

Is Thomas Aquinas's ideology on the human intellect being one of the causes of love justifiable?

The question in mind is whether Thomas Aquinas's ideology on knowledge being one of the causes of love is justifiable? This is not a case on whether Aquinas is right or wrong but whether he has a reasonable case and argument to support his statement that it is indeed one of the main causes of love. The inspiration behind this question came from reading Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. In this book there is an article and a discussion on the question that is being asked and therefore, can be used. This is where the evidence of Aquinas's view will come from as it demonstrates his train of thought and reasoning behind his ideology.

Before looking at any other resource, the *Summa Theologiae*, volume 19 must be read. This is due to the book containing Thomas Aquinas's views which from there must be established and analysed. After looking at the *Summa Theologiae*, it can be said that Aquinas's broad opinion is yes, knowledge is a cause of love. This can be said as the evidence from his own work, demonstrates his arguments in his second article in the chapter; *The Causes of Love*. He says, "some knowledge of a thing is necessary before it can be loved" (Aquinas, 1967. Page 78). This means that you must know the existence of something to love it whether it is an object, hobby or person. You cannot love what you do not know. This is Aquinas's first point.

Aquinas uses the philosopher Aristotle, in order to back up his theory and ideas using "is why Aristotle says that sensory love is born of seeing a thing" (Aquinas, 1967. Page 78). The idea that you cannot love a thing without seeing it does not apply to spirituality. "spiritual love is born of the spiritual contemplation of beauty or goodness." (Aquinas, 1967. Page 78). This is generally aimed at the love for God. We cannot love God if we do not know Him and we cannot do this without learning about God and his works. To put this idea in the modern concept, we must think of something simple so all can understand what Aquinas is trying to convey; you cannot like or love coffee if you do not have any knowledge or understanding of what it is, where it comes from, what it tastes like or what it looks like. You cannot love something that you do not know exists. There could be an argument that yes, you can know and love an idolised celebrity however, you do not truly know them as a person. You simply admire their beauty or talent; you do however have the knowledge that they do indeed exist.

Further evidence and support for Aquinas's ideology on whether knowledge is a cause of love is the philosopher, Aristotle. The philosopher says that physical sight is the introduction of "sensitive love" (*Ethic. ix, 5,12*). The observation of spiritual beauty or goodness is the beginning of spiritual love and understanding. Badhwar writes in his book "Love" about the roots of Aristotle's theories on love. Therefore, this can also be used to support Aquinas's views. He explains that having loving relationships "promotes self-knowledge" (Badhwar, 2003, p. 58) and loving acts can be mirrored.

The first heavily used objection is "Augustine says that, in the case of such things, possessing them means knowing them; if therefore one had knowledge of them, one would not be

seeking them" (Aquinas, 1967. Page 78). This is the idea that persons can pursue something if they do not know it. This can mean the search for new things scientifically. This signifies that people can gain knowledge and understanding of things without loving it.

The second objection is that to that loving something that we do not know is fundamentally the similar as loving something better than we know it. This is simply the idea that we can love something even without knowing it personally. Aquinas uses the example of "in this life we can love God in himself, but we cannot know him in himself." (Aquinas, 1967. Page 78). This is an argument that can be compared to the modern-day scenario of idolising and loving a celebrity however, you cannot truly know them. The idea of not being able to know something or someone but still love it supports the argument that knowledge is not a cause of love.

The third objection is that Dionysius says that "if knowledge is truly a cause of love then love could not be anywhere where love does not reside." (Aquinas, 1967. Page 79). Love is found in all things; therefore, knowledge is not a cause of love. This argument is the idea that no matter where you are there is always love as it is observed in all things around us.

To truly have a sense of what is against Aquinas's argument we must look at further evidence outside of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. Due to this we must look at both Augustine and Dionysius. The philosopher, Augustine says that if you know something you should have it. People "should not seek them out" (Q83, qu. 35) and therefore, knowledge is not the cause of love. As for Dionysius, he argues that there is "not knowledge in all things" (Div. Nom. iv). Therefore, directly going against Aquinas's theory that all things must have knowledge and furthermore love within them.

In conclusion, it can be said that Aquinas does have a strong argument that knowledge is a cause of love. Aquinas provides support in the *Summa Theologiae*, as well as being aided throughout time by others. Aquinas can be defended as may have interpreted in the wrong way. They have taken his words and taken something out of context or taken it in the modern sense rather in the time they were written in. From the research for this essay, we can say that Aquinas's argument is resilient and does indeed make complete sense.

However, it can be argued that Thomas Aquinas is very selective in what he uses from other philosophers. He does take what he needs from what philosophers say and then disregards the rest of their ideology. From the research we can also see that there are many objections that Aquinas has failed to disprove or argue against.

Bibliography

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