomas makes reference. Aristotle tells us that an infinite series of causes is impossible. This is true in regard to material, moving, final, and formal causes. The reason is this:

In the case of intermediaries which have a last term and a term prior to them, the prior must be the cause of the later terms. For, if we had to say which of the three is the cause we should say the first; surely not the last, for the final term is the cause of none; nor even the intermediate, for it is the cause only of one. (It makes no difference whether there is one intermediate or more, nor whether they are infinite or finite in number). But of series which are infinite in this way and of the infinite in general all the parts down to that now present are alike intermediaries; so that, if there is no first, there is no cause at all.⁵

Etienne Gilson, in one of his most recent works,⁶ points out that there is a basic difference between the argument just quoted from Aristotle and the similar principle as used by St. Thomas in the Second Way: whereas the latter treats of efficient cause in the proper sense, the Aristotelian passage refers only to a

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⁶*The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 66 and 68.
"moving" cause. Avicenna, Gilson continues, insists that he himself, unlike Aristotle, is dealing with efficient cause as such: "the cause exists with the esse of its effect" and "a thing whose esse depends on a thing caused is itself caused." Following Grundwald, however, Gilson sees an important difference between St. Thomas and Avicenna: St. Thomas interprets as creation what Avicenna interprets as natural action. In other words, Gilson believes that when St. Thomas speaks of causality in the Secunda Via he means the absolute production of being, but the causality in the argument as Avicenna uses it simply means the eduction of a form from a matter by means of movement.

St. Thomas' reasoning in the Secunda Via may have been influenced by a false theory concerning the physical structure of the universe. Like Aristotle, St. Thomas believed that the earth is at the center of the universe and that it is surrounded by a series of nine concentric spheres, each of which causes the motion of the one inside it, so that the outer-most is responsible for all the motion inside it. This results in a series of motions essentially and per se subordinated to the outer sphere. A

7 Avicenna, pp. 63, 64.


9 For more detailed explanations of this physical theory see Gilson, The Phil. of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 187; Martin D'Arcy, Saint Thomas Aquinas, (Dublin, 1953), pp. 120, 121, note 1; Rupert
theory of this kind would lend itself naturally to the formulation of an argument leading from the most obvious effects to the first and highest cause.

2. Its form in the early writings

The Secunda Via of the Summa Theologiae, that is, the argument from efficient causality, appears on only one other occasion in the works of St. Thomas, viz., in the thirteenth chapter of the Summa Contra Gentiles. In the latter St. Thomas prefaces the argument with the words: "the Philosopher, in the second book of the Metaphysics, proceeds to show by another way that it is not possible to proceed to infinity in efficient causes, but one first cause is attained; and this we call God." The argument that follows may be reduced to this: in an ordered series of efficient causes, each cause depends on that which precedes it, so that all depend on the first cause; in an infinite series, however, there is no first, and therefore no causality at all. But it is obvious that there is some causality; therefore the hypothesis of an infinite series is false. We must postulate "some first efficient cause, which is God."10


10 Contra Gentiles, I. xiii.
3. Its form in the Summa Theologiae

The Secunda Via in the Summa Theologiae is a very close parallel to the argument from efficient causality in the Contra Gentiles. It does, however, express two truths apparently presupposed in the Contra Gentiles. These truths are: (i) the fact that there is sensible causality, and (ii) the impossibility of anything being the efficient cause of itself. Having made these two points, St. Thomas proceeds to show, as in the Contra Gentiles, that there can be no efficient causality if there is no first cause; but in an infinite series there is no first cause; therefore, there will be no second or third, nor will there be any intermediary between the first and the ultimate. Going farther, we must even deny the ultimate cause, since it cannot be without one preceding it. "Therefore," says St. Thomas, "it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God."11

A note of clarification should be added. In the Secunda Via, as indeed in any of his proofs for the existence of God, when St. Thomas tells us that an infinite series of causes is impossible he is referring to what he sometimes calls a per se or an essential subordination of each cause to that which precedes it. The

11 Summa Theologiae, I, 11, 3.
notes which distinguish a series of this kind from a series of
accidentally ordered causes are: (i) each cause in an essentially
ordered series is necessary for the production of the effect, so
that if any one cause were absent the effect would not be produc-
ed; (ii) the first cause intends the ultimate effect; (iii) each
cause is generically or specifically higher than the one which
follows. In a person writing we have an example of this kind of
causality: the will moves the brain which moves the hand to move
the pen. Human generation is an example of an accidental series:
the generative action of the father is directed toward the son
but not toward the grandson per se: (otherwise generation would
always produce not only a child but also all the succeeding gen-
erations of children). This distinction between an essential and
an accidental series of causes explains how St. Thomas can hold
that an infinite series of (essentially ordered) causes is im-
possible and still teach that the theory which teaches the eter-
nity of the world cannot be disproved by human reason.

B. The Criticism of Cajetan

1. Its background

In commenting on the Segunda Via Cajetan expressly agrees
with Averroes' evaluation of the proof. But, just as we saw that in the preceding argument similarity of conclusions did not imply similarity of premises, so, also, in this Via the fact that Cajetan agrees with Averroes' theory that the proof leads only to the mover of the heavenly body does not necessarily mean that Cajetan had decided that any proof for the existence of God must belong to the realm of physics. We have already mentioned that St. Thomas believed the universe to be composed of a series of concentric spheres, the movement of the inner one in each case being essentially subordinated to the movement of the one outside it. Cajetan could reasonably assume that St. Thomas based the Secunda Via on this physical theory, and that is probably why Cajetan held that the Secunda Via belongs to the physical order. Again, Cajetan seems to have been influenced by the fact that St. Thomas does not deduce the divine attributes directly from the conclusion of the Secunda Via. If God were proved in the Secunda Via as the first uncaused cause in the widest sense, he would be proved as the cause of being, and therefore Creator. An involved

12 Averroes, I Dei. et Mun. comm. 22; cf. XII Metaph. comm. 44. Averroes held that the argument from motion does not go beyond the heavenly body and its mover. This was a logical conclusion from his premise that proof of the existence of God pertains to the philosophy of nature. (God is the subject of metaphysics, Averroes argued, and since no science proves its own subject, God must be proved, not in metaphysics but in physics, i.e., the philosophy of nature),
deduction of these attributes would be unnecessary, but, in fact, we find the following questions of the *Summa Theologicae* using diverse arguments to arrive at the divine attributes.13

2. **Its form**

In defense of his doctrine that the *Quinque Vias* do not conclude to a being that is incorporeal, immaterial, eternal, most high, immutable, first, and most perfect, Cajetan points out that the First Way leads only to a heavenly body and its mover.14 Later, making a more direct evaluation of the second proof, he says: "It is sufficient if the second argument (from efficient causality) leads to a first efficient cause, not caring whether that be a body or incorporeal, for this is investigated in the following question."15 He goes on to say that the attribute of being the first efficient cause, like the other attributes of the Five Ways, is in reality proper to God, and therefore, by concluding that this attribute is found in reality, we conclude *(quasi per accidens)* that God—or the possessor of this attribute—

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13 This has been explained more fully in treating of the argument from motion, p. 35.

14 Cajetan, *in Summa Theologicae*, I, ii, 3, comment. 3: ... *secunda autem, ut dicit Averroes, non ducit nisi ad corpus caeleste et eius motorem ... ."

15 *Ibid.*: "Secunda quocumque viae, ex parte efficientis, sit est quod ducat ad primum efficientem, non curando an illud sit corpus vel incorporeum: hoc enim quaeretur in sequenti qwestione."
-exists. It is only later that we conclude that God as God exists.16

G. The Criticism of Suarez

1. Does Suarez object to the Secunda Via?

At first sight it would seem that Suarez is in perfect agreement with the Secunda Via. He explicitly approves of the argument from efficient causality and explains why it lacks the defects of the argument from motion:

A much more evident principle is the metaphysical principle, "everything which comes into being becomes by another." This principle is demonstrated from the fact that nothing can produce itself. A thing which becomes through an efficient cause acquires being; a thing, however, which makes or produces is supposed to have being; and therefore it is clearly impossible that anything should make itself; because before a thing exists it is neither in formal act nor in virtual act to make itself, and for this reason this principle, "everything which comes into being is produced by another", is much more evident than "everything in motion is moved by another," because what is in motion supposes being, in which being the virtual act towards self-movement can be understood.17

Furthermore, Suarez disproves the possibility of an infinite series of per se subordinated causes in terms quite in accordance with the position of Suarez, by demonstrating the impossibility of an infinite series of such causes. He argues that if we assume an infinite series of such causes, we end up with a contradiction, namely, that there must be a term in the series which is not immediately caused by another. This term, however, would then be its own cause, which is impossible according to the principle that nothing can produce itself. Therefore, an infinite series of such causes is impossible.

16Ibid. : "Omnia haec praedicata scilicet movens immobile, etc. sunt secundum veritatem propria Deo: et ideo, concludendo haec inventi in rerum natura, conclusitur directe, quasi per accidens, quod Deus est, idest, Deus, non ut Deus, sed ut habens talem conditionem, est: et consequenter ipsum substratum, scilicet Deus ut Deus, est."

17Suarez, p. 27.
with the doctrine of St. Thomas. And he goes on to say that the attribute proved by the argument from efficient causality is the most important divine attribute:

We are not able to demonstrate the existence of God without demonstrating in some manner what he is... By demonstrating that certain attributes belong to that being which is the principle of other beings we demonstrate the existence of God... But the first and most essential of those attributes is that which we have so far demonstrated, namely, to be from oneself and without the efficiency of another... He properly demonstrates the existence of God who demonstrates that there is in the nature of things some uncreated being.18

But, although Suarez places great value on this proof, he will not admit that it proves the existence of God, strictly speaking, since it does not prove all the essential attributes or that God is one and unique. When we come to the Tertia Via we shall find that Suarez finds the same limitations in that proof, too. Suarez is convinced that if an argument for the existence of God is valid it proves the unicity of God. We shall take up those points later.

D. An Evaluation

**Cajetan's position**

The judgement pronounced by Cajetan on the Secunda Via is obviously parallel to that which he pronounced on the Prima Via.

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18*ibid.* p. 33 and 35.
He claims that the Secunda Via does not go beyond the mover of the heavenly body (without even deciding whether or not that mover is corporeal). It is well to remember, that Cajetan is thinking of that theory of physical structure which St. Thomas had in mind when he formulated the proof: ascending orders of heavenly substances, each depending for life and motion on the one above, so that the highest is the efficient cause of all the life and motion beneath it. The efficient cause of the activity of the outer sphere is, accordingly, the supreme being, since it causes all the activity of the universe. For this reason we call it God. But, even so, the Secunda Via has told us very little about the first cause. We do not even know whether it is the soul of the outer sphere or some separate spiritual substance. For this reason Cajetan can justly say that the Secunda Via has not proved the existence of God. When we have proved that there is a first, uncaused efficient cause we may speak of that being as God; but we have not really established the existence of God until we have demonstrated that there exists a Being Who is spiritual, all perfect, Pure Act.¹⁹

¹⁹This theory that, separately or all together, the Five Ways do not constitute an adequate proof of God's existence but need to be complemented by the proofs of the divine attributes has been given special prominence in our day by Van Steenberghen in his article, "Le Problème Philosophique de l’Existence de Dieu", Revue Philosophique de Louvain, III Serie, nos. 6-7, pp. 163-168.
Some may object to the position we have just taken—Cajetan's position—by pointing out that the ascending orders of per se subordinated efficient causes necessarily involve an ascending degree of generically more perfect causes, so that each cause will be an explanation, not only of the individual effect, but of the nature or species of the individual. Consequently, the first cause will be of the supreme "genus" of being. It must be granted that this consideration enhances the evident perfections of the first cause, but it is not yet self-evident that it is a spiritual substance completely apart from matter.

Finally, it must be pointed out that there is no problem involved in Cajetan's theory that the Secunda Via leads us no farther than the first celestial mover and yet proves an attribute proper to God. The attribute proved, uncaused causality, is de facto proper to God, but the Secunda Via does not prove it as such. All we know at the conclusion of the Secunda Via is that there exists an uncaused first cause. Later, when we shall have proved that there can be only one such being, when we shall have deduced that that being is simple, absolutely immutable, and self-subsistent, we can say that the first efficient cause is God. In other words, when we shall have deduced the essential attributes of the first efficient cause we shall be able to say that the

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20Gilson, Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, p. 449, note 3.
conclusion of the Secunda Via is an attribute proper to God. But this information is not contained in the Secunda Via itself.

In summary, we can say that the Secunda Via, as interpreted by Cajetan, presents no special difficulty. From the historical consideration at the beginning of this chapter it is evident that very many philosophers have argued from the effects obvious in this world to an ultimate uncaused cause. Cajetan considers St. Thomas' formulation of the argument as valid; Cajetan concedes that the Secunda Via proves the existence of a being who is the first cause, i.e., an uncaused cause. But, in the opinion of Cajetan, it is not the Secunda Via, but the deduction of attributes in the later questions of the Summa Theologicae which shows that the first efficient cause is God. In our attempt to evaluate this theory of Cajetan we have come to the conclusion that Cajetan was justified in his interpretation. The basic factor influencing this evaluation was the fact that St. Thomas does not rest satisfied when he says, "there exists a first efficient cause, and this being we call God." He goes on to prove that this being is God. He does not do this in the Secunda Via, but only when he shows that this first efficient cause is infinite, eternal, and absolutely immutable.
CHAPTER IV

THE ARGUMENT FROM POSSIBLE BEING

A. The argument in St. Thomas

1. Its sources

There is perhaps no more controverted problem in the twentieth century relative to the Five Ways than the interpretation of part of the Third Way. The disputed passage is that which states "if all things were possible, then at some time nothing was."\(^1\) As one might expect, from the diversity of interpretations, there are diverse opinions regarding the source of the Tertia Via. These may be classified into three groups:

a) Those who hold that Moses Maimonides is the immediate source, Avicenna being the intermediate, and Aristotle (probably, *Metaphysics*, book IX, ch. 8) the ultimate source.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)&nbsp;Since this problem did not come into focus until recent times—it was, in fact, passed over in silence by the early commentators—we are here interested only in the source of the argument as our direct and primary concern.

b) Those who maintain that Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (book XII, ch. 6) is the direct source.  

3Carpenter, 212; Lucien Chambat, O.S.B., "La Tertia Via dans Saint Thomas et Aristotle", *Revue Thomiste*, X (1927), 46.

c) Those who insist that the *De Caelo et Mundo* (book I, chs. 11 and 12) is the source.  


What follows is an attempt to summarize the various suggested sources.

a) *Moses Maimonides* 5 (treating of generation and corruption):  
It is evident that there are only three possible divisions of things: either (i) nothing is generable and corruptible, or (ii) all things are generable and corruptible, or (iii) some are and some things are not generable and corruptible. The first hypothesis is excluded by sense experience. The second is also false, because if all were corruptible it would follow necessarily that all things are corrupted. But in that case nothing would now exist. However, it is evident that things do exist. Therefore,
the second hypothesis is false.⁶ 

It follows that there must be some necessary being. This being must be necessary either by reason of its substance or by reason of its cause. But the latter (Aristotle's ingenerate and incorruptible heavenly body) in turn demands a cause which would be necessary by reason of its substance. This cause altogether necessary in itself is "the blessed Creator."

This passage of Maimonides, as Gilson suggests, appears to have its source, through Avicenna,⁷ in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (book IX, ch. 8). In this chapter Aristotle explains the various senses in which the actual precedes the potential. One of the ways in which the actual precedes the potential, according to Aristotle, is a result of the fact that eternal things are always actual, never potential. He gives a complicated proof of the incompatibility of eternity and potentiality. The gist of the

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⁶Renatus Arnaud, S.J. in his collection of documents, *De Quinque Viis Sancti Thomas* (Rome, 1932), mentions that the argument was disputed among medieval Jews (and refers to Munk, p. 39, n. 2; and Weiss, p. 30, n. 45, 46). Gilson adds (giving as his reference Levy, Maimonides, p. 128) that Maimonides himself had given to the translator Ibn Tibbon the explanation that, even though a possible does not necessarily have to be realized in an individual, it must be realized in a species; otherwise it is not a "possible". *Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 452, n. 46. It is probable that Maimonides is thinking of the Aristotelian doctrine of an eternal world, but this is not all evident from the text.

proof seems to be this: that which is capable of being may either be or not be. From this Aristotle argues that those things which have potentiality are perishable—they are perishable to the extent that they are potential. Consequently, it is only those things which have no potentiality that are imperishable. In other words, all imperishable things are actual. Aristotle's next step is to point out that the primary things, i.e., the heavenly bodies, since they exist of necessity, are imperishable and therefore have no potentiality. (We know that "the primary things" exist of necessity, for if they did not exist nothing would exist.)

It is well to note that this argument does not really prove what it apparently attempted to prove, viz., the incompatibility of eternity and potentiality. What it really proves is that imperishable things are always in act, i.e., have no potency; but since it indicates that imperishable things are eternal, it also proves that some eternal things are always in act. Aristotle, however, does not make this distinction; he appears to use the terms "imperishable" and "eternal" synonymously. But (in this passage, at any rate) he does not prove that they are synonymous.

b) **Aristotle's Metaphysics, XII, ch. 6**

In this chapter Aristotle takes as his premise the necessity of eternal motion. From that he argues to the necessity of an eternal mover. If the mover be not necessary, i.e., if there be potentiality in it, then its effect, motion, would not be necessary.9

The connection between this argument and the *Tertia Via* is that Aristotle here implies that if all things were able to be or not to be nothing would be in motion. (For Aristotle any single motion proves the eternity of motion; therefore, eternal motion is an eternal and necessary truth.) The *Tertia Via*, as we shall see, argues that if all things were able to be or not to be nothing would now exist. As the reality of motion was most obvious to Aristotle, the reality of existence was most obvious to St. Thomas.

c) **Aristotle's De Caelo et Mundo, I, ch. 11, 12**

Having defined the terms "ungenerated", "generated", "destructible", "indestructible", "possible" and "impossible", and having pointed out the difference between an impossible proposition and a false one, Aristotle proceeds to prove that the eternal must be indestructible and that the generated and destructible cannot

9Ibid. 1071b, 18-b, 26.
be eternal. His subtle reasoning begins with the statement that, although one can have at any one time the capacity of two opposites (e.g., a man lying down has the potentiality both to stand and to sit), one cannot have the capacity for opposites at the same time (the man does not have the potentiality to stand and sit at one and the same time). Now, if a thing is eternal it has, obviously, the capacity to exist for all time; if the same thing is destructible it has the capacity not to exist for some time. But that "some time" must coincide with a portion of "all time"; therefore, an eternal, destructible thing has the capacity of existing and of not-existing at one and the same time. But it has been pointed out that this is impossible; and since only impossible hypothesis result in impossible conclusions, the hypothesis, "an eternal, destructible thing", must be intrinsically contradictory. We conclude: every eternal thing is indestructible.  

We have now described the three possible sources of the Tertia Via. We have seen how Moses Maimonides established the existence of a necessary being, and we have noted the possible weakness of his argument. (It is not quite clear from his words

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10 The destructible is necessarily generated and corruptible, as Aristotle explicitly mentions in 282b, 1.

11 De Caelo, 281b, 16-283b, 22.
how it follows that, if all things were corruptible, all would have corrupted.) We have examined briefly the Aristotelian argument usually suggested as the source of Maimonides' proof; the connection seems to lie in Aristotle's statement that if the primary, necessary, eternal beings did not exist, nothing would exist. (It seems that this theory is simply supposed here; it is not demonstrated.) The second probable direct source is the sixth chapter of the twelfth book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle establishes the existence of a necessary eternal mover from his supposition that motion is eternal. Finally, we have seen that Aristotle, in *De Caelo et Mundo*, proves, or attempts to prove, that eternity and destructibility are incompatible. It is hard to decide which of these arguments is the actual source of the *Tertia Via*, but it is obvious that the argument of Maimonides as well as the last-mentioned argument of Aristotle bear a very close resemblance to the Third Way as found in St. Thomas.

2. **Form in the early writings**

In the thirteenth chapter of the first book of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* St. Thomas decided to set forth the arguments of the philosophers and theologians to prove the existence of God. It is interesting to note that, although he produces an argument corresponding to each of the other arguments of the *Quinque Viae*, there is no argument in that Chapter corresponding to the *Tertia*
Via. However, we do find a variation of the Tertia Via in the fifteenth chapter, where St. Thomas proves the eternity of God, and also in the fifteenth chapter of the second book as part of the proof that God is the cause of all things. Since the form of the argument as it appears in each of these books is practically identical with that of the other, it will be sufficient to quote it from book I:

We see in the world some things which are able to be and not to be, namely generable and corruptible things. Everything, however, which is able to be has a cause, because, when of itself it has an equal orientation to two things, namely to esse and to non-esse, it is expedient that, if it has esse, it should have it from some cause. But we cannot proceed to infinity in causes, as was shown above through the reasoning of Aristotle; therefore it is necessary that there be something which exists necessarily. However, every necessary thing either has the cause of its necessity from another or it does not (i.e., it is necessary of itself). It is impossible, however, to proceed to infinity in necessary things which have a cause of necessity other than themselves; therefore it is necessary to postulate some first necessary being; and this is God, since he is the first cause, as was said above.

This argument is metaphysical in tenor and relatively valid as distinct from the argument of the Summa Theologicae, which has a passage much disputed because of temporal connotations which seem to contradict other Thomistic theories. As we shall see later, this form of the argument uses as a premise the proposition that every possible being at some time does not, or did not,

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12On only one other occasion does St. Thomas use this argument: Expositio in Dionysium De De Divinis Nominitbus, c. V, lect. l.
13Contra Gentiles, I, xv.
exist. It deduces immediately from this that, if all beings were possible, at some particular "time" nothing would exist. The first of these propositions seems to conflict with St. Thomas' doctrine that we cannot prove from reason that the world—certainly a possible being—did not always exist. Against the second proposition it has been argued that, even if all possibles exist only for a time, there is no reason why they should all not be at one and the same "time".

In the sixteenth chapter of the first book of the Contra Gentiles are two arguments (in proof of the fact that there is no passive potency in God) which have recently been proposed as a connecting link between the argument in the Contra Gentiles corresponding to the Tertia Via and the problematic temporal passage of the argument in the Summa Theologicae. Here St. Thomas proves that there is no passive potency in God by the following arguments: 1) God is eternal. Therefore he is not able not to be. But every substance in which there is potency is able not to be. 11) Although things which are sometimes in potency, sometimes in act are first in the order of time in potency, yet a being in act must precede a potential being. But nothing precedes God; therefore he is not a potential being, i.e., he is devoid of all pot-

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11) This was proposed by Father V. Heris, O.P., in Bulletin Thomiste, V Annee, No. 4 (1928), p. 319.
Let us first consider the implications of these two arguments. The first states, without proof, that an eternal being is not able not to be. It follows logically from this that possible beings are not eternal, and this is the solution to the meaning of the disputed passage in the Tertia Via. At first sight it seems that there is an error here: someone could object to the statement that, because eternal beings are all necessary, things that are not necessary are not eternal. The point of the objection would be that, though things that are not necessary are not eternal of their own nature, or de jure, they could be eternal de facto. The objection is true insofar as it goes, but it overlooks the fact that, if a being not eternal of its own nature exists de facto forever, it needs a necessary eternal being to give it the capacity of existing forever. In other words, if a thing is corruptible by nature it can exist forever only if an extrinsic cause impedes its corruption—and this perfectly satisfies the demands of the Tertia Via.

It has also been argued that the second argument from the sixteenth chapter of the Contra Gentiles given above throws considerable light on the Tertia Via. In this argument in the

15 Contra Gentiles, I, xvi.
16 This is Fr. Heris' theory.
Contra Gentiles St. Thomas points out that things which are sometimes in potency, sometimes in act, are in potency before they are in act. At first sight it would seem that this means that all potential beings, taking "potential" to mean beings which have potency, have a period of non-existence before they actually exist. If that were the meaning of St. Thomas' statement, then truly this would be related to the Tertia Via. But, in fact, St. Thomas does not speak of "potential" or possible beings without qualification; he speaks of beings which, in fact, sometimes exist, sometimes do not. It is hard to see what bearing this has on the problematic temporal passage of the Tertia Via: "If all things were possible, then at some time nothing would be." The latter refers to possible beings, the other speaks of possible beings which sometimes do not exist. We conclude that this argument of the Contra Gentiles is not related to the Tertia Via.

3. Form in the Summa Theologicae

St. Thomas begins his argument by indicating the obvious fact that some things come into existence and cease existing. He refers to these things as "possibles", since they do not exist necessarily but are able to be or not to be. He goes on to say that "it is impossible for these always to exist, for, that which can not-be at some time is not; therefore, if everything can not-be, then at some time there was nothing in existence." But in
that case nothing would now exist; this is obvious because if nothing existed nothing could come into existence. But things do exist; therefore the hypothesis, "everything can not-be", is false. There must be some necessary being or beings. But a necessary being, in turn, is either caused or uncaused, and by the application of the Secunda Via we can deduce that ultimately there must be "some being having of itself its own necessity and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God." With these general observations in mind, we can now turn to Cajetan's commentary.

17 *Summa Theologiae*, I, 11, 3. There are two questionable statements in the argument. The first is the assertion that corruptible things must corrupt. We have seen this explained in its Aristotelian source: eternity is not compatible with corruptibility; otherwise opposed potencies could be actuated at the same time. The other difficult statement, that which indicates that all corruptible things would be non-existent at the same time, is apparently opposed to the Thomistic principle that the corruption of one thing is the generation of another. It appears that St. Thomas is keeping in mind the hypothesis, "if everything can not-be". According to this hypothesis there would be nothing necessary in the world, not even a necessary substratum, and consequently generation would not follow corruption.

18 It would seem that the third sentence of the Leonine version, "Impossible est autem omnia quae sunt talia, semper esse", should be corrected to read: "Impossible est autem omnia quae sunt, talia esse." This is justified by the omission of the word "semper" from codices CEFpAD and ed. a as footnoted in the Leonine edition, p. 31. See Peter O'Reilly, *The Tertia Via*, Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, XXX (1956), 119, 120. This reading is obviously more logical.
B. The Criticism of Cajetan

1. Its background

In regard to the Prima Via we have seen the possibility that Cajetan was influenced by the Averroistic theory that the proof of the existence of God should be relegated to physics, or the philosophy of nature. Cajetan's express reference to the Commentator in his remarks on the Secunda Via and his limitation of the conclusion to nothing more than the mover of the heavenly body gave some grounds for our thinking that here, too, he is convinced that only a physical argument can be used to prove the existence of God. In his commentary on the Tertia Via, however, it is fairly clear that this is not Cajetan's position. The Tertia Via, at least in part, is evidently of a metaphysical nature. It concludes to "some being having of itself its own necessity," which is a metaphysical concept. Cajetan admits this conclusion.

Let us again ask the question: what influenced Cajetan's interpretations? The fact that he considered the Tertia Via a metaphysical argument is ample proof that he was not under the spell of an a priori conviction that proof of God's existence belongs exclusively to the philosophy of nature. Consequently, we can logically infer that it was not such a consideration that made him see the Prima and Secunda Viae as physical arguments.
Rather, it seems to have been the structure of the *Summa Theologiae* that influenced Cajetan's decision. He repeatedly points out that many divine attributes are not contained in the conclusions of the Five Ways but special questions are devoted to establishing them. If any particular attribute is expressed in the conclusion of one of the Five Ways, is it not, Cajetan asks, to prove it later from other arguments? 19

2. **Form of criticism**

After pointing out that the First Way leads only to a mover no more immobile than an intellective soul, and after asserting that the Second Way establishes only a mover of a heavenly body, Cajetan adds that the other three ways do not go beyond these limits. 20 While admitting that the conclusion of the *Tertia Via* is a first necessary being having its necessity from itself, he declares the question of its unicity is still unanswered. 21 However, as with the other proofs, he insists that the terminus is,

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19 The objection could be raised that Cajetan says that the conclusion of the *Tertia Via* does lead beyond that of the *Secunda*. We shall deal with this when evaluating his position.


21 *Ibid.*, "*Tertiae vero viae, ex parte necessarii, sat est quod ducat ad primum necessarium non ex alio, non curando an sit unum vel plura; hoc enim quaegetur in quaestione XI."
in truth, proper to God, so that, when the existence of that attribute is demonstrated, the existence of God as possessor of that attribute is proved directly, although "quasi per accidens". 22

Suarez, as we shall now see, had some similar remarks to make on the proof.

C. Does Suarez object to the Tertia Via?

The limitation imposed by Suarez on the Secunda Via would equally apply to the Tertia Via. He demands that a proof of God's existence concludes, not only to a being necessary and a se, but also unique and the fountain of all being. He would agree with Cajetan, therefore, that the notion of necessity-from-self does not contain the notion of unicity; and he adds that the attribute of being the "fountain head of all being" is also required for a proof of the existence of God, but is not present in the notion of "self-necessity." 23

In another passage Suarez explicitly declares that, when a being having necessity from itself has been proven, unicity is the only attribute remaining to be proved in order to complete

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22 Ibid., "Omnia enim haece praedicata, scilicet movens immobile ... necessarium non ex alio ... sunt secundum veritatem propria Deo."

23 Suarez, p. 35. See quotation in note of Ch. iii.
the demonstration of the existence of God. 24

We can gather from what has been said that Suarez objects to the Tertia Via only to the degree that Cajetan does. We have already seen that it was in the same sense and for the same reason that Suarez objected to the Secunda Via. Consequently, the following evaluation, insofar as it refers to Suarez, will be pertinent to his criticism of the Secunda Via as well as to his limitation of the Tertia Via.

D. Evaluation of Cajetan and Suarez

No one in our day can read a commentary on the Tertia Via by an early scholastic without wondering at his passing over without comment the first part of the argument, i.e., the part which proves the existence of a necessary being on the grounds that if all beings were possible nothing would now exist. 25 But if we

24 Ibid., p. 48: "...demonstrato a posteriori Deum esse ens necessarium et a se, ex hoc attributo posse a priori demonstrari, praeter illud non posse esse aliud ens necessarium et a se, et consequenter demonstrari Deum esse."

25 Cajetan, as we have seen, has practically no comment on the proof. Bannes (in I, 11, 3 ad 4 contra tertiam rationem) and Billot (pp. 66, 67) agree with the words of St. Thomas with little explanation. John of St. Thomas, Cursus Theologicus (Paris, 1931), p. 426, and later authors such as Billuart, p. 50, Gotti, Theologia Scholastica Dogmatiae juxta Mentem Divi Thomae Aquinat- is, I. De Deo, tract. II, q. 1, dub. 4, par. 4, and Lepiciier, De Deo Uno (Paris, 1902), pp. 144-145, make the argument a purely metaphysical one.
consider the conclusion of the argument taken as a whole, emphasizing the metaphysical reasoning rather than the difficult "temporal" passage, the argument involves no special difficulty, since all scholastic philosophers will admit that possible or corruptible being demands necessary or incorruptible being as its ultimate explanation. Cajetan accepts the conclusion of the Tertia Via—a being necessary from itself—and he admits that the being thus proven is God. But he insists that we do not yet know that this being is God because we do not yet know that he is unique. Suarez admits that it is not at all self-evident that there can be only one necessary being whose necessity is from himself, and, although he does not expressly refer to the Tertia Via, this position indicates that he would never grant that this argument of St. Thomas proves the existence of God.

Cajetan refers to the eleventh question of this (first) part of the Summa Theologiae where St. Thomas proves the unicity of God. He points out that St. Thomas makes no appeal medially or immediately to the conclusion of the Tertia Via in order to prove that God is unique. It is true, of course, that this point is only of negative value; but, surely, if the attribute proved in the Third Way, viz., self-necessity, contained the notion of unity, St. Thomas would use that to deduce the unicity. But, as we

26 See Appendix of this paper.
have pointed out, he does not.

This is not to say, however, that it cannot be shown that a being absolutely necessary from itself is unique. That being which, by its own right, is not able not to be can be shown to be Ipsum Esse Subsistens (since its essence will be to be), and the unity of such a being can be demonstrated, as it is by St. Thomas most clearly in his De Ente et Essentia\textsuperscript{27} (an argument with which Cajetan is familiar, as is evident from his approving commentary).\textsuperscript{28} In the De Ente Aquinas proves the unicity of Ipsum Esse Subsistens by showing that it cannot be multiplied in any of the three ways in which things are multiplied: (i) by the addition of some difference (it would no longer be the act of pure existing but the act of existing plus some form); (ii) by being received in different parts of matter (it would not then be a pure subsistent being but a material act of being); (iii) by being separate from "another" like it which is in a subject (but ipsum esse subsistens by definition cannot be received in anything). Following this line of reasoning in De Ente, St. Thomas concludes that ipsum esse subsistens is unique.

This reasoning process could, it appears, be added on to the


\textsuperscript{28}For Suarez, who denies the real distinction between essence and existence, this argument would not have the same force.
Tertia Via, but since it is not there it will not do to say that the being proved by the Third Way is proved there to be unique.

However, it may be objected that Cajetan was in error in saying that the terminus of this argument (as also of the fourth and fifth) is no higher than that of the First and Second Ways, because it is obvious that the being who exists necessarily from itself (conclusion of the Tertia Via) is higher than a heavenly body (conclusion of the Secunda Via). Yet while it is true that Cajetan, commenting on the Secunda Via, first restricts its conclusion to a heavenly body or its mover, later he calls it primum efficiens. To us this term has a much nobler connotation than a heavenly body has, but, as explained in the discussion of the Secunda Via, the proof itself has not given any grounds for this difference. Consequently, Cajetan is justified in maintaining that, if one does not yet know that God exists but is simply arguing from sensible causality to that conclusion, the primum efficiens would not be evidently higher than a heavenly body. Now, if we apply the point just made to the conclusion of the Tertia Via we can see that here too Cajetan is justified. In the Tertia Via St. Thomas starts with another attribute of sensible things--corruptibility and, therefore, possibility--and argues to a being necessary in itself. For all we know at this stage of the reasoning, this may be nothing more than the heavenly body or its mover. Or, to put it more logically, we have not yet proved that
it is not the heavenly body which is the first uncaused efficient cause and the self-necessary being.

To summarize our discussion of the Tertia Via: we have considered the problem of its source and have seen that scholars vary widely in their opinions; we have examined briefly other writings of St. Thomas himself for indications as to how the author of the argument would have interpreted it; and in the sixteenth chapter of the first book of the Contra Gentiles we found evidence that the whole argument of the Tertia Via should be interpreted quite literally. We studied the objections of Cajetan and Suarez, both of whom maintain that proof of a being necessary in itself does not constitute a proof of the existence of God, since the notion of self-necessity does not contain the notion of unicity. We finally concluded, especially from an examination of the actual arguments used by St. Thomas to prove that God is unique, that the Tertia Via cannot be said to be a complete proof of the existence of God.
CHAPTER V

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GRADATION OF PERFECTION

1. Its sources

In our study of the Tertia via we saw that, though there was one problematic passage, the argument as a whole was generally considered valid. But this is not the case in regard to the quarta via: here the whole argument is problematic, in the sense that each of the premises has been seriously questioned throughout the centuries and even down to our own day.

The question of the sources of the quarta via, on the other hand, is not as difficult as the question of the sources of the Tertia via. In the text of the Summa Theologicae St. Thomas refers¹ to the second book of Aristotle's Metaphysics as the source of his statement that those things which are supremely true are supremely being. In the proof as it appeared in the Contra Gentiles² he had also made this reference, besides mentioning the

¹Summa Theologicae, I, ii, 3.
²Contra Gentiles, I, xiii.
fourth book of the *Metaphysics* as an authority for the proposition that degrees of truth demand a supreme true being. Simplicius quotes a passage from Aristotle's *De Philosophia* which contains a proof almost identical with St. Thomas' in the *Contra Gentiles*, and Simplicius informs us that Aristotle borrowed the argument from Plato. On this ground we can say the *Quarta Via* was influenced indirectly by Plato—indirectly, because St. Thomas probably did not know the works in which Plato develops this argument. It is also possible that the Platonic argument influenced the *Quarta Via* by means of St. Augustine, who, as we shall see, has a closely related argument for proving the existence of God.

In the *Banquet* Plato tells us that the lover of the beautiful, if persistent in his search for beauty, will ultimately arrive at the absolute Beauty, of which all other beautiful things are mere participations. His point seems to be that the various grades of beauty never offer a satisfactory explanation of beauty;

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3St. Thomas probably did not know this passage from the *De Philosophia* which is quoted by Simplicius in his commentary on the *De Coelo*: "In a general manner, wherever we find the better, we find also the best. Since among beings some agree better than others, there must be a best, and this is the Divine Being." (fr. 1476B, 22-24). See Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 453, n. 5, and Carpenter, p. 215.

4Some, however, would deny Platonic influence in the proof. See Carpenter, 214-215. Another passage of St. Thomas linking the notions of divine causality and participation refers explicitly to a Platonic source—*In Joannem Evangelistam Expositio*, Prologus.
the only explanation is the absolute subsistent Beauty.\footnote{Banquet, 210e-211d. Recent studies tend to show the great importance of the theory of participation in Thomistic metaphysics; new light is thrown on St. Thomas' dependence on Plato; and the Quarta Via is coming into its own. See Sister M. Annice, "Historical Sketch of the Theory of Participation", The New Scholasticism XXVI (1952), 49-97; W. Clarke, "The Limitation of Act by Potency" The New Scholasticism XXVI (1952) 167-194; C. A. Hart "Participation and the Thomistic Five Ways" The New Scholasticism XXXVI (1952), 267-282.]

In the \textit{Phaedo} Plato points out that, if Phaedo and Phaedrus are both beautiful, beauty cannot be proper to one of them, for the other also has beauty. For these things are beautiful, they are not beauty.\footnote{Phaedo, 101a.} There must be something external to these beautiful things which is Beauty itself. In another passage Plato says that Phaedo cannot be said to be beautiful without restriction, nor is Socrates great without restriction. In them these qualities are mixed with their opposites.\footnote{Ibid., 102b.} They are mixed and impure because they are only participations in absolute Beauty and absolute Greatness.

Just as Plato's theory of participation just mentioned contains the basic doctrine on which the \textit{Quarta Via} is established, Aristotle's works give in more explicit terms the principles of the argument. Since the passages in Aristotle are quite brief, we will quote them in full:
Aristotle: Metaphysics, II, Ch. 1. (993b, 19-31):

We do not know a truth without its cause; and a thing has a quality in a higher degree than other things if in virtue of it the similar quality belongs to the other things as well (e.g., fire is the hottest of things; for it is the cause of the heat of all other things); so that, that which causes derivative truths to be true is most true. Hence the principles of eternal things must be always most true (for they are not merely sometimes true, nor is there any cause of their being, but they themselves are the cause of the being of other things), so that as each thing is in respect of being, so is it in respect of truth. 8

Aristotle: Metaphysics, IV, Ch. 4. (1008b, 31-1009a, 5):

However much all things may be "so and not so", still there is a more and a less in the nature of things; for we should not say that two and three are equally even, nor is he who thinks four things are five equally wrong with him who thinks they are a thousand. If, then, they are not equally wrong, obviously one is less wrong and therefore more right. If, then, that which has more of any quality is nearer the norm, there must be some truth to which the more true is nearer. And even if there is not, still there is already something better founded and liker the truth, and we shall have got rid of the unqualified doctrine which would prevent us from determining anything in our thought. 9

As the pagan philosophers had searched for the Absolute, using the principle that the limited must be a participation of the infinite, so, too, did St. Augustine in the Christian era. St. Augustine, referring to the perfections as held by the Platonic philosophers to be divine, argues from the degrees of created beauty to the unchangeable source of that beauty. The key passage

8McKeon edition, p. 712-713.
9Ibid., p. 743.
in Augustine is as follows:

Undoubtedly, anything susceptible of degrees is mutable, and for this reason the most able, learned and experienced philosophers readily concluded that the first form of all could not be in any of these things in which the form was clearly mutable. Once they perceived various degrees of beauty in both body and mind, they realized that if all form were lacking their very existence would end. Thus they argued that there must be some reality in which the form was ultimate, immutable, and therefore not susceptible of degrees. They rightly concluded that only a reality unmade from which all other realities originate could be the ultimate principle of things.10

2. Form in the early writings

The Quarta Via is found in the thirteenth chapter of the first book of the Summa Contra Gentiles together with the First, Second and Fifth Ways. However, this is not its first appearance in the writings of St. Thomas, since many forms of this argument, more or less approximating that of the Summa Theologica, are contained in St. Thomas' commentary on The Sentences of Peter Lombard.11 These arguments closely link the ideas of createdness, imperfection (in varying degrees), and participation. Wherever St. Thomas uses the argument we note a constant tendency to use degrees of goodness and degrees of beauty as starting points of

10St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, trans. G. G. Walsh and Grace Monahan (New York, 1952), Book VIII, Ch. 6, p. 32.

11St. Thomas, In I Sent., III, divisio primae partis textus; In II Sent., I, 1, 1; ibid., I, 1, 2.
the argument; and variation in degrees of heat is his favorite example.

The following are two forms of the argument appearing in The Sentences that closely resemble the form in the Summa Theologiae:

There are two other reasons which are deduced from a consideration of the way of eminence. But eminence can be taken in two ways: either in relation to esse; or in relation to knowledge.

Therefore, the third way is taken from the way of eminence in esse and is as follows: Good and better are said through a comparison to the best. But in substances we find the body good and the created spirit better—but the goodness of spirit is not from itself. Therefore, it is necessary that there be something best from which each has its goodness.

The fourth way argues from eminence in knowledge and is as follows. In whatsoever things there is found more and less beauty there is found some principle of beauty by approximation to which one is said to be more beautiful than the other. But we find bodies to be more beautiful by sensible form, spirits by intelligible form. Therefore, there must be something from which each is beautiful and to whom created spirits approach more closely.\(^\text{12}\)

Before quoting the argument from the text usually considered parallel to the Five Ways passage of the Summa Theologiae (viz., I Contra Gentiles, 13), we should note that the principle of the Quarta Via are extensively used also in a later work, Quaestiones Disputatae: De Potentia Dei.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{12}\)In I Sent. III, divisio primae partis textus.

\(^{13}\)Articles five and six. These passages are frequently used by Thomists to solve the difficulties of the texts of the two Summae. The closest in form to the latter makes explicit reference to Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book II.
Here are the words of the proof in the Contra Gentiles:

Another argument can be educed from the words of Aristotle in the second book of the Metaphysics. For there he shows that those things which are most true are most being. In the fourth book of the Metaphysics he notes also that there is something most true from the fact that we see one of two falsehoods to be more false than the other; and it follows that one is also more true than the other. This, however, is by way of approximation to that which is simply and most perfectly true. From which we can conclude further that there is something which is "most being" (maxima ens); and this we call God.14

3. Form in the Summa Theologiae

The Quarta Via in the Summa Theologiae begins with the degrees of goodness, truth, nobility "and the like" which we observe in things. Working on the principle that "more and less are predicated of different things according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum", St. Thomas concludes that there must be something which is truest, best and noblest. (He gives no proof of the principle just quoted; he merely gives the example of heat: things are called hotter as they approximate the hottest thing.) And because there is something which is truest there must be something which is "most being", since (and here St. Thomas refers to the second book of Aristotle's Metaphysics) those things that are greatest in good are greatest in being.

14Contra Gentiles, I, xiii.
The argument then continues on a different note: St. Thomas gives a second general principle, "the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in any genus," and again his only proof is the example of fire: fire, which is the maximum of heat, is the cause of all things hot. St. Thomas concludes, "Therefore there must be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God."15

B. The Criticism of Cajetan

1. Its background

As in the case of the other *Vieae* there is no reason for believing the theory that Cajetan was under the spell of Averroes when he asserts that this argument does not directly prove the existence of God.16 Cajetan's opinion seems to have been influenced once again simply by the consideration of the use to which St. Thomas puts the conclusion of this argument in investigating the divine attributes. For, although St. Thomas does say in the *quarta Via* that the "maxime ens" is called God, yet he still considers it necessary to prove that the same being is Pure

15 *Summa Theologiae*, I, ii, 3.

16 The theory in question suggests that Cajetan relegated any proof of God's existence to the physical order. But this proof as explained by him (see below) is obviously metaphysical.
Act, simple, infinite, and immutable. Hence, Cajetan argues, since St. Thomas himself did not seem to think that the Fourth Way concluded to an infinite being such as we ordinarily consider God to be, there is no reason why we should think anything opposite or attribute to the "Way" a force which it actually does not possess. We can now take up Cajetan's criticism itself, which is quite brief.

2. Its form

Cajetan wastes no words on this argument from the grades of perfection. As with the Third and Fifth Ways, he claims that the terminus of this Way does not go beyond the first heavenly mover proved by the Second Way. Although this Fourth Way arrives at a predicate in truth proper to God like the other ways, like them also it does not prove "a being incorporeal, immaterial, eternal, most high, immutable, first, most perfect, etc..." It does not prove God "such as we hold God to be." But Cajetan does not explain why the direct terminus of the proof falls short of the indirect terminus, viz., God as God. He merely says, "It suffices that the Fourth Way from the grades of things lead to the supreme being, true, good and noble, of whom all things are participations."17 In other words this proof leads to a knowledge of God

17"Quartae alsoque vias, ex gradibus rerum, sat est ducere ad maxime ens, verum bonum, nobile, a quo sunt omnium participations." Cajetan, I Summa Theologiae, I, ii, 3.
but does no formally demonstrate His existence.

C. Criticism of Suarez

1. Does Suarez object to the Quarta Via?

Suarez, as we shall see, doubts the principle, "the greatest in any genus is the cause of all in that genus." Moreover, he denies that Aristotle ever used this principle: on the contrary, he says, Aristotle held the opposite. Aristotle would admit that "The cause is the greatest", but since this is a universal affirmative proposition it does not admit of simple conversion into "The greatest is the cause." What Aristotle did say was that in every group containing imperfect things there is a most perfect as a standard or measure of the others. But this perfect thing or standard is not necessarily the cause of the others. However, Suarez admits that in the case of being the principle is true: the supreme being is the cause of all things in the genus of being (It is obvious that in the principle the word "genus"

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18 Suarez, p. 54. "Deinde prinsipium illud in se sumptum non est ita evidens ut ex illo possit demonstratio confici. Imo verum non esse docuerit Durand. 2; d. 15, q. 3. et Aureol. apud Caspr., I, d. 3, q. 1. Quia homo licet sit omnium animalium perfectissimus, non ob id est causa castarorum, neque albedo reliquarum colorum, etiam perfectissimus color sit; unde etiam Cajet., 1 p. 2. 2, a. 3, sentit axioma illud de propria causa, et præsertim efficiente intellectus, non esse necessarium neque verum."

19 Metaphysica, X, 1.
is loosely used here since "being" and the other transcendental truths are not, strictly speaking, in a genus). That the supreme being is the cause of all other beings he demonstrates by showing that the first uncreated being is infinite in perfection and therefore all powerful. And since it can produce all things Suarez concludes that it does produce all existing things and that there is no other uncreated being. 20

Now we can see the extremely interesting, if somewhat complicated, relationship between the Fourth Way of St. Thomas and its principles as used by Suarez. In the Summa Theologiae this argument is, as already indicated, deeply complex. It seems to have two separate though related parts. We shall consider these parts individually.

The first part is that which concluded to the existence of a "reality ens". The best way to interpret this passage seems to be this: since essential perfections (e.g., humanity) do not admit of degrees, and since predicamental perfections (e.g., wealth, color, heat) do not have an absolute degree (heat being used by St. Thomas merely as a sensible example), this proof

20"Nunc vero in re ipsa conabimur probare in primo ente restante sequi ex eo, quod est maximum ens, esse causam caeterorum, esto id universe non sequatur . . . Unde sequatur id quod est maximum ens, est causa caeterorum,

Primum ens improductum est summum perfectionem et infinitum ergo ad agendum potentissimum, ergo potest producere omnia, quae participant seu habent esse; ergo producat omnia, quae sunt, neque aliquid praeter illud est improductum." Suarez, p. 55.
refers exclusively to transcendental perfections (being, unity, truth, goodness, beauty, nobility). Now since these perfections evidently exist in sensible things in varying degrees, yet being of their own nature unlimited, they must have been caused in their state of limitation by a being possessing them in an unlimited degree. In other words, the imperfect is necessarily and ultimately caused by the perfect. This interpretation, not at all evident in the *Summa Theologica*, is seen to be the mind of St. Thomas if we compare it with the fifth article of the third book of the *De Potentia* (already referred to as the key passage to an intelligent understanding of the *Quarta Via*),21 for this is clearly the form of St. Thomas' argument as it appears in the second work.

According to this interpretation the conclusion drawn from this principle is the existence of a supreme being. Suárez, however, does not deal with this half of the argument. Therefore, we cannot say that he accepts or rejects this argument.

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21 *De Potentia*, III, v. "Oportet enim, si aliquid communiter in pluribus invenitur, quod ab aliqua una causa in illis causetur; non enim potest esse quod illud communs utrique ex seipso conveniat, cum utrumque, secundum quod ipsum est, ab altero distinguatur; et diversitas causarum diversos effectus producit. Cum ergo esse inveniatur omnibus rebus communes, quae secundum illud quod sunt, ab invisiem distinctas sunt, oportet quod de necessitate eis non ex seipsis, sed ab aliqua una causa esse attribuatur. Et ista videtur ratio Platonis, qui voluit, quod ante omnem multitudinem esset aliqua unitas non solum in numeris, sed etiam in rerum natura."
On the other hand, as we have already seen, Suarez does concern himself with the basic principle of the second part of the *Quaer. Via*. In this second part St. Thomas expresses what is implicit in the first: namely, that the supreme being is the efficient cause of the limited degrees of being. Why he does so is hard to decide; probably he wanted to emphasize the efficiency of the supreme being whose exemplarity was discussed in the first part. On the other hand, it may merely be intended as an Aristotelian proposition pertinent to the main argument that imperfection demands the perfect.\(^{22}\) (It should be noted that the *Contra Gentiles* proof omits this aspect of efficiency, and Aristotle did not use it to conclude to a supreme being).

Now we can see where St. Thomas and Suarez agreed in regard to the principle, "the greatest in any genus is the cause of all in that genus," and in what they disagreed. They agreed in their understanding of the truth contained in the proposition but differed in regard to the means for discovering that truth. Moreover, they differed in the application or the use they made of it. St. Thomas deduces this truth from metaphysical principles (based on the insufficiency of the imperfect) and from this truth concludes to the existence of a Supreme Being. Suarez concludes

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\(^{22}\) Despite the denial of Suarez it does seem that Aristotle uses this principle of exemplary-efficient causality in Meta. II, 1 (as quoted in p. 81, note 8 of this chapter).
to this truth from the already proven existence of an all-powerful being and uses it to arrive at a knowledge of other attributes of that being. These attributes, of course, are for him all-important, for it is only with the demonstration of them that he is finally satisfied that the being he has discovered is truly God.

Does Suarez then object to the Fourth Way? We have found that he rejects one of its principles, but that only apparently. In reality his opinion regarding the truth of that principle does not differ from St. Thomas'. But he does not use the principle to prove the existence of God. That is, he does not use the Fourth Way as found in St. Thomas.

D. An Evaluation of Cajetan's Position

Cajetan, as we have seen, accepts the Quarta Via as a proof of a supreme being who is also supremely good and true. This is a being in whose goodness and truth all others participate. But he insists that these predications do not express "God as God". Therefore, he says the Quarta Via does not prove the existence of God.

There is no reason to believe that Cajetan did not understand the Quarta Via; and, in our opinion, he seems to be perfectly faithful to St. Thomas when he asserts that the "terminus" of this argument is a supreme being of whom all other beings are participations. This is certainly a metaphysical notion of God.
On the other hand, we believe it could be called physical in the sense that it does not express what God is in Himself but rather His relation (loosely speaking) to creatures. In other words, it defines God in terms of creatures.

Are the notions of Pure Act, eternity, simplicity, contained in the notion of "supreme being of whom all others participate"? Certainly these notions can be deduced by a process of argumentation from the notion of a supreme being, and this means that they are virtually contained in it. But the very fact that further process of reasoning is required means that those attributes are not found explicitly as the terminus of the Quarta Via. Consequently, although that terminus may express preeminently the supreme being in His "relation" to His effects, it does not conclude directly to the Supreme Being Himself.

It is worth noting that Cajetan answers an objection raised by Aureolus against the principle: "the supreme is the cause of all in a genus." Aureolus flatly denied this principle and gave as proof the fact that whiteness, the greatest of colors, is not the cause of all other colors. Cajetan\(^\text{23}\) points out several principles which were also followed almost verbatim by John of St. Thomas\(^\text{24}\).

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\(^{23}\)Cajetan, comment. vii.

\(^{24}\)John of St. Thomas in Summa Theologicae. I, ii, 3, comment.
1) The supreme (maximo tale) is not to be taken as the first or highest species.\textsuperscript{25}

ii) The greatest can be a cause effectively, exemplarily, or both. In the case in question it is not made clear, but God is cause in both ways.\textsuperscript{26}

iii) "Cause of all else" means "cause of all else of this genus"; in this case the supreme being is the cause of all being.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25}... non assumitur hic quod perfectissima species sit causa ceterarum: sed quod maxime tale, etc.

\textsuperscript{26}In note 18 we saw Suarez' interpretation of this remark by Cajetan. It can hardly be said that the interpretation is altogether unfair; nevertheless Cajetan leaves room for effective causality, even though he does not clearly distinguish.

\textsuperscript{27}Cajetan's summing up does much to clarify an otherwise obscure commentary: "Ex hoc patet quod instantia Aureoli de albedine respectu colorum, nihil valet. Tum quia albedo non est maxime color. Tum quia, si esset maxime color, non oporteret propter ea ipsam causam ceteras species coloris absolute, sed quantum ad rationem coloris tantum. Tum quia dicere albedinem esse causam exemplarem reliqorum colorum quatenus colors sunt, nullum inconveniens est: cum perfectiora sint naturaliter exemplaria imperfectiorum ut sic; et colores omnes, quanto magis accedunt ad albedinam, tanto plus habent lucis, et consequenter perfectionis ratione coloris."
Summing up, we can say that Cajetan has a high esteem for the *Quarta Via*. He regards it as a valid proof for the existence of a supreme being. But, in his opinion, it is not a complete proof of the existence of God since it does not sufficiently establish the nature and attributes of the supreme being. It does not arrive at God as God. And for the reasons we have described we feel that this evaluation of the *Quarta Via* by Cajetan is entirely defensible.

We will now consider the Fifth Way—its classical form in the writings of St. Thomas and the criticisms levelled against it by Cajetan and Suarez.
CHAPTER VI

THE ARGUMENT FROM FINAL CAUSALITY

A. The Argument in St. Thomas

1. Its sources

In the *Contra Gentiles* St. Thomas informs us that the *Quinta Via*, or the argument from order, was used by St. John Damascene. This, however, does not exclude other sources, since the argument from final causality has been in constant use since the time of Socrates, and St. Thomas probably knew, directly or indirectly, the argument as it appears in the works of Plato and Aristotle.

The most striking instance of its use in Plato is possibly in the *Philebus* where Plato presents Socrates discussing the government of the universe. He concludes "from the consideration of the world, of the sun and moon and the other stars, and from the revolutions of all of them" that the earth and the heavens are wonderfully governed by a wise intellect.\(^1\) A similar form is found in Aristotle in chapter seven of the twelfth book of the

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\(^1\) *Philebus*, 28c-e.
Metaphysics. Here Aristotle declares that the first eternal mover is the ultimate final cause of all things, since it is an object of love and desire.\(^2\) In Chapter ten he shows that the world would be without order if there were no beings beyond the sensible world;\(^3\) and he continues to argue from the absurd consequences which would result if there were many rulers: "the rule of many is not good; one ruler let there be."\(^4\) St. Thomas was, of course, quite familiar with all these passages. He was also familiar with St. John Damascene's passage which marvels at the fact that diverse elements have been coordinated into the formation of one smoothly operating universe:

Again, that joining together of created things, that conservation and government, teach us that there is a God who co-ordinates this universe and sustains and provides for it. For, how would natures, opposed in themselves, the natures of fire and water for instance, the natures of air and earth, cooperate in the constitution of one world, and cling together in an indissoluble bond unless some omnipotent power had joined them and perpetually preserved them from dissolution?\(^5\)

\(^2\)Metaphysics, 1072a, 20-30.

\(^3\)Ibid. 1075b, 26.

\(^4\)Ibid. 1076a, 5. Aristotle is quoting Homer's Iliad, 11, 204.

\(^5\)St. John Damascene, De Fide Orthodoxa, I, 3; PG, 94, 795.
2. Form in the early writings

The argument from final causality is used by St. Thomas ten times—that is more often than any other—to prove the existence of God. It first appears in his Commentary on the Second Book of the Sentences where, in replying to the question, "Are there many first principles?", St. Thomas writes as follows:

It is clearly impossible that there be more than one, and this is clear from three considerations: first, from the order of the universe, whose parts are found to be ordered to one another, just as the parts of an animal in a whole serve one another. There is not, however, such a coordination of many unless they tend toward some one thing. Therefore, there must be one ultimate highest good which is desired by all; and this is the principle.

In the thirteenth chapter of I Contra Gentiles St. Thomas uses a similar argument, but here for the express purpose of proving the existence of God. He attributes the argument to St. John Damascene and bases it on a simple principle: "It is impossible that things contrary and discordant should harmonize in

6 Besides the passages to be quoted we find the argument in: De Veritate, q. V, art. ii; De Potentia Dei, q. III, art. vi; In Metaphysicorum, XI, Lect. 12; In Evangelium S. Ioannis, Prologus; Super Symbolum Apostolorum, art. i.

7 In XI Sent., D. I, q. I, art. I "Primo ex ordine universi, cujus partes inveniuntur ad invicem ordinatae esse, quasi partes animalis in toto, quae sibi invicem deserviunt. Talis autem coordinatio plurium non est, nisi unum aliquod intendant. Ergo oportet esse unum summum bonum ultimum, quod ab omnibus est desideratum; et hoc est principium."

This is the second argument (chronologically) for the existence of God in the works of St. Thomas. The first is found in De Ente et Essentia, Maurer ed., p. 46.
one order always or frequently unless by the governance of some-
thing which gives to each and all of them a tendency to some
certain end." And, since this harmony is verified in nature, St.
Thomas concludes that there must be something by whose providence
the world is governed: "this we call God."8

3. Form in the Summa Theologiae

The arguments in the Summa Theologiae differs from the two
arguments we have just given in that it explicitly begins with
things that lack knowledge and explicitly concludes by arriving
at "an intellectual being by whom all natural things are directed
to their end." If things without knowledge act toward an end
they must be directed by some intelligent being because acting
for an end pre-supposes purpose or design, and design pre-supposes
an intelligent designer. For this St. Thomas directly concludes
that there exists a being who directs all natural things to their
end.9 The argument appears again, of course, but always in these
basic forms with only slight modifications. Hence we can turn
immediately to the critique made of them by Cardinal Cajetan.

8Contra Gentiles, I, xiii.
9Summa Theologiae, I, ii, 3.
B. Criticism of Cajetan

1. Its background

To discuss the source or the background of Cajetan's stand on the Quinta Via there is no need to add anything to what has been said in discussing his position on the Tertia and Quarta Via.¹⁰ Cajetan did not think that they fully establish the existence of God; and he held this, not simply because he was influenced by Averroes, but also because of the fact that St. Thomas used many other distinct arguments in the later questions of the Summa Theologiae to deduce the existence of essential divine attributes, such as unicity.

If St. Thomas had actually proven through these arguments, or Ways, the existence of God with attributes proper to God alone, then these later, distinct arguments would not have been necessary. This was Cajetan's basic position when treating the earlier arguments, and he does not alter it essentially while commenting on the Fifth Way.

2. Its form

Cajetan's criticism of the Fifth Way can be summarized very briefly since it is found quite succinctly in Cajetan's own

¹⁰See pages 73 and 91.
writings.

The Fifth Way, according to Cajetan, does not prove the existence of God as God. It proves the existence, per se, of the attribute of intellectual governor, and, therefore, per accidens it proves the existence of a being possessing that attribute:

"Likewise it is sufficient if the fifth way lead to a first governor through the intellect, whoever he is."11

Nevertheless, he admits that the Fifth, like the other Ways, leads to a terminus that is proper to God.12

C. Criticism of Suarez

1. Does Suarez object to the Quinta Via?

In order to prove the existence of God Suarez uses the principle, "Everything which comes into existence is produced by another."13

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11Cajetan, in Summa Theologiae, I, ii, 3, comment. 3: "Et similiter quintae vias, ex gubernatione, sed est ducere ad primum gubernantem per intellectum quicumque sit ille."

12Ibid. "Omnia haec praedicata ... et primum gubernans intellectum sint secundum veritatem propria Deo."

13Suarez, p. 27: "Omne quod producitur ab alio producitur." To avoid even the appearance of tautology this should not be rendered "everything which is produced is produced by another", but as translated here. (The same may be said of the phrase "omne quod movetur ab alio movetur"—mutatis mutandis. The Greek original (Physics 256a, 2) is best translated by the Latin passive, "quae moventur", but in English a better sense is had by translating it as "in motion".)
But, according to Suarez, this argument is not adequate, for it does not prove that the first cause is the only first cause, i.e., it fails to prove the unicity of God, which, in the opinion of Suarez, means that it does not prove God.\textsuperscript{14} Naturally, Suarez next looks for an \textit{a posteriori} argument to prove that the first cause is unique and takes up the argument from the order of the universe,\textsuperscript{15} attributing it to St. Thomas.

At one point Suarez reviews possible objections: i) the governor be other than the maker; ii) many governors rule harmoniously by mutual agreement; and iii) the governor is the maker of the sensible world but not of the "Intelligences".\textsuperscript{16} Then he comes to a problem which he feels is unanswerable: Is there another universe caused by another "God"? By failing to answer this objection and by admitting the possibility of another world and another "God" on the grounds that this argument from order

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.} p. 35 "Et ideo ad demonstrandum Deum esse, non satis est ostendere dari in rerum natura ens quodam necessarium, et a se, nisi etiam probetur illud esse unicum, et tale, ut sit fons totius esse, a quo pendunt, et illud recipiunt omnia, quo ipsum esse quoque modo participant. Hoc autem demonstrato, sufficienter ostenditur Deum esse; nam reliqua eius attributa quae cum hujusmodi ente necessarium connexionem habent, demonstranda sunt."

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.} p. 36 "...licet singuli effectus per se sumpti et considerati, non ostendant unum et eundem esse omnium factorem, tamen totius universi pulchritudo, omniunque rerum, quae in eo sunt, mirabilis connexionis et ordo, satis declarant esse unum primum ens, a quo omnia gubernantur et originem ducunt."

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.} p. 37.
does not demonstrate otherwise Suarez seems to reject the Contra
Gentiles argument from design as commonly understood.

2. Form of criticism

Suarez reluctantly points out the defect of the argument
from order in the universe in the following key passage, which is
worth being cited in its entirety:

It proves nothing [in regard to unity], especially since
there is able to be another universe composed of bodies
of a different species or—and this is less certain—of
a different physical genus, i.e., differing in regard to
materia prima.
But bodies of distinct worlds would not have an order
amongst themselves, and therefore neither would desire
to be under the other or over the other. Consequently,
it must be admitted that he who, to avoid the force of
this argument [i.e., the argument from design], would
fabricate another order would be neither saying anything
impossible nor implying a contradiction; he would, how-
ever, be speaking rashly . . . since there is no reason-
able ground for the suspicion, and therefore the objec-
tion is not philosophical. Nevertheless, from this and
the preceding objection I admit that I am convinced that
the argument designed to prove that there is only one un-
produced being and that all other beings are made by him
does not attain this conclusion absolutely but only in
regard to those beings which are known to human reason
from experience or natural philosophy. Therefore, we
must have recourse to an a priori demonstration. . . . 17

17Ibid. p. 47.
D. Evaluation of Cajetan and Suarez

Neither Cajetan nor Suarez denies the validity of the Quinta Via; they agree that the argument proves the existence of a governor of the universe, but they insist that the argument is not an adequate proof of the existence of God as He is commonly understood.

Thomistic\textsuperscript{18} interpreters of the Fifth Way vary in their evaluations. Dominicus Banez, an eminent defender of the Five Ways, admits that the Fifth Way gives merely moral certainty—and is especially designed for those admitting the "newness" of the world.\textsuperscript{19} To those who will insist that there may be many governors in harmonious agreement Banez suggests that they consult the eleventh question, where St. Thomas proves the unicity of God. John of St. Thomas\textsuperscript{20} expressly concedes that the argument is not intended to prove that there is only one governor; he says it proves an intelligent being directing others to their end without being dependent on any superior being and that, therefore, this being is divine. For the question of its unicity

\textsuperscript{18}For the many objections of non-Thomistic and non-Scholastic philosophers see Garrigou - Lagrange, pp. 345-371.

\textsuperscript{19}Banez, in \textit{Summa Theologica}, I, ii, 3, ad objectionem contra quintam viam.

he also refers to the eleventh question.

The distinguished Belgian medievalist, Canon Van Steenberghen, looks for a metaphysical argument in the *Quinta Via* and fails to find one—or, rather, he does find metaphysical implications but denies their validity. 21 On the other hand, many other contemporary authors believe that the Fifth Way is a metaphysical proof for the existence of God, its terminus being, one supreme intelligent Governor of all things. But here, too, there are different interpretations. The British scholar, Father Martin D'Arcy, for instance, claims that the argument is based on intrinsic finality, 22 while the French Thomist, Jacques Maritain, bases it on extrinsic finality. 23

How is it possible that so many reputable commentators fail to find the one God as the conclusion to the Fifth Way, whereas many modern authors insist that the Fifth Way arrives at Pure Act? The suggestion we would like to make is that many commentators have seen in the *Quinta Via* a deduction from the design in the world; they have seen St. Thomas looking in awe on the harmony of creation and concluding, as he more evidently does, for instance, in the third article of the fifth question in his

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21Van Steenberghen, p. 164.

22D'Arcy, p. 122. Garrigou - Lagrange, p. 347, also suggests that St. Thomas speaks of intrinsic causality.

De Veritate, 24 that there must be an intelligent ruler who designs this order. The modern tendency is to emphasize not so much the design as the metaphysical basis of the design, which is really, in the logical order, the conclusion drawn from that design, viz., that all things act for an end. A thing acts for an end because the author of its nature implanted that tendency in it. That author may be his own end or may operate because of a higher end; in either case we come ultimately to a being who is his own end. Finally, if a being is his own finis, it is impossible that his nature or essence be other than his esse, since essence has a tendency to esse as to its finis; and in all other natures that tendency must ultimately be implanted by a being whose essence is esse. Hence, there can be only one being who is pure "to be".

Re-examining in this light the objection of Suarez, we notice that he did not faithfully reproduce the argument of the Contra Gentiles to which he refers, for, as is apparent from a

24 De Veritate, v, 3. "Quantumcumque ergo multitudinem invenimus ordinatam ad invicem, oportet eam ordinari ad exterus principium. Partes autem universi, corruptibiles et incorruptibiles, sunt ad invicem ordinatae, non per accidens, sed per se: vidimus enim ex corporibus caelestibus utilitates provenire in corporibus corruptibilibus vel semper vel in majori parte secundum eundem modum; unde oportet omnia, corruptabilia et incorruptabilia, esse in uno ordine providentiae principii exterioris, quod est extra universum. Unde Philosophus concludit, quod necesse est ponere in universo unum dominatum et non plures."
study of the text, that argument spotlights, not the efficient
cause of the universal design, but the inherent tendency things
have towards an end which brings into focus the ultimate final
cause of everything. We have already seen that Suarez denied
that the Quinta Via reached God. We admit that his position is
valid if the Quinta Via is understood as an argument from effici-
ent rather than final causality. But the text seems to favour
the latter interpretation: i.e., St. Thomas in both the Contra
Gentiles and the Summa Theologiae seems to be arguing from final
causality.25 The corresponding argument of Suarez, on the other
hand, is based on efficient causality, and for that very reason
it does not reach God.

This is Suarez' formulation of the argument: "Although
effects taken individually do not show that the maker of all
things is one and the same, nevertheless the beauty of the whole
universe and the wonderful connection and order of all things
which are in it adequately proclaim that there is one first being
by whom all things are governed and from whom they take their
origin."26

25 The point of the passage from De Veritate quoted in note
24 is that, whereas the material and efficient causes explain the
effect, the final cause is needed to explain the qualities and
tendencies in the effect.

26 The Latin text has been quoted in note 15, p. 101.
Cajetan's criticism of the Fifth Way is stated quite tersely. It appears on the occasion of his replying to an objection raised by Aureolous, who had insisted that the quiddities of things are in themselves sufficient explanations of their effects. Cajetan, in reply, refers to a passage in St. Thomas\textsuperscript{27} where Thomas asserts that when a nature acts towards an end that and is conceived either by itself or by another: in either case we can ultimately get to a cause which is its own end.\textsuperscript{28} However, Cajetan is not satisfied that the proof from finality for God's existence is entirely adequate as it appears in St. Thomas. He asserts that, even after we have arrived at the conclusion that there is a supreme being who instills in natures a tendency to an end so that these things act consistently to the extent that all the visible universe harmoniously operates, still we can say that this is merely an ingelligent governor of the universe, who is not, however, necessarily God. In truth this being is God and no one else--Cajetan does not deny this; but he says that the argument itself does not go so far. And, indeed, if we study the argument objectively or try to discover how far St. Thomas meant to carry his conclusion (by comparing the form in the \textit{Summa Theologicae} with the form as found in his other writings), we must

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Summa Theologicae}, I, ii, 3 ad secundum.

\textsuperscript{28} Cajetan also refers to \textit{De Veritate}, V, 2, where the emphasis is stressed on the giver of the tendency toward the \textit{finis}. 
admit that there is little evidence to indicate that St. Thomas regarded this argument as absolute proof of a creating, unique being such as we understand God to be. There is no need to repeat the evidence, for we have already considered it in conjunction with the other arguments. In brief, the evidence is this: St. Thomas himself did not consider any of the five ways to be conclusive or sufficient, for he explicitly brings in further proofs before concluding to the existence of a God who is perfectly immutable, a creator, and unique cause of all other beings.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

According to Cardinal Cajetan the Five Ways of St. Thomas do not prove the existence of God as God. He concedes that each of the arguments is a valid one; he admits, for instance, that the first way does prove the existence of a first immovable mover. Moreover, he is willing to grant that there exists a being who is the possessor of the respective attributes which are the proper conclusion of each of the Five Ways. But when he considers the last clause of each argument, "and this everyone understands to be God" (or the equivalent) Cajetan hesitates, or rather, he distinguishes. Certainly, he says, God is the first immovable mover and God is the first cause, but these are truths which we will know by demonstration only when we have proved that the possessor of the attributes discovered in the Five Ways is also unique, simple, and infinite. The only adequate proof of God's existence, therefore, and the arguments which deduce these, are the other divine attributes, together with the Five Ways. The Five Ways, taken by themselves, constitute merely the first step of a complex demonstration.

The approach of Suarez is different. He makes no allusion
to the Five Ways. But, as we have seen, he does consider at length the principles on which the arguments are based. He rejects the basic principle of the Prima Via, "everything in motion is moved by another," on the grounds that nature seems to disprove it. He accepts the principle of causality as used in the Secunda Via but refuses to believe that an argument based on that principle proves the existence of God, since he insists that a proof of God's existence must show that God is unique, and the first uncaused cause is not self-evidently unique. For the same reason he holds that the conclusion of the Tertia Via—a necessary being having its necessity from itself alone—does not, of itself, denote God. Suarez' treatment of the Fourth Way is quite interesting. St. Thomas uses two basic principles in the Quarta Via; "more and less are predicated of different things according as they resemble in different ways something which is a maximum" and "the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus". Suarez refers only to the latter principle; he admits that it is true in the "genus" of being (but not in other genera), so that he would state it in this way: "the greatest being is the cause of all others." However, he deduces the existence of the greatest being by means of an argument corresponding to the Secunda Via, so that the principle of the Quarta Via, in the opinion of Suarez, is valid only after we prove that God is the first efficient cause by means of the Secunda Via. Finally, Suarez makes use of an
argument similar to the Quinta Vie of St. Thomas, but it is really an argument from design, whereas St. Thomas' proof is an argument from final causality. It is not surprising that Suarez' argument from the order of the universe does not prove the existence of the one God. In summary we can say that Suarez would not admit that any of the Five Ways taken separately demonstrates the existence of God, but he does hold that a combination of the Second and Fourth Ways (with a special proof added to prove that the greatest being is the cause of all other beings) is sufficient to prove that God exists.

How are we to evaluate, in general, the positions of Cajetan and Suarez? The majority of Thomists are convinced that any one of the Five Ways gives an adequate demonstration of the existence of God. On the other hand, we can say—at the risk of over-simplification—that for Cajetan and Suarez the Five Ways lead to, but do not arrive at, God as their conclusion. Supporting their opinion is the fact that St. Thomas does not conclude any of his proofs with the words "and this being is God". Instead he says "and this everyone understands to be God" or "and this being we call God". A stronger indication that St. Thomas did not consider these proofs as adequate demonstrations of God's existence is the fact that he did not conclude directly from the conclusions of these proofs to such divine attributes as simplicity and infinity. The most striking example we have seen is in the case of the First
Way in which St. Thomas concludes that there exists a first im-
movable mover. Yet, in the ninth question of the Summa Theologicae
he proves that God is absolutely immovable, from premises that
have no immediate connection with the Prima Via. This seems
sufficient grounds for the opinion that there is a difference be-
tween the first immovable mover as proved in the Prima Via and the
immutable God established in the ninth question of the Summa.

In the thirteenth chapter of the Summa Contra Gentiles St.
Thomas declares that he will state the proofs of the philosophers
and theologians for the existence of God. The third article of
question two as in the Prima Pars is obviously a parallel passage,
and it is probable that there, too, St. Thomas intends to give the
"arguments of philosophers and theologians". If those arguments
were incomplete proofs of the existence of God we would expect
that, then or later, St. Thomas would develop the arguments or
add to them until the desired conclusion is adequately demonstra-
ted. Cajetan points out that this is precisely what St. Thomas
did, and for this reason it is Cajetan's express opinion that the
Five Ways do not arrive at God as He is ordinarily understood.
St. Thomas's later detailed proofs that there exists an infinite,
perfect, immutable, subsistent Being are for Cajetan clear evi-
dence that Thomas himself was aware of the inadequacies of the
Quinque Vias. Suarez, as we have indicated, seems to agree with
Cajetan, for, like Cajetan, he insists that any proof of God's
existence must prove an omnipotent, unique God—which, Suarez is careful to point out, is not done in the *quinque viae*.

What about those many Thomists who contend that the Five Ways do prove the existence of God? Certainly the arguments as they state them are adequate. For instance, if one shows that when writing the *secunda via* St. Thomas was thinking of the distinction between *esse* and *essence* and that he concluded (implicitly) to a Being whose essence is esse, all that is needed for an adequate proof of the existence of God is an argument demonstrating that there can be only one purely self-subsistent being. But how do we get all this in the *secunda via*? We do not suggest that we should confine ourselves to the literal sense of each proposition in any of the proofs; some "interpretation" is clearly necessary. But it is possible to "interpret" too much; it is possible to read into the arguments a reasoning process which was never meant by St. Thomas. And, as we have pointed out consistently throughout this paper, the guides to determine what St. Thomas held to be the conclusion of each argument should be: (i) the source of the argument, (ii) other texts of St. Thomas where he is more detailed, and (iii) the use made of that particular conclusion by St. Thomas in his deduction of the divine attributes. This paper has judged the Five Ways and the interpretations of Cajetan and Suarez according to these three norms, especially by the third one. The evidence indicates that St. Thomas did not believe that
the Five Ways alone demonstrated the existence of God, properly speaking. Or, in the words of Cajetan, the Five Ways prove the existence of a being possessing certain attributes, which further argumentation shows to be proper to God; but they do not, in themselves, prove the existence of God as God.
APPENDIX

DEDUCTION OF DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

In this paper much emphasis has been laid on the method used by St. Thomas in deducing the divine attributes in the Summa Theologicae. What has interested us is the use of the conclusions of the Quinque Vias as premises for arguing to the attributes. On examination we find that St. Thomas makes no use of the conclusion of the Tertia Via in deducing the attributes of God and that he uses the conclusion of the Quinta Via once only, viz., as one of the arguments to prove the unicity of God. In this regard the Prima Via is the same as the Quinta; its conclusion, too, is used only once—to prove that God is not a body. The conclusion of the Secunda Via is used to prove that (i) God is not composed of matter and form, (ii) that God is not composed of essence and esse, (iii) that God is absolutely simple, (iv) that God is perfect, and (v) that God is good. From the fact that God is not composed of matter and form St. Thomas concludes (a) that He is not composed of nature and person and (b) that He is infinite. Again, from the fact that God is not composed of nature and person, as well as from the divine perfection, St. Thomas demonstrates that God is unique. Finally, Aquinas uses the conclusion of
the Quarta Via to prove (i) that God is not a body, (ii) that God is not composed of matter and form, (iii) that He is not composed of essence and esse, (iv) that He is altogether simple, (v) immutable, and (vi) unique.

Since the above listing does not do justice to the rather intricate order of premises and conclusions, it may help to outline graphically, and in greater detail, the material just given. We shall confine ourselves to the conclusions of the Secunda and Quarta Vias since, as we have already seen, the other Vias are used very little in the deduction of attributes. It seems reasonable to presume that when St. Thomas speaks of the "first being" as something already proven he is referring to the "maxime ens" proved in the Fourth Way. The other premises used by St. Thomas can be easily seen to refer either to the conclusion of the Secunda Via or that of the Quarta Via. (In the first column we give the question of the Summa Theologiae in which each attribute (column two) is demonstrated.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qn.</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Secunda Via</th>
<th>Quarta Via</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>SIMPLICITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Not a body</td>
<td></td>
<td>i) first being, perfect act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) No matter and form</td>
<td>iii) first agent</td>
<td>ii) most noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>i) pure act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ii) first good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qu.</td>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>Secunda Via</td>
<td>Quarta Via</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) No composition of nature and person.</td>
<td>no matter and form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d) No essence-and esse</td>
<td>i) first efficient cause</td>
<td>ii) pure act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Altogether simple</td>
<td>i) first efficient cause</td>
<td>ii) first being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| IV  | PERFECTION         | first efficient cause                        |                                           |
| VIII| GOODNESS            | first efficient cause                        |                                           |
| VII | INFINITY            | i) no matter-and-form                        | ii) no essence-and-esse                   |

| IX  | IMMUTABILITY        | i) pure act                                  | ii) no composition                        |
|     |                     | i) infinite and perfect                      |                                           |

This graph may need a note of explanation. Let us take, for instance the last entry. In the ninth question of the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas proves that God is absolutely immutable. His first argument in proof of this is based on the fact that God is Pure Act. And the attribute "pure act" is a derivation from the conclusion of the *Quarta Via*. (This is evident from the fact that, when deducing the truth that God is not a body (question three), St. Thomas points out that the first being must be pure
The second proof of the divine immutability is based on the fact that God is not composed, and this fact was derived from various uses of the conclusions of both the *Secunda Via* and *Quarta Via*. The third proof of the immutability of God is based on the infinity and the perfection of God. In the seventh question of the *Summa Theologicae* Aquinas proves that God is infinite, using as premise the conclusion of the *Quarta Via*; and in the fourth question, he proves that God is perfect basing his arguments on the conclusion of the *Secunda Via*. 
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Denis M. Hickey, O.S.M. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

October 17, 1958

Date

Signature of Adviser